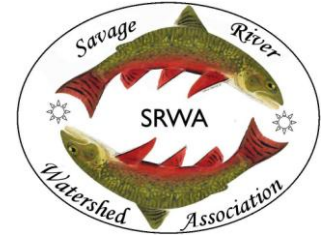


*Savage River Watershed
Association, Inc.*
PO Box 355, Frostburg, MD 21532
301-689-7156



January 20, 2011

Garrett County Board of Commissioners
203 South Fourth Street
Oakland, MD 21550

Dear Commissioners Crawford, Gatto and Raley,

At a time when states and nations are finding themselves fighting over access to clean water and facing water shortages, it is unthinkable that Garrett County would take any unnecessary risks with this precious natural resource, which is so basic to the survival of our citizens and environment. When government scientists are calling for more research before Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling proceeds, why would Garrett County embrace this industry so readily and risk the health of our people and our environment?

According to David Bolton, a hydrologist with the MD Geological Survey, there is currently little data on aquifer hydraulic properties or stream flow in Garrett County, and both of these will be needed in order to make any type of intelligent assessment of the long-term sustainability of the water resource. In addition there has also been no systematic study of groundwater quality in our county. It's obvious that we need to know more about the quality and quantity of our wells, streams and springs before drilling begins. But who will pay for this county-wide assessment? Who will pay the estimated \$700 cost for each water quality test for wells, streams and lakes that fall outside of the MD Department of Environment regulated gas well buffer? Critical tests that must be performed before drilling begins, in order to establish baseline data, and repeated both during and after drilling has occurred, to establish any cause-effect relationship.

Daniel Soeder, a geologist with the US Department of Energy, is currently collecting rigorous data on the potential impacts of shale gas drilling and production on water resources, air quality, and ecosystems. According to Soeder, sources of drilling-related environmental impacts may include air emissions, land use changes, habitat fragmentation, ecological degradation, solids disposal, and possible contamination of surface streams and groundwater from improper disposal of produced water or flow-back fluids. Soeder also has plans to study the potential direct effects of hydraulic fracturing on groundwater aquifers and the chemistry of leachate from shale drill cuttings. Results from this research is expected to help industry develop and improve drilling management practices, as well as identify sensitive environmental indicators for more focused regulatory monitoring. Isn't it well-worth waiting for the outcome of such research if it translates into better safeguards for Garrett County's water resources and the health of our citizens and environment?

The December 2010 *Report on Implications of Marcellus Shale Gas Drilling on Conserved Land* by the MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR) concludes, "At this point in time, sufficient information is not available and broader environmental questions are still sufficiently unresolved to determine whether drilling for and the production of natural gas in the Marcellus Shale can be made compatible with the natural resources and conservation values that conservation easements are designed to preserve". If more time is needed to determine the potential impacts to natural resources from Marcellus Shale gas extraction on conserved lands, why wouldn't more time be needed to ensure adequate protection for the natural resources on all lands in Garrett County?

The Savage River Watershed Association (SRWA) respects private property rights and does not begrudge individuals profiting from natural gas leases. Unfortunately, the many problems associated with Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction do not respect property boundaries. Whether one has signed a lease or not, our entire community and environment will be forced to bare the brunt of potential impacts. Why take such risks when the likelihood of negative impacts could be significantly reduced through additional research*, proper planning, well-developed safeguards, and stringent regulations?

As Maryland's premier brook trout fishery, the Savage River has been identified as a conservation priority by MD DNR because it is one of the few watersheds that still contain intact populations of native brook trout in Maryland. SRWA asks that you take every action needed to ensure that this needed energy doesn't come at the price of the clean water and natural resources in our watershed, or elsewhere in Garrett County. As such SRWA respectfully asks that you:

- Request a County and State moratorium on Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction until that time that scientifically-based safeguards and regulations are in place to protect Garrett County's surface and ground waters for its people and environment.
- Request a prohibition on Marcellus Shale gas drilling and/or associated infra-structure on or beneath MD State Forests and other public lands in Garrett County.

Please feel free to us, if you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter or our request.

Respectfully,
SRWA Board of Directors

* Suggested parameters to monitor per Daniel Soeder, US Department of Energy, from his Power Point presentation "Research and Environmental Studies on the Marcellus Shale", given at FSU on Jan 6, 2011 (see attachment).

Cc: Senator George Edwards
Delegate Wendell Beitzel
Governor Martin O'Malley
Secretary John Griffin, DNR
Acting Secretary Robert Summers, MDE

*Board Members: Kenny Braitman, Annie Bristow, Mike Dean, John Fritts,
Ed Gates, Carol McDaniel, Liz McDowell, Rich Raesly, Matt Sell, Tom Wolfe*

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*SRWA is a group of local landowners and other citizens dedicated to preserving and enhancing the rural nature and natural resources of the Savage River watershed by assisting interested landowners and public land managers with environmental stewardship efforts and educational outreach.*

**Suggested parameters to monitor per Daniel Soeder, US Department of Energy,  
from his presentation "Research and Environmental Studies on the Marcellus Shale"  
at Frostburg State University on January 6, 2011**

| <b>Category</b> | <b>Parameters to Monitor</b>                                 | <b>before</b> | <b>during</b> | <b>after</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Air             | Measure methane, CO2, dust, fumes, ozone                     | x             | x             | x            |
| Drilling        | Impacts of noise and lights on wildlife                      |               | x             |              |
| Drilling        | Monitor wildlife use of drilling ponds as a water source     |               | x             | x            |
| Drilling        | Collect fluid and gas samples during drilling                |               | x             |              |
| Drilling        | Seismic monitoring of hydrofrac                              |               | x             |              |
| Drilling        | Assess integrity of well and casing                          |               | x             | x            |
| Ecology         | Assessment of land and aquatic species assemblage            | x             |               | x            |
| Ecology         | Invasive species assessment                                  | x             |               | x            |
| Ecology         | Rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) species                 | x             |               | x            |
| Habitat         | Effects of cleared pad on habitat/edge effects               | x             | x             | x            |
| Habitat         | Resettlement of area afterward; succession                   |               | x             | x            |
| Landscape       | Monitor sediment, erosion and topography changes             | x             | x             | x            |
| Site char       | Land use, geology, topography, hydrogeologic setting, etc.   | x             |               |              |
| Social          | Property values, land access, timber, farming, etc           | x             |               | x            |
| Soil            | Road/pad impacts on soil compaction, infiltration, etc.      | x             |               | x            |
| Water           | Establish surface water flow monitoring network              | x             | x             | x            |
| Water           | Establish groundwater monitoring network: existing/new wells | x             | x             | x            |
| Water           | Establish water quality monitoring sites                     | x             | x             | x            |