

March 30, 2018

Delaware River Basin Commission
P.O. Box 7360
West Trenton, New Jersey 08628
Attn: Steve Tambini

Dear Commissioners:

During the past eight years, while the Delaware River Basin Commission (the “DRBC” or “Commission”) has had a moratorium on the high volume, hydraulic fracturing and conventional methods of gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin, there have been ongoing protests against drilling and all activities associated with that process. The Commission has also been subject to pressure from individuals and groups, as well as corporations, to permit drilling, wastewater dumping and storage, and water withdrawals. So it seems as if the DRBC may be trying to “split the baby” by proposing to ban the drilling, but permit wastewater storage and/or treatment, and water withdrawals to support drilling elsewhere.

As a resident of New Jersey and New York, I could say that from a personal perspective, I should not have to bear the consequences of Pennsylvania’s choice to allow fracking. But this is not about one individual. This is about the health of vast numbers of people. Versus money.

You have received numerous comments about the 15-17 million people who rely on the Delaware for their drinking water. Many more would be impacted by the deterioration of the River’s pristine, Special Protection Waters — those who are drawn to it for fishing and other recreational purposes. And while your primary concern is the water in the River, your decision would also directly impact the air quality for millions more.

Balance that against the argument to accept wastewater and water withdrawals. The companies that would benefit by taking in wastewater would continue to exist and profit without processing or storing Pennsylvania’s or any other state’s fracking by-products. But the people impacted might not continue to exist. They could be plagued by the cancers and other health consequences those who consume radioactive materials and volatile organic compounds experience. We know about those health consequences because study after study reports them. There have been no studies that have any credibility whatsoever that suggest anything to the contrary. And the studies continue to appear in journals daily. Here is just one of the most recent ones:

http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/uploadedFiles/CPUC_Public_Website/Content/Safety/Natural_Gas_Pipeline/Blaque%20RCA%20SS-25%20Metallurgical%20Protocol%20-Phase%204%20RCA.pdf and

Water withdrawals have no positive outcome either. Aside from supporting fracking elsewhere, thereby subjecting others to the direct harms of fracking, depleting the River will seriously impair the whole ecosystem of the River. These impacts too, are well documented. Fresh, clean drinking water is diminishing around the globe, and squandering it on a doomed fuel source is beyond foolish.

I keep wondering what could possibly compel a vote to permit any kind of gas drilling, water withdrawal or wastewater processing or storage. The only thing I can surmise is a corruption of the intent of the compact that created the Commission. What would the point of its existence these past 57 years have been if its mission could be reversed with this one decision?

Please choose people over profit for an industry that already makes billions and destroys the lives and livelihoods of millions. They really don't need more money. People need their health.

Respectfully,

Wendy E. Robinson