

TESTIMONY OF JOHN GORMAN
On behalf of SLUDGE FREE UMBT, INC.
(Upper Mount Bethel Township, Northampton County)
Before the Delaware River Basin Commission
January 25, 2018

My name is John Gorman. I am here on behalf of Sludge Free UMBT, a non-profit organization based in Upper Mount Bethel Township in Northeast Pennsylvania -- an area where residents depend on well water from the Delaware River Basin.

Extracting water from the Basin will dramatically lower the water table for the entire region. I make this claim based on recent evidence produced for an environmental lawsuit¹ we were involved in. Specifically, developers seeking to turn a 150 acre farm into a golf course, drilled 4 test wells to analyze the interconnectedness with drinking water wells of adjacent homeowners. Test wells were run for a 24 hour period removing 351,000 gallons of water. As a result, adjacent wells went down by as much as 2 feet!

Now let's do the math: It takes an average of 4.4 million gallons of water to drill 1 gas well. Multiply that by the estimated 3 to 5 thousand new fracking wells to be drilled each year in Pennsylvania for the next 30 years and you get the total amount of freshwater needed -- 528 billion gallons². Even if only 10 percent of the water needed comes from the Basin, the industry will consume 4.8 million gallons of fresh water a day³ -- every day for the next 30 years! So, if removing 351,000 gallons of water for 1 day from the 150 acre Upper Mount Bethel farm caused neighboring wells to drop by 2 feet, what impact will removing 4.8 million gallons a day have on underground sources of drinking water? Not only will rural communities be affected but so will downstream urban residents who rely on the Delaware River for their water supply.

"Environmental impact cannot be avoided," says oil and gas industry insider, Thomas Alexander.⁴ But, just how big is the environmental impact? According to PADEP records, the number of fracking well encasements that have failed is over 6 percent. Meanwhile, a Cornell Study forecasts an even higher number: 4 in 10 frack wells will fail

¹ Sludge Free UMBT, et al, v. PA DEP and Synagro Midatlantic, Inc., EHB Docket No. 2014-015-L.

² 4,000 gas wells per year x 30 years = 120,000 wells x 4.4 mil gals of water = 528 billion gallons.

³ 528 billion x 10% = 52.8 billion divided by 30 yrs = 1.76 billion divided by 365 days = 4,821,917 gals of water per day

⁴ www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/gas-exploration-company-defends-hydro-fracking-1.996151

in Northeastern Pennsylvania.⁵ Leaking frack wells introduce toxic chemicals into the 528 billion gallon aquifer. As I speak, unknown quantities of chemicals are now migrating underground. A contaminated aquifer can never be cleaned.

The current administration has aligned itself with the fossil fuel industry. Who is your loyalty to? President Trump and the oil and gas corporations? Or the residents of your state who voted for you? All of us can live without fracking in the Basin. None of us can live without water. To protect the water supply of 17 million people, your vote cannot ignore these numbers.

Thank you.

⁵Assessment and Risk Analysis of Casing and Cement Impairment in Oil and Gas Wells in Pennsylvania, 2000-2012, Anthony R. Ingraffea, et al, published in the journal proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.