



A Marcellus gas well flares in the distance. photo credit: google images

Greetings!

Thanks to all of you that came out to the DEP hearing on proposed new rulemaking this past Monday. Although outnumbered by industry representatives, those with valid concerns about the potential risks and harms of gas drilling managed to make a solid case in favor of stronger regulations. Our feature story this week highlights testimony from both sides of the playing field and includes links to a handful of comments submitted to DEP.

"In Other News" links up to some breaking news describing PA water well contamination; and opportunities for your participation are provided in the "Action Points" section.

There is also still time to submit a comment regarding DEP's proposed rulemaking. See our feature article for more details.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Brooke Woodside
Managing Editor

Visit our website at: www.rdapa.org

Headlines proclaim drilling chemicals

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In Other News

Fracking Chemicals Detected in Pennsylvania Drinking Water

An analysis of drinking water sampled from three homes in Bradford County, Pa., revealed traces of a compound commonly found in Marcellus Shale drilling fluids, according to a recent study.

The paper, published in the Proceedings of the National

found in drinking water as debate over new DEP regulations continues

by Barb Jarmoska, RDA Board of Directors

On Monday, May 4th, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) conducted a hearing on the proposed rulemaking for oil and gas operations in Pennsylvania. About 80 people gathered at the Klump Academic Center in Williamsport for the 3-hour hearing where 33 presented oral testimony.

The conflict-ridden debate on the topic of oil and gas drilling regulations was certainly in evidence; a clash of values the obvious dividing line. On one side, concern for the future of the planet, the air, soil, water and all life forms that comprise the ecosystem. On the other side - warnings that the economic opportunity provided by oil and gas would be lost due to costly regulations.

If anyone was keeping "score" at this third and final hearing - it was 19/14 among those who testified; money trumped sustainability.

Several RDA Board and Working Group members worked for many hours studying the 168 page final rulemaking proposal for oil and gas operations in order to offer valid and important comments within DEP's established framework of acceptability for such comments. In spite of RDA's position that no new unconventional wells should be drilled until such time as the industry can show that the technology is safe, we also understand the absolute necessity of participation in the regulatory process. RDA's comments therefore followed DEP guidelines and were very specific to those sections of the new regulations that we either agree with or wish to see strengthened.



The panel listens to individual testimony. photo credit: Richard Karp

RDA did not have access to the full testimony of the paid industry representatives and other pro-gas folks who spoke at the hearing, but we can offer you a few quotes:

Dale Howard, gas industry employee from McKean County, *"DEP should burn these new regulations and return to Act 223, also known as the Oil and Gas Act of 1984."*

Rich Adams, Environmental Health and Safety Director for Chief, *"In the past, DEP has had great success with more general regulations than what is being proposed."*

Mark Fisher, pipeline surveyor from Lancaster PA, *"Hundreds of thousands of jobs are on the line. Our loss would be the middle east's gain."*

Matt Henderson from Montoursville, *"These regulations are strangled opportunities. You (DEP) have endangered my children's future."*

Tom Gillespie, Director of Health and Safety for Inflection Energy, *"PA's economic*

Academy of Sciences, addresses a longstanding question about potential risks to underground drinking water from the drilling technique known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. The authors suggest a chain of events by which the drilling chemical ended up in a homeowner's water supply.

[Click here for the full article as printed in the NY Times.](#)

Tell DEP: It's time to deal with fracking waste pits

Subject: Chapter 78: Protect communities from fracking waste

Fracking waste pits are a blight on our communities and our environment. They leak toxic chemicals into our water and poison our air.

PennEnvironment has prepared a petition to DEP to show them that we support the proposal to end on-site drilling waste pits, factor schools into the permitting process of fracking sites, and require companies to restore contaminated drinking water sources.

[Click here to sign the petition by PennEnvironment](#)

Respect Our Voices on Oil and Gas Oversight

If the Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association (PIOGA) had their way, PA shalefield residents and public interest groups would **"have no place"** on oil and gas oversight bodies.

Tell PA Governor Tom Wolf and DEP Secretary John Quigley that shalefield residents and public interest groups should be front and center in overseeing the oil and gas industries.

[Click here to sign this petition prepared for you by the Clean Air Council.](#)

Ban Fracking on Public Lands

revolution is in jeopardy...natural gas is the life blood of current and future society."

Tammy Donnis, President of the Montrose Chamber of Commerce, *"No new regulations are needed. PA needs less competition."*

Timothy Erikson, subcontractor for the gas industry, *"The combustion of methane will contribute more water to the hydrologic cycle than fracking uses."*

John Augustine, Marcellus Shale Coalition, *"The proposed regulations create a competitive disadvantage...don't set our economy backwards."*

Paul Hart, owner of waste-water treatment company in Indiana PA, *"The low price of gas must be factored into the new regulations."*

John Stewart, conventional driller from Warren, PA, *"The restoration performance standards for conventional hillside drilling must be relaxed. Those sites are impossible to restore."*

Others present at the hearing, both those who offered testimony and those who spoke via their applause, were looking through a scope far beyond the often wildly exaggerated job creation and other "economic benefits" touted by the industry. RDA was among them.

For the past 6 years, we have been actively engaged in seeking the truth about the true costs and potential consequences of unconventional gas drilling. We know beyond a doubt that gas industry operations pose a threat to our air, water, soil, ecological systems, and health - and that this threat is impossible to remove from the equation. There has been much research documenting the potential harms and risks posed by the industry. Just this week, newspapers across PA ran front page headlines of a story on drinking well water contamination by drilling chemicals. [Click here to read all about it.](#)

The potential damages and harm created by the gas industry must be minimized. On that premise, RDA presented both oral and written comments in support of some much-needed new regulations, as well as recommendations to tighten the requirements in crucial areas. I delivered a shortened version of these comments Monday night and the following is the current draft of what RDA plans to submit before the May 19th deadline. We welcome your feedback and suggestions before RDA's final submission is made. [Click here to read the current draft of RDA's comments to DEP.](#) [And click here to send us your input.](#)

"In section (d)(2) RDA supports the restoration and replacement of drinking water quality to pre-pollution standards. Given the fact that the industry continually tells us that gas drilling does not pollute water, and many of our elected officials echo that claim, publicly stating in campaign rhetoric that no drinking water supplies have been contaminated by drilling.

Since we are told this doesn't happen, this regulation should not be burdensome to the industry, nor should they have just cause to push back against its inclusion in the proposed rulemaking. It is a simple, common-sense regulation. If you ruin it, you replace or restore it."
-excerpt from [RDA's draft comments](#)

We also provide you with the testimony of several other folks who attended the hearing. Click on each individual's name to read what [Bob Deering](#) and [Dan Alters](#) had to say to DEP. [Click here for the C.O.G.E.N.T. \(Connection for Oil, Gas & the Environment in the Northern Tier\) website and link to Emily Kraffack's testimony.](#)

"Overall I strongly support more stringent regulation of the oil and gas industry and urge these regulations, strengthened in keeping with the above comments, be adopted as soon as possible. I trust that the current administration will provide DEP with the staff and other resources needed

U.S. Representative Mark Pocan re-introduced the bill to ban fracking on public lands (Earth Day - 4/22/15).

Fracking has already caused serious damage to our public lands, particularly in the areas that serve to buffer America's most precious national parks and monuments. By the end of 2014, oil and gas companies had leases on over 34 million acres of public land, and over 200 million more acres are currently being targeted for drilling.

[Click here to sign Food & Water Watch's petition.](#)

Support Clean Energy in Pennsylvania

Today, under the EPA's Clean Power Plan to limit carbon pollution from power plants, Pennsylvania has an unprecedented opportunity to transition away from dirty fossil fuels and towards a cleaner, healthier future based on renewable energy and energy efficiency. By developing a strong plan to comply with the Clean Power Plan, Pennsylvania can save thousands of lives while creating jobs, lowering electric bills, and preventing the worst effects of climate change.

Tell Governor Wolf to protect the health and future of all Pennsylvanians by developing a plan that promotes zero-emitting renewable energy and energy efficiency.

[Click here to sign the petition created by the Clean Air Council.](#)

Prioritize Renewable Energy, Not Natural Gas

Right now, the EPA is finalizing limits on global warming emissions from power plants, the largest source of these emissions in the United States. The EPA's Clean Power Plan is our best opportunity to curb the growing consequences of climate change and accelerate the growth of clean energy—but it's not strong enough. The draft plan relies

to fully and timely implement these regulations.”
-excerpt from [Dan Alters' testimony](#)



Bob Deering testifies before the audience. photo credit: Richard Karp

"More consideration is given for gas drilling jobs (mostly out of area people), and special interest money than the environment you folks were put in place to protect. Where is the relaxing atmosphere for future generations in our area? This was the reason I personally enjoyed coming here and moved here years ago prior to any gas drilling. We have no daily quality of life left in our area."

-excerpt from [Bob Deering's testimony](#)

Written comments will be accepted by DEP through May 19th. We encourage all of you to make note of those areas of greatest concern to you and submit written comments to DEP at this link:

<http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/RegComments/Agreement.aspx>.

The future of Pennsylvania is at stake. Make your voice heard.

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heavily on a still from coal to natural gas and underestimates the power of renewable energy, such as wind and solar, to help cut power plant carbon emissions.

New analysis from the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) underscores the costly and complex risks of over-relying on natural gas for electricity and the economic and environmental benefits of more renewable energy and energy efficiency. [Click here to read their full report.](#)

Natural gas is still a fossil fuel and dramatically expanding its use poses risks to the climate and our economy. A smarter path forward is to take greater advantage of cost-effective renewable energy.

[Click here to sign this petition to the EPA prepared by UCS.](#)

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We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special events, publicity, research and other projects.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RDA relies on donations for the important work we do. In order for RDA to continue its valuable education and advocacy outreach in 2015, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

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Please note: The RDA newsletter includes reporting on a variety of events and activities, which do not necessarily reflect the philosophy of the organization. RDA practices only non-violent action in voicing the organization's beliefs and concerns.

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