Dear Inspector General Elkins, Jr.:

We, the undersigned organizations and public stakeholders, call on you to investigate the Environmental Protection Agency for its withdrawal of legal action against Range Resources in a case of apparent water contamination from hydraulic fracturing and/or drilling near Fort Worth, Texas. We understand that you are currently conducting an investigation of this incident at the request of six U.S. Senators. We want to ensure that your investigation encompasses issues that have recently come to light that raise questions about EPA’s commitment to protecting the public from oil and natural gas drilling pollution.

As a Jan. 16, 2013 Associated Press report details,¹ the EPA had scientific evidence that Range Resources had polluted local residents’ well water while drilling for natural gas in 2010. The EPA's evidence led the agency to issue a rare emergency order in late 2010 declaring that the families were in immediate danger. EPA identified contaminants in the families’ water, including benzene, and found that "extremely high levels of methane in [the] water pose an imminent and substantial risk of explosion or fire."² The EPA filed suit against Range Resources on Jan. 18, 2011 and commissioned an analysis by independent scientist Geoffrey Thyne, which showed that the contamination could have originated in Range Resources’ drilling operation.

Despite the compelling evidence suggesting that Range Resources contaminated the water, the EPA rescinded the emergency order and ceased all legal action on March 29, 2012, soon after Range Resources protested. Documents obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request by Washington, DC-based EnergyWire³ show that the EPA was pressured to drop the case by Ed Rendell, former Pennsylvania governor and former head of the Democratic National Committee. The EPA issued only a short, two-sentence explanation for its sudden reversal:

“Resolving the lawsuits with Range allows EPA to shift the Agency's focus in this particular case away from litigation and toward a joint effort on the science and safety of energy extraction. EPA and Range will share scientific data and conduct further well monitoring in the area, and Range will also provide useful

---

information and access to EPA in support of EPA's scientific inquiry into the potential impacts of energy extraction on drinking water.”

The EPA made no mention of Thyne’s independent analysis even as the agency came under attack by the drilling industry for its apparent “rush to judgment.”

Far from allaying concerns, the EPA’s explanation for its reversal makes it appear that the agency is abdicating its legal obligation to protect the health and environment of all Americans. The EPA has refused to offer any explanation beyond those two sentences, further leaving us to question what the EPA is hiding and whether the agency is fulfilling its commitment.

Another scientist, Robert B. Jackson of Duke University, recently studied Thyne's report and raw data and concluded that the gas in the homeowners’ water could have come from the formation in which Range was drilling. As the Associated Press reported, Jackson believes the EPA's withdrawal of its emergency order was "premature" and that the EPA "dropped the ball in dropping their investigation."

We call on you to investigate this matter in a thorough and comprehensive manner to determine the propriety or impropriety of the EPA's actions. Among the questions that must be addressed:

- Did the EPA have a scientific basis for withdrawing its emergency order and rescinding its legal action against Range Resources?
- Did the EPA improperly yield to pressure from the gas industry or other sources, including former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, in withdrawing its legal action against Range Resources?
- Why did the EPA make no mention of Geoffrey Thyne’s independent scientific analysis in the face of drilling industry criticism of EPA’s scientific integrity?
- Was the public denied access to information that could be useful for preventing negative impacts associated with hydraulic fracturing and natural gas drilling?
- Did the EPA hide evidence of pollution and contamination from hydraulic fracturing and drilling operations that is important to scientific inquiry and public debate?

Thank you for your swift attention to this important matter. Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can provide any additional information. Feel free to contact Dusty Horwitt at Environmental Working Group at 202-939-9133 or Alan Septoff at Earthworks at 202-887-1872 x105.

Sincerely,

---

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Center for Biological Diversity
Kassie Siegel

Earthworks
Alan Septoff

Environmental Working Group
Dusty Horwitt

Food and Water Watch
Wenonah Hauter

Greenpeace
Carolyn Auwaerter

Josh Fox, Director, GASLAND

Public Citizen

CALIFORNIA
California Coastal Protection Network
Susan Jordan

Californians for Western Wilderness
Mike J. Painter

Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community
Paul V. Ferrazzi

Greenhorns
Severine von Tscharner

COLORADO
Be The Change – USA
Wes Wilson

EcoFlight
Bruce Gordon

San Juan Citizens Alliance
Dan Randolph

MARYLAND
Citizen Shale
Eric Robinson
Talbot River Protection Association
Christine Sweeney

NEW JERSEY
Communication Workers of America Local 1081
David Weiner

Genesis Farm
Miriam MacGillis

GreenFaith
Paul Kaufman

Pascack Sustainability Group
Rosemary Dreger Carey

NEW MEXICO
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
Douglas Meiklejohn

NEW YORK
Andes Works!
William Feldman

Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy
Jill Wiener

Catskill Mountainkeeper
Wes Gillingham

Chenango Community Action for Renewable Energy
Erin Heaton

Citizens Energy and Economics Council of Delaware County (CEEC)
Joan Tubridy

Citizens For Water
Joe Levine

Church Women United of New York State
Mary Smith

ClimateMama
Harriet Shugarman
Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition
Suzannah Glidden

Damascus Citizens for Sustainability
Barbara Arrindell

Fleased
Ellen Z. Harrison

Frack Action
John Armstrong

Frack Free Genesee
Cindy Carestio

Gas Free Seneca
Yvonne Taylor

Grassroots Environmental Education
Patti Wood

Middlefield Neighbors
Kelly Branigan

New Yorkers Against Fracking

New York Residents Against Drilling (NYRAD)
Benjamin Perkus

NYH2O
Buck Moorhead

Otsego Neighbors
Julie Huntsman

People Advocating Use of Sustainable Energy (PAUSE)
Marie Terlizzi

Plymouth Friends of Clean Water
Peter Hudiburg

Responsible Associated Landowners of New York State
William Feldman

Riverkeeper
Paul Galley
R-CAUSE (Rochesterians Concerned About Unsafe Shale-gas Extraction)
Anna Sears, Nedra Harvey

Rochester Defense Against Fracking (RDAF)
Toby Stover

Sanford/Oquaga Ara Concerned Citizens (S-OACC)
Gail Musante

Stewart Park and Reserve Coalition (SPARC)
Sandra Kissam

The Friends of Sustainable Sidney
Albert Crudo

The Center for Sustainable Rural Communities
Robert Nied

The Session of First Presbyterian Church, Cooperstown
Elsie Rhodes

Vestal Residents for Safe Energy
Sue Rapp

Westchester for Change
Susan Van Dolsen

Western New York Drilling Defense
Rita Yelda

NORTH CAROLINA
Clean Water for NC
Hope Taylor

OHIO
Athens County Fracking Action Network
Heather Cantino

Buckeye Forest Council
Nathan Johnson

Concerned Citizens Ohio
Gwen B. Fischer
Fresh Water Accountability Project
Gregory Pace

People’s Oil & Gas Collaborative – Ohio
Kari Matsko

Ohio Citizen Action
Paul Ryder

Ohio & Stark County Concerned Citizens
Chris Borello

Southeast Ohio Fracking Interest Group (SEOFIG)
Betsy Cook

**PENNSYLVANIA**
Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
Sr. Miriam Eileen Murray, OSF

Berks Gas Truth
Karen Feridun

Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Maya van Rossum

Lehigh Valley Gas Truth
Julie Ann Edgar

Marcellus Outreach Butler
Michael Bagdes-Canning

Marcellus Protest
Terri Supowitz

Mountain Watershed Association
Beverly Braverman

Nature Abounds
Melinda Hughes

Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
Cricket Eccleston Hunter

Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group
Maria Payan
Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air
Jenny Lisak

Protecting Our Waters
Iris Marie Bloom

Residents Against the Power Plant (RAPP)
Cathy Lodge

Rush for Clean Water
Mary Ann Williams

Residents for a Great South Fayette
Deron Gabriel, Esq.

Sustainable Monroeville
Elisa Beck

Tour de Frack
Jason Bell

Upper Burrell Citizens Against Marcellus Pollution
Debbie Borowiec

Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens Group
Janice Milburn

TEXAS
Denton OFF Fossil Fuels
Rebekah Hinojosa

Fort Worth Citizens Against Neighborhood Drilling Ordinance
Don Young

West Texas Accountability Project, Lubbock Chapter
Leann Lamb-Vines

WEST VIRGINIA
Doddridge County Watershed Association
Christina Woods

Guardians of the West Fork River
S. Thomas Bond

Morgan County Frackban
John C. Webster
West Virginia Citizen Action Group
Julie Archer

WYOMING
Upper Green River Alliance
Linda Baker