



PRESS RELEASE FROM CATSKILL CITIZENS FOR SAFE ENERGY

This morning, the Delaware River Basin Commission released draft drilling regulations which call for “decision-making based on sound scientific principles”. This is a reasonable standard, but one that the DRBC cannot possibly hope to meet. Because there is not a single credible study of hydraulic fracturing and drinking water safety, the Commission lacks the knowledge it needs to establish responsible regulations.

The DRBC’s draft regulations note that gas wells “may have a substantial effect, either individually or cumulatively, on the surface water and groundwater resources of the basin”, yet the DRBC has refused to conduct a cumulative impact study to determine what those effects might be.

While the draft regulations do contain some useful provisions, they amount to little more than a wish list. The DRBC will not have the staff to enforce its own regulations; instead it will have to rely on already overburdened state agencies and self-reporting by an industry that is notorious for cutting corners and evading regulatory oversight.

And the DRBC seems intent on ensuring that the taxpayer, not the gas industry, will have to pay the cost of cleaning up the inevitable environmental accidents. Under the draft regulations, drillers will be permitted to develop a gas well by putting up as little as \$125,000. Are the Commissioners aware that it will cost 12 million dollars to bring water to the town of Dimock because Cabot Energy contaminated private water wells in that town? And are they aware that Cabot has announced that it intends to stick Pennsylvania taxpayers with the bill?

In issuing its draft regulations before the completion of necessary scientific studies, the DRBC ignored the urgent appeals of New York State Governor Paterson, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York Congressman Maurice Hinchey, the New York City Council, the Philadelphia City Council, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. The fifteen million Americans who depend on the Upper Delaware River Basin for their drinking water cannot count on the DRBC to safeguard their health. It has abandoned its mission to protect one of the most important water resources in the nation. Today the DRBC stands exposed as a captive of special interests. The message is clear: “money rules, the public be damned.”