



# GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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**Berks County  
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## This Earth Day, Senator Maria Collett Introduces Legislation to Address PFAS Contamination Crisis

On April 22, 2019, Senator Maria Collett (D-Montgomery/Bucks) introduced two pieces of legislation today to address the PFAS contamination crisis. **Senate Bill 581**

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?year=2019&sind=0&body=S&type=B&bn=581> lowers the acceptable level of PFAS in our drinking water to 10 parts per trillion until such time as a maximum contaminant level is established by the EPA, DEP or a Governor's Executive Order.

### **Senate Bill 582**

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?year=2019&sind=0&body=S&type=B&bn=582> classifies PFAS as hazardous substances under Pennsylvania's Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA). The bills are a key first step toward addressing

this environmental and public health crisis and ensuring that the polluters - and not local municipalities and tax payers - are the ones bearing the cost to clean up our water and soil.

Under Article I Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, we "have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment." According to Senator Collett: "The sad reality is that this right has not been adequately preserved or defended as it pertains to our drinking water and the contaminated soil from which water tainted with dangerous chemicals continues to flow and spread through communities across Pennsylvania."

The culprit: firefighting foams containing dangerous per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that were used in great quantities at military bases and fire training facilities for decades. These chemicals, intended to do good, ultimately contaminated groundwater, wells, and drinking water in Bucks and Montgomery counties and across the country. It also put

our residents and the hard-working military and civil employees who worked on these bases at risk for various negative health effects, including infertility, high cholesterol, and certain types of cancer.

"The people of the 12th District are sick and tired of waiting for action and answers," said Senator Collett, whose district includes the Horsham Air Guard Station and former Willow Grove Naval Air Station and Warminster Naval Warfare Center. "I can no longer count the number of community members who have shared with me their stories of lost loved ones, personal health struggles, and increased water bills. Passage of these bills will be a decisive first step toward restoring the public's confidence and ensure that everyone impacted by PFAS contamination has the resources necessary to remediate the crisis. I urge my fellow legislators to support this urgent and long overdue legislation."

**Source:** Senator Collett Press Release, 4/22/2019

## Stephens Demands Cancer Rates Be Included in CDC PFAS Study

In a letter to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Rep. Todd Stephens (R-Montgomery) demanded their study of PFAS on health include an investigation into cancer rates. He also called upon federal officials to join him in his effort.

According to a document released by the CDC, its study of the health impact of PFAS will exclude cancer rates.

"Several years ago, I was the first public official to call for a comprehensive health

study so we can understand what health effects we face as a result of the federal government contaminating our drinking water," Stephens said in the letter. "This is critical as we work to protect our residents' health. Excluding cancers and other ailments in the national study is unacceptable and I implore you to correct this immediately."

He also sent letters to U.S. Sens. Pat Toomey (R-Pa) and Bob Casey, Jr. (R-Pa) and Reps. Madeleine Dean (D-Pa) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa).

PFAS, a chemical used to extinguish fires, has seeped into local drinking water from the Willow Grove Naval Base. Stephens has called on the federal government to fund the cleanup of area water and to conduct a local health assessment with long-term follow-ups.

Cancers of the kidneys, testicles and bladder had been linked to some PFAS chemicals in prior studies, along with thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis, high cholesterol, developmental effects and immunotoxicity. Ulcerative colitis and autoimmune diseases will also be excluded from the CDC study.

Several local residents affected by these serious health implications have contacted Stephens concerned about the lack of information regarding PFAS exposure.

"Just when I thought one federal agency-- the CDC-- was on the path to helping our community deal with the effects of the PFAS water contamination the federal government caused, along comes this news," Stephens said.

**Source:** Rep. Todd Stephens Press Release, 4/25/2019

# PUC Adopts Implementation Order for Act 58 of 2018; Provides Guidance on How Utilities May Establish Future Alternative Rate Mechanisms

**O**n April 25, 2019, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) approved an **Implementation Order for Act 58 of 2018** <http://www.puc.pa.gov/pcdocs/1616766.doc> (Act 58), putting forth procedures through which utilities may seek Commission approval of applications establishing alternative rates and rate mechanisms in future base rate proceedings.

The Commission voted 5-0 to adopt the order, which the PUC finalized after providing for an extended comment and review period on the Commission's proposed interpretation and implementation of the new law. Act 58 gives the Commission express statutory authority to approve alternative rate mechanisms for electric, natural gas, and water and wastewater utilities, as well as what notices of such ratemaking requests are to be given to customers.

On June 28, 2018, Gov. Tom Wolf signed Act 58, which added **Section 1330 to Chapter 13 of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Code** <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/66/00.013..HTM> (Chapter 13) and enabled utilities to seek PUC approval of alternative rates and rate mechanisms

including, but not limited to: decoupling mechanisms, performance-based rates, formula rates, multiyear rate plans, or a combination of these alternatives.

In its **Tentative Implementation Order** <http://www.puc.pa.gov/pcdocs/1582760.doc> of Aug. 23, 2018, the Commission proposed that the alternative ratemaking mechanisms authorized under Act 58 be proposed within the confines of a utility base rate case under Chapter 13. The PUC has a well-established process for reviewing base rate cases, which provides for hearings concerning the lawfulness and appropriateness of proposed rates, including proposed alternative rate mechanisms.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

For recent news releases and video of select Commission proceedings or more information about the PUC, visit our **website** at <http://www.puc.pa.gov/>. Follow the PUC on Twitter - @PA\_PUC for all things utility. "Like" Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on Facebook for easy access to information on utility issues.

**Docket No.: M-2018-3003269** [http://www.puc.pa.gov/about\\_puc/consolidated\\_case\\_view.aspx?Docket=M-2018-3003269](http://www.puc.pa.gov/about_puc/consolidated_case_view.aspx?Docket=M-2018-3003269)

**Source:** PUC Press Release, 4/25/2019

## State legislators, leaders call on overhaul of state's regulatory system citing bureaucratic red tape

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York) and Representative Kate Klunk (R-York) were joined by local senators and representatives as well as local and state leaders at York College today to outline bicameral efforts to reduce and reform the state's regulatory process.

The lawmakers outlined six major reform measures, including efforts that would require greater oversight of regulations that cost state taxpayers in excess of \$1 million, provide for the removal of two regulations for each new regulation added, as well as improve permitting transparency in Pennsylvania.

The leaders called for reforms and improvements to the state's regulatory process and burden while standing in front of the entrance of the former York Narrow Fabrics Company.

"This site is the perfect location to talk about government red tape," Phillips-Hill said. "This factory was once a booming operation, manufacturing the actual red tape used to bind the federal government's regulations. While the factory may be closed, red tape is persistent along all levels of government. I'm pleased to stand with my colleagues to propose significant reforms to overhaul the state's complicated regulatory process, which will grow our state's economy, provide more opportunity for employees and drastically improve government accountability."

Representative Klunk outlined legislation she's sponsoring along with Phillips-Hill to establish the Independent Office of the Repealer as a way to objectively reform and remove unnecessary and onerous regulations.

"The Independent Office of the Repealer would ensure state government is functioning efficiently and effectively by reviewing existing acts and regulations," Klunk added. "Though some of these laws and regulations have been on the books for years, sometimes decades, they have never been examined and evaluated for their relevance, appropriateness and cost. All too often, we, as legislators, receive complaints about the burdensome and, in some cases, repetitive regulations that stifle business growth. My bill would provide relief to our current businesses and potential businesses that opted not to come to Pennsylvania because of the amount of red tape they'd have to cut through."

Representative Dawn Keefer (R-York) is the sponsor of legislation to require an enhanced review process for major regulations that impose a significant cost burden on state or local governments, known as the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny, or REINS Act.

"It's time to restore the balance of power our Founding Fathers established," Keefer said. "My REINS Act legislation is a solid first step to restoring this balance by shepherding in enhanced regulatory review to reduce the amount of prohibitive red tape. This would decrease unnecessary and duplicated government oversight to create a free market in which Pennsylvania businesses can thrive and grow, all while attracting more businesses to the Commonwealth."

A George Mason University-based research center, Mercatus Center, compiled extensive data on Pennsylvania's regulatory burden as it relates to other states.

"At last count, Pennsylvania had more than 153,000 regulatory restrictions on its books," Dr. James Broughel, an economist at Mercatus Center, said. "State economic growth, while roughly in line with the national rate, could be much higher. It is not surprising then that legislators are looking to implement meaningful regulatory reforms as a way to boost economic growth and opportunity for state residents."

"Legislation introduced today is a step in that direction," he added.

Representative Greg Rothman (R-Cumberland), who is proposing to overhaul the way in which costly regulations are approved, is supporting efforts that would provide a one-stop-shop for permitting in Pennsylvania.

"I believe good government starts with transparency and that is what I'm looking to accomplish with my bills," Rothman said. "I'm also proud to be here today with my colleagues in support of legislation which aims to make government work for the people and to reform a job-killing bureaucracy."

In addition to lawmakers, several groups joined the event to express their support to overhaul the state's regulatory process as a way to grow jobs at both the local and state level.

"It is wise for us to take a step back and pump the breaks to assess how government can run more efficiently," Kevin Schreiber, President and CEO of the York County Economic Alliance, said. "Doing so

modernizes government and ensures it is doing its part to foster success of its businesses and people."

Speaking on behalf of small businesses, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) expressed the cost of regulations is prohibiting local employers from growing and providing existing employees with new opportunities.

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of local communities and the root of Pennsylvania's economic success, but they are mired in a mound of red tape," Rebecca Oyler, who serves as the Pennsylvania Legislative Director for the NFIB, added. "Small business owners frequently say they could grow bigger and hire more workers if only the government didn't get in the way with costly, time-consuming regulations that don't seem to have much to do with safety and health."

"We have an incredible opportunity in front of us thanks to our energy assets and a strong performing economy," Kevin Sunday, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry's Director of Government Affairs, said. "To take advantage of that opportunity, though, we need a well-functioning, efficient permitting and regulatory system in place in Harrisburg. We are thankful that members of the House and Senate are championing much needed reform that will help bring about economic prosperity for all of Pennsylvania."

Several manufacturing sites are cropping up throughout the commonwealth, but Carl Marrara, Vice President of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association, said that removing burdens his members face could turn areas overlooked by redevelopment into huge opportunities for attracting large investment, growing jobs and providing

family sustaining jobs to struggling regions across the state.

"Our employers are facing an onslaught of regulations from a breadth of departments at both the state and federal level," Marrara said. "This creates uncertainty in business planning and results in companies not growing, expanding, hiring, and investing as they could."

What they're saying about the need for regulatory reform for Pennsylvania:

"In the preamble of the Constitution, the Founding Fathers established guiding principles that are sometimes hard to see today. From the time our alarms wake us, government is present through regulations, laws, licenses, taxes, permits, etc. By the time we go back to bed, it's almost impossible to avoid some contact with some level of government. We need to again focus on the fundamentals of our Republic -- respect for the Constitution, respect for life, personal responsibility, and less government."

**Senator Mike Folmer** (R-Lebanon/Dauphin/York)

"It is no secret I am staunch advocate for improved government efficiency. This package of bills is a step toward the goal of better government and fewer burdensome regulations. The approach we are taking -- having members from the two chambers of the Legislature work together on these issues -- shows government can work together to improve the lives of all Pennsylvanians."

**Representative Seth Grove** (R-York)

"With the amount of resources we have and our close proximity to some of the nation's largest cities, Pennsylvania's

economy and job market should be flourishing, but due to the burdensome regulations and red tape our businesses are suffering. I am extremely proud to be a cosponsor of many of the regulatory reform bills and I am proud to stand alongside my colleagues and fight for business owners and their employees."

**Senator Mike Regan** (R-York/Cumberland)

"Businesses considering a move to Pennsylvania all too often find an unfriendly, unwelcoming business climate, and turn to our neighboring states. The administration's failed attempt to lure Amazon to Pennsylvania showed that tax breaks alone aren't enough. We need to address our shortage of a skilled and semi-skilled labor, reduce unnecessary litigation, and dramatically reduce the regulatory burden employers face if we expect them to call Pennsylvania their home."

**Representative Mike Jones** (R-York)

**Source:** Senator Phillips-Hill and Rep. Klunk Press Release, 4/24/2019

## **Senate Environmental Committee to Consider Re-nominations of McDonnell for DEP, Dunn at DCNR April 30**

**T**he Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee is scheduled to meet **April 30 to consider the re-nominations of Patrick McDonnell as DEP Secretary and Cindy Adams Dunn as DCNR Secretary.**

**Patrick McDonnell**

McDonnell has led DEP since he was nominated as Acting Secretary on May 20, 2016 and was later confirmed by the Senate. Prior to his appointment in 2016, McDonnell served as Director of DEP's Policy Office.

Prior to returning to DEP, Mr. McDonnell was executive policy manager for former Commissioner Pamela A. Witmer of the Public Utility Commission, focusing on electric, natural gas and water issues as well as cybersecurity and the impact of environmental regulation on energy markets.

Previously, McDonnell spent 13 years with DEP in a variety of roles. As deputy secretary for administration, he managed the budget, human resources, information technology and oversaw the facilities management functions of the agency. He also previously served as policy director and as an assistant to the special deputy secretary.

### **Cindy Adams Dunn**

Dunn has led DCNR since she was nominated as Acting Secretary in January 2015 and was later confirmed by the Senate. She returned to the agency where she worked under three governors in multiple positions over the last two decades.

Since November 2013, Dunn had served as the president and chief executive officer of PennFuture, a statewide environmental advocacy organization.

Prior to her time at PennFuture, Dunn served as DCNR's Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services from 2007-2013, where she led DCNR's conservation landscape program and oversaw the community conservation

partnerships grant program, which provides \$30-\$60 million annually for conservation and recreation throughout the Commonwealth.

The re-nomination of Russell Redding for Secretary of Agriculture was unanimously reported out of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on April 9 and awaits action by the full Senate.

All three re-nominations are on day 15 of the 25 voting days allotted for Senate action on their nominations.

The meeting will be held in Room 461 Capitol Building starting at 9:30 a.m. [Click here to watch the meeting live](https://environmental.pasenategop.com/)

Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming) serves as Majority Chair of the Senate Environmental Committee and can be contacted by calling 717-787-3280 or sending email to: [gyaw@pasen.gov](mailto:gyaw@pasen.gov). Sen. John Yudichak (D-Luzerne) serves as Minority Chair and can be contacted by calling 717-787-7105 or sending email to: [yudichak@pasenate.com](mailto:yudichak@pasenate.com).

**Source:** PA Environmental Digest, 4/29/2019

## **Dinniman, Senators: Hold on Reconfirmation of DEP Secretary**

**T**he reconfirmation of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary (DEP) Patrick McDonnell should be put on hold until investigations into Sunoco/Energy Transfer's Mariner East pipeline project are complete, state Senator Andy Dinniman and others said today.

In a **memo** [http://www.senatordinniman.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Sec-McDonnell-Memo\\_042519.pdf](http://www.senatordinniman.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Sec-McDonnell-Memo_042519.pdf) to state Senators Gene Yaw and John Yudichak, the majority and minority chairs of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee respectively, Dinniman, along with state Senators Daylin Leach, Katie Muth, Tom Killion, and Tim Kearney, called for the hearing, scheduled for Tuesday, April 30 to be postponed.

"Due to the serious nature of these concerns, we feel strongly that there should not be any consideration or reconfirmation vote in committee or on the floor until these concerns are fully addressed and publicly disclosed," they wrote. "In our view, it would be very improper to proceed with any vote until these questions are answered in full and each of these investigations are complete."

Specifically, the memo cited the multiple criminal and ethical investigations currently underway in the problematic and controversial Mariner East pipeline project, including those being conducted by the Chester County District Attorney, the Pennsylvania Attorney General (at the request of the Delaware County District Attorney) and the Pennsylvania Ethics Commission. In fact, according to reports, a grand jury has been empanelled in West Chester to review concerns for legal action.

In addition, Dinniman, Leach, Muth and Killion raised a **series of ten questions** [http://www.senatordinniman.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Sec-McDonnell-Questions\\_042519.pdf](http://www.senatordinniman.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Sec-McDonnell-Questions_042519.pdf) to McDonnell related to DEP's management and oversight of the Mariner East pipeline project that they asked to have answered in detail prior to

consideration of his reappointment. They included concerns regarding DEP's sharing of pertinent environmental information, management of public and environmental safety issues, response to impacts local water supplies and geological stability, and approval of various permits.

"Given the ongoing investigations into the Mariner East project - investigations that cite state regulators, it is only prudent and proper for any consideration or reconfirmation vote to be put hold until these concerns are fully addressed and publicly disclosed," Dinniman said. "I hope the committee chairs and legislative leaders agree, but even if the confirmation vote goes forward, we have very important questions that need to be answered."

Dinniman also noted that just today a sinkhole opened up along the Mariner East pipeline route in Delaware County, according to news reports.

Dinniman said his concerns about the Mariner East pipeline project's ongoing impacts to environmental protection, public safety and the overall quality of life in his district are ongoing and were further raised by recent troubling news reports concerning DEP involvement with and close ties to the project.

"At the end of the day, it's a matter of transparency. It's a matter of the truth. We need to know more, and the public deserves to know more," he said.

**Source:** Senator Dinniman Press Release, 4/25/2019

## **Wolf Administration Announces Funding to**

# Support Environmental Cleanup across the State

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced the approval of \$25 million in funding for environmental cleanup and revitalization projects at abandoned mine land (AML) locations across Pennsylvania.

"The approved abandoned mine cleanup projects will help eliminate public health and safety hazards and improve stream, groundwater, and land quality," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "The funding is an important investment in the community from environmental, recreational, and economic development standpoints."

The local community and economic development projects include three surface mine reclamation projects, one acid mine drainage treatment or remediation project, three coal refuse pile/culm bank remediation projects, and a historic mining preservation project to move a historic mine fan and other artifacts to a mine museum.

Project funding comes from the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) 2018 AML Pilot Program, which specifically targets abandoned mine cleanup projects that are linked to local community and economic development goals. This is the third year that Pennsylvania has received funding from the AML Pilot Program.

The following projects were recently approved:

## Butler County

**Slippery Rock Creek AMD Treatment, Education, and Recreation:** The project will fund needed maintenance on five existing passive treatment systems located in Brady and Washington townships. Additionally, the project will enhance educational, recreational, and tourism activities by restoring the Foltz Schoolhouse, which is part of the Jennings Environmental Educational Center, and provide significant repairs to bridges and trails on the North Country National Scenic Trail System.

## Carbon County

**No. 9 Coal Mine and Museum Complex/Dorrance Colliery:** This project will carefully dismantle and transport historic ventilation fans and steam engines from their location in Luzerne County to a mine museum in Carbon County where the pieces will be reconditioned and reassembled. The project significantly expands the No.9 Mine and Mine Museum Complex, preserves unique pieces of coal mining history, and strengthens the presence of historic sites in the coal mining area. The project is expected to increase visitation by 15 to 20 percent at the tour site and increase utilization of all types of visitor services in the vicinity.

## Clearfield County

**Morgan Run Recreational Facility - West Decatur Post Office:** Reclamation of 3,700 feet of dangerous highwall, 20 acres of spoil area, and seven acres of subsidence area. The project will lead to the expanded use of the facilities for CenClear and other local organizations, a mile of multi-use recreational trail, a parking lot for public using the facility, and an increase of jobs for CenClear.

## Clinton County

**Huling Branch East:** Reclamation of 3,000 feet of dangerous highwalls, a 10-acre dangerous pile and embankment consisting of acid-forming shale, a half-acre slurry pond, and two acres of gob material. The project includes construction of 5,000 feet of ATV trails within Sproul State Forest, construction of a grass parking area and flat area to be used by helicopters for emergency evacuations, improvement of trout stocking fisheries, and will establish a more natural environment for elk which are starting to migrate toward the area. The project will encourage tourism, outdoor recreation, and improve watershed quality.

#### Luzerne County

**Earth Conservancy Bliss Bank 4:** Reclamation of 31 acres of AML refuse/culm banks of the overall 220-acre Bliss Bank project, including the reclamation of a section of Espy Creek. This project allows the site to be developed in anticipation of nationwide companies potentially coming to the area, creating more than 1,000 permanent full-time jobs.

#### Northumberland County

**Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (AOAA), Bear Valley Southwest:** Reclamation of 88 acres of AML surface mine highwalls, a hazardous water-filled pit, and spoil piles. The project will expand the AOAA trails to include approximately 6,600 feet of extreme rock crawling trails, re-establish and/or construct approximately 4,370 feet of off-road/ATV/dirt bike trails, and create a new recreational attraction for public use that will boost the local economy.  
Susquehanna and Wayne Counties

**Forest City East Fish & Boat Commission Access:** Reclamation of 55

acres of AML that will eliminate dangerous and erosive refuse/culm banks and a dangerous AML mine structure. The site will be used as a future community attraction for fishing and canoeing and will create job and development opportunities.

The cleanup of abandoned mines is a priority of the Wolf Administration and has been included in the **Restore Pennsylvania** <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/20190204-Restore-PA.pdf> initiative, a statewide plan to aggressively address the commonwealth's vital infrastructure needs. Funded through a commonsense severance tax, Restore Pennsylvania is the only plan that would help make Pennsylvania a leader in the 21st century.

**Source:** DEP Press Release, 4/24/2019

## **U.S.G.S Releases Study Of Bradford County Private Drinking Water Wells; Nearly 50% Have Coliform Contamination**

**O**n April 18, the U.S. Geological Survey released another in its series of county studies [https://www.usgs.gov/centers/pa-water/science/groundwater-quality-domestic-supply-wells-pennsylvania?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/pa-water/science/groundwater-quality-domestic-supply-wells-pennsylvania?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects) on the quality of water coming from private drinking water wells.

The new study <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sir20185170> described the results of a chemical analysis of water from 72 private water

wells in Bradford County which found drinking water quality exceeded federal and state standards for total coliform bacteria (49.3 percent), sodium (48.6 percent), manganese (30.6 percent), iron (11.1 percent), methane (12.5 percent) and the proposed standard for radon-222 (70.4 percent).

Water well contamination related to total coliform bacteria is frequently associated with improper water well construction allowing surface water to pollute the well. Pennsylvania is one of only 2 states which have no private drinking water well standards.

Improperly constructed water wells are a particular problem in areas of oil and gas well drilling because they allow brine and methane to easily contaminate wells.

Since Bradford County has been highly developed for Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction, the study looked at more specific results for methane as well as sodium, chloride and bromide that can be associated with drilling operations and brine.

The study found, “Four of the six groundwater samples with the highest methane concentrations had chloride/bromide ratios that indicate mixing with a small amount of brine (0.02 percent or less) similar in composition to those reported for gas and oil well brines in Pennsylvania.”

“In several other eastern Pennsylvania counties where gas drilling is absent, groundwater with comparable chloride/bromide ratios and chloride concentrations have been reported, implying a potential natural source of brine.”

“Most of Bradford County well-water samples have chloride concentrations less than 20 mg/L, and those with higher chloride concentrations have chloride/bromide ratios that indicate anthropogenic sources (such as road-deicing salt and septic effluent) or brine.”

“Brines that are naturally present may originate from deeper parts of the aquifer system, whereas anthropogenic sources are more likely to affect shallow groundwater because they occur on or near the land surface.

“The available data for this study indicate that no one physical factor, such as the topographic setting, well depth, or altitude at the bottom of the well, was particularly useful for predicting those well locations with an elevated dissolved concentration of methane.

“The 2016 assessment of groundwater quality in Bradford County shows groundwater is generally of good quality, but methane and some constituents that occur in high concentration in naturally occurring brine and also in produced waters may be present at low to moderate concentrations in groundwater in various parts of the aquifer.”

The U.S.G.S. provided participating well owners with the results of their water samples and worked with **Penn State Extension and the Master Water Well Owners Network Program** <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/mwon> to provide follow up support and interpretation of the results for well owners.

They also held a public meeting to discuss the overall results of the study in Bradford County which included a well

owner education program by Penn State Extension.

A 2011 study by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania done by Penn State specifically on the impact of drilling on rural drinking water supplies in the Marcellus Shale region found 40 percent of wells failed at least one drinking water standard for coliform, manganese and other parameters before drilling. Methane was also found in 20 percent of the wells before drilling, but below advisory levels.

These results are generally consistent with over 30 years of research by Penn State showing 40 percent of wells do not meet one or more drinking water standards.

The Bradford County study was conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission and was funded in part by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Similar drinking water quality reports are available for Lycoming, Pike, Sullivan and Wayne counties and soon for Clinton and Potter counties. Funding for many of these studies included financial assistance by the Commonwealth Financing Authority Act 13 Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Program supported by drilling impact fees.

Click here for an **overview of the U.S.G.S. Groundwater Quality of Domestic Water Supply Wells in Pennsylvania Project** [https://www.usgs.gov/centers/pa-water/science/groundwater-quality-domestic-supply-wells-pennsylvania?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/pa-water/science/groundwater-quality-domestic-supply-wells-pennsylvania?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects) . Questions should be directed to John Clune, U.S.G.S. Hydrologist, PA Water Science Center, 717-

317-7226 or send email to: [jclune@usgs.gov](mailto:jclune@usgs.gov).

### Background/Help

There are more than 1 million private water wells in Pennsylvania serving about 3.5 million people across the state. Approximately 20,000 new wells are drilled each year.

For more information on proper water well construction and decontamination procedures, visit **DEP's Private Water Wells webpage**

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/PrivateWells/Pages/default.aspx> .

Also visit the **Penn State Extension Master Water Well Owners Network Program webpage**

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/mwon> for more information on water well issues and solutions, including a water test kit available from Penn State.

The **PA Ground Water Association website** <https://www.pgwa.org/> also has helpful information on how communities can protect groundwater and the health of their residents by adopting water well standards, since the General Assembly has failed to pass legislation to set standards.

The Association will hold its **Summer Field Conference** <https://www.pgwa.org/> on June 7 in Bellefonte, Centre County.

**Source:** PA Environmental Digest, 4/29/2019

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*This newsletter provides general information, not legal advice as to any specific matter. It should not be used as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.*