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Temple University Hospital Nurses Association

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RECEIVED/DELAWARE RIVER
BASIN COMMISSION



Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses & Allied Professionals

2011 FEB 4 A 11:04

January 31, 2011

DRBC Commissioners, c/o Commission Secretary
Delaware River Basin Commission
P.O. Box 7360
West Trenton, NJ 08628

Re: Draft Natural Gas Development Regulations

Dear DRBC Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of over 1000 Registered Nurses at Temple University Hospital. Our Executive Board had unanimously endorsed a resolution calling on you to commit to a moratorium on hydrofracking in the Delaware Basin until and unless full evaluations by the EPA and other agencies assure us that there will be no deleterious effect on our water or air.

We also encourage you to expand the public participation process for the draft natural gas regulations you have published. A 90 day comment period is wholly inadequate. At least six months is needed to allow for broad participation by the interested public in these rules. If the public voices a desire to prohibit drilling in the watershed, you should take that as your mandate, and responsibly enforce it.

Evidence is pouring in daily from the frack drilling in the western states and from other areas of Pennsylvania as to the devastating impact on water quality, air quality, human health, and the rest of our environment. As health care providers, we are watching a public health disaster unfold in the states where fracking is already widespread. As bedside care givers, we know that the prevention of harm is priceless, while even the best remediation is rarely complete. The loss of health and life which would result from widespread drilling in the watershed would cost more, and take more energy, than will ever be derived from the drilling. If the drillers were required to post bond appropriate to the potential danger to public health, there would be no drilling. If they were charged with completely remediating even that part of the waste water which comes back to the surface, they would not be interested in drilling.

If the drilling companies are not willing to bear the entire cost of preventing contamination of the air and water and still make a profit, then we know that they are throwing onto us the cost of remediation, as well as the cost of any ill effects we suffer that cannot be remediated.

Your principal mandate is to protect our watershed. We urge you to pursue this, your exclusive mandate. It is not your responsibility to compromise the potential of our river and make national energy policy.

DRBC is at a turning point in watershed management with gas drillers knocking on our door. It is time for the DRBC to take a stand to fully protect the exceptional water quality, valued natural assets and irreplaceable drinking water supply for 15 million people by preventing pollution and avoiding degradation of the Delaware River and its outstanding watershed from gas drilling. In order to get it right, the public needs and desires to influence that process and meaningfully participate in the decisions that will affect us and future generations, human and nonhuman.

Thank you for considering broadening the public participation process to allow for a robust public component to this landmark rulemaking.

Sincerely,

Maureen May, President

Temple University Hospital Nurses Association

Cc: Executive Board