



Pennsylvania Council of Churches Resolution on Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Extraction

WHEREAS: Natural gas extracted from the Marcellus Shale is a finite, carbon-based, energy resource, and its production creates significant impacts on the environment and economy of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, its communities and citizens;

WHEREAS: The Pennsylvania Council of Churches (Council) believes (1) all of creation is a gift from God, given to us to hold in sacred trust, and that it is our responsibility as humans to protect and preserve the environment for now and future generations, and (2) the government must play a role in promoting an environment that protects citizens and communities and provides benefits for the common good through protection and wise management of Pennsylvania's natural resources;

WHEREAS: The Council concurs with the words of Pennsylvania Constitution, Article 1, Section 27, which states:

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

WHEREAS: The Council has long been an advocate for the environment, (1) calling for the preservation, sustainable use, and wise management of the Commonwealth's natural resources through local, state and federal policies, and (2) calling for citizens to live in harmony with nature and avoid over-consumption and waste; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches ("Council") calls upon the House, the Senate, and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to enact and sign legislation and policies that:

- Protect public health and the environment in all aspects of Marcellus Shale natural gas production, site restoration, and delivery to customers, by:
 - requiring the use of best practices (i.e., those that best protect the environment and human health), and promoting comprehensive regulations, communications, and adequate staffing across government agencies; and
 - protecting workers and communities exposed to chemicals used in the extraction process by ensuring that comprehensive information about the chemicals and how to address exposure is widely available to all concerned;
- Encourage employment opportunities at the local level and economic development related to natural gas extraction that will result in new streams of revenue for state and local government agencies—but not at the expense of human health and tourism and fishing activities related to natural recreation areas;
- Impose a sufficient fee structure on natural gas extraction for permits, bonds, and surcharges for the funds to plug abandoned and orphan oil and gas wells that reflects projected costs to prevent a burden on Pennsylvania taxpayers;
- Create a severance tax on natural gas as a revenue source primarily designated for:
 - Monitoring and protection of public health;

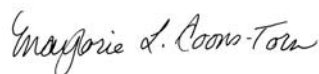
- Preservation and enhancement of natural resources;
- An escrow fund for supporting community adjustment as the industry grows and declines; and
- Research on the effects of natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale on the economy, environment, and public health of Pennsylvanians
- Provide for:
 - Transparency in all stages of exploration, drilling, and production;
 - Insuring public input into decision-making regarding the location of facilities and related pipelines;
 - Extending the timelines and parameters for testing water supplies, to include
 - Testing of surface waters, wells, aquifers and other groundwater that extends to include areas where contamination is possible because of the movement/path of these water supplies/sources; and
 - Provision of clean water supplies when individual and municipal water sources have been contaminated, and cleanup and restoration of other surface and groundwater that has been contaminated;
 - Balancing the rights of mineral and surface owners;
 - Preventing gas companies from forcing residents to sign leases through forced pooling requirements;¹ and
 - Establishing an efficient and effective oversight system for reporting potential violations and accidents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Council instruct the Director of Public Advocacy to communicate this resolution to the Governor of Pennsylvania, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the chairs of the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary, and to all Senators and House Representatives.

AND FINALLY BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Council encourages its member bodies to:

- Seek adherence to denominational resolutions on the environment similar to this Resolution;
- Provide educational materials and resources to their congregations to make them aware of, and to educate them about, the Marcellus Shale and its effects on the Commonwealth's environment and economy, and on the health and welfare of its citizens; and
- Encourage congregations and individuals to seek enactment of legislation and policies related to the Marcellus Shale that protect the Commonwealth and the common good.

Approved by the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches on this 26th day of October, 2010.



The Rev. Dr. Marja Coons-Torn, President
Board of Directors
Pennsylvania Council of Churches

With thanks and appreciation to the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters for much of the language contained in this resolution.

¹ Forced pooling is a strategy embraced by many drillers that would require property owners who do not wish to engage in leases to do so if most or all of their neighbors have done so.