Dear Friend,

As you know, our rivers and streams define Virginia—from the historic Jamestown settlement along the banks of the James River to the important role clean water plays in our modern local and regional economies. Clean water is important and a truly critical component of a thriving Virginia. For that reason, we must ensure that the oil and gas industry is protective of our water resources.

**Urge the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy to strengthen oil and gas regulations for fracking!**

For the last year, DMME has been considering improvements to Virginia’s oil and gas regulations. The time has come for them to pass these improvements. The agency is taking comments until December 4—**submit your comment today**.

These new rules require disclosure of fracking fluids, expanded baseline groundwater testing and improvements to well safety standards. We still have a long way to go before our water resources are fully protected…but these new rules are a good step in the right direction. **Submit your comment today.**

Additionally DMME is holding two public hearing to accept comment on the rules. Please consider attending one of these.

 *November 2, 2015*

 *2:00 pm*

 *University of Mary Washington, Dahlgren Campus*

 *4224 University Drive, King George, VA 22485*

 *November 3, 2015*

 *2:00 pm*

 *Virginia State Capitol, House Room 3*

 *1000 Bank Street, Richmond, VA 23219*

Thank you for all that you do to protect Virginia’s environment!

Sincerely,

P.S. You can read the full text of DMME’s proposed rules [here](http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/ViewStage.cfm?stageid=7185).

http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/ViewStage.cfm?stageid=7185

Attention: Mike Skiffington, Regulatory Coordinator, DMME

(mike.skiffington@dmme.virginia.gov)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy’s proposed oil and gas regulations. Drilling for oil and gas in the Commonwealth has a significant impact on local communities, public health and the environment—it is critical that our state regulations keep up with current energy technology. **I urge you to finalize and implement the draft regulations that are before you; they are a good step in the right direction.** Disclosure of fracking fluids, baseline groundwater testing, technical standards for well integrity, recognition of local authority and other improvements are beneficial additions to the current DMME regulations.

However we must go further to manage the negative impacts of modern fracking that have been witnessed in neighboring states. I urge you to:

1. **DMME should maintain a distinct and separate disclosure registry.**

Disclosure of fluids used in oil and gas production and the public’s access to this information is essential. The Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy should not rely solely on an external industry-sponsored website for public disclosure. DMME should maintain its own chemical registry that provides thorough and clear information to the public. I urge you to include previous draft language in the final regulations Part B of 4VAC25-150-365: “The Department shall obtain and maintain data submitted to the Chemical Disclosure Registry.”

1. **Reduce water consumption.**

Large water withdrawals for high-volume hydraulic fracturing can deplete water supplies for drinking, irrigation and other uses. On average, a single Marcellus shale frack job in Pennsylvania requires 4.2 million gallons of water. Stress on Virginia’s Potomac Aquifer is well known and oil and gas operations regulated by DMME should not increase the stress on this vital resource. DMME should require disclosure of proposed water sources and quantities for drilling in permit applications; standards and procedures for mandatory recycling and reuse of wastewater should be created; and DEQ approval should be required for all ground and surface water withdrawals associated with drilling operations.

1. **Eliminate the use of wastewater pits.**

Wastewater pit failures and overflows are a significant source of groundwater and surface water contamination risk for drilling operations. 25% of all environmental violations documented at Marcellus Shale wells in Pennsylvania during 2010 stemmed from pit and storage problems. I urge DMME to eliminate the routine use of wastewater pits in Virginia for flowback and produced wastewater and require that all wastewater be managed in a closed loop system.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to seeing the draft regulations finalized and future improvements for public safety and the environment implemented.

Thank you,

(name, address)