

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

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**From:** RegComments@pa.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 21, 2015 3:03 PM  
**To:** Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; apankake@pasen.gov; IRRC;  
RegComments@pa.gov; erekop@pahousegop.com;  
environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; gvitali@pahouse.net  
**Cc:** ra-epmsdevelopment@pa.gov  
**Subject:** Comment notice for - Advanced Notice of Final Rulemaking - Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites (7-484)



**Re: Advanced Notice of Final Rulemaking - Environmental Protection Performance Standards at Oil and Gas Well Sites (7-484)**

**The following comments have been received regarding the above-referenced advanced notice of final rulemaking.**

Commentator Information:

Rita McConnell  
(brsam.rm2@gmail.com)

, PA US

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Comments entered:

May 19, 2015

Dear Madame or Sir:

I am greatly concerned about the impact the new regulations you are drafting for oil and gas will have on the many Pennsylvania families who rely on this industry for pay checks.

There are more than 9 million people employed by the oil and gas industry and related fields in the United States. More than a quarter of a million of those are in Pennsylvania.

According to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics, Pennsylvania experienced an increase of 259.3 percent in oil and gas annual employment between 2007 and 2012. For many of us in Pennsylvania who rely on the oil and gas industry, this amazing growth allowed us to weather poor economic conditions and keep others in the Commonwealth from experiencing the worst consequences of recession.

Around 2007, as my husband and I were just starting our family, we, like many other Americans, were hit with the reality of the subprime mortgage disaster. At the same time, shale gas drilling was taking off in Pennsylvania. We were both blessed to find work in this industry; my husband's environmental engineering employer was gaining new clients and I was hired as a community outreach consultant to a drilling firm that had moved into the area. The stable employment and generous salaries not only saved us from foreclosure, it allowed us to reduce

our debt, provide more for our children and move closer to family.

Since that time, my husband has taken work directly in an energy company, which has given me the opportunity to be home with our two daughters as they progress through elementary school and to be actively involved in their development. We have also been blessed to have oil and gas leases for drilling and pipelines on the two properties we own. When we needed to downsize from the large ranch we lived on, it was an oil and gas company that was able to purchase the real estate at a fair price when few others could.

Knowing many others working in oil and gas, I know my family is not the only one that has escaped the consequences of the recession thanks to the development of shale drilling in Pennsylvania. I also know that the benefits go way beyond those working on rigs and in leasing land. Among other businesses I personally know to have benefitted from oil and gas growth : car dealerships, hardware stores, real estate agencies, advertising and public relations firms, law practices, construction outfits, logging services, rental agencies, housing providers, travel/tourism services, conference centers, information technology providers, catering outlets, security services, pipe manufacturers, heavy equipment operators, engineering contractors, environmental scientists, laboratories, surveyors, community colleges, and technical schools, food services, and many others.

We live in an active drilling area, and have visited many others across the Commonwealth. We see farmers who are not only able to keep their land thanks to the royalties they receive from wells on their property, but upgrade their practices and equipment. We see new businesses and industry sectors emerging, like water treatment operations, and see an industry constantly looking for new ways to do things better and safer. Manufacturing is rebounding in the region and consumers are seeing lower energy prices.

Additionally, I have seen firsthand how oil and gas interests open their check books and hearts to the community. When food banks were hurting for donations a few years ago, it was oil and gas companies and their employees who stepped up to supply them. Today, oil and gas money benefits everyone in the region, with millions of dollars in donations to health care, education, recreation, veterans and charities for the less fortunate.

Through my own work in oil and gas, I also learned that energy companies are shrewd when it comes to business. They must be able to make their work - which requires great investment - profitable. There is simply too much proposed regulation in the current Chapter 78 draft that is not backed by the reality of fieldwork, or by any sound science. Some of it is included only to placate opponents of drilling/fracing with specific personal complaints. A number of the "problems" the draft is designed to abate have been completely debunked. For instance, even with thousands of wells now drilled in Pennsylvania, not one case of water contamination from fracing has been confirmed - even by DEP itself. Some of the provisions in the Chapter 78 draft regulations have even been declared unconstitutional by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court!

Oil and gas drilling in Pennsylvania offers the Commonwealth decades of economic opportunity and prosperity. In addition to providing jobs, the use of shale gas in place of other fuels, especially for power generation, has already been shown to lower emissions and improve air quality. But just as drilling and fracing companies must operate responsibly, so must we treat them fairly to keep them working in our state. It is not fair to those of us who rely on oil and gas for our livelihoods for the Commonwealth to treat this one industry differently than other industrial operations, and overreact to its perceived impacts. Do not take our jobs and income through over-regulation. Please streamline these proposed regulations to keep oil and gas interests here in Pennsylvania.

Most sincerely,

Rita M. McConnell  
Citizen of Pennsylvania

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No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Patrick McDonnell

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