

Corbett administration recommending stronger drilling rules

HARRISBURG (AP) — Gov. Tom Corbett's administration is recommending tougher laws to protect drinking water from pollution caused by booming natural gas exploration in Pennsylvania and to allow the state to wield harsher penalties against drilling companies that violate the law.

Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Michael Krancer made the recommendations in a letter sent Friday to Lt. Gov. Jim Cawley, who chairs the governor's Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission.

One recommendation would restrict well drilling within 1,000 feet of a public water supply. Currently, the law requires as little as 100 feet in many cases. Another would clarify the DEP's authority to revoke or refuse to issue a drilling permit under certain conditions, and allow it to require comprehensive tracking of drilling wastewater that would help the agency more accurately determine wastewater recycling rates.

Krancer also recommended expanding buffer requirements between gas wells and

private drinking water wells from 200 feet to 500 feet; boosting per-day penalties for violating the law and well-plugging insurance requirements; and extending a driller's presumptive liability for pollution or water loss from 1,000 feet to 2,500 feet from a gas well.

Many of those recommendations, if not all, have been under consideration in the Legislature since last year, with little action. Some of the bills would provide for stronger protections than the Corbett administration advocates.

The Marcellus Shale formation, which is considered the nation's largest-known natural gas reservoir, lies primarily beneath Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia and Ohio. Pennsylvania is the center of activity, with more than 3,000 wells drilled in the past three years and thousands more planned in the coming years as thick shale emerges as an affordable, plentiful and profitable source of natural gas.

When drilling companies began flocking to Pennsylvania several years ago to

exploit the Marcellus Shale formation, they were largely working under laws from the 1980s that never envisioned deep-drilling activity that is combined with high-volume hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and the recent innovation of horizontal drilling underground.

So far, the Legislature has done little to change that, other than pass a bill to require faster public disclosure of well-by-well gas production data from Marcellus Shale wells and debate the merits of a tax on gas extraction.

Pennsylvania remains the largest gas-drilling state without such a tax and Corbett opposes the imposition of one.

For decades, energy companies have drilled shallow oil and gas wells in Pennsylvania. But high-volume fracking involves the use of chemicals and produces millions of gallons of often-toxic wastewater, sparking fresh environmental concerns about the protection of public waterways and wells that provide drinking water to millions of people.

Last year, the Department of Environmental Protection won approval of tougher regulations on drilling safety, chemical disclosure and wastewater disposal and, before that, regulatory approval to increase permit fees so that it could pay the salaries of more inspectors and permitting staff.

But Pennsylvania has left a number of protections undone, some lawmakers say.

For instance, Pennsylvania's \$1,000 per day penalty on drillers for violating state regulations lag many other states. The \$25,000 per-company insurance bond that the state requires to plug abandoned wells is out of date, as well, since plugging a single well can cost as much as \$100,000.

In April, the DEP asked drilling companies to voluntarily stop taking the wastewater to riverside treatment plants that were ill-equipped to remove all the pollutants from it. The agency has not said whether the companies are complying with the May 19 deadline.

PCL

Continued from Page 1
Chamber Alliance.

In a letter to Redevelopment Authority of the City of McKeesport chairman Harry C. Walsh read at the McKeesport City Council meeting, Sunstein said a dispute over parking in a lot along Pacific Avenue was "the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back."

He said Walsh helped him make up his mind to move "to a larger facility out of the city."

Sunstein was responding to a letter from Walsh that said the lot in question would become "lease only" effective Wednesday. Neighbors said no cars were parked there Thursday.

Walsh said there was an arrangement in which Sunstein would dispose of a blighted warehouse along Arctic Avenue and Windsor Street and then take a lot along Pacific Avenue between Rebecca and Erie streets off RACM's hands.

Sunstein said there had been no such arrangement.

A move from the Tenth Ward would not necessarily end PCL's connection to the city. Sunstein's company also operates out of the former Babe Charapp Ford

dealership along Eden Park Boulevard.

According to Allegheny County real estate records, Sunstein's Sun Land LLC bought the former Charapp property in 2009 from Ford Leasing Development Co. for \$375,000.

Sunstein's letter did not mention the Eden Park Boulevard property in the city's Twelfth Ward.

West Mifflin is another possibility because the West Mifflin Area School District has a busing contract with PCL, as does the McKeesport Area School District.

"It doesn't ring a bell," borough council president Regis Stephenson said.

MASD business manager David Seropian declined comment about the dispute between PCL and the city.

"He's not indicated anything to us about moving," Seropian said. "Our contract said he is required to maintain a terminal/bus garage in the school district."

That would not necessarily mean McKeesport. The district also covers White Oak, Dravosburg, Versailles and South Versailles Township.

Staff Writers Michael DiVittorio and Eric Slagle contributed to this story.

Forward

Continued from Page 1

Homeowners in the Fallen Timber and Elizabeth Manor neighborhoods soon will see a rate increase of 20 cents per 1,000 gallons treated. They also will have to pay a higher quarterly service charge, which is going from \$39 to \$45.

Supervisor Dave Magiske noted it is the borough authority that is raising rates, not the township, which only handles billing

for sanitation. He said the township is being charged a higher rate by the borough authority and consequently has to pass the increase on to customers.

About 300 homes in the township are on the borough sanitation system.

Other parts of Forward Township that have sanitation are served by Elizabeth Township Sanitary Authority.

IRS chief apologizes for rude employees

WASHINGTON (AP) — The IRS commissioner publicly apologized Thursday to three victims of identity theft who said agency employees were rude or insensitive to them and added to their emotional stress.

Commissioner Douglas Shulman began his testimony before a House committee with the apology, saying he met with the victims privately and accepted their accounts of conversations with agency employees who were supposed to help them. The victims testified after Shulman's apology, but had met with him beforehand.

"We need to walk in each taxpayer's shoes," Shulman said. He promised to retrain employees who may encounter emotionally distraught taxpayers, whose names and Social Security numbers were stolen by thieves who filed for their refunds.

"We obviously need to do better," Shulman told a House Oversight and Government Reform subcommittee.

Tax returns filed by identity thieves have increased nearly five-fold between 2008 and 2010, from 51,702 incidents to 248,357, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Shulman said the IRS flags a fraudulent return once it's discovered, and gives extra scrutiny to any subsequent returns filed under the same Social Security number. He said the agency's best chance for prevention is a new personal identification number that will be assigned to victims.



A crime scene investigator stands outside the Yuma, Ariz., office of attorney Jerrold Shelley, who was one of six people killed in a shooting rampage Thursday. Shelley represented the 73-year-old suspect's ex-wife in a divorce proceeding.

Police say Arizona man killed 5 before taking his own life

YUMA, Ariz. (AP) — The report of the shooting came in around dawn from a town in southwestern Arizona — the opening salvo in a rampage that left six people dead over the next six hours.

The toll included the suspected gunman, 73-year-old Carey Hal Dyess, and the prominent Yuma attorney who represented his ex-wife in their divorce, Jerrold Shelley.

Police said Dyess also wounded one person in the shootings around Yuma, a city of about 91,000, before he was found dead of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Shelley was killed while packing up his office on his last day of work.

"This is not a random act," Yuma Police Chief Jerry Geier said. "These victims were targeted."

Yuma County Sheriff Ralph Ogden said the first shooting was reported shortly after 5 a.m. in Wellton, about 25 miles east of Yuma. The woman was in critical condition at a Phoenix hospital.

He said Dyess then fatally shot four people around town before driving to Yuma and killing Shelley at about 9:20 a.m. The bodies in Wellton were found between 8:20 and 9:45 a.m.

Police believe Dyess drove back toward Wellton, pulled over and fatally shot himself. His body was found at 10:47 a.m. inside a vehicle.

Neither police nor the sheriff would identify the

other four dead.

Shelley was killed in his downtown law office. Shelley represented Dyess' ex-wife in their 2006 divorce, which was Dyess' fifth.

Vida Florez, a Yuma attorney who knew Shelley, said she learned of the shooting after leaving court. She said she heard from a witness who spoke to the police about what happened inside the office.

"They said the shooter came in and told the secretary to 'Get out of here,'" Florez said. "She did, and he shot Jerry Shelley and he left."

Shelley also was one of the lawyers representing seven young men — three sets of brothers — who sued the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tucson after accusing a priest of repeatedly raping them when they were children.

A man and woman were found dead in a small farm house outside the nearby town of Wellton, said Yuma police Sgt. John Otero. The tree-shaded home was set back about 100 feet from a highway, with a cow pasture in front.

The downtown shooting prompted officials to block off a street and to lock down the nearby county courthouse and some schools. Those buildings were later reopened.

Court records show Dyess was involved in two civil court cases, one in Yuma and one in Wellton. A judge issued an order of protection against Dyess in one of the cases in 2006, and a

court clerk said it stemmed from Dyess' divorce. No information was immediately available on those cases.

Court records also show the 2006 divorce was Dyess' fifth, with the previous four divorces all in Washington state.

The divorce file showed that Theresa and Carey Dyess were married in Tombstone in May 2002 and the couple filed for divorce in 2006. Theresa Dyess alleged there had been domestic violence and she asked for and received an order of protection. No details of that incident were immediately available in the court file.

Carey Dyess later took out a protection order against Theresa Dyess, records showed.

The divorce was granted and the couple later agreed on a property split that gave Theresa Dyess the couple's home in Wellton once she bought out her former husband's share.

A lawyer for Carey Dyess filed a brief in October 2008 that said Carey Dyess had not been paid more than a year after the divorce became final.

"Mr. Dyess is sick and believes (his ex-wife) is 'holding out,' waiting for him to die, Yuma attorney Gregory Torok wrote in a court petition. The file shows the issue led to a final settlement two months later.

Dyess also took out an order of protection against a man he identified as 'my wife's boyfriend.'

Plaque

Continued from Page 1 and Rose Lorenzini. His aunt, Maria Shippers, still resides in Blythedale.

Elizabeth Township commissioner Robert Keefer said of the updates to the memorial, "Generations of men and women have been deployed to far off places like Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. Today, brave men and women are fighting the war on terrorism, serving in Afghanistan or wherever called upon to preserve the Liberty and Freedom we hold dear. We want to make certain their service and sacrifice are not forgotten. We also wanted to pay special homage to a soldier from Blythedale who made the ultimate sacrifice, giving his life in Vietnam in valiant service to this Country."

The stones at the monument were cleaned and the electrical system was updated as part of the renovation.

Flanigan said the new plaque and improvements to the memorial would not have been possible without the assistance of Elizabeth Township government and its sanitary authority, township Commissioner Keefer, Elizabeth Township Fire Department, West Newton VFW, Sunray Electric, Allegheny Power and the support of many community members.

Walk

Continued from Page 1 children's hand prints on top of a neutral, iridescent base of puzzle pieces.

"I was ready for a change," he said. "I thought it would be a really good idea to raise awareness."

Osinski went to fellow McKeesport officer Jon Harrison, who also works out of Area 51 Auto Worx in West Newton, for help with the redesign.

"I gave him a folder with a couple of ideas, and he went with it," Osinski said. "The guy's got skills. What he did is outstanding."

Osinski also credited Ken and Jamie Filotei of Dream Works Custom Alterations for preparing the motorcycle for its new paint job and rebuilding it when the job was complete.

For more on Autism Speaks, information is available online at www.autismspeaks.org.

Appeal

Continued from Page 1 assessment they had."

He said he received notice the trial is July 28 for Macy's.

Fetzko said Steel Valley has a total of \$98 million in property tax assessment appeals in the county courts.

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