

Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2010 3:41 PM
To: White, Senator Mary Jo
Subject: 1/27 Public Hearing

Senator Mary Jo White
Senate Box 203021
Room 169 Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3021

January 21, 2010

Dear Senator White, Chairperson
PA Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee

The Bartramian Audubon Society chapter, now twenty-six years old, has members in Butler, Lawrence, Mercer and Venango Counties. From the beginning, its mission has been fourfold: 1) to preserve the native plant and animal communities in our eco-region through monitoring and protecting vulnerable, rare, threatened and endangered life-forms; 2) to safeguard such life-forms from air, water and land pollution, radiation and toxic substances; 3) to conserve through wise use in a sustainable way all air, water and land gifts of Earth by promoting rational alternative strategies of energy development and use; and 4) to educate our children, ourselves and the public at large in the laws of ecology.

The chapter has made many positive strides in its short history, not the least of which is the unique Wildlife Sanctuary Program inaugurated in September 1995 and its Bird and Butterfly Sanctuary Program commencing in September 1997. Currently, the chapter has 135 sanctuaries protecting over 4,400 acres. The chapter is also responsible for monitoring eight Important Bird Areas (IBA) representing 38,319 acres in our eco-region.

Therefore, with these conservation accomplishments, the chapter was shocked to learn that the Pennsylvania Assembly failed to impose a severance tax on profits from Marcellus Shale natural gas extractions like other states have done, but even worse, adding insult to injury by selling gas drilling leases on the citizens of Pennsylvania's forest lands, an integral ecological part of our public domain, to be sacrificed on the altar of quick financial gain. With these insensitive actions in mind, our chapter has lost all trust in the Pennsylvania Assembly members being conscientious legislative stewards of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's natural resources. Hence, our chapter is especially worried about the future protection of our many sanctuaries being negated by gas drilling in proximity to them.

The chapter is therefore petitioning that your committee seriously takes into account the following proven, scientific points and guidelines:

- * The first law of ecology states that humans can never do merely one thing, such as drilling for gas. Any intrusion into nature has numerous effects, many of which are unpredictable. This is also known as the law of ecological backlash.
- * The second law of ecology is that "everything is connected to and intermingling with everything else;" we are all in it together. This is also called the law of interrelatedness.
- * The third law of ecology says that any chemical that humans produce should not interfere with any of Earth's natural biogeochemical cycles in ways that degrade the Earth's life support systems. e.g., the Dimock, PA 6,000-8,000 gallons of fracking waste that spilled into the ground and a nearby wetland. Also known as the law of chemical non-interference.
- * The fourth law of ecology is that the Earth's life-support systems can take a lot of stress and abuse but there are limits. This is also known as the law of limits.

- * The fifth law of ecology stresses that each species and each individual organism (including humans) can tolerate only a certain range of environmental conditions, e.g., but not simultaneous exposure to air, water and land pollution promoted by gas drilling. This is also known as the law of tolerance.
- * The sixth law of ecology notes that no population of a species (including the human) can continue growing indefinitely. If it does, that species will destroy its environment. This is also known as the law of carrying capacity.
- * Finally, the seventh and last law of ecology clearly states that nature is not only more complex than humans think, but also more complex than humans can ever think. This is also known as the law of complexity.

Thus, if your committee seriously examines these vital principles, it immediately becomes apparent that every one of these laws has been broken by previous Pennsylvania General Assembly decisions about the Marcellus Shale drilling for natural gas and the already occurring negative impacts caused by these decisions on Pennsylvania's natural environment, wildlife and people. Therefore, the chapter feels strongly that legislative decision-makers who represent the citizenry of the Commonwealth have the duty and responsibility of abiding by the latest 21st century scientific data when making major environmental decisions that touch all life, natural and human. Unfortunately, your committee on January 27 will be dealing only with one aspect - waste water treatment, as important as that is - but our chapter is imploring your committee to think, understand and act how this one part fits into the entire issue of gas drilling. Ground water quality and supply, air and soil quality, probable wildlife habitat disruption, severe forest fragmentation, toxic chemical contamination, even the quality of human rural living, are intricate parts of the gas drilling environmental context and must be considered together. In sum, although considered a panacea for our energy needs by many people, including our legislators, Marcellus Shale natural gas is a fossil fuel that still emits carbon dioxide, thereby presenting both a high environmental risk in its processing and a poor candidate for reducing global warming. In short, natural gas does not reconcile with the Laws of Ecology.

Senator White, it will be appreciated if you please make certain that this letter becomes a part of the official public hearing record of January 27, 2010. Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

For the Bartramian Audubon Society Board of Directors and Members

Gene Wilhelm, Ph. D.
Sanctuary Chair

Kathie Goodblood
President