PRESS RELEASE

We, the members of N.B. Water First, are shocked and alarmed to discover that 17 unconventional gas wells, many of them active and being fracked, are built on the floodplain of the Kennebecasis River in Penobsquis.

Despite international efforts by industry to prevent gas wells leaking their contents into the surrounding soil, water and air, well leakages due to sustained casing pressure are common, occurring at a rate of over 5% in the first year, and increasing with age to a leakage rate of 50% after 15 years. Once, sometimes twice a year the gas well sites in Penobsquis are covered with flood water which then returns to the Kennebecasis River. Further, the gas well casings in Penobsquis are even more likely to discharge their contents as the surrounding earth is sliding laterally and sinking due to mining subsidence in the area.*

According to Dr. Anthony Ingraffea, Rock Mechanics Specialist at Cornell University, nowhere else in North America are gas wells built on floodplains. At a public presentation delivered in Hampton on December 1, 2011, he stated that this was a "no brainer". The new recommendations proposed by the oil and gas group also prohibit such sites for the construction of gas wells.

The problem for New Brunswickers and those living in the Kennebecasis Valley is that these wells are already here. We fish, swim, grow food and farm in the valley. Most of our fresh drinking water comes from wells dependent on the Kennebecasis watershed and its subsurface hydrology*. There are many geologic fault lines throughout this valley.** The Kennebecasis Fault runs almost the full distance of the river and at places underneath the river with depths of from 6 to 30 km. The many faults are possible passageways for the toxic frack liquid and methane to enter our freshwater system and threaten our communities' water supplies. There has been no thorough or consistent underground hydraulic water mapping of the valley.*

Because of the above, we, N.B. Water First, demand that:

- The N.B. government decommission these 17 wells since they present a clear and present danger.
- The N.B. government monitor these well sites on a monthly basis for leakage of methane gas and toxic frack chemicals.
- The Kennebecasis River water immediately downriver from these 17 well sites be monitored monthly for methane and toxic frack chemicals.
- The results of the above testing be made public to reassure Valley residents of the safety of their environment.

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* From Mud to Cement-Building Gas Wells. Schlumberger Oilfield Review, Autumn 2003. Brufatto et al. http://www.sib.com/resources/publications/industry_articles/oilfield_review/2003/or2003auto6_gas_wells.aspx

** From Aquifer Vulnerability Project: Part A – Summary Report. Royal District Planning Commission. May, 2012
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