

Tell the SRBC: See the Big Picture, Save the Susquehanna!

The beautiful and powerful Susquehanna River stretches 400 miles, provides drinking water to millions of people, and supports wildlife and unique environments. Yet even with the expansion of natural gas development, no agency has taken the time to understand how it affects the watershed, let alone how to prevent impacts. Working together, we can change that.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)—the agency representing Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and the U.S. Government that manages water resources of the Basin—has decided to study impacts from gas development and other activities as part of its Comprehensive Plan for water resources. This is good news, and an opportunity to make a difference in how the SRBC conducts business.

What this study considers and shows is important because, while the effects of gas development can seem small in one place, they can become very intense over time and across the Basin as a whole. A cumulative impacts study can help determine where gas activities occur, how many water use permits are issued to gas companies, and the condition of local environments before drilling operations begin. That's why we must make sure that the SRBC's impacts study is comprehensive, based on sound science and long-term thinking, and involves the public.

Clean Water Action, Earthworks, PennEnvironment, the Sierra Club, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, and other groups have launched a three-state campaign to engage and pressure the SRBC on this important issue. SRBC has a responsibility to look not only at water withdrawals by the gas industry, but also to consider broad impacts of the many stages of gas extraction, production, and transport on the health of the Susquehanna Basin, such as:

- Erosion and sedimentation near waterways, which harms water quality.
- Landscape and other local impacts in the watershed from roads, pipelines, and infrastructure.
- Pollution and other damage to ecologically sensitive areas, such as small streams and ponds with unique fish, wildlife, and plant species.
- Transfers of water from the Susquehanna to other river basins, which can change the flow and health of interconnected water bodies.
- The permanent loss of water from nature when it's pumped underground for fracking.
- New weather patterns due to climate change, such as intense storms, more frequent drought, and less predictable rainfall.

In the coming months, there will be many chances to speak out and make a difference. The SRBC needs to hear the voices of residents across the Susquehanna Basin who have knowledge about water supplies and local environments. Whether you live upstream or downstream from or in the heart of gas drilling activities, your concerns and questions matter.

The SRBC Action Network will provide the tools you need to take effective action by testifying at public hearings, writing letters and emails, and submitting useful information for the study.

Please join us by signing up at:

www.earthworksaction.org/issues/detail/susquehanna_river_basin_commission