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MEMORANDUM




House of Representatives COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & ENERGY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
STATE GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION
DELEGATION
SOUTHEAST

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Steve Santarsiero 

DATE: May 16, 2012

SUBJECT: Marcellus Compact: Proposed legislation strengthening environmental safeguards in Marcellus Shale drilling activities

In the near future I will be introducing a bill to amend Act 13 of 2012, the Marcellus Shale law passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Tom Corbett in February. My bill, which is part of the Marcellus Compact legislative package, would establish stronger environmental protections with respect to Marcellus Shale drilling activities.

Act 13 fails to protect our critical environmental resources from the impacts of natural gas drilling activities. It sets bonding requirements so low that it guarantees taxpayers will be left holding the bag for abandoned well clean-up and reclamation if the drilling companies fail to live up to their responsibilities. Of equal concern, Act 13 establishes environmental buffers and setbacks that are inadequate to ensure that public water supplies are protected from potential pollution and contamination. Act 13 also fails to protect the environment by requiring DEP to grant a local variance when requested by a drilling company.

My bill corrects these problems. First, it doubles the bonding requirements of Act 13 to ensure that drillers are held accountable for any environmental damage they may cause. Next, it increases set back distances to ensure that drinking water is protected. Finally, my legislation will remove the requirement that DEP grant variances, keeping the zoning variance process at the local level where it belongs.

The Marcellus Compact is a six-bill legislative package that fixes the flawed Marcellus Shale law, known as Act 13 of 2012. The Marcellus Compact is our promise to put the interests of Pennsylvania taxpayers, workers and families first.

Please join me in sponsoring this important legislation, which makes the health, safety and well-being of Pennsylvanians a top priority while treating industry fairly. If you are interested in co-sponsoring this legislation, please contact Karon Haring at 717-787-3566 or kharing@pahouse.net.