



RIVERTOWNCOALITION
FOR CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER

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Dear Members of the Board and Staff Leaders of SEDA-COG.

With careful management and responsible usage water is a renewable resource. The rate of replenishment must be equal to or faster than the rate of usage.¹ According to the U.S. Geological Survey, less than 3% of the Earth's water is fresh water. Over 68 percent of the fresh water on Earth is found in icecaps and glaciers, and just over 30 percent is found in ground water. Only about 0.3 percent of our fresh water is found in the surface water of lakes, rivers, and swamps. Of all the water on Earth, more than 99 percent of Earth's water is unusable by humans and many other living things! It seems extraordinary that the water that supports all terrestrial, as well as aquatic, life on our planet is actually so scarce. With this stunning realization comes a recognition that we have to utilize this resource very wisely. An important first step is to educate ourselves and future generations of citizens.²

For these reasons it is important to realize that the hydraulic fracking process uses 1 to 5 million gallons of fresh water that is drawn from our rivers and streams to break up the rocks underground to release gas and oil. In order to make the water most effective an assortment of chemicals are added to make the fresh water into slick water. For *each* frack, 80-300 tons of chemicals may be used, selected from a menu of up to 600 *different* chemicals. Though the composition of most fracking chemicals remains protected from disclosure through various "trade secret" exemptions under state or federal law, scientists analyzing fracked fluid have identified volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene - all of which pose significant dangers to human health and welfare.³ Disposing of this contaminated water is another problem of this process. Some is put into coal mines creating more pollution some is injected underground and the slick properties contribute to unintended seismic activity (earthquakes).⁴ a small amount is processed to be reused in fracking. As this is expensive, few use this option.

If we are to learn from our own Pennsylvania history, it would be good to recall that when the lumber business started in PA there was a responsible effort to cull trees and to raft them to market. However in the late 1840's John Leighton and James Perkins financed the Susquehanna Boom Company and changed the industry so that driving floating logs replaced rafting and radically changed the timber industry. This new method speeded the clear cutting of trees, leading to deforestation, increased erosion and flooding. This "Great Take Away" lasted until railroads were a better transportation option. By 1908 the state's forest cover was only 30% and in the Susquehanna Basin likely less because whole mountains had been stripped of trees.⁵ People wanted "their piece of the action."

The gas industry is following the same pattern. In the early years of vertical wells, this was a slow but steady industry. With the fracking process there is a shift to exploitation of natural resources on the scale of the unleashed timber industry. There are currently 7,788 active wells in Pennsylvania.⁶ As of last October over 16,000 permits have been issued for high-impact gas wells, and the industry projects a whopping 60,000 wells by 2030.⁷ Each well can be fracked many times. Each fracking uses 1-5 million gallons of fresh water. This misuse of water needed to support all of life is staggering. The more gas we extract, the more water we will remove from the fresh water percentage. When you decide to expand gas use, you decide to join this process. We are some of the people you are supposed to represent and we object to this misuse of Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Carol Parowski, President

Shirley Rowe

Mark Heuer, PhD

Peg Lauver

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Rev. Mary Peterhaensel

The Board of the Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Clean Water

¹<http://www.ask.com/science/water-renewable-resource-8aab095490f3e393>

²<http://education.nationalgeographic.org/media/earths-fresh-water/>

³<http://www.gaslandthemovie.com/whats-fracking/faq/fracking-fluid>

⁴<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/research/induced/>

⁵Brubaker, Jack, *Down the Susquehanna to the Chesapeake*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 2002. pp 95-96

⁶<http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/drilling/>

⁷http://pennenvironment.org/sites/environment/files/reports/PA_Close_Fracking_scrn.pdf