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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

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3700 Venango Ave.
Munhall, PA. 15120
February 10, 2010

Environmental Quality Board
P.O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

Dear Sir:

The water I once drank comes from the Monongahela and is processed by the Pennsylvania American Water Company. But this public utility cannot clean the toxic fracking fluids nor the Total Dissolved Solids. So I now purchase bottled water to drink.

I believe the State of PA. has made a Faustian bargain with the fossil fuel industry. In exchange for state and local taxes estimated at $240M for 2008 and $400M for 2009[1], our state leaders have forever compromised the healthfulness of our drinking water sources.

Clearly, the industrial legacy wastes in the Mon's mud combined with the current impact made by heavy industry, such as coke, steel, chemical and coal-fired power plants and also storm-sewer overflows into the Mon already push this majestic river beyond healthy limits for human consumption. Fish advisories have been ubiquitous for years.

But now we have the drilling concerns from Texas and Canada supported by Gov. Rendell, DEP Head, John Hanger, the Allegheny Conference, and Penn State University with its Marcellus Shale Education and Training Center, all eager to profit from this gas boom.

But industry exemptions currently disallow citizens the most basic forms of protection: the Safe Drinking water Act, and the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act.[2] Moreover, "oil and gas operations are exempt from runoff and erosion controls that apply to other industries." [in the Barnett Shale fields of Texas][3]

As fracking liquids are not controlled by the State of PA., drilling companies must not report the chemicals used. As neither the State of PA., nor our local water companies, therefore know what chemicals are being used, they cannot test for them in any economical way. So there will be no testing for cancer causing chemicals or endocrine disruptors which can be part of the fracking brew. TDSs may be a big part of the problem and expensive to address, but murky water is only the visible aspect of a much greater problem.

High salinity is a consequence of Marcellus Shale gas drilling adventures. Will we need a desalinization plant in coming years on the Mon River? The largest desalinization plant in the U.S. on Tampa Bay ran into litigation, millions in cost overruns, and now resembles an electricity hog using as much electricity as 10,000 homes.[4]

Little help will come to local municipalities whose taxes must repair the roads used by heavy drilling equipment and water trucks since our legislature is unwilling to pass a gas severance tax.

W. PA. saw the oil boom and the coal boom leave in their wake hillsides of brown mud, acid mine drainage in our rivers, and coal ash piles of "gob" and their associated toxins decorating our landscape at every turn of any road in the Mon Valley area. In 2008 and 2009 The American Lung Assn. named us the SMA with the highest level of fine particulates, i.e. the dirtiest air in the U.S. in terms of the most dangerous criteria pollutant controlled by the EPA. Now our health and our lives must endure showering in

cancer-causing fracking liquids – even when we purchase and carry-in our own drinking and cooking water.

Regardless of my usual high esteem for both Gov. Rendell and Sec. John Hanger, their support of gas drillers may temper present budget shortfalls, but it will costs billions in clean-up costs for future generations. Meanwhile, the millions of gallons of ground-water used for every drill site, and the inevitable loosing of fracking contaminants into our wells and streams and rivers will cost much more than money. Many, many residents of PA. will pay with their health and, the unlucky, with their lives.

This Proposed Rulemaking [25 PA. Code Ch. 95] Wastewater Treatment Requirements should be seen as a first step only.

Approval of these mine permits should cease immediately.

Regulations should be made extremely tough, so residents can rely on their water source.

Yours truly,

Frances E. Harkins

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1 ttp://www.alleghenyconference.org/PDFs/PELMisc/PSUStudyMarcellusShale072409.pdf Considine, Timothy, "An emerging giant: prospects and economic impacts of developing the Marcellus shale natural gas play," The Pennsylvania State University. College of Earth & Mineral Sciences. Department of Energy and Mineral Engineering, July 24, 2009

2 http://txsharon.blogspot.com/2009/02/dont-let-oil-

gas-drillers-mess-with.html?widgetType=BlogArchive&widgetId=BlogArchive1&action=toggle&dir=open&toggle=MONTHLY-1157086800000&toggleopen=MONTHLY-1233468000000

3 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3rXRgbLM68&feature=player_embedded#at=35

4 http://www.wmnf.org/news_stories/desalinization-plant-outage