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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

From: Kristy Warren [kfw.warren@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2010 12:49 PM
To: EP, RegComments
Subject: Stricter Regulations for Natural Gas Drilling, Hydraulic Fracturing, and Water/Air Protection Acts

Good afternoon,

I am writing to request stricter regulations on natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale. Currently, the U.S. Department of Energy reports that zero states surveyed regarding natural gas drilling require the volume of fluid left underground after fracturing be recorded. With wildlife, community health, and the environment on the line, I call for this measurement to be required, along with requiring all states to have regulations specific to hydraulic fracturing, detailed regulations guiding the process of hydraulic fracturing, and that all fracturing chemicals be disclosed as opposed to being labeled "proprietary elements." I also call for the cleaner methods of gas drilling that have been overlooked, are used intermittently at best, and are not mandated by states.

Energy companies have figured out how to drill wells with fewer toxic chemicals, enclose wastewater so it can't contaminate streams and groundwater, and sharply curb emissions from everything from truck traffic to leaky gas well valves. Some of their techniques also make good business sense because they boost productivity and ultimately save the industry money -- \$10,000 per well in some cases. Yet these environmental safeguards are used only intermittently in the 32 states where natural gas is drilled.

The devastating environmental effects of hydrofracking are already being laid bare for the us to see in states already experiencing extensive drilling such as New York and Texas. With potential cancer clusters already being identified in other states and at least one law suit regarding adrenal cancer linked to property adjacent to a gas drilling well, the human health risks are as real as the 161 species killed as a result of the contaminated streams and rivers caused by the drilling. Pennsylvania officials are investigating yet another natural gas well leak in Lycoming County, the county adjacent to my own, and methane related to the natural gas industry has contaminated water wells in at least seven Pennsylvania counties since 2004.

The open chemical pits will expose our communities to radium, mercury, and benzene--exposure to the last of which has been linked powerfully to leukemia. Environmental regulators are spread too far and thin to handle the massive amount of drilling sites, and with companies already in violation of towing/weight limits, drilling without proper credentials and permissions, it is clear that the gas companies have little regard for the law. Perhaps that should come as no surprise when a loophole in the 2005 energy bill grants them exemption from the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, the Natural Resource Recovery Act and other federal regulations.

I find this exemption to be outrageous and unacceptable. As our elected preservationists, the DEP must call on legislators to overturn this exemption, and force both the oil and natural gas companies to be responsible to the responsible and respectable usage of our land. The loop hole was clearly created because the current standards of practice could not possibly continue if reporting to these Acts.

How can our Department for Environmental Protection or U.S. Dept. of Energy claim to do their jobs if they do not take a stand against something that sacrifices the well being of the environment in the name of money? Greed always has a way of swaying people, and in a hurry to earn an extra buck in this difficult time, the gas company was able to coerce people into signing lease contracts before they investigated the dangers. The gas company claims it can return the land to where it was before, but the deep drilling and sideways drilling has been proven to have disastrous, long-lasting effects that damage water sheds, wells, and water tables. Our biggest regional resources are being put at risk in the name of economic growth, when in actuality, the environment IS our economy, and if we do not protect it, there will be no one left to enjoy whatever short-term profitable gain was to be had.

I now live in fear that what was once praised as a rural paradise of clean air and water will become a living hell in which my family and myself will have to fear increased risks of cancer, well contamination, permanent property damage due to run off, remaining fracking liquid underground, and disturbed soil and ground water tables, the eyesores and health hazards of open chemical pits and torches burning off the excess gas, and the vile, repugnant, and dangerous hydrofracking fluid.

I beg you, not only for Pennsylvania's sake, but for the entire country's, as the gas drilling continues to mount, put a stop to the dangerous methods of drilling and the environmental and health hazards that are guaranteed to follow.

Kristy Warren