



Property Owners' Association of Deep Creek Lake, Inc.

PO Box 816 McHenry, MD 21541

October 9, 2014

Garrett County Board of Commissioners
Bob Gatto, Chairman
Gregan Crawford
Jim Raley

203 South Fourth Street
Courthouse, Room 207
Oakland, MD 21550

Dear Chairman Gatto,

After considerable research and discussion, the Property Owners' Association of Deep Creek Lake, Inc. (POA) has decided to oppose shale gas recovery operations within the Deep Creek Watershed. Accordingly, the POA respectfully requests that the Board of County Commissioners amend the Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance to prohibit vertical drilling and associated surface infrastructure within the watershed.

Our position is motivated by the following concerns:

- Preserving the watershed's rural character, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and the resulting quality of life in the face of significant "industrialization" (e.g., noise, odor, traffic congestion, "viewshed" impact).
- Sustaining water resources and drinking water quality in the face of significant scientific uncertainty and controversy about the risk mitigation effectiveness of state-proposed "best management practices".
- Protecting property values against the perception as well as the reality of potential risk/adverse impact on the above treasured attributes of the current watershed.

The recommended watershed zoning amendment would implement the principal means for mitigating the noted risks/impacts: increased geographic separation.

We understand that our recommended action raises the question of what impact this might have on the ability of the County to fully realize the projected economic benefits of shale gas recovery. We've done some analysis of the implied constraint on shale gas recovery, noting that prohibiting vertical drilling within the watershed does not preclude deep horizontal "laterals" below the surface (e.g., a nominal 8,000 ft. "reach"). Simply stated, the estimated decrease in shale gas recovery within the County would be ~3%.

This yields, for instance, a decline in projected County severance tax revenues which is very modest compared to possible declines in watershed property values and the derivative negative impact on County property tax revenues.

The points made above are further elaborated in the accompanying position paper, including some quantification of local economic impacts.

We recognize that our position is consistent with a position taken earlier by the Garrett County Board of Realtors and with a provision recently adopted by the Steering Committee in the Deep Creek Watershed Management Plan. We are adding our voice and conveying our rationale, including a specific consideration of economic impacts on the broader County.

We look forward to further discussions with County officials and staff on this important matter, including sharing our thoughts and analyses in more detail. Thank you very much for your serious consideration of our position and request.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Hoffmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Hoffmann
President

Attachment
POA Position Paper, October 9, 2014, 4pp.

cc
Monty Pagenhardt, County Administrator
Mike Koch, Executive Director, Community Planning and Development
Deborah Carpenter, Asst. Dir., Community Planning and Development,
Office of Planning and Land Management