

Michael Lawrence

There is a moratorium on all gas drilling, hydraulic fracturing (fracking), water withdrawals for and wastewater treatment and discharges from fracking throughout the entire Delaware River Basin today, since 2010.

The moratorium was put in place by the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), the federal-interstate agency that manages the water resources of the Delaware River Watershed. The DRBC members – the Governors of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, and the federal government – have the responsibility of protecting the shared waters that provide 15-17 million people in all four of the Watershed states with drinking water, including New York City and Philadelphia.

The Delaware River was designated as a national Wild and Scenic River by Congress because of its outstanding features, irreplaceable resources, exceptional water quality and scenic and recreational value. These prized assets provide important economic benefit to all four states whose tributaries flow to the Delaware River. These values are gravely jeopardized by fracking and its polluting operations and must be protected for the public and future generations.

The entire nontidal Delaware River is protected by DRBC's Special Protection Waters regulations that do not allow water quality to be diminished in any way. We are dependent on that protection to keep our water safe.

After exhaustive study, the State of New York prohibited fracking based on environmental and public health analysis. The NY Department of Health concluded that the overall weight of the evidence demonstrated the likelihood that adverse health outcomes and environmental impacts from fracking could not be prevented, leading to the Governor's decision to ban high volume hydraulic fracturing in the state.

The State of Maryland permanently banned fracking after 2 years of study, based on the potential for adverse public health and environmental impacts.