



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

April 8, 2010

Subject: Public Comment – Stone Energy Dockets

Dear Secretary:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on draft dockets D-2009-13-1 and D-2009-18-1 and, more generally, to speak to the highly controversial and complex issues regarding gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale areas within Pennsylvania's Delaware River Watershed.

Our core mission is to ensure safe, high quality drinking water to all of our customers and this effort begins with our pledge to be good stewards of our region's water resources. Indeed, the quality of our tap water is ultimately linked to the health, vitality, and quality of our watersheds and rivers.

We look forward to working with our partners at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), the US Environmental Protection Agency Region III (EPA) and the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to ensure that all natural gas drilling is performed with full respect for our drinking water. Responsible drilling to maintain the integrity of Pennsylvania's drinking water supplies will take strong regulatory leadership and oversight by the DEP and DRBC on a number of difficult issues. It is our expectation that the health and safety of the region's drinking water will not be compromised.

In this vein, we have been watching the public dialogue on gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale very closely and appreciate the strength and depth of the public's concerns. We share many common thoughts on this issue, although we would couch some of the impacts on Philly with a little less alarm. We do not believe, for example, that one could compare Philadelphia's watershed concerns to the potential impacts of the drilling on more vulnerable water supply systems, such as NYC's open reservoir system and groundwater suppliers located more adjacent to drilling sites.

The Marcellus Shale formation underlies roughly half of the watershed area influencing Philadelphia's water supply, and, as such, activities related to shale drilling and high volume fracturing present new challenges to the quality and safety of our water resources. Most importantly, the formations largely underlie our rivers Special Protection Waters region.

We are pleased that the DRBC has pledged to change to the Water Code to address activities relating to natural gas drilling and high volume fracturing. It is critical that new water quality criteria are quickly established for these Special Protection Waters for both chloride and sodium. Note that this is not a new request, but one that has become even more essential and relevant in light of the potential impacts of new activities in the watershed. We also ask that the boundary control point criteria be modified to include radioactive isotopes and other potential inputs from the by-products of the fracturing process and its treatment and disposal. Water withdrawal criteria should also be evaluated to determine whether additional or alternate protocols are necessary to ensure protection of these exceptional waters.

Beyond this effort, PWD encourages DRBC to work closely with PA DEP to coordinate policy rules and regulations on the cumulative impacts on water quality in the Delaware Basin. Understanding the anticipated number of withdrawal, fracturing, and disposal sites, the volume of freshwater anticipated necessary to support drilling operations, and the amount of wastewater expected to be disposed of in the basin is essential to sound water management decision making.

We will need to also guard against any potential for fracturing waste products interfering with drinking water treatment plant performance. Parameters requiring monitoring should reflect all relevant regulated water quality parameters under the Safe Drinking Water Act, as well as other unregulated contaminants known to exist, or identified in, the chemicals used for the fracturing process. Monitoring protocols should be modified accordingly. PWD is especially concerned with all dockets that discharge fracturing wastewater into Zone B, which includes Philadelphia's drinking water treatment plants as defined by the Safe Drinking Water Act source water assessments for the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers.

Creating partnerships with open and transparent communications will be essential as we move forward with responsible drilling in our Special Protected Waters. We strongly encourage DRBC to require all parties with permits relating to natural gas extraction and disposal to join and participate in the Delaware Valley Early Warning System (EWS). The EWS serves as the essential communication tool and spill response mechanism for the Delaware River Basin. The EWS provides quick notification of spills and water quality events to over 50 participating organizations throughout the Delaware Basin.

We look forward to working in partnership with the DRBC, PA DEP, the EPA and all of the stakeholders interested in this issue to ensure the protection of the Delaware River's

special protected waters and the overall continued high quality of our drinking water sources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bernard Brunwasser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Bernard Brunwasser,
Commissioner, Philadelphia Water Department