

*August 20, 2013*

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO ALLEGHENY COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

Dear Elected Representatives,

We, the undersigned organizations and/or individuals are informing you of our opposition to the leasing of Allegheny County Public Parks for shale gas extraction, commonly known as "fracking".

As you may know, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald has been meeting privately with Range Resources, one of the major fracking corporations, with the plan to lease the mineral rights to one of Allegheny County's public treasures, Deer Lakes Park. Mr. Fitzgerald has also repeatedly made it clear that he is open to leasing other public parks as well for private gain by gas companies.

During the past year the taxpaying residents, your constituents, of Allegheny County have seen our airport's mineral rights leased for shale fracking. It is commonly acknowledged from some of you that this lease was not shown to you before Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald forced a vote on the lease. In fact, some of you voted against the lease making it clear that the process was flawed and that Council members should have been given time to fully review the lease contract before voting.

Our public parks are some of the main attractions that bring prestige and attention to Allegheny County. Hundreds of thousands of residents have, for generations, been able to enjoy our tax-supported public parks that are largely free of air, water, and soil pollution.

It has become quite obvious, in published reports and studies from all parts of this nation, that fracking causes air and water pollution whether the fracking well is in a public park or located on land adjacent to public parks.

It sends a very bad message to our children and potential residents who are considering locating homes and businesses in Allegheny County if we let private corporations exploit and possibly despoil the public's land.

As our elected Allegheny County Council representatives, we are sure that you will act on your duty to carefully examine all contracts brought before council and to demand that such contracts be examined fully and that

public hearings be held before any leases are signed. We are certain that each of you is aware of your primary responsibility to your constituents, and we expect that each of you will collectively and democratically determine policies regarding fracking of our public lands. And, as our representatives, we are also certain that you, like us, treasure and wish to preserve our public parks.

Please do not give away our public parks as they belong to us and future generations, and NOT to private corporations.

Sincerely,

Allegheny Defense Project  
Clean Air Council  
Clean Water Action  
Group Against Smog and Pollution  
Jefferson Hills Marcellus Group  
Marcellus Outreach Butler  
Marcellus Protest  
Michael Bett, Ben Avon Council Member  
Mon Valley Unemployed Committee  
Mountain Watershed Association  
Neville Island Good Neighbor Committee  
PennEnvironment  
ShadBush Environmental Justice Collective  
Sierra Club Allegheny Group  
South Hills Area Against Dangerous Drilling  
Steel Valley Printers, Inc.  
Thomas Merton Center  
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23