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I was shocked to learn that the DRBC has proposed changes to their Rules of Practice and Procedure. These changes are largely carving in stone several of the practices the DRBC already uses when they make permitting and policy decisions. Citizens like I have protested many of these practices in the past because they have led to bad decisions by the DRBC. Most notably, the DRBC Executive Director unilaterally approved the extension of the approval for the Gibbstown LNG Export Terminal Project last year without any public input and even without a vote or public discussion by the DRBC Commissioners – the Governors of the four watershed states (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) and the Army Corps of Engineers, representing the federal government (President Biden). Only because the community cried "FOUL!" when Delaware Riverkeeper Network discovered the clandestine approval through a Freedom of Information Act request was the secret decision to extend the permit discussed at a public meeting and voted on by the Commissioners. This kind of back room decision-making should be overthrown, not memorialized into regulations! As of today, we still live in a democracy, although some would certainly like to change that. For now, however, We, the People, still have the right to use our voices.

We, as a Coalition of organizations, community groups, and frontline residents from throughout the Delaware River Watershed and beyond, have fought for many years for greater transparency and fair opportunities to provide meaningful and informed public participation in the approvals and policies that the DRBC makes. These critical decisions directly affect the quality of our environment, our drinking water, our air quality, the diversity and health of the Delaware River, its species, habitats, ecosystems, tributaries and communities throughout the entire magnificent Delaware River Watershed. We cannot effectively take part and influence outcomes if the decision-making process is not open and interactive, with all important decisions and the underlying information about them fully disclosed and available for review and comment. We also have advocated for the DRBC Commissioners to be hands-on involved and engaged with the decisions that are made as these representatives of our elected government are accessible to us, as members of the public, and they are required to respect our rights and protect the environment for the public good. That is not what this rulemaking proposes to do. In fact, it does the opposite in almost all of its proposed sections.

Shame on those who feel it necessary to hide their actions from the public!!!