

3042

Cooper, Kathy

From: RegComments@pa.gov
Sent: Saturday, March 08, 2014 4:18 PM
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 environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net
Cc: ra-epmsdevelopment@pa.gov
Subject: Proposed Rulemaking - Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites

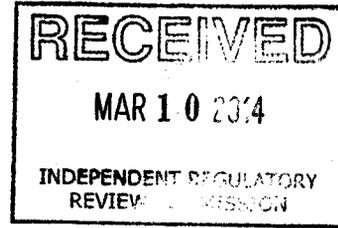


Re: Proposed Rulemaking - Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) has received the following comments regarding the above-referenced proposed rulemaking.

Commentor Information:

Barbara Jarmoska
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 766 Butternut Grove Road
 Montoursville, PA 17754 US



Comments entered:

Testimony presented to EQB in Williamsport PA on January 13, 2014

My name is Barbara Jarmoska. I live at 766 Butternut Grove in Montoursville, an address representing 20 acres of rural land in northern Lycoming County.

Within a 10 mile radius of my unleased land, my best estimate is that there are now over 30 gas wells, with more to come. It no longer feels like a safe place to live. In reading over the details of these proposed Chapter 78 regulations, I do not feel any less vulnerable.

I have a Master's Degree in Special Education and 30 years of daily study and experience in the field of human health.

In both molecular biology and pharmacology, "small molecule" is the term used for a molecule with a low molecular weight, 10 to the minus 9th. At this size, minute beyond what you can imagine, a substance is able to activate a receptor site on a human cell membrane, and in so doing - alter gene expression, which can then signal the cell to die, multiply, or mutate. Thus, the central dogma of receptor pharmacology is that the effect of any substance is directly proportional to the number of receptors occupied, and the smaller the molecule, the greater the capacity to occupy and affect receptor sites. On the membranes of your cells, toxins wreak havoc and dilution DOES NOT count. Less is truly more.

It is my understanding of these principles of orthomolecular biology that cause my fear and

trepidation when reading the proposed Chapter 78 regulations, for there is an inherent flaw that can be found throughout: the classification and therefore the regulation of potentially highly toxic material as "residual waste".

The meaning of residual is: that which is left over. Kind of like the meatloaf in your refrigerator; it's what remains after the main event. Residual waste is an enormous challenge to the gas industry, and one they will do everything in their power to minimize. The industry would like permission to dispose of this waste in the most inexpensive, unregulated, and unobserved way possible. And therein lies my worst fears.

Section 78.62 outlines the conditions under which waste, that when generated by other industries IS classified as toxic, can be left behind at the site for perpetuity, as long as operators follow very minimal requirements.

I propose that NO residual waste should ever be stored in pits or permitted to remain behind when the well site is abandoned.

Section 78.65 says that within 60 days after the restoration of the well site, the operator will provide DEP with a description of the method used for disposal or reuse of the waste, including the name of the hauler and disposal facility, if any. We know for a fact that much of this waste is unaccounted for, there being no laws in place to require such an accounting. We know for example, that residual waste was spread on cornfields in Muncy, PA, only because those drivers were caught. I have personally witnessed 5 tank trucks, each labeled residual waste, leaking from the rear valve as they drove down my road, creating a black line in the middle of the lane, in all likelihood spreading small molecules of their toxic contents to nearby lawns, streams and playgrounds. I propose a closely regulated CRADLE TO GRAVE CHAIN OF CUSTODY for every gallon of residual waste generated. No exceptions.

Section 78.70 would authorize the road-spreading of brine from conventional wells for dust control on dirt and gravel roads. How very convenient for the industry. Not only are there no chain of custody requirements here, but the risks of spreading this produced brine on roads so far outweigh the benefits that this permissibility is ludicrous, except of course, to the gas industry's bottom line in the disposal cost column. I propose: No brine should be spread on any road -ever. No exceptions.

To date, the gas industry has been caught violating existing regulations 4,685 times. We all know the operative word there is "caught". I do not believe the current fines levied are by any means an adequate deterrent, nor begin to cover the real cost of human suffering and ecological damage that these thousands of violations represent.

Chapter 78 regulations must be further tightened, loopholes closed, the nebulous and over used term "practicable" defined in enforceable, legal terms, bonds and fines increased.

After pouring over these proposed rules for hours, this is my conclusion: We remain at risk. The regulations do not go far enough to offer real protection from harm and potential disaster. Oversight is inadequate. The gas industry is given far too much leverage in both reporting and self-regulation.

The latter can be summarized like this:
Dear Farmer Brown,
Your chickens are fine.
Trust us to let you know if that changes.
Sincerely yours,

The Fox

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Hayley Book

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