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Savage River Watershed Association

**Marcellus Shale Follow-up # 18
March 1, 2013**

Emergency Action Alert from CitizenShale

Western Maryland residents should email the Garrett and Allegany County Commissioners ASAP asking them to either: **Support HB 1274 – Maryland Hydraulic Fracturing Moratorium & Right to Know Act of 2013** - OR - Take No Position and Not Testify on HB 1274.

Why is there an "action alert"? Both the Garrett and Allegany County Commissioners testified in OPPOSITION to Senate Bill 601 this past Tuesday in Annapolis. Next week's House Bill 1274, also establishes a moratorium on permitting for natural gas development. The hearing on HB 1274 will be held this coming Friday, March 8, before the House Environmental Matters Committee.

1. The Garrett County Commissioners have discontinued the local Marcellus Shale Advisory Committee, the only local public body specifically appointed to examine Marcellus issues.

2. As stated in "The [Garrett County] Republican Newspaper" editorial in the Feb 28 issue:

"A poll was conducted recently, the results of which are in this issue, asking Maryland voters if they believe the General Assembly should require safety and environmental studies before hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking, can begin in the state. Turns out that 78% of Maryland voters feel that way. Since the fracking would occur primarily in just Garrett and Allegany counties, it seems that the feeling of those who reside in those counties should carry more weight than the opinion of those who reside, say, in Montgomery County.

Well, lo and behold, the percentage among western Maryland responders was almost the same – 76% of them believe the fracking studies should indeed be conducted before any drilling is permitted.

Maryland Senate Bill 601, now being debated, would place a formal moratorium on fracking, prohibiting the issuance of any drilling permits in the state by the Maryland Department of the Environment until specified conditions are met to guarantee, as much as possible, that fracking will not harm the environment. That seems to be a highly prudent, intelligent mandate, especially given the environmental track record of this industry in neighboring states and the potential of contamination that could cripple our relatively pristine, tourism-based county for decades.

SB 601 does not ban fracking forever, nor will the industry be absolutely, 100% safe, with all risk removed. Just like other similar industries, such as coal mining, accidents can and do occur. But this legislation would require that every possible avenue for making the relatively new practice as safe as possible is pursued before giving the okay to begin drilling.

Despite the intelligence behind this measure, and despite the results of the aforementioned poll, both the Garrett and Allegany county commissioners testified in opposition to SB 601 this past week. The Garrett County Chamber of Commerce is likewise advocating opposition to the bill, despite the fact that one of its own committees passed a motion recommending that the chamber board support it."

[visit www.therepublicannews.com for full editorial]

Both Boards of Commissioners must hear that there is opposition to their obstruction to HB 1274. No later than 5:00 PM SUNDAY, March 3, send an email to the Commissioners asking them to either SUPPORT HB 1274 - or - TAKE NO POSITION AND NOT TESTIFY AT THE HEARING.

What your e-mail should say:

Subject: Marcellus Legislation, HB 1274

Dear Commissioner:

As a resident and concerned citizen of Western Maryland, I request that you either: 1. Support HB 1274 - Maryland Hydraulic Fracturing Moratorium and Right to Know Act of 2013 - OR - 1. Take no position on this bill and do not testify at the bill hearing. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your name and address

Cut, paste and email the above letter to your county commissioners:

Garrett County

bgatto@garrettcountry.org

g Crawford@garrettcountry.org

jraley@garrettcountry.org

Allegany County

Commissioner.McKay@alconet.org

Commissioner.Brodie@alconet.org

Commissioner.Valentine@alconet.org

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**Savage River Watershed Association, Inc.**

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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.*

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

*SRWA is a 501c3 non-profit charitable organization. Please consider joining or making a donation.  
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