



April 22, 2010

The Honorable Edward Rendell
Governor
225 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

I am writing on behalf of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey (PABS) to express our support of the intentions of House Bill #2235 entitled, “An Act providing a moratorium on leasing state forest lands for the purposes of natural gas exploration, drilling or production...” Specifically, the members of PABS are concerned about the potential environmental damage caused by natural gas extraction from the Marcellus shale rock formation. Much remains unknown about drilling in the Marcellus Formation, possibly the third largest gas reserve in the world. Impacts from the millions of gallons of water needed to drill each well need to be monitored and ways to treat the high concentration of chloride in the waste water need to be found. Toxicity of products used in the drilling process and potential radioactivity of Marcellus shale wastes (uranium, strontium, and selenium) also should be monitored. Additionally the infrastructure required to support well pads and drilling equipment will fragment intact forest landscapes that are required by many of our native wildlife species. In particular, we urge the moratorium to be used as an opportunity to minimize the fragmenting effects of the drilling and to establish best management practices for conserving our wildlife and forest resources. For example, the trained staff, equipment, and protocols needed to support robust independent monitoring of site development, production, retirement, and related environmental impacts should be in place prior to continuation of drilling activities. In addition, permit requirements should be reviewed to ensure they adequately protect environmental resources.

We are concerned about the rapid development occurring in the areas that contain the Marcellus Shale formation prior to a full understanding of all the environmental impacts to soil, water, plants, and wildlife. There is a strong need for independent, peer-reviewed science to ensure proper siting and management of Marcellus Shale drilling activities—especially on public lands. A statewide screening process for areas of high ecological risk and/or value also should be in place. Therefore, we advise that, until ecological issues are fully addressed, there be moratorium on leasing state forest lands for this purpose.

The Pennsylvania Biological Survey (PABS) is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to increase the knowledge of and foster the perpetuation of the natural biological diversity of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Our membership includes scientists, representatives of state

and federal agencies concerned with natural resource management, and representatives of non-profit conservation organizations.

Our members acknowledge the economic incentives for Marcellus Shale drilling especially in this time of economic crisis. However, we should not [sacrifice the legacy of Pennsylvania's natural resources for short-term economic gain] some alternate phrasings...sacrifice the quality and quantity of clean water and healthy forests for future generations...or... allow corporations unfettered access to natural resources without fully recognizing and mitigating the impacts, lest future taxpayers be burdened with the costs of restoring clean water and healthy forests). The PABS membership stands willing to work with you and members of the General Assembly to find the best solutions to protect our natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn G. Mahan', written in a cursive style.

Carolyn G. Mahan, PhD
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