

Resolution Concerning Horizontal Fracturing in the George Washington National Forest

WHEREAS, the George Washington National Forest is located in the Potomac River Watershed and plays a vital role in protecting downstream water quality; and

WHEREAS, the Potomac River is the sole raw water source for water treated by the Washington Aqueduct Division of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, serving approximately 1 million residents of Arlington County, the District of Columbia, the City of Falls Church and a portion of Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, Arlington County purchases its water from the Washington Aqueduct and distributes it to the over 210,000 residents that live in Arlington and hundreds of thousands of others who work and play in our community on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, the Potomac River flows to the Chesapeake Bay, a vital estuary for which Arlington continues to invest substantial sums to protect from pollution; and

WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service is currently in the process of updating its George Washington National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, which will direct natural resource management for the forest for the next 10 to 15 years, including the possibility of mining the Marcellus Shale by horizontal hydraulic fracturing; and

WHEREAS, horizontal fracturing is currently exempted from many of the requirements of the federal laws that protect our nation's water supply, such as the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act; and

WHEREAS, at the request of the United States Congress, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is conducting a research study on the potential impact of hydraulic fracturing for oil and natural gas on drinking water resources; and

WHEREAS, numerous other stakeholders have expressed their concerns with horizontal fracturing in the George Washington National Forest, including the EPA, the National Park Service, and many of the localities in our region that depend upon the Potomac River for their water supply; and

WHEREAS, the August 2011 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the George Washington National Forest, developed by the United States Forest Service, states "concern about the development of gas resources in the Marcellus shale formation led to Plan direction that horizontal drilling would not be allowed on any federal leases. This restriction is based on concerns about the impacts of extensive hydraulic fracturing associated with horizontal drilling on water quality, the unknown potential for developing the Marcellus shale formation on the George Washington National Forest, and the limited experience with horizontal drilling in the immediate vicinity of the GWNF."

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD:

1. **Expresses our concern about the potential impact of horizontal fracturing in the George Washington National Forest on the Potomac River Watershed, and therefore the quality of Arlington County's water supply, and;**
2. **Supports the United States Forest Service's proposal, contained in the George Washington National Forest Draft Forest Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, to prohibit the use of horizontal fracturing in the George Washington National Forest.**