



Testimony of the Leagues of Women Voters of
Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania
Presented
January 7, 2012 in Delhi, New York
to the
New York Department of Environmental Conservation

RE: Revised Draft SGEIS on the Oil, Gas and Solution Mining Regulatory Program

I am Elizabeth Tatham, speaking on behalf of the Leagues of Women Voters of Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania in support of the League of Women Voters of New York, which will be submitting written comments that are much more detailed. We also speak for our own State Leagues because water and air have no regard for state boundaries. Our four Leagues have worked closely together in studying the regulations proposed by the Delaware River Basin Commission and we have issued several joint comments to the DRBC.

Our citizens all share both the benefits and hazards related to the extraction of fossil fuels within the region. Having conducted studies and developed positions on natural resources at both state and national levels, the League believes that government policies should promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest. With this in mind and our knowledge of the evolving issues connected with horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale, we strongly urge Governor Cuomo and Secretary Martens to extend the current moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in New York until the EPA Study on the effects of hydrofracking on drinking water has been concluded.

The verdict regarding the impact of hydraulic fracturing on our land, air, and water resources is still out. Sound decision-making concerning public health must be based on science – and the science isn't in yet. The importance of awaiting independent scientific feedback is exemplified by the recently released EPA findings based on 2 test wells and other data from Pavillion, Wyoming. The two-year study results show the presence in the aquifer of compounds consistent with hydraulic fracturing, such as the solvent 2 Butoxyethanol (2-BE), phenols, acetone, toluene, naphthalene and traces of diesel fuel. In addition, the EPA has recently initiated efforts to determine how waste products from natural gas drilling can be disposed safely. This is a critical area to study in view of illnesses being reported near heavy drilling sites due to water and air contamination. By waiting until we know how to drill "safely," the DEC will benefit from these findings before taking steps that may not sufficiently protect the health of people, crops, and animals that will provide our milk and meat.

Results of another study to consider is the Health Consultation (released November 4, 2011) that was conducted by the Centers for Disease Control of 7 wells and the aquifer in Leroy Township, Bradford County, PA that were contaminated by the blowout of a natural gas well there last April. In addition, concerns have been raised about the deep injection waste storage wells inducing earthquakes when two of these wells were recently shut down in Ohio after a 4.0 magnitude earthquake. A careful review of similar earthquakes is needed. For instance, two of these deep injection waste wells were also shut down in the spring of 2011 after a 4.7 magnitude earthquake that was part of a group of more than 1,000 smaller earthquakes that occurred in the Guy-Greenbrier area of Arkansas in less than a year. Other "suspected induced earthquakes" in Oklahoma, Virginia and Texas suggest that this method of disposal may have some inherent problems that need to be controlled or avoided before proceeding.

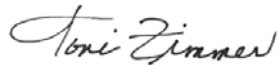
We also suggest a national health registry to document illnesses, accidents, human and animal deaths that may have been related to hydrofracking, whether due to water or air contamination, explosion or exposure while working in the industry.

In summary, an end to the de-facto moratorium now represents a premature misstep that may endanger the health of millions of residents, not only in New York, but also those living downstream or nearby in other states in the region. The drinking water of 81% of Delaware, 34% of New Jersey, 32% of New York and 42% of Pennsylvania's residents is at risk. (Earth Institute at Columbia University) The State Leagues of Women Voters of Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania therefore respectfully request that you adhere to the precautionary principle and wait to finalize the SGEIS until the EPA has issued its study report.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.



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