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**FRONT LINE GROUPS REACT TO COAST GUARD
DECISION TO DEREGULATE FRACKING WASTE
SHIPMENTS ON NATION'S WATERWAYS**

On February 22, front line community groups throughout the Ohio River valley received notification that the U.S. Coast Guard has determined that no new rules are needed to barge shipments of toxic, radioactive hydraulic fracturing waste. The Coast Guard instead decided to proceed using 40-year-old regulations that fail to address unconventional oil field waste from hydraulic fracturing. Fracking wastes contain such toxic chemicals as benzene and are laced with radioactive materials like water soluble radium-226, which is linked to leukemia and bone cancers. The Coast Guard will instead allow shipment of waste fluids from hydraulic fracturing to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The proposal being considered by the Coast Guard would have required new rules and guidelines to transport highly flammable, explosive hazardous waste on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to currently undisclosed locations.

Members of frontline organizations living along the Ohio River in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois have been voicing opposition concerns for several years about the Coast Guard allowing barges carrying 5 million gallons of liquid fracking wastes each to sail without procedures in place to address the hazards.

“We cannot allow the shipment of toxic, radioactive fracking waste fluid on our nation’s drinking water sources. The risk to public health and safety is too high,” said Teresa Mills of the Buckeye Forest Council, based in Athens, Ohio. “It is not safe even on a case-by-case basis as is now being proposed by the Coast Guard. This is not the waste stream from your 60 year old mom and pop wells. The industry will not tell us what is in this waste, and that is just plain wrong.” Organizer Leatra Harper from Fresh Water Accountability Project of Grand Rapids, Ohio expressed “dismay and disbelief that the coast Guard would enable the unnecessary risk of floating toxic and radioactive frack waste on the Ohio River. This is purely to enhance corporate profits and is another way the fracking industry has found to cut

costs at public risk.” She continued, “Even more suspect and reprehensible is that any test results obtained by the Coast Guard for hazardous chemicals and water-soluble radium in these shipments will not be shared with the public. Once again with fracking and its waste, the public is not allowed to know to what toxins and in what amounts they are being exposed.”

“As a resident of the lower Ohio River Valley, and as a staff member for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, I am appalled that the Coast Guard would disregard nearly 70,000 comments from citizens and experts who opposed the plan to bring potential catastrophe associated with the barging of toxic and radioactive frack waste on our river,” observed Robin Blakeman. “The city of Huntington, of which I am a resident, is entirely dependent for its tap water from the Ohio River. Our water company is not prepared for such pollutants as may come from frack waste barges. There are numerous water systems along the river's course that are similarly at risk if major leaks, explosions, or spills occur in the process of loading, unloading and shipping these barges. This is definitely not the same kind of waste as has been shipped for 4 decades from more conventional gas drilling operations. It seems the Coast Guard has abdicated their responsibility for regulation and oversight of highly toxic substances with this decision.”

“Some groups have voiced concern about the lack of expertise and current federal loopholes pertaining to the hydraulic fracturing industry which eliminate the ‘Right to Know’ and chemical disclosure and fail to protect workers and citizens downstream.” commented Tabitha Tripp, Chair of Heartwood from Indiana. “The lack of oversight and regulation of shipments containing radioactive hydraulic fracturing waste should be a concern to all those living downstream of barge operations who will be handling this industrial waste.”

Terry Lodge, a Toledo attorney for the Fresh Water Accountability Project, was blunt, “This is disastrous. The Coast Guard proposes to regulate shipment by shipment, and they will do no such thing. They have very limited scientific staff, the lab testing of cargoes will not become Coast Guard records (if they do testing at all), and the information will remain the proprietary property of the shipper. The Coast Guard backed down and accepted an alternate means of classifying the shipments based on an oil and gas waste cargo definition that was implemented decades before horizontal hydraulic fracking was invented.”

“The public fought the Coast Guard’s proposed blanket approval of the barging of toxic and radioactive frack waste on the nation’s rivers, resulting in a withdrawal of the policy. But the struggle to keep this hazardous waste out of our water and off our waterways is far from

over because the Coast Guard will now consider individual applications, making it very difficult to stop and essential that the fight continues,” said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

The groups urge citizens to contact their State and Federal elected representatives to demand that our rivers and drinking water are protected from being exposed to hazardous and toxic waste from hydraulic fracturing.