

Mark W. Smith, Chairman  
John Sullivan, Vice Chairman  
Doug McLinko, Commissioner



Gayle Kershner, Chief Clerk  
Jonathan Foster, Solicitor

## Bradford County Commissioners

April 7, 2009

PA Department of Environmental Protection  
Secretary John Hanger  
400 Market St.  
Rachael Carson State Office Building, 16<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Secretary Hanger,

As the board of Bradford County Commissioners we are writing concerning your recent decision and action to eliminate our local Conservation Districts from the permit process of Erosion and Sedimentation as well as Stream and Wetlands as they relate to the natural gas industry. We find this move to be of the utmost concern and wish to convey that we are in complete disagreement with D.E.P.'s decision in this matter.

As commissioners, it is our opinion that our local conservation districts are the best equipped to responsibly receive, manage and issue permits. As this industry moves into our county our local communities will be affected in ways that some still do not grasp. By retaining some local control we believe we better serve the residents of our county and in doing so serve the industry better as well.

Some specific concerns we have in regards to your decision are as follows:

- The lack of input D.E.P. has sought in regards to this decision, both from the public and from conservations districts.
- The lack of staff, training and local contacts for D.E.P to adequately manage and issue these permits.
- The fact that this change will eliminate municipal notice of drilling activity.
- D.E.P. is telling local conservation districts to turn over all gas industry related records, which represent decisions made at the local level.

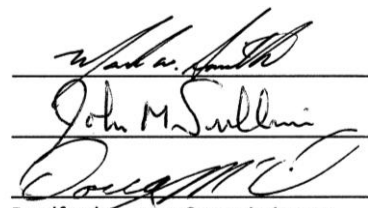
Locally, in Bradford County, there have been many instances in which the landowner and the industry were well served by the conservations districts experience, knowledge and local contacts. They have been able to avoid potential landowner disputes

regarding such things as pipeline or road placement. They have done their jobs to take into account erosion, sedimentation, streams and wetlands which these permits are meant to protect. The fast track approach D.E.P. is taking concerns us.

Our conservation district is respected among our local communities. Conservation district employees are a part of our communities and therefore carry with them the commitment, pride and knowledge to do the work with the best interests of their residents in mind.

We urge you to reconsider your present course of action. As commissioners we urge you to return the long entrusted duties and responsibilities to our local conservation district.

Respectfully,



Bradford County Commissioners

Cc:  
Edward Rendell, Governor  
Gene Yaw, Senator  
Tina Pickett, Representative  
Matt Baker, Representative  
County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania