



Recommendations

General Recommendations

The Citizens Commission urges the Governor, General Assembly and the Department of Environmental Protection to immediately take the following steps to ensure all citizens their constitutional right to clean air and pure water:

-End the privileged treatment of the gas industry. The policy of expedited permits should end immediately and DEP should stop issuing waivers or general permits that have the effect of circumventing or weakening environmental protections.

-Raise the bar to protect the health and welfare of the citizens and the environment. The Commonwealth should improve laws and regulations (enumerated in detail in the report), provide funding necessary to ensure vigorous enforcement and significantly increase penalties on violators.

-Specify and protect areas of the state that are unsuitable for natural gas development. The moratorium on gas drilling in state forests should be extended.

-Fully acknowledge the risks of natural gas development. Undertake a full cumulative impact analysis of existing and likely proposed industrial development in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale, including an analysis of impacts on water quality and quantity, air quality, land use, habitat, and human health. As *Scientific American* (October 19, 2011) notes in an editorial addressing gas development in Wyoming, Colorado, Texas and Pennsylvania:

“All these states are flying blind. A long list of technical questions remains unanswered about the ways the practice could contaminate drinking water, the extent to which it already has, and what the industry could do to reduce the risks.” <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=safety-first-fracking-second>

-To better protect the environment and public health, the Commonwealth should put in place stricter protections for air quality and surface and groundwater prior to issuing new permits.

-Make industry pay its fair share. Institute a drilling tax on gas producers, and restore local governments' ability to assess the value of oil and gas reserves for tax purposes to address

community impacts. Ensure proper bonding and clean-up requirements are in place for all well sites and facilities, with an escrow fund established for unintended consequences to public health and the environment.

-Abandon the current piecemeal process for permitting gas drilling sites and infrastructure. Institute a comprehensive permit process at all sites, and ensure the process is transparent.

-Restore Conservation Districts' role in permitting and enforcement. Conservation Districts are trusted by residents to fairly and thoroughly review permits and apply the law.

-Ensure the integrity of well casings to protect water supplies, and require continued monitoring and repair through the production process and beyond.

-Monitor and minimize harmful air emissions and pollutants by requiring the use of the best technology. Require companies to report citizen complaints to DEP.

-Establish an office of consumer environmental advocate in the Office of Attorney General to provide a transparent forum in which public complaints can be heard and investigated.