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COMMONWEALTH TRUSTEE FOR THE
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Dan Frankel

DATE: April 28, 2011

SUBJECT: **Legislation applying whistleblower protection to Marcellus drilling operations and other oil and gas operations**

In the near future, I will introduce legislation to apply the 1986 Whistleblower Protection law to employees of Oil and Gas Drillers regulated under the Oil and Gas Act (1984) and any other employee who renders a service or product to a well or well site.

Recognizing that we must partner with, and protect, workers who report misconduct in areas where public safety could be at risk, the Pennsylvania General Assembly has already extended whistleblower protection to laws relating to private sector employees and employers in Environmental Testing Labs (2002), Hazardous Sites Cleanups, recycling and landfills, low level radioactive waste and water and waste water systems. In non-environmental areas we have extended a variety of whistleblower protection to health care facilities and to actions related to Adult Protective Services.

The serious environmental and public safety concerns from natural gas drilling that have surfaced in the last few days point to the need for this legislation. This bill provides greater protection for our communities without imposing any new regulation on drillers. It simply protects individuals who report wrong-doing or waste to their employer or governmental authority, or who participate in an investigation, hearing or court action when asked.

Widespread support of Whistleblower legislation exists; every single member of the House voted this year to expand the Whistleblower law covering governmental workers. We have already extended this protection to many environmentally sensitive private sector facilities in the Commonwealth. It's important that we address the gap in protections for workers involved in oil and gas drilling.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Carrie Goodyea in my office via phone (717-705-1875) or email (cgoodyea@pahouse.net).