

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CITY COUNCIL

CURTIS JONES, JR.
ROOM 404, CITY HALL
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107
(215) 686-3416 or 3417
Fax No. (215) 686-1934

COUNCILMAN - 4TH DISTRICT

October 14, 2010

Executive Director Carol R. Collier
Delaware River Basin Commission
25 State Police Drive
P.O. Box 7360
West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360
609-883-9500 - Phone
609-883-9522 - Fax

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RE: Halt on Hydro-Drilling Regulations until Completion of Scientific Studies

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to thank you for your work on behalf of our watershed and specifically for Executive Director Carol Collier's testimony at Philadelphia's Joint Hearing of the Environment and Public Utilities Committees on September 27, 2010. The in-depth expertise and other testimony our committee heard at the hearing re-enforced our concerns and left us with more questions than answers regarding the impact of gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin on Philadelphia's environment and economic future.

Science should guide Environmental policy, placing the horse of science before the cart of policy. Clearly more time is needed to enable study and evaluation of the new technology. Not doing so is analogous to driving a vehicle that has not passed auto-safety regulations.

A letter from the federal Environmental Protection Agency which was entered into the record at our hearing indicated that they are in the process of embarking on a two-year study of the risks to water and to air of Marcellus Shale drilling. This will be the first major scientific study of this gas extraction technology and should be the driver of any new regulations that govern unconventional drilling. Furthermore, it makes eminent sense to withhold permitting of gas wells, and in fact to not issue new rules, permits for water withdrawals, waste discharge, or test wells, until a cumulative impact study has been done. As you know, the Commission applied for federal funding for a cumulative impact study on the effects of natural gas development on the water resources of the Basin.

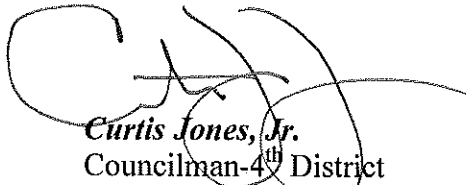
On June 23 the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and related agencies approved \$1 million for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Commission to conduct that study. The foresight the Commission has shown in seeking these funds is great and will make the Commission's goals possible. Thus, we are writing to request specifically that you not issue draft

regulations governing any projects related to gas drilling in the Basin at this time, or at any time prior to the completion of the EPA study and your own cumulative impact study.


Following our Council hearing, recent events indicates the Commonwealth DEP is facing enormous challenges to regulate even existing laws regarding gas extraction, as evidence of the frack fluid spill in Cumberland County last week. Neither the state nor federal government require companies to disclose exactly what fluids, in their proportions, are being utilized. As you might remember, this was the major concern of Dr. Joseph Martin, of Drexel University, who testified in support of drilling at our hearing.

The stakes are high; we do not want potentially harmful drilling to occur because of inadequate or incomplete regulation. We hope you will agree that waiting until a cumulative impact study is complete is necessary and appropriate before issuing regulations, so we understand the environmental standards required to protect our water, air, climate, biodiversity, economy, and human health.

Very truly yours,



Curtis Jones, Jr.
Councilman-4th District



Blondell Reynolds Brown
Blondell Reynolds Brown
Councilwoman- at large