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NEW PARTNERSHIP TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THREATS TO CLEAN WATER, CLEAN AIR AND COMMUNITIES BY STATE LAWMAKERS

Campaign will initially focus on fracking, three state lawmakers

RALEIGH (March 20, 2014) – State, regional and national environmental groups today announced a new partnership designed to raise public awareness about threats by lawmakers in Raleigh to North Carolina’s basic environmental safeguards.

The North Carolina Environmental Partnership is a coalition that includes the nonprofit, nonpartisan environmental groups Southern Environmental Law Center and the Natural Resources Defense Council, with the support of local environmental and citizens groups throughout North Carolina.

“Our goal is simple: To make sure the public knows about legislation and policies that threaten North Carolina’s water, air and quality of life - and to make sure they know which lawmakers are responsible for these assaults on our basic environmental safeguards,” said Mary Maclean Asbill, senior attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) in Chapel Hill.

“When legislators vote to threaten North Carolina’s drinking water, we’re going to make sure folks back home know about it,” Asbill said. **“We’re holding legislators accountable so they’ll have to look people in the eye and explain why they voted against clean water.”**

The new partnership’s campaign will initially focus on fracking, the dangerous process of injecting chemicals and water into the ground to extract oil and gas. Fracking can poison drinking water, and the chemicals used in fracking are known to cause cancer.

In the 2012 legislative session, lawmakers voted to open the state to fracking. The 2013 session brought attempts by the NC Senate to issue fracking permits before environmental and human health safeguards are in place, and to allow the injection of toxic fracking wastewater on our coast. Earlier this year, the legislature’s hand-picked Mining and Energy Commission voted for

a rule that would allow oil and gas companies to keep secret the chemicals they pump into our ground.

Today, the North Carolina Environmental Partnership is launching a major advertising campaign designed to show North Carolinians how reckless fracking has poisoned clean water and air and devastated communities in other states. The ads will run on every major television station and on cable channels in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and Fayetteville; and will be augmented by direct mail and other public outreach.

In the first round of ads, North Carolinians also will learn about three key lawmakers behind the push for fracking: Sen. Chad Barefoot (Raleigh); Sen. Wesley Meredith (Fayetteville); Sen. Ronald Rabin (Harnett County). These legislators also represent areas of NC that could be impacted by fracking.

“We are focusing on fracking initially because it is one of the biggest looming threats to North Carolina’s clean water, clean air and quality of life,” said Luis Martinez, senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in Asheville. “But it’s certainly not the only threat to our environment coming from Raleigh these days.

“North Carolinians have the right to know whenever our basic environmental safeguards are being threatened – and they have the right to know the lawmakers who are behind these threats,” Martinez said. “This isn’t about politics. This is about protecting our state’s clean water, clean air and communities.”

Asbill said: "If the public knew what was happening, we think they would want their legislators to change their position on dangerous fracking in our state."

For more information, and to view the ads, see:
www.NorthCarolinaEnvironmentalPartnership.org.

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The Southern Environmental Law Center is a regional nonprofit using the power of the law to protect the health and environment of the Southeast (Virginia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama). Founded in 1986, SELC's team of nearly 60 legal and policy experts represent more than 100 partner groups on issues of climate change and energy, air and water quality, forests, the coast and wetlands, transportation, and land use. www.SouthernEnvironment.org

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 1.4 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. In addition to its Asheville, N.C. office, NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter [@NRDC](https://twitter.com/NRDC).