

Stone Mountain Printing

To the Delaware River Basin Commissioners -

Thank you for your attention to the Delaware River Basin, and to the quality of our drinking water. I'm writing to urge you to ban fracking wastewater and produced water importation, transportation, storage, processing, and discharge in the Delaware River Basin.

Please take seriously the findings of the EPA's study of fracking's impacts on drinking water resources. In essence, industry control over data and information meant that after years of study, EPA was still unable to determine how often fracking and related activities lead to water contamination, and what that contamination looks like.

The agency was only able to verify that contamination is happening.

It's striking that of the "over 36,000" reported spills from the oil and gas industry from January 2006 through April 2012, almost all the spills occurred beyond well sites. Of course many were oil spills from pipelines, but I was shocked to learn that spills from transporting wastes were not included in the analysis. Wastes from well sites where fracking is not banned will continue to threaten the Delaware River Basin.

Look no farther than the Susquehanna River Basin, where wastes are being sent to at least 15 different facilities. The EPA's takeaway? The "data necessary to detect changes in surface water or groundwater due to hydraulic fracturing activities do not currently exist for the Susquehanna River Basin." Meanwhile, we know that waste treatment facilities have contaminated stream beds with effluent.

The EPA study summarizes that fracking wastewater consists of varied mixes of the ancient brines brought to the surface with shale gas, together with the fracking chemicals used, and the by-products of chemical reactions during the process. So, in varied amounts, the waste includes highly harmful chemicals such as BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes) as well as radioactive material (including Radium-226).

Bringing these wastes into the basin will never be consistent with the DRBC's comprehensive plan, and ought to be likewise banned. Jeopardizing water quality by allowing wastewater to be imported, stored, transported, processed, or discharged in the basin makes no sense.