



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contacts:

Katie Stanley

President, Big Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

katrinaestanley@hotmail.com

724-869-6166

Gail Murray, Communities First Sewickley Valley,

communities1sewickleyvalley@gmail.com, 412-508-4663

Allegheny and Beaver Residents Fight Plans to Pollute Big Sewickley Creek

PennEnergy Water Withdrawal for Fracking Will Harm Fishing, Wildlife

SEWICKLEY – Big Sewickley Creek Watershed Association (BSCWA) has filed a petition with more than 200 signatures with the Pa. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) asking that the agency deny a second request by PennEnergy Resources to withdraw millions of gallons of water from Big Sewickley Creek and one of its tributaries for a fracking operation.

Rep. Robert Matzie, D-16th, also added an objection with a letter to DEP secretary Patrick McDonnell this month asking that the agency deny the withdrawal from the trout-stocked stream. Rep. Matzie first voiced his opposition back in July 2021, noting that "nothing contained in the new application changes that – fishing will still be impacted, wildlife species will still be threatened and summer drought conditions will still be exacerbated."

The DEP denied the energy company's first application in October 2021 to withdraw more than 3 million gallons of water a day from Big Sewickley Creek and its tributaries

for fracking operations due to technical application deficiencies. The DEP and the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission also expressed concern at the time that withdrawing the water could permanently harm the local habitat, aquatic habitat and the threatened Southern Red-Belly Dace.

That is also the concern of members of BSCWA and local residents, many of whom believe that the application would also threaten trout fishing, a favorite local pastime.

Many residents sent hand-written letters to the DEP asking for denial of the second application by PennEnergy. The millions of gallons of fresh water taken from the Big Sewickley Creek will be exposed to toxic chemicals used for fracking. When the water eventually returns to the creek/surface, it will likely include additional contaminants like salts, heavy metals, and possibly, radioactivity, the group says.

It is very unlikely this fracking wastewater will be reclaimed as potable water. It remains unclear how this wastewater will be used, stored or disposed of, the group says.

The creek's watershed runs through Ambridge Borough, Bell Acres Borough, Bradford Woods Borough, Cranberry Township, Economy Borough, Franklin Park Borough, Harmony Township, Leetsdale Borough, Marshall Township, New Sewickley Township and Sewickley Hills Borough.

"As a kid my family and friends enjoyed many days swimming, fishing and playing in both the North Fork and Big Sewickley creeks, said John Sipes, Economy Borough resident. "This will ruin this precious resource used by many Pennsylvanians."

BSCWA prefers that that the DEP direct Penn Energy to take the water from the Ohio River without catastrophic disruption to a watershed like Big Sewickley Creek.

NOTE TO MEDIA: Bob Schmetzer, avid trout fisherman, and BSCWA president Katie Stanley are available for on-camera interviews.