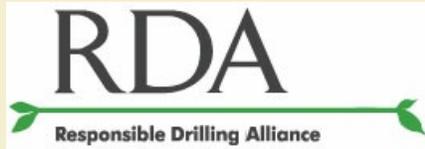


Protecting Communities and Special Places

e-Newsletter September 6, 2013



"Shale plays are not a revolution but, rather, a retirement party as the world exhausts its oil and gas resources."

~ Arthur E. Berman

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Keep It Wild Hike

September 22
10:00 a.m.

Bob Webber Trail
Wolf Run Wild Area
Tiadaghton State Forest
Route 414,
Cammal, PA 17723

[Look here for more
information](#)



www.keepitwildrda.org

This article was written by Ted Stroter, RDA Board of Directors and chemical advisor, in response to the September issue of The Chamber View, written by Vincent Matteo, President/CEO of the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

Will the Real "Extremist" Please Stand Up

According to our local Chamber of Commerce, as espoused by president Vincent Matteo, natural gas drilling is environmentally safe. In addition, because RDA favors a moratorium on all new drilling, the grassroots organization is now labeled an "environmental extremist group" whose acronym should stand for "Reject Drilling Alliance."

First of all, thank you, Mr. Matteo, for clearing up this very complicated issue about the safety of the natural gas industry. Hundreds of Ph.D.s in various fields, including engineering, chemistry, biology, environmental, toxicological, medical sciences and other disciplines have been struggling with this safety issue for years. I guess my own education and experience no longer count: My education is in chemical engineering and chemistry, and I have several decades of industry experience as a chemical and environmental safety engineer, where I worked daily with toxicologists and industrial hygienists.

I should be relieved that I no longer need to continue researching the many health studies, air emissions reports, water contamination documents, ecological studies, and more that have all linked gas industry operations to, dare I say it, possible environmental and safety problems. I use the word "possible" because in some studies, a definitive link is a very difficult thing to prove.

However, since Mr. Matteo used the phrase "... how safe it has become" when



SHALE GAS OUTRAGE 2013

September 24-26

Philadelphia, Pa.

Keynote speaker:
John Fenton

Shale Gas Outrage Water
Drive, September 24-26

Freedom from Fracking III
Conference, 2 pm - 8 pm
Thursday, September 26.

The conference is free, but
requires [registration](#).

[Find more information here.](#)

New Phone Number!
Contact RDA at
888-332-1244

**Missed the
Shale Justice forum
with John Hanger?**

Watch his opening
comments and some
beginning Q&A's here.



John Hanger Part 1

[Read Dory Hippauf's
review for Shale Justice
here.](#)

TAKE ACTION!

**Pennsylvania Legislative
Session Resumes**

September 23

Both the Pennsylvania
House and Senate are
[scheduled to resume](#) in
Harrisburg on September
23. **Now is the time** to let
your legislators know your
thoughts on upcoming bills.

referring to natural gas drilling in his latest [Chamber View](#), I would appreciate an explanation of a few issues he seems to have missed:

An [OSHA / NIOSH Alert](#) shows samples from 11 fracking sites giving this data:

- 47% showed silica exposures greater than the calculated OSHA PEL (permissible exposure limit)
- 79% showed silica exposures greater than the NIOSH REL (recommended exposure limit)

Respirable silica dust can cause [silicosis](#), an incurable lung disease. These exposures are NOT considered safe for gas industry workers. Mr. Matteo should explain his "safe" statement to our friends, neighbors and relatives who work for the gas industry. RDA wants [gas workers to have all the necessary information](#) about the industry. Does the Chamber?

Natural gas operations in Pennsylvania and other states have been linked to a [number of environmental problems](#), including [high levels of ozone](#) formed from the oil and gas industry's emissions. For example, since the gas industry moved into a formerly pristine rural area in Wyoming with excellent air quality, that region has [experienced ozone levels higher](#) than those in Los Angeles, California. [Ozone](#) is a known respiratory irritant that is especially harmful to children, the elderly and those with respiratory issues like asthma. Mr. Matteo should explain to our local citizens why Lycoming County will not experience these [documented air quality problems](#) as the build out continues in areas like the Route 87 corridor. RDA wants the public to be aware of these potential emissions problems. Does the Chamber?

Environmental damage from natural gas operations is well documented. These include a significant percentage of well-casing failures, [as shown in the Department of Environmental Protection's violations](#) (compliance) database. These well casings are supposed to protect against gas / liquid migration to water supplies. Mr. Matteo should explain to homeowners living near gas operations in Lycoming County why these violations are "environmentally safe" and why these folks will not experience such problems. RDA wants the public to be aware of the violations and potential for environmental problems. Does the Chamber?

When any conscientious individual looks at someone's hypothesis, they must know several things:

First, the qualifications of the person stating the hypothesis. Mr. Matteo has a doctorate in public administration. How does that make him an expert on environmental and chemical safety?

Secondly, what persons or groups may have influenced the hypothesis? Mr. Matteo is the president of the local Chamber of Commerce. A number of local businesses have benefited from the gas industry presence, and these companies are Chamber members. There is definitely a bias here, but does that bias need to be accompanied by ignorance? Perhaps Vince has been reading the reports about the gas industry that originated from Penn State University. Guess which industry [funded those studies](#)? I guess they don't teach these things in public administration.

Finally, I have to laugh at Matteo's hypothesis that RDA is an extremist environmental group because we have called for a moratorium on new drilling. RDA members have Ph.D.s in biology and veterinary science, they are owners of local businesses, they are professional ecologists, geologists, and chemists, they teach at our local colleges and work in local businesses. RDA members are parents and grandparents, they are active in many important local non-profit agencies, they care about and serve this community, and they are intelligent individuals who all have legitimate concerns about the natural gas industry.

RDA called for a moratorium on new well drilling, not an end to all drilling. We understand the need for energy and are glad some of our neighbors, friends, and family members have been able to benefit financially from the gas industry. But we also understand there are currently way too many unaddressed concerns and unanswered questions. We cannot continue full speed ahead without

Several of the [Marcelus Works bills](#) are scheduled for vote in the House on the 23rd. Other bills to consider are [HB 1717](#), proposed to fund bridge repair by leasing additional state forest land, and [HB 1576 and SB 1047](#), both which would significantly alter the protection of endangered and threatened species in Pennsylvania. [Contact your legislator](#), tell your friends, spread the word - before the voting begins.

IN THE NEWS

This Week's Scoops

WNEP recorded a [camera-shy Senator Yaw](#) as he met with constituents unhappy about the money withheld from their royalty checks. The good news for leaseholders is that some legislators, including Rep. Garth Everett and Rep. Tina Pickett, are [moving legislation](#) to clear up the issue. Let's just hope this works out better than Rep. Everett's [last work with leaseholder legislation](#).

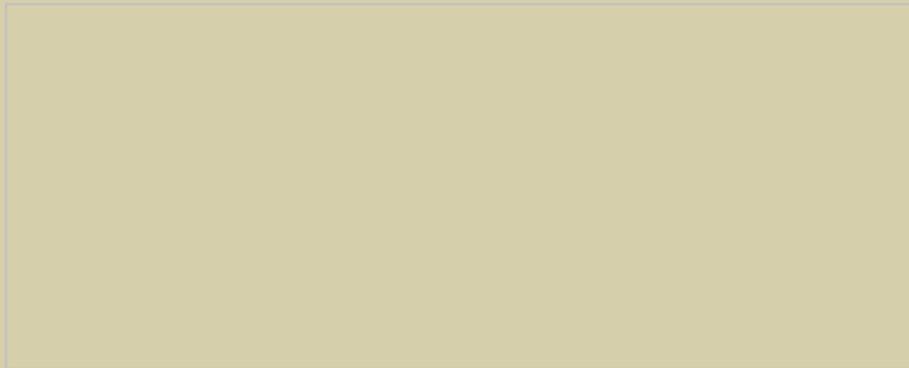
Meanwhile, [Chesapeake Energy has agreed](#) to pay \$7.5 million to settle a class action suit with angry leaseholders. The news of Chesapeake's agreement [made Senator Yaw happy](#), and why not, since all Pennsylvanians should be happy according to the [citizens' benefits from Marcellus Shale outlined by Energy Executive Patrick Henderson](#).

Henderson made his comments in defense of Governor Corbett's impact fee after Democratic gubernatorial candidate [Allyson Schwartz unveiled her plan](#) for a severance tax.

But not all Pennsylvanians are happy - just ask the Mount Pleasant folks about [those drilling waste pits still](#) in their neighborhood, or the

comprehensive impact studies and a full understanding of the consequences of this technology. To us, this precaution seems like common sense. For us, the "R" in RDA stands for responsible.

So who is the real extremist here?



Frac sand trucks wait in line to enter a well pad.

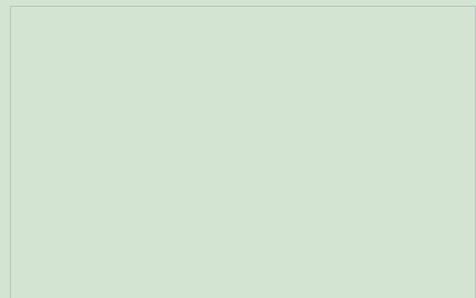
IMAGE: ANN PINCA

Is Your Property Value Fracked?

A recent [Atlantic Cities article](#) by Roger Drouin raises once again the question of property values in active drilling areas. In his article, Drouin notes that banks, federal agencies, and insurance companies have become more cautious when dealing with properties near hydraulic fracturing operations, which can affect the resale value of a property.

A [2011 New York Times article](#) presented mortgage issues already rising with leased properties, while in 2012, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. [decided to exclude coverage](#) for damage related to gas drilling. Both Drouin and the New York Times cite examples of homeowners who were unaware of the consequences that leasing their properties could present in terms of future financing or resale value. For this reason, homeowners should be sure to read and understand all clauses in their mortgages and insurance policies before signing a lease. Consent from the lender may be required before an owner can enter into a leasing agreement.

Of course, when things really go wrong, there's no telling what the outcome might be. Last year, Julie and Craig Sautner [settled with Cabot Oil and Gas](#) and moved out of their Dimock home after [years of controversy](#) over water contamination. This week, demolition began on their former home, which stood empty since their departure.



Demolition on the former Sautner house in Dimock, Pa. IMAGE: VERA SCROGGINS

"If you can see it, you can change it."

So it says on the web site of [SkyTruth](#), a nonprofit organization that provides an amazing amount of useful information. Founded by John Amos in 2001, SkyTruth

landowners in Westmoreland County [preparing to fight eminent domain proceedings](#) for the [Mariner East](#) pipeline.

And then there are those lucky citizens living in Susquehanna County, named as a [sweet spot for shale gas production](#). Funny, but after events like the one in the video below, many in the area aren't finding it so sweet.



Teel Compressor blow off, footage by Ron Teel

Join RDA

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

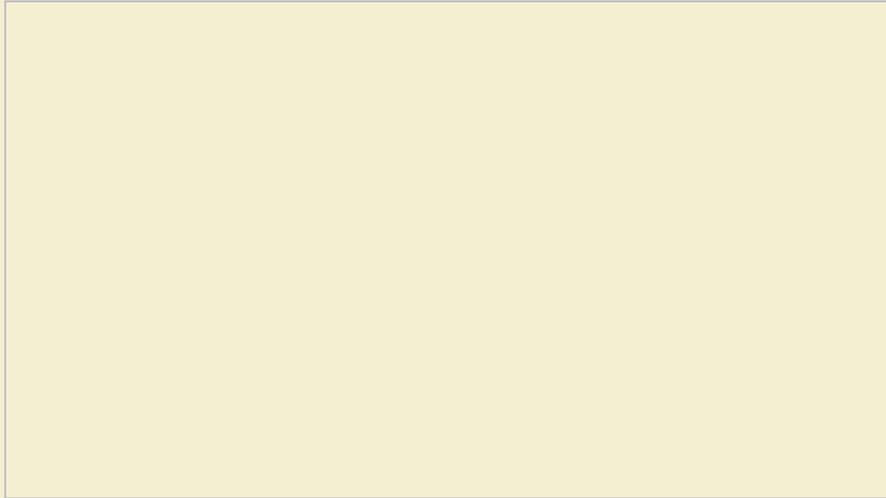
As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RDA relies on donations for the important work we do. In order for RDA to continue its valuable education and advocacy outreach in 2013, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

Join Our Mailing List!

uses remote sensing and digital mapping to create images that reveal the impacts of man's activities in our world. Learn more about SkyTruth and its mission by clicking the logo below to watch a brief video. (After the advertisement - be patient!)



If you aren't familiar with SkyTruth's alerts as pictured below, be sure to check out their [web site](#) and sign up to receive daily alerts tailored to your location.



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Donations may also be sent by mail to: Responsible Drilling Alliance, P.O. Box 502, Williamsport, PA 17703
Thank you for your support!

Donate



