

STEVE SANTARSIERO, MEMBER  
31ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

121-B EAST WING  
P.O. BOX 202031  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2031  
PHONE: (717) 787-5475  
FAX: (717) 787-6929

277 NORTH SYCAMORE STREET  
NEWTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 18940  
PHONE: (215) 988-3975  
FAX: (215) 988-4674

E-MAIL: REPSANTARSIERO@PAHOUSE.NET  
WEBSITE: WWW.PAHOUSE.COM/SANTARSIERO



House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

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COMMITTEES

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & ENERGY  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
STATE GOVERNMENT  
TRANSPORTATION

DELEGATION

SOUTHEAST

Carol Collier  
Executive Director  
Commission Members  
Delaware River Basin Commission  
P.O. Box 7360  
25 State Police Drive  
West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360

Dear Director Collier and Commission Members:

On behalf of my constituents, the residents of the Newtown-Yardley area in Bucks County, I write to urge the Commission to strengthen its proposed natural gas development regulations in order to protect the drinking water supply for these residents.

Since its inception in 1961, the DRBC has helped clean up polluted areas of the watershed and preserved the Delaware River through its Special Protection Waters Program that was put in place over the years because of the healthy conditions of the River. The entire 197-mile non-tidal Delaware River is now designated Special Protection Waters because of its high water quality. The Delaware River is also a Wild & Scenic River and every year kayak and canoers flock to this stretch of the River to enjoy with their families, supporting local jobs and many liveries along the Delaware River. In New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania alone, the total economic contribution of outdoor recreation exceeds \$38 million annually, generating over 350 thousand jobs and adding additional economic sales and tax revenues of more than \$32 million (Outdoor Industry Foundation, Fall 2006).

With these designations and such an important resource for Pennsylvanians, it is critical that the DRBC strengthens proposed gas rules being considered to ensure protection of the resource and the drinking water supply. The DRBC should conduct a cumulative impact analysis of natural gas development on the resources of the Delaware River Basin before finalizing or voting on gas drilling regulations. This research would help inform the regulations and is a critical step.

Thirty-six percent of the Delaware River Watershed is underlain with Marcellus shale so we cannot afford to develop this reserve without a clear picture and study in place. New York is in the process of doing a similar study so Pennsylvanians should also be given the same protections.

**In addition to the need for a cumulative impact analysis for the Delaware Basin, my specific recommendations for DRBC's draft gas drilling regulations include:**

- Prohibit treated flowback wastewater from being discharged into the waters of the Delaware River Basin.
- Require more stringent oversight of impoundments or holding ponds for wastewater storage in the Basin;
- Require more rigorous and extensive monitoring and the addition of tracers in fracking fluids to effectively track pollution events back to the source; require full disclosure to the public of chemicals being injected into the ground;
- Require larger setbacks and buffer zones for drilling operations to ensure operations are not located near floodplains or wetland areas where pollution can easily travel downstream in times of high water. Larger setbacks from private wells are also needed;
- Require restoration of a pad site to native forested conditions after extraction.

The Commission has a valuable opportunity to establish evidence-based and environmentally protective rules for the expansion of natural gas drilling in the region, in a way that will protect our drinking water now and our environment for generations. The natural gas has been trapped underground for thousands of years delaying this drilling for a few more months will not waste any economic opportunity but will instead provide substantial protection for the health of our region.

For these reasons, I join many of my constituents and colleagues in requesting the Commission strengthen the proposed regulation on natural gas drilling as explained above and delay a final vote on any proposed natural gas drilling regulations until there is a cumulative impact analysis of natural gas development on the resources of the Delaware River Basin.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions you may have on this important issue.

Sincerely,  


Steve Santarsiero