

DEP does regulate state's gas-drilling industry

Published: Thursday, July 15, 2010, 1:08 AM

When it comes to protecting its water resources from the impacts of natural gas drilling, Pennsylvania has the strongest oversight in the nation and is the only state to take extensive regulatory steps in this area. The Department of Environmental Protection has doubled its oil and gas staff and opened two new offices, allowing the department to conduct 2,000 Marcellus Shale inspections in the first six months of 2010 or twice the 2009 rate.

Anyone who suggests that natural gas production is unregulated is misinformed. Regulations are in place that will protect our waterways from drilling wastewater. Rules have been proposed that will enhance existing rules governing erosion, sediment control and stormwater to protect streams from the effects of new development, reduce localized flooding during storms and cut sediment and nutrient pollution.

Erosion and sediment control permits received are thoroughly reviewed by the department, and the oil and gas industry is not exempt from these reviews. The enforcement of our rules has never been more effective and compliance by the industry has never been better. When violations do occur, enforcement action is promptly taken, including orders to halt all drilling activities at well sites.

DEP works every day to protect our waters and is dedicated to regulating natural gas production in a manner that maximizes the economic benefits and minimizes its costs.

JOHN HANGER

Secretary

Department of Environmental Protection