

Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) Hearing – Pennsylvania State Legislature  
June 26, 2017  
Shrewsbury, PA

#### Status of consumptive users in the Golf Industry

Stories of hardships continue to come forward since more light is being shed on the consumptive user issue. Superintendents, owners and hydrogeologists are operating under duress in their attempts for approvals. In the last two weeks, I have received numerous letters and emails from those grateful for these hearings, but refusing to participate for fear of retribution. One hydrogeologist stated that his clients were treated like criminals and that some SRBC staff struggle with enforcing regulations that are so harsh. What other organization requires payment in full up front and then takes more than a year to review? What has happened in the last 20 years that so many professionals are reluctant to step forward? Nothing, other than our costs and requirements have multiplied. There is no storage built into the basin or protection for consumptive users. The only tangible evidence of progress is SRBC headquarters with a nice view of the river.

We are victims of abiding by the law (if what they are doing even has any legal merit). Their SOP is absent of any due process. Most of us have enough Notices of Violation (NOV) to wallpaper our offices. The certified letters always include the threat of “civil penalties”. No other organization compares to this. If you move my facility 75 miles east to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), the cost for a 10 year docket to be reapproved is \$1,600 vs \$23,600. Consumptive use is \$.08/m vs \$.33/m. Annual monitoring fee is \$300 vs \$1,150. DRBC also has no evaporation calculation. They have no aquifer testing on previously permitted wells vs a 72-hour test or \$5,100 waiver. Annual cost of operating, DRBC is \$1,270 vs SRBC is \$6,023. I could understand this if DRBC were a relatively new commission, but they were founded 10 years before SRBC. They are the only other organization in Pennsylvania similar to SRBC, yet they pale in comparison.

We are left with a self-governing commission who answers no one, operates under a false narrative about storage and water quality, have an unprecedented operating procedure and fee schedule with plaintiffs who are too scared to testify. We are left with nowhere to turn. If we converted our properties to sod farms or corn fields we would not need dockets. Our municipalities zone us as agricultural, yet the commission says we are not. There is no effort made to help our facilities stay in business, which thus far the commission has profited from. We are caught between the threats of operating out of compliance or paying the fees. The larger consumptive users consider this the cost of doing business. I would argue that the commission has exchanged its moral compass for a monetary one. Article 1 Section 1.3-2 of the Compact states: *The water resources of the basin are subject to the sovereign rights and responsibilities of the signatory parties, and it is the purpose of this compact to provide for a joint exercise of these powers of sovereignty in the common interest of the people of the region.* We are the people of the region and until now nobody listened.