



P.O. Box 45 Springtown, PA 18081

"To protect, preserve and improve the quality of water, land and life in the Cooks Creek Watershed"

April 4, 2011

Carol Collier, Executive Director
Delaware River Basin Commission
PO Box 7360
25 State Police Drive
West Trenton, NJ 08628

Re: Hydrofracking regulations

Ms. Collier:

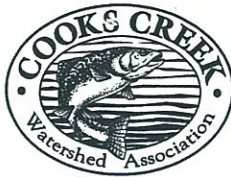
The Cooks Creek Watershed Association is a volunteer citizen organization based in upper Bucks County that has advocated for the wise use of resources in our 20 square mile Exceptional Value watershed since 1971. Our membership is comprised of approximately 125 citizens of Durham, Springfield and Lower Saucon Townships.

The Board of Directors, and many of our members, have watched the Marcellus Shale controversy with some interest since it first arose a decade ago. While we believe that there are no gas-bearing formations in our watershed, we have supported the efforts of neighboring organizations as they have struggled to enact regulations to protect the quantity and quality of their drinking water.

We do not claim to be experts in gas well drilling, or its effects. However, it has become obvious to us that local efforts to control misuse of this most valuable of all resources – water – will be met with legal resistance. This seems to us to be anathema to the very concept of "commonwealth". If we do not do everything we can to protect the ability of every citizen to obtain and fairly use clean water (for drinking, livestock, sustainable wildlife populations, agriculture and recreation) then we are not fulfilling our duties as guardians of the public trust.

The recent flooding in the Delaware reminds us that this watershed is connected to the surrounding watersheds in a very real way. Whatever flows down the Delaware does, with startling regularity, end up flowing up into the lower reaches of our tributary watershed. In recent water quality and habitat assessments of the Cooks Creek by our members, we consistently observe lower quality near the confluence with the Delaware than that observed higher in the watershed. Is this a result of flooding from the Delaware? We are unable to tell, but the question remains.

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We are also concerned about withdrawals of water from nearby watersheds to fuel the hydro-fracking process. Our experience tells us that clean drinking water is scarce in the surrounding watersheds, so much so that it limits development and causes some to look at our water resources with envy if not commercial interest. We only recently fended off an attempt from outside interests to gain control of the tiny Springtown Water Authority. This interest will only increase if surrounding communities are forced to look elsewhere because of short-sighted decisions regarding their own resources.

Even if there are no short or long-term impacts within the borders of the CCWA, our members are still concerned about the impacts to water resources throughout the Delaware River Watershed. Many of our members recreate on the river and in its bountiful natural areas. It is simply not acceptable to allow a short-term gain to impact these resources. We understand that cumulative impact studies are underway. It would be prudent to wait until these studies are completed before new regulations are adopted and the moratorium lifted.

Because of this, we implore the DRBC to consider carefully the ramifications of regulatory oversight of hydro-fracking. Regulation for its own sake is wasteful, but for new technologies being applied in new areas, we need to be completely sure that we do not throw away one resource for the sake of another. There seems to be more than enough doubt, in the minds of our members and of those who live closer to existing or proposed wells, that justifies careful and considered oversight of the companies that seek to profit from the gas. While we certainly do not oppose folks who are trying to profit from their lands, we do feel strongly that this profiteering must not be done at the expense of the Delaware watershed or its many varied inhabitants – human and non-human alike.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

W. Scott Douglas
President, CCWA

c: Maya vanRossum, Delaware Riverkeeper
Representative Paul Clymer
Senator Robert Mensch
Senator Robert Casey
Congressman Michael Fitzpatrick