



PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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Analysis: What We Stand To Lose If There's No Final Action On A Marcellus Shale Bill

While the size and shape of a drilling fee has gotten most of the attention in pending Marcellus Shale legislation, the other half of the bills are just as important-- additional protections for our water supplies and streams and valuable new enforcement tools.

Without final action on a comprehensive Marcellus Shale bill that includes both a responsible drilling fee and strong environmental protection measures by the end of this year, water supplies and streams continue to be vulnerable to impacts from drilling and needed environmental programs like Growing Greener will all but die.

Here's what we stand to lose without action (based on [Senate Bill 1100](#))--

Notification

- Increases notification requirements from 1,000 feet to 3,000 feet for unconventional wells;
- Requires notification for any municipality within 3,000 feet of the proposed unconventional well;
- Requires DEP to notify a public drinking water system of any spill the department investigated that may affect their water supply.

Well Location Restrictions

- Increases the setback distance from an unconventional well and an existing building or existing water well from 200 feet to 500 feet;
- Increases the setback distance from an unconventional well and a spring or body of water identified on the most current 7½ minute topographic map from 100 feet to 300 feet;
- Restricts an unconventional well from being located within 1,000 feet of a public water supply source as defined in the Safe Drinking Water Act;
- The department may establish additional protective measures for the storage of hazardous chemicals or materials intended to be used on the well drilling site within 500 feet of any stream, spring, body of water or wetland.

Presumption

-- Increases the distance an operator drilling an unconventional well is presumed responsible for pollution of a water supply from 1,000 feet to 3,000 feet if pollution occurred within 12 months after stimulation or alteration of the well.