



December 12, 2011

The Honorable Chris Christie
Governor of New Jersey
P.O. Box 001, State House
Trenton, NJ 08625-0001

Dear Governor Christie:

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey supports a plan of comprehensive research and field study as a predicate to permitting substantive hydraulic fracturing in this area. We believe continued restraint is required.

On December 8, 2011, the U.S. EPA released an official report which states that specific chemicals “consistent with gas production and hydraulic fracturing fluids” were found in a drinking water aquifer in west-central Wyoming. These chemicals include the solvent 2-BE, phenols, acetone, toluene, naphthalene and traces of diesel fuel.

This disturbing report forewarns of health and life safety dangers we simply cannot ignore. The science is in. Field data reveals that hydraulic fracturing is potentially hazardous to our drinking water and to our health. As a member of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) you are responsible to act as a steward of the Basin’s water resources, which includes “basing decisions on sound science” and “protecting, enhancing and developing the water resources of the Delaware River Basin for present and future generations.”

One third of New Jersey residents rely on the Basin’s water resources for their drinking water. The League of Women Voters of New Jersey urges you to consider the danger to health and the environment associated with a vote to lift the moratorium on high volume slick-water hydraulic fracturing in the Basin. We also ask that any advocacy efforts from industry or special interests to lift the moratorium be ignored and rebuked. The industry that stands to gain by lifting the moratorium should not be allowed to compromise an evaluation process designed to protect the interests of the public.

The public interest here demands that a decision of this magnitude not be made before reviewing the final EPA study currently in progress, entitled “The Impacts of Hydrofracking on Water Supply.” The overwhelming response to the original DRBC Draft Regulations and the fact that more than 69,800 comments were submitted, including 4,800 stand alone letters, speak volumes about public concern and mitigate against a “rush to judgment” approach.

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey urges thoughtful consideration and implores the Commission to wait until the scientific results of the EPA study are published, reviewed and understood before finalizing regulations or issuing permits. This is the only way a sensible and scientifically valid scheme for handling the potable water resources that sustain so many New Jerseyans can be implemented impartially and intelligently.

Finally, please consider the effects of the hydrofracking process on residents of Pavilion, Wyoming. Men, women and children drank innocently – and with trust – from an aquifer harmfully impacted by the introduction of hydrofracking chemicals. If there is even the slightest chance of a similar outcome occurring in New Jersey, we must insist that the moratorium on hydrofracking remain imposed absent sound scientific evidence there are no health and life safety concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Toni Zimmer".

Toni Zimmer, President
League of Women Voters of New Jersey