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House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

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Paula Schmitt, Secretary
Delaware River Basin Commission
P.O. BOX 7360
West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360

RE: Comments on the DRBC Natural Gas Development Regulations

Dear Madam Secretary,


Please accept these comments on behalf of the 60,000 people I represent in Central Montgomery County who draw their drinking water from the Delaware River and other sources within the Delaware River Basin.

I am writing to offer support for the draft regulations of the Commission that will protect water quality in the region where fracking and drilling are occurring in the Marcellus Shale for natural gas. I have repeatedly assured my constituents (who do not own land within the Marcellus Shale region), that this natural gas development can be a big boom for Pennsylvania, can help our nation's energy independence and can be done safely so that their drinking water supplies are safe. My confidence is based both on DEP's handling of their responsibilities as the lead environmental protection agency for Pennsylvania as well as my confidence that the DRBC takes seriously its responsibility to ensure water quality.

I want to offer support for the draft regulations that would require DRBC oversight of well pad locations and the necessary roads and other accoutrements that go along with this. In the absence of DRBC oversight, I do not believe there is another entity capable of overseeing these decisions. Pennsylvania's zoning (local land use) regulations are governed by the Municipalities Planning Code. This law does not give municipal governments clear responsibility to oversee the siting of well pads and access roads, and even if it did, a myriad of municipal regulations would be confusing to the industry and difficult to enforce. Thus the absence of any clear authority and responsibility at the local level will lead to an absence of regulations that effectively deal with the forest fragmentation, erosion, sedimentation overflow into our streams and rivers and the resulting and predictable degradation of our streams, creeks, rivers and downstream drinking water supply. Safe clean, drinking water supplies are a matter of concern and even survival for the people I represent.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Representative Kate M. Harper
61st Legislative District

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BASIN COMMISSION
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