

April 21, 2011

Resolution #2011.59

WHEREAS, natural gas development is proposed within the Delaware River Watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River is designated as a Wild and Scenic River of federally recognized outstanding resources, natural assets, and exceptional water quality; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River supplies drinking water to over 15 million people, many of them downstream of the Marcellus Shale fairway in the Upper and Middle Delaware River Watershed, approximately 3 million people in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River is the lifeblood of the communities along the River, is essential for commerce, tourism and recreation, and once contaminated will negatively impact those communities and those uses and can be very costly or impossible to remediate and can take a very long time; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) has designated the non-tidal River - the entire 197 mile River from Hancock, New York to Trenton, New Jersey - as Special Protection Waters due to the exceptional water quality and "exceptionally high scenic, recreational, ecological, and/or water supply values" of the River; and

WHEREAS, these special waters and ecosystems must be maintained as per the DRBC Water Code, so that there be "no measurable change in existing water quality except towards natural conditions", requiring protection from avoidable water quality degradation; and

WHEREAS, degradation of these waters would be illegal and would impose significant hardships, public health detriment, and economic harm if degraded; and

WHEREAS, the natural gas development process involves the use of chemicals and hazardous materials during construction, drilling, hydraulic fracturing, gas production and delivery, well maintenance, and workover operations; and

WHEREAS, hydraulic fracturing of underground geologic formations is often accomplished by injecting a complex mix of fluids and chemicals, including large volumes of water, on average 4.5 million gallons per well, under very high pressure to create fractures in gas bearing geologic formations; and

WHEREAS, billions of gallons of fresh water will be depleted by hydraulic fracturing (the water is not returned to the source and is classified as a consumptive loss) and at least 200,000 acres of land are already leased for gas development, and that tens of thousands of wells are expected to be drilled in the Upper and Middle Delaware River Watershed; and

WHEREAS, many of the chemical constituents injected during hydraulic fracturing have documented adverse health effects and/or adverse environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, use of these hydraulic fracturing mixes exposes adjacent land and surface waters to the risk of contamination through open pit storage, truck transport on roadways, and activities during well development; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, as part of the federal Energy Policy Act and over objections of health care, scientific, environmental, and conservation communities, regulation of hydraulic fracturing fluids under the Safe Drinking Water Act by the Environmental Protection Agency was exempted, thereby allowing oil and gas companies to use these substances without federal oversight or standards; and

WHEREAS, the oil and gas industry remains one of the only industries that is allowed to inject such known chemical constituents directly into or adjacent to underground drinking water supplies without federal oversight; and

WHEREAS, the oil and gas industry is not required by federal law to publicly disclose chemical formulas of hydraulic fracturing fluids so that this information is publicly available for health and safety purposes; and

WHEREAS, proposed natural gas wells in the Delaware River Watershed are planning to use chemical additives in drilling and to use hydraulic fracturing in developing these wells and exploratory wells that have been drilled have used chemical additives in drilling; and

WHEREAS, natural gas development will fragment forests in the Upper and Middle Delaware River Watershed, which is 89% forested, and convert naturally vegetated land to impervious cover and industrial conditions, increasing stormwater runoff and pollution, flooding, sedimentation, and erosion to the tributaries and the mainstem River and will emit air pollution during constructing, drilling, extraction, and production of natural gas; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River Basin Commission is seeking funding to complete a cumulative impact analysis of natural gas development on the water resources of the Delaware River Basin; and

WHEREAS, the US Environmental Protection Agency is studying the practice of hydraulic fracturing and the study will be completed in 2012 and, if it is recommended by the study that hydraulic fracturing should be subject to the Safe Drinking Water Act, that the federal oversight of hydraulic fracturing would not be unduly burdensome on industry or the economy; and

WHEREAS, Bethlehem Township has declared that degradation of these waters would impose significant hardships, public health detriment, and economic harm if degraded, and

WHEREAS, the wise stewardship of Bethlehem Township's natural resources involves protection of Bethlehem Township's water supplies and water resources for generations to come; and

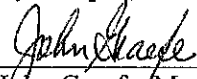
WHEREAS, protection of Bethlehem Township's water supplies and resources is better accomplished by prevention of contamination and environmental degradation, rather than attempting to clean up contamination and restoring degraded environments after the fact;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on the 21st day of April 2011, Bethlehem Township supports strong regulation by the DRBC to prevent pollution and avoid degradation of the water resources and ecosystems of the Delaware River Watershed; and

AND BE IT RESOLVED – that Bethlehem Township supports a New Jersey statewide ban on natural gas development involving hydraulic fracturing; and

AND BE IT RESOLVED that Bethlehem Township calls on our Congressional Representative and U.S. Senators to support the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals, (“FRAC”) Act and supports the proposal of a resolution in the New Jersey Legislature encouraging enactment of the FRAC Act.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND EFFECTIVE on this 21st day of April, 2011.



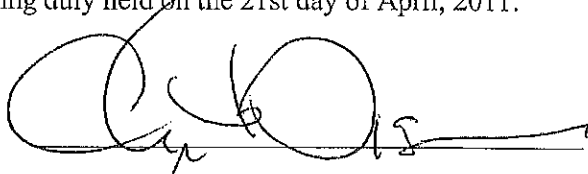
John Graefe, Mayor

ATTEST:


Christine Dispenza, Municipal Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I, Christine Dispenza, Municipal Clerk, hereby certify that this resolution was duly adopted by the Township of Bethlehem Committee at a meeting duly held on the 21st day of April, 2011.



Christine Dispenza, Municipal Clerk