

12/12/2008 STATEMENT BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
DAMASCUS CITIZENS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

[\[www.DamascusCitizens.org\]](http://www.DamascusCitizens.org)

We thank Councilman **James Gennaro** for his call to BAN gas drilling by “hydraulic-fracturing” within the New York City Watershed. This morning we will present details about the Pittsburgh metropolitan area’s drinking water systems - and outline a series of events that must not be allowed to occur in the Watershed Region. Our Watershed is a treasured asset -- as it provides drinking water to over 25 million people -- including the 8-million citizens of New York City.

Water is our most precious commodity - but the nation’s water supply is now threatened. An example of this is a recent contact we received from Pittsburgh residents to tell us that the **Pittsburgh Water Authority** had issued an emergency warning -- that due to gas drilling related practices - their drinking water supply is unsafe and residents should use bottled water until further notice.

#### TIME LINE

Earlier this spring Damascus Citizens for Sustainability began to communicate with grass-roots groups across America. We were told that drilling activity had begun in Hickory, PA -- and there were many citizens there who were describing the same problems being experienced by people in other states where “hydraulic-fracturing” was taking place. We sent a video team to Hickory, PA to collect first-hand testimonials -- these video testimonials have been seen by over 13,000 viewers online at [[www.YouTube.com/GasDrillingTruth](http://www.YouTube.com/GasDrillingTruth)]. Three of these testimonials state clearly that the drilling wastewater was being taken from Hickory, PA to northern West Virginia.

At that time, shortly before leaving her position as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection [PA-DEP], **Kathleen McGinty** issued an executive order prohibiting Pennsylvania sewage treatment facilities from accepting wastewater from sites where “hydraulic-fracturing” was being performed. As a result, most of the industry wastewater from Hickory and other locations within Pennsylvania, was transported to sewage treatment plants along the Monongahela River in West Virginia. This practice provided a steady income source -- and most facilities began taking up to 20% or more of their total processing capacity from drilling companies operating in Pennsylvania.

On October 31, 2008 *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that “the state received reports of high levels of contaminants in a 70-mile stretch of the Monongahela River - which flows north from West Virginia towards Pennsylvania. Since 350,000 people get their drinking water from this part of the Monongahela, the PA-DEP called for the use of bottled water for customers of 11 public water suppliers in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area -- particularly those whose tap water smelled foul and tasted bad.”

The cause of the alarm was TDS -- “total dissolved solids.” In early October, the Army Corps of Engineers began a release of additional river water through dams to dilute the TDS levels. But we ask -- what was the cause of the sudden and dangerous rise in levels of “total dissolved solids”? Answer: the sewage treatment plants were unable to process the fracturing fluids without causing a rise in TDS because gas drilling wastewater contains toxic chemicals, biocides, and heavy metals that municipal treatment plants CAN NOT PROCESS out.

Now the ever-increasing flow of drilling wastewater is being trucked to points further south and west -- since the PA-DEP has now ordered all treatment facilities along the Monongahela River to no longer accept drilling wastewater. Since no records are required to track what happens to this wastewater, it is not clear how it is being disposed. Drillers are creating millions of gallons more wastewater than existing treatment plants are able to process.

Additionally, *WTAE-TV* Pittsburgh presented a comprehensive investigative report about how drillers are also taking massive amounts of water from rivers, streams, and reservoirs. For instance, water haulers are at the Monongahela River so frequently they sometimes leave their hoses behind at the water's edge. And a hose -- attached to a diesel pump -- takes water from the river continuously. The hose runs up the bank and into tanker trucks. It also splits off into tanker trucks standing in a line. In fact, nine tanker trucks each holding 180,000 gallons fill up 24/7. For some Marcellus Shale gas wells, these trucks will come back and refill with water 40 times causing a substantially reduced river flow which also contributes to the problem by causing the percentage of contaminants to be higher in the remaining water flow.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The above outline only describes what occurred at "the back-end" of the gas drilling process by "hydraulic-fracturing". **John Hanger**, PA-DEP Acting Secretary recently stated that "Each drilling operation in the Marcellus Shale will require substantial volumes of water, much more than conventional drilling operations. They need more water because they have to drill much deeper, sometimes a mile-and-a-half deep, and they use hydraulics to fracture the Marcellus Shale and release the natural gas trapped beneath it." Each well can require as much as 6 million gallons of water mixed with up to 10,000 gallons of "proprietary" toxic chemicals.

But the wastewater being trucked away -- is just that water which "returns to the surface." At least 30% of the drilling wastewater remains in the ground -- sometimes 100% remains in the ground [even industry says this in their data]. Former NYC-DEP Commissioner, **Al Appleton** says that "over time this highly toxic wastewater will find its way into the aquifers and find its way to the surface through "spring-fed water migration."

Overwhelming evidence and much science now exists to prove that the type of gas drilling proposed for the watershed region - **made possible by total federal deregulation** - causes contaminated drinking water, and carcinogens in the farmland and food chain. Experts have calculated that over 10,000 gas wells are allowed by existing laws -- and will be drilled in the Upper Delaware Watershed, which includes all of the New York City Watershed System.

**Thus we urgently request the New York City Council pass a resolution calling for a BAN on gas drilling by "hydraulic-fracturing" within the New York City Watershed.**

## **PUBLISHED NEWS REPORTS:**

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08356/936646-113.stm>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08305/924213-35.stm>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08297/922152-113.stm>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08327/929978-113.stm>

## **WTAE-TV 6-MINUTE. -- FULL-SCREEN VIDEO:**

<http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com/video/17976058/index.html>