

[by Smita Bharti · 2,240 supporters](#)

[Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors: Deny Toll Brothers development plan](#)

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Petition update

Water Authority member asks activists to compile scientific objection report.



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May 25, 2015 — This is a long update, but please read it through. Over the next couple of weeks, we need community-minded scientists to help us make an even stronger "Deny the Toll Brothers Plan" case to area officials.

First off, the petition now has 1,961 signatures.

Turnout at the two key meetings last week was excellent: standing room only at both.

About 150 citizens packed the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors meeting on Monday, May 18, making and/or loudly supporting several excellent public comments urging the Board to deny the Toll Brothers/Penn State application. Pam Steckler submitted the handwritten petition with more than 400 signatures, and Peter Buckland submitted the online petition package: more than 60 pages with more than 1,800 signatures (at the time) and more than 500 individual comments. Video is on C-Net.

<http://cnet1.org/video/ShowByMember/7/>

More than 70 citizens packed the room at the State College Borough Water Authority meeting on Thursday, May 21, again arguing eloquently for the water authority to publicly urge the Ferguson supervisors to deny the Toll Brothers/Penn State plan and protect our regional public drinking water supply.

This pressure is pushing the public conversation in the right direction.

It now looks as though the final Ferguson Township review and vote on the plan has been postponed from the original deadline - Monday, June 1 - to sometime in August. Activists and officials in neighboring municipalities have not yet received an official public notice - I'll pass it along if and when Ferguson Township issues a notice.

But it seems likely your signatures have contributed to a delay that will give activists and officials alike more time to reconsider the Toll Brothers/Penn State project and marshal even more momentum and evidence to help the Ferguson supervisors firmly and confidently vote to protect our public drinking water when the time comes.

Thanks to the pressure, the water authority is now setting up a joint work session with the Ferguson Township supervisors, specifically to discuss the Toll Brothers/Penn State plan. The work session is not yet scheduled but I'll send out that info as soon as we find out the details.

Citizens will not be permitted to speak at the work session, but SCBWA board member Gary Petersen has asked citizens to prepare a report more fully explaining our scientific objections to the Toll Brothers plan. We're currently putting together a small team to write this report and we need your help.

There is a lot of scientific evidence to support denial of this specific development plan, and implementation of strong regional source water protection policies.

There are a lot of extremely intelligent professional scientists in the State College/Penn State area able to contribute to a report. Many of them have signed this petition, or engaged in the campaign in other ways.

We now need to collect clear, data-supported scientific arguments that support the citizen campaign from as broad a range of scientists as possible, including (but not limited to) hydrogeologists, environmental engineers, forest ecologists, riparian biologists, geochemists, watershed conservationists, toxicologists, and water treatment engineers.

We would also like to submit information from energy researchers; for example, the energy demands and financial costs of natural water filtration provided by our currently intact recharge ecosystem as compared to the energy and financial costs that would be required to support artificial water filtration provided by new treatment plants if the natural recharge ecosystem is damaged or destroyed.

You do not have to sign your submitted scientific comments; we can include them anonymously as long as the science is clear, sound and data-supported: original data and/or references to data published in peer-reviewed journals.

Please send scientific comments to me at katherine_watt@hotmail.com and I'll make sure they get into the final report to the water authority.

Although preparation of the scientific report to the water authority will be among the top priorities for the core activist team for the next few weeks, we have many other investigative and advocacy tasks ahead of us that would benefit from more hands on deck over the summer. We're putting together a list, and will send that out via this update list, the Steady State College website and the Facebook page as soon as possible.

Again, thank you for your strong and ongoing support for this water protection campaign.