
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 534 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY HUTCHINSON, BROOKS, ARGALL, MENSCH, PITTMAN,
MARTIN, VOGEL, YAW, J. WARD, LANGERHOLC AND STEFANO,
APRIL 8, 2021

REFERRED TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, APRIL 8, 2021

AN ACT

1 Relating to conventional wells and the development of oil, gas
2 and coal; imposing powers and duties on the Department of
3 Environmental Protection; and providing for preliminary
4 provisions, for general requirements, for underground gas
5 storage, for enforcement and remedies, for related funds,
6 parties and activities and for miscellaneous provisions.

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13 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
14 hereby enacts as follows:

15 CHAPTER 1

16 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

17 Section 101. Short title.

18 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Conventional
19 Oil and Gas Wells Act.

20 Section 102. Declaration of purpose.

21 The purposes of this act are to:

22 (1) Permit the optimal development of the oil and gas
23 resources of Pennsylvania consistent with the property rights
24 of owners of the oil and gas resources and the protection of
25 the health, safety, environment and property of the residents
26 of this Commonwealth.

27 (2) Protect the safety of personnel and facilities
28 employed in the exploration, development, storage and
29 production of natural gas or oil or the mining of coal.

30 (3) Protect the safety and property rights of persons

1 residing in areas where exploration, development, storage or
2 production occurs.

3 (4) Protect the natural resources, environmental rights,
4 property rights and values secured by the Constitution of
5 Pennsylvania.

6 (5) Provide a flexible and cost-effective way to
7 implement and enforce the provisions of this act.

8 Section 103. Scope of act.

9 This act relates to conventional wells and well sites only.

10 Section 104. Definitions.

11 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
12 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
13 context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 "Abandoned well." Any of the following:

15 (1) A well that has not been used to produce, extract or
16 inject gas, petroleum or other liquid within the preceding 12
17 months.

18 (2) A well for which equipment necessary for production,
19 extraction or injection has been permanently removed.

20 (3) A well, considered dry, not equipped for production
21 within 60 days after drilling, redrilling or deepening,
22 except that it shall not include a well granted inactive
23 status.

24 "Alteration." An operation which changes the physical
25 characteristics of the well bore, including removing, repairing
26 or changing the casing. For the purpose of this act only, the
27 term shall not include:

28 (1) Repairing or replacing of casing if the activity
29 does not affect the depth or diameter of the well bore, the
30 use or purpose of the well does not change and the activity

1 complies with regulations promulgated under this act.
2 However, this exclusion shall not apply to production casings
3 in coal areas when the production casings are also the coal
4 protection casings and shall not apply when the method of
5 repairing or replacing the casing would affect the coal
6 protection casing.

7 (2) Stimulation of a well.

8 "Anti-icing." Brine applied directly to a paved road prior
9 to a precipitation event.

10 "Bridge." An obstruction placed or occurring naturally in a
11 well at a specified depth.

12 "Building." An occupied structure with walls and roof within
13 which persons live or customarily work.

14 "Casing." A string or strings of pipe commonly placed in
15 wells drilled for natural gas or petroleum.

16 "Cement" or "cement grout." Hydraulic cement properly mixed
17 with water only or a mixture of materials adequate for bonding
18 or sealing of well bores as approved by regulations promulgated
19 under this act.

20 "Coal mine." Operations in a coal seam, which include the
21 excavated and abandoned portions as well as the places actually
22 being worked, all underground workings and shafts, slopes,
23 tunnels and other ways and openings and all shafts, slopes,
24 tunnels and other openings in the course of being sunk or
25 driven, together with all roads and facilities connected with
26 them below the surface.

27 "Coal operator." A person who proposes or has a permit to
28 operate or operates a coal mine either as owner or lessee.

29 "Completion of a well." The date after treatment, if any,
30 that the well is properly equipped for production of oil or gas,

1 or, if the well is dry, the date the well is abandoned.

2 "Conventional well." As follows:

3 (1) A bore hole drilled or being drilled for the purpose
4 of or to be used for construction of a well regulated under
5 this act that is not an unconventional well, irrespective of
6 technology or design.

7 (2) The term includes, but is not limited to, the
8 following:

9 (i) Wells drilled to produce oil.

10 (ii) Wells drilled to produce natural gas from
11 formations other than shale formations.

12 (iii) Wells drilled to produce natural gas from
13 shale formations located above the base of the Elk Group
14 or its stratigraphic equivalent.

15 (iv) Wells drilled to produce natural gas from shale
16 formations located below the base of the Elk Group where
17 natural gas can be produced at economic flow rates or in
18 economic volumes without the use of vertical or
19 nonvertical well bores stimulated by hydraulic fracture
20 treatments or multilateral well bores or other techniques
21 to expose more of the formation to the well bore.

22 (v) Irrespective of formation, wells drilled for
23 collateral purposes, such as monitoring, geologic
24 logging, secondary and tertiary recovery or disposal
25 injection.

26 "Council." The Pennsylvania Grade Crude Development Advisory
27 Council.

28 "De-icing." Brine applied directly to a paved road after a
29 precipitation event.

30 "Department." The Department of Environmental Protection of

1 the Commonwealth.

2 "Drilling." The drilling or redrilling of a well or the
3 deepening of an existing well.

4 "Dust control." The process of applying a material to the
5 surface of a dirt road for the purpose of mitigating air
6 pollution.

7 "Fresh groundwater." Water in that portion of the generally
8 recognized hydrologic cycle which occupies the pore spaces and
9 fractures of saturated subsurface materials.

10 "Gas." A fluid, either combustible or noncombustible, which
11 is produced in a natural state from the earth and which
12 maintains a gaseous or rarified state at standard temperature of
13 60 degrees Fahrenheit and pressure 14.7 PSIA, a manufactured
14 gas, byproduct gas or mixture of gases.

15 "Inactivate." To shut off the vertical movement of gas in a
16 gas storage well by means of a temporary plug or other suitable
17 device or by injecting bentonitic mud or other equally nonporous
18 material into the well.

19 "Linear foot." A unit of measurement in a straight line on a
20 horizontal plane.

21 "Noncoal area." An area where there are no workable coal
22 seams.

23 "Notice." For the purpose of providing required notice to
24 the department, includes notice provided by telephone, e-mail or
25 other available electronic means.

26 "Oil" or "petroleum." Hydrocarbons in liquid form at a
27 standard temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit and pressure of
28 14.7 PSIA.

29 "Operating coal mine." The portion of a workable coal seam
30 which is covered by an underground mining permit issued by the

1 department.

2 "Operating well." A well not plugged and abandoned.

3 "Orphan well." A well abandoned prior to April 18, 1985,
4 that has not been affected or operated by the present owner or
5 operator and from which the present owner, operator or lessee
6 has received no economic benefit, except only as a landowner or
7 recipient of a royalty interest from the well.

8 "Outside coal boundaries." When used in conjunction with the
9 term "operating coal mine," the boundaries of the coal acreage
10 assigned to a coal mine under an underground mine permit issued
11 by the department.

12 "Owner." A person who owns, manages, leases, controls or
13 possesses a well or coal property; except that for purposes of
14 sections 303(b)(4) and (5) and 310, the term "owner" shall not
15 include those owners or possessors of surface real property on
16 which the abandoned well is located who did not participate or
17 incur costs in the drilling or extraction operation of the
18 abandoned well and had no right of control over the drilling or
19 extraction operation of the abandoned well. The term shall not
20 apply to orphan wells except where the department determines a
21 prior owner or operator benefited from the well as provided in
22 section 310(a).

23 "Person." An individual, association, partnership,
24 corporation, political subdivision, agency of the Federal or
25 State Government or other legal entity.

26 "Pillar." A solid block of coal surrounded by either active
27 mine workings or a mined-out area.

28 "Plat." A map, drawing or print accurately drawn to scale
29 showing the proposed or existing location of a well or wells.

30 "Prewetting." Mixing brine with antiskid material prior to

1 roadway application.

2 "Retreat mining." The removal of coal pillars, ribs and
3 stumps that remain after the development mining has been
4 completed in a section of a coal mine.

5 "Secretary." The Secretary of Environmental Protection of
6 the Commonwealth.

7 "Well." A bore hole drilled or being drilled for the purpose
8 of or to be used for producing, extracting or injecting gas,
9 petroleum or other liquid related to oil or gas production or
10 storage, including brine disposal, but excluding bore holes
11 drilled to produce potable water. The term does not include:

12 (1) A mine bore as referenced in 25 Pa. Code Ch. 73
13 (relating to standards for onlot sewage treatment
14 facilities).

15 (2) A bore hole drilled or being drilled for the purpose
16 of or to be used for systems of monitoring, producing or
17 extracting gas from solid waste disposal facilities, as long
18 as the wells are subject to the act of July 7, 1980 (P.L.380,
19 No.97), known as the Solid Waste Management Act, and do not
20 penetrate a workable coal seam. The term also does not
21 include a bore hole drilled or being drilled for the purpose
22 of or to be used for degasifying coal seams if the following
23 conditions are satisfied:

24 (i) (A) the bore hole is used to vent methane to
25 the outside atmosphere from an operating coal mine;

26 (B) the bore hole is regulated as part of the
27 mining permit under the act of June 22, 1937

28 (P.L.1987, No.394), known as The Clean Streams Law,
29 and the act of May 31, 1945 (P.L.1198, No.418), known
30 as the Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation

1 Act; and

2 (C) the bore hole is drilled by the operator of
3 the operating coal mine for the purpose of increased
4 safety; or

5 (ii) the bore hole is used to vent methane to the
6 outside atmosphere under a Federally funded or State-
7 funded abandoned mine reclamation project.

8 "Well operator" or "operator." All of the following:

9 (1) A person designated as the well operator or operator
10 on the permit application or well registration.

11 (2) Where a permit or registration was not issued, a
12 person who locates, drills, operates, alters or plugs a well
13 or reconditions a well with the purpose of production from
14 the well.

15 (3) In cases where a well is used in connection with the
16 underground storage of gas, a storage operator.

17 "Well site." The areas occupied by equipment or facilities
18 necessary for or incidental to drilling, completion, production
19 of or plugging a well.

20 "Wetland." An area that is inundated or saturated by surface
21 or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to
22 support, and that under normal circumstances supports, a
23 prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated
24 soil conditions, including swamps, marshes, bogs and similar
25 areas.

26 "Workable coal seams." The term includes:

27 (1) A coal seam in fact being mined in the area in
28 question under this act by underground methods.

29 (2) A coal seam which, in the judgment of the
30 department, can reasonably be expected to be mined by

1 underground methods.

2 CHAPTER 3

3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

4 Section 301. Well permits.

5 (a) Permit required.--Except as provided under subsection
6 (j), a person shall not drill a well or alter an existing well
7 without having first obtained a well permit under this section
8 and shall not operate an abandoned or orphan well unless the
9 person is in compliance with subsection (m). A copy of the
10 permit shall be kept at the well site during drilling or
11 alteration of the well. No person shall be required to obtain a
12 permit to redrill a nonproducing well if:

13 (1) the redrilling has been evaluated and approved as
14 part of an order from the department authorizing the cleaning
15 out and plugging or replugging of a nonproducing well, under
16 section 13(c) of the act of December 18, 1984 (P.L.1069,
17 No.214), known as the Coal and Gas Resource Coordination Act;
18 and

19 (2) the redrilling is incidental to the plugging or
20 replugging operation and the well subsequently is plugged
21 within 15 days of redrilling.

22 (b) Plat.--

23 (1) The permit application shall be accompanied by a
24 plat prepared by a certified professional in erosion and
25 sediment control, a competent engineer or a competent
26 surveyor on forms to be furnished by the department showing
27 the following:

28 (i) The political subdivision and county in which
29 the tract of land upon which the well to be drilled is
30 located.

1 (ii) The name of the surface landowner of record and
2 lessor.

3 (iii) The names of all surface landowners or water
4 purveyors whose water supplies are within 1,000 feet of
5 the proposed well location.

6 (iv) The name of the owner of record or operator of
7 all known underlying workable coal seams, if any.

8 (v) The acreage in the tract to be drilled.

9 (vi) The proposed location of the well determined by
10 survey.

11 (vii) The courses and distances of the location from
12 two or more permanent identifiable points or landmarks on
13 the tract boundary corners.

14 (viii) The proposed angle and direction of the well,
15 if the well is to be deviated substantially from a
16 vertical course.

17 (ix) The number or other identification to be given
18 to the well.

19 (x) The workable coal seams, if any, underlying the
20 tract of land upon which the well is to be drilled or
21 altered, which are to be cased off in accordance with
22 section 307.

23 (xi) Other information needed by the department to
24 administer this act.

25 (2) The applicant shall forward, by certified mail, a
26 copy of the plat to the surface landowner, all surface
27 landowners or water purveyors whose water supplies are within
28 1,000 feet of the proposed well location, the owner and
29 lessee, if any, of the workable coal seams and every coal
30 operator required to be identified on the well permit

1 application and shall submit proof of the notification with
2 the well permit application. With respect to surface
3 landowners, notification shall be accomplished under this
4 section by sending notice to the persons to whom the tax
5 notices for the surface property are sent, as indicated in
6 the assessment books in the county in which the property is
7 located. With respect to surface landowners or water
8 purveyors whose water supplies are within 1,000 feet of the
9 proposed well location, notification shall be made on forms
10 and in a manner prescribed by the department sufficient to
11 identify, for those persons, the rights afforded them under
12 section 308 and the advisability of taking their own
13 predrilling or prealteration survey. With respect to the coal
14 operator, lessee or owner, if any, notification shall be
15 accomplished under this section by sending notice to the
16 persons to whom tax notices for the workable coal seams are
17 sent, as indicated in the assessment books, if available, or
18 as indicated in the records of the recorder of deeds office
19 in the county in which the seams are located. If certified
20 mail or notification is returned undeliverable, the applicant
21 shall include a completed affidavit attesting to the
22 attempted delivery, which shall satisfy the notification
23 requirements under this section.

24 (3) If the applicant submits to the department written
25 approval of the proposed well location by the surface
26 landowner and the coal operator, lessee or owner, if any, of
27 the coal underlying the proposed well location and no
28 objections are raised by the department within 15 days of
29 filing or if no approval has been submitted and no objections
30 are made to the proposed well location within 15 days from

1 receipt of the notice by the surface landowner and the coal
2 operator, lessee or owner, if any, or by the department, the
3 approval shall be filed and become a permanent record of the
4 location, subject to inspection at any time by an interested
5 person.

6 (c) Applicants.--If the applicant for a well permit is a
7 corporation, partnership or a person that does not reside in
8 this Commonwealth, the applicant shall designate an agent for
9 the operator who shall be the attorney in fact for the operator
10 and who shall be a resident of this Commonwealth upon whom
11 notices, orders or other communications issued under this act or
12 the regulations adopted under this act may be served and upon
13 whom process may be served. Every well operator required to
14 designate an agent under this section shall, within five days
15 after the termination of the designation, notify the department
16 of the termination and designate a new agent.

17 (d) Permit fee.--An application for a well permit shall be
18 accompanied by a permit fee, established by regulation of the
19 department, which bears a reasonable relationship to the cost of
20 administering this act.

21 (e) Issuance of permit.--The department shall issue a permit
22 within 45 days of the submission of a permit application unless
23 the department denies the permit application for one or more of
24 the reasons set forth under this subsection, provided that the
25 department shall have the right to extend the period for 15 days
26 for cause shown upon notification to the applicant of the
27 reasons for that extension. The department may impose permit
28 terms and conditions as are necessary to assure compliance with
29 this act and other laws administered by the department. The
30 department has the burden of proving that the conditions were

1 necessary to protect against probable harmful impact to health,
2 safety, environment or property and shall allow the optimal
3 development of oil and gas resources consistent with the
4 property rights of the owners of the oil and gas resources. The
5 department shall have the authority to deny a permit to a person
6 for the following reasons:

7 (1) The well site for which a permit is requested is in
8 violation of the provisions of this act or if issuance of a
9 permit would result in a violation of this act or any other
10 applicable environmental statute, rule or regulation.

11 (2) The permit application is incomplete.

12 (3) Unresolved objections to the well location by a coal
13 mine owner or operator remain.

14 (4) The requirements of section 315 have not been met.

15 (5) The applicant, with respect to other well or wells
16 which the applicant operates, is in continuing violation of
17 this act or other applicable statute administered by the
18 department. The right of the department to deny a permit
19 under this paragraph shall not be effective until a final
20 administrative determination has been made of the violations
21 and no appeal is pending in which a stay has been granted.

22 (f) Drilling.--Upon issuance of a permit, the well operator
23 may proceed with the drilling of the well at the location shown
24 on the plat after providing the department 24 hours' notice of
25 the date that drilling will commence. In noncoal areas where
26 more than one well is to be drilled as part of the same
27 development project, only the first well of the project need be
28 located by survey. The remaining wells of the project shall be
29 shown on the plat in a manner prescribed by regulation. Prior to
30 drilling each of the additional project wells, the well operator

1 shall notify the department of the operator's intention and
2 provide reasonable notice of the date drilling will commence.
3 If, before or during the drilling of a well which is not within
4 the outside boundaries of an operating coal mine, a well
5 operator encounters conditions of a nature as to render drilling
6 of the bore hole or portions of the bore hole more hazardous
7 than usual or otherwise difficult, the well operator shall have
8 the right upon oral notice to the department to immediately plug
9 all or portions of the bore hole, if drilling has occurred, and
10 to commence a new bore hole not more than 50 feet from the
11 location shown on the plat if the location of the new bore hole
12 does not violate section 305 and if, for wells subject to the
13 act of July 25, 1961 (P.L.825, No.359), known as the Oil and Gas
14 Conservation Law, the new location complies with existing law,
15 regulation or spacing order and if the new bore hole is a
16 minimum of 330 feet distant from the nearest lease boundary. If
17 drilling occurred at an original bore hole, within 10 days of
18 commencement of the new bore hole, the well operator shall file
19 with the department a written notice of intention to plug, a
20 well record, a completion report, a plugging certificate for the
21 original bore hole and an amended plat for the new bore hole.
22 The well operator shall forward a copy of the amended plat to
23 the surface landowner identified on the well permit application
24 within 10 days of commencement of the new well bore.

25 (g) Posting.--The well permit number and operator's name,
26 address and telephone number shall be posted at the drilling
27 site in a conspicuous manner prior to commencement of drilling.

28 (h) Labeling.--The well operator shall install the permit
29 number issued by the department in a legible, visible and
30 permanent manner at the well upon completion.

1 (i) Expiration.--Well permits issued for drilling of wells
2 covered under this act shall expire three years after issuance
3 unless operations for drilling the well are commenced within the
4 period and pursued with due diligence or unless the permit is
5 renewed in accordance with regulations of the department. If
6 drilling is commenced during the three-year period, the well
7 permit shall remain in force until the well is plugged in
8 accordance with section 310 or the permit is revoked. A drilling
9 permit issued prior to April 18, 1985, for a well which is an
10 operating well on April 18, 1985, shall remain in force as a
11 well permit until the well is plugged in accordance with section
12 310. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to rescind
13 the provisions pertaining to drilling permits contained in the
14 Oil and Gas Conservation Law.

15 (j) Exceptions.--The Environmental Quality Board may
16 establish by regulation certain categories of alterations of
17 permitted or registered wells for which the permitting
18 requirements of this section shall not apply. The well operator
19 or owner who proposes to conduct the alteration activity shall
20 first obtain a permit from the department. Requirements for
21 modifications shall be as the Environmental Quality Board shall
22 require by regulation.

23 (k) No transfer permitted.--No permit issued under this
24 section may be transferred without prior approval of the
25 department. Requests for approval of transfer shall be made on
26 forms or in a manner prescribed by the department. The
27 department shall approve or deny the transfer request within 45
28 days of receipt of a complete and accurate application. The
29 department shall only have the authority to deny the request for
30 the reasons set forth under subsection (e)(4) or (5). Approval

1 of the transfer request shall permanently transfer
2 responsibility to plug the well under section 310 to the
3 recipient of the transferred permit or registration.

4 (l) Accelerated approval.--The department may establish a
5 procedure for accelerated approval of well permit applications
6 in hardship cases, as defined by regulation of the Environmental
7 Quality Board, consistent with the requirements of this act.

8 (m) Regulations.--The Environmental Quality Board may
9 establish by regulation requirements for permitting and
10 operation of abandoned or orphan wells. A person who proposes to
11 conduct abandoned or orphan well operations shall first obtain a
12 permit to adopt and operate an abandoned or orphan well.

13 Section 302. Permit objections.

14 (a) General rule.--If a well location referred to in section
15 301(b) is made so that the well, when drilled, will be located
16 on a tract whose surface is owned by a person other than the
17 well operator, the surface landowner affected shall be notified
18 of the intent to drill and have right to file objections, in
19 accordance with section 701, based solely on an assertion that
20 the well location violates section 305 or that information in
21 the application is untrue in any material respect, within 15
22 days of the receipt by the surface owner of the plat provided
23 for in section 301(b). Receipt of notice by the surface owner
24 shall be presumed to have occurred 15 days from the date of the
25 certified mailing when the well operator submits a copy of the
26 certified mail receipt sent to the surface owner and an
27 affidavit certifying that the address of the surface owner to
28 which notice was sent is the same address that is listed in the
29 assessment books in the county in which the property is located.
30 If no objections are filed or none are raised by the department

1 within 15 days after receipt of the plat by the surface
2 landowner, or if written approval by the surface landowner is
3 filed with the department and no objections are raised by the
4 department within 15 days of filing, the department shall
5 proceed to issue or deny the permit.

6 (b) Special circumstances.--If a well location referred to
7 in section 301(b) is made so that the well, when drilled, will
8 penetrate anywhere within the outside coal boundaries of:

9 (1) an operating coal mine; or

10 (2) a coal mine already projected and platted but not
11 yet being operated for which a technically complete mine
12 permit application has been filed with the department or
13 within 1,000 linear feet beyond the boundaries and the well,
14 when drilled, or the pillar of coal around the well will, in
15 the reasonable opinion of the coal owner or operator,
16 endanger the mine, the coal owner or operator affected shall
17 have the right to file objections in accordance with section
18 701 to the proposed location within 15 days of the receipt by
19 the coal operator of the plat provided for in section 301(b).
20 An alternative location at which the proposed well could be
21 drilled to overcome the objections shall be indicated if
22 possible. If no objections to the proposed location are filed
23 or if none are raised by the department within 15 days after
24 receipt of the plat by the coal operator or owner, or if
25 written approval by the coal operator or owner of the
26 location is filed with the department and no objections are
27 raised by the department within 15 days of filing, the
28 department shall proceed to issue or deny the permit.

29 (c) Procedure upon objection.--If an objection is filed by a
30 coal operator or owner or is made by the department, the

1 department shall fix a time and place for a conference in
2 accordance with section 701 not more than 10 days from the date
3 of the service of the objections on the well operator, at which
4 conference the well operator and coal operators or owners
5 present or represented shall consider the objections and attempt
6 to agree upon a location. If the parties fail to agree upon a
7 location, the department shall, by an appropriate order,
8 determine a location on a tract of land as near to the original
9 location as possible where, in the judgment of the department,
10 the well can be safely drilled without unduly interfering with
11 or endangering the mine as described in subsection (b). The new
12 location, as agreed upon by the parties or as determined by the
13 department, shall be indicated on the plat on file with the
14 department and shall become a permanent record, whereupon the
15 department shall proceed to issue or deny the permit.

16 (d) Survey.--Within 120 days after the commencement of
17 drilling operations, the coal operator shall accurately locate
18 the well by a closed survey on the same datum as the mine
19 workings or coal boundaries are mapped and file the results of
20 the survey with the department and forward by certified mail a
21 copy to the well operator.

22 Section 303. Orphan well adoption and identification.

23 (a) Orphan wells.--

24 (1) Well owners or operators who discover abandoned
25 wells on property purchased or leased by the well owners and
26 operators shall identify the well to the department within 60
27 days of discovery and advise the department that they are
28 seeking classification of the well as an orphan well. No fee
29 shall be required for the identification.

30 (2) Operators shall undertake reasonable diligence to

1 identify abandoned, orphan, active or inactive wells through
2 review of the department's public well databases and field
3 examination prior to hydraulic fracturing. The department may
4 not require operators to undertake landowner surveys for
5 these wells.

6 (3) (i) During hydraulic fracturing, the operator shall
7 periodically monitor orphan, abandoned, active or
8 inactive wells that are located within the area of the
9 operator's oil and gas operating interest and are within:

10 (A) two hundred feet of the top hole location of
11 an oil well being hydraulically fractured and within
12 400 feet of a gas well being hydraulically fractured;
13 or

14 (B) half the well field spacing if the spacing
15 exceeds the distances under clause (A).

16 (ii) The area of monitoring for horizontal
17 conventional wells shall include wells within half the
18 well field distances of the lateral portion of the wells.
19 An operator shall provide notice to the department if the
20 well being hydraulically fractured communicates with the
21 monitored well in a manner that has the potential to
22 cause an adverse environmental impact.

23 (4) A person who is not a well owner or operator and who
24 discovers an abandoned well on property owned or leased by
25 the person shall identify the well to the department within
26 60 days of discovery and advise the department that the
27 person is seeking classification of the well as an orphan
28 well. No fee shall be required for the identification.

29 (5) A person who proposes to conduct orphan well
30 operations shall first obtain a permit to adopt and operate

1 an orphan well in accordance with section 301.

2 (b) Information.--Information regarding wells to be
3 identified shall be provided on forms or in a manner prescribed
4 by the department and shall include:

5 (1) The name and address of the well operator and, if
6 the well operator is a person that does not reside in this
7 Commonwealth, the name and address of an agent for the
8 operator upon whom notices, orders, process or other
9 communications issued under this act may be served.

10 (2) The well name and the location of the well indicated
11 by a point on a 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey
12 topographic map or any other location description sufficient
13 to enable the department to locate the well on the ground.

14 (3) The approximate date of the drilling and completion
15 of the well and the approximate depth of the well, producing
16 horizons, well construction information and driller's logs,
17 if available.

18 (4) An indemnity bond, an alternative fee in lieu of
19 bonding or other evidence of financial security submitted by
20 the well operator and deemed appropriate by the department as
21 satisfying the requirements of section 315. No bond,
22 alternative fee or other evidence of financial security shall
23 be required for identification of an orphan well.

24 (c) Guidelines.--The department may adopt and promulgate
25 guidelines designed to ensure a fair implementation of this
26 section which recognizes the practical difficulties of locating
27 unpermitted wells and complying with the reporting requirements
28 of this act.

29 Section 304. Inactive status.

30 (a) General rule.--Upon application, the department shall

1 grant, within 60 days of receipt of the application, inactive
2 status for a permitted or registered well if the following
3 requirements are met:

4 (1) The condition of the well is sufficient to prevent
5 damage to the producing zone or contamination of fresh water
6 or other natural resources or surface leakage of any
7 substance.

8 (2) The condition of the well is sufficient to stop the
9 vertical flow of fluids or gas within the well bore and is
10 adequate to protect freshwater aquifers, unless the well
11 poses a threat to the health and safety of persons or
12 property or to the environment.

13 (3) The operator anticipates future use of the well for
14 primary or enhanced recovery or future gas storage, or the
15 operator anticipates the construction of a pipeline for
16 approved disposal or other appropriate uses related to oil
17 and gas well production.

18 (4) The applicant satisfies the bonding requirements of
19 sections 303 and 315, except that the department may require
20 additional financial security for a well on which an
21 alternative fee is being paid in lieu of bonding under
22 section 315(d).

23 (b) Monitoring.--The owner or operator of a well granted
24 inactive status shall be responsible for monitoring the
25 mechanical integrity of the well to ensure that the requirements
26 of subsection (a)(1) and (2) are met and shall report the same
27 on an annual basis to the department in a manner and form as the
28 department shall prescribe by regulation. A well granted
29 inactive status under subsection (a) shall be plugged when the
30 well no longer meets the requirements of subsection (a).

1 (c) Return to active status.--An owner or operator who has
2 been granted inactive status for a well which is returned to
3 active status shall notify the department that the well has been
4 returned to active status. The owner or operator may make
5 application to return the well to inactive status in accordance
6 with subsection (a).

7 (d) Revocation of inactive status.--

8 (1) The department shall have the right to revoke
9 inactive status and order the immediate plugging of a well
10 under any of the following circumstances:

11 (i) When the well is in violation of this act or
12 rules or regulations promulgated under this act.

13 (ii) When the owner or operator demonstrates
14 inability to perform the owner's or operator's
15 obligations under this act.

16 (iii) When the owner or operator becomes financially
17 insolvent.

18 (iv) Upon receipt by the department of notice of
19 bankruptcy proceedings by the permittee.

20 (2) If the department revokes inactive status, a well
21 owner or operator aggrieved by the denial shall have the
22 right to appeal the denial to the Environmental Hearing Board
23 within 30 days of receipt of the revocation. Upon cause shown
24 by a well owner or operator, the Environmental Hearing Board
25 may grant a supersedeas under section 4 of the act of July
26 13, 1988 (P.L.530, No.94), known as the Environmental Hearing
27 Board Act, to allow the well to retain inactive status during
28 the period of appeal.

29 Section 305. Well location restrictions.

30 (a) General rule.--Wells may not be drilled within 200 feet

1 measured horizontally from an existing building or existing
2 water well without the written consent of the owner of the
3 existing building or existing water well. If the distance
4 restriction would deprive the owner of the oil and gas rights or
5 the right to produce or share in the oil or gas underlying the
6 surface tract, the well operator may be granted a variance from
7 the distance restriction upon submission of a plan which
8 identifies the additional measures, facilities or practices to
9 be employed during well site construction, drilling and
10 operations. The variance, if granted, shall include additional
11 terms and conditions as the department requires as necessary to
12 ensure the safety and protection of affected persons and
13 property. The provisions may include insurance, bonding and
14 indemnification, as well as technical requirements.

15 (b) Limitation.--No well site may be prepared or well
16 drilled within 100 feet measured horizontally from a stream,
17 spring or body of water as identified on the most current 7.5-
18 minute topographic quadrangle map of the United States
19 Geological Survey or within 100 feet of wetlands greater than
20 one acre in size. The department may waive the distance
21 restrictions upon submission of a plan which identifies the
22 additional measures, facilities or practices to be employed
23 during well site construction, drilling and operations. The
24 waiver, if granted, shall impose permit conditions as are
25 necessary to protect the waters of this Commonwealth.

26 (c) Protection of threatened or endangered species.--Well
27 permit applicants are obligated to determine impacts to
28 threatened or endangered species in accordance with applicable
29 law. The department shall, on making a determination on a well
30 permit, consider the impact of the proposed well on habitats of

1 threatened or endangered species that are listed in a final
2 rulemaking by a Federal or State agency with statutory authority
3 to list species for protection.

4 Section 306. Well site restoration.

5 (a) General rule.--Each oil or gas well owner or operator
6 shall restore the land surface within the area disturbed in
7 siting, drilling, completing and producing the well.

8 (b) Plan.--During and after all earthmoving or soil
9 disturbing activities, including, but not limited to, activities
10 related to siting, drilling, completing, producing and plugging
11 the well, erosion and sedimentation control measures shall be
12 implemented in accordance with an erosion and sedimentation
13 control plan prepared in accordance with the act of June 22,
14 1937 (P.L.1987, No.394), known as The Clean Streams Law. For
15 purpose of determining the five-acre permit threshold under the
16 Clean Streams Law, the earth disturbance footprint of the well
17 site may be combined with a portion of the access road only if
18 it is directly connected to the well site and will be
19 constructed at the same time as the well site. Well sites may be
20 restored prior to drilling and completing the well.

21 (c) Pits, drilling supplies and equipment.--Within nine
22 months after completion of drilling of a well, the owner or
23 operator shall restore the well site, remove or fill all pits
24 used to contain produced fluids or industrial wastes and remove
25 all drilling supplies and equipment not needed for production or
26 repairs. Drilling supplies and equipment not needed for
27 production or repairs may be stored on the well site consistent
28 with the property rights of the owner of the oil and gas
29 resources or if the express written consent of the surface
30 landowner is obtained or is contained in historical documents.

1 (d) Production and storage equipment.--Within nine months
2 after plugging a well, the owner or operator shall remove all
3 production or storage facilities, supplies and equipment and
4 restore the well site.

5 (e) Clean Streams Law.--Restoration activities required by
6 this act or in regulations promulgated under this act shall not
7 be more stringent than applicable provisions of The Clean
8 Streams Law. There shall be no mandatory requirement to return
9 well sites to approximate original contours or conditions.

10 (f) Violation.--Failure to restore the well site as required
11 in this act or in regulations promulgated under this act is a
12 violation of this act.

13 (g) Extension of restoration.--The restoration period may be
14 extended by the department for an additional 12 months upon
15 application of the well owner or operator providing evidence of
16 inability to comply due to adverse weather conditions or lack of
17 essential fuel, equipment or labor, or upon a demonstration that
18 the extension will result in less earth disturbance, increased
19 water reuse or more efficient development of the resource.

20 Section 307. Protection of fresh groundwater and casing
21 requirements.

22 (a) General rule.--To aid in the protection of fresh
23 groundwater, the well operator shall control and dispose of
24 brines produced from the drilling, alteration or operation of an
25 oil or gas well in a manner consistent with the act of June 22,
26 1937 (P.L.1987, No.394), known as The Clean Streams Law, or any
27 rule or regulation promulgated under The Clean Streams Law.

28 (b) Casing.--To prevent the migration of gas or fluids into
29 sources of fresh groundwater and to prevent pollution or
30 diminution of fresh groundwaters, there shall be run and

1 permanently cemented a string or strings of casing in each well
2 drilled through the fresh-water-bearing strata to a depth and in
3 a manner prescribed by regulation by the department. The
4 regulations shall be consistent with practices that have proven
5 to be satisfactory in regional areas and are in accordance with
6 geologic variability or anomalies in the regional areas. If it
7 is anticipated that cement used to permanently cement the
8 surface casing cannot be circulated to the surface, a cement
9 basket may be installed immediately above the depth of the last
10 circulation zone. The casing shall be permanently cemented by
11 the displacement method. Additional cement may be added above
12 the cement basket, if necessary, by pumping from the surface to
13 fill the annular space.

14 (c) Noncoal areas.--In noncoal areas, the surface casing may
15 be employed as the production casing, provided the operator
16 pumps a volume of cement equal to or greater than 120% of the
17 calculated annular space and, at well completion or earlier, the
18 top of the cement is determined to be at or above the depth of
19 50% of the casing. If the casing coverage is insufficient, the
20 operator shall produce oil only leaving the annulus open, run
21 alternative production casing or pump additional cement through
22 a pour string from the surface to fill the annular space.

23 (d) Procedure when coal removed.--When a well is drilled at
24 a location where the coal has been removed from one or more coal
25 seams, the well shall be drilled and cased to prevent the
26 migration of gas or fluids into the seam from which the coal has
27 been removed, in a manner prescribed by regulation of the
28 department. The department and the coal operator, owner or
29 lessee shall be given at least 72 hours' notice prior to
30 commencement of the work protecting the mine.

1 (e) Procedure when coal not removed.--When a well is drilled
2 at a location where the coal seam has not been removed, the well
3 shall be drilled to a depth and size as will permit the placing
4 of casing, packers in, and vents on, the hole at the points and
5 in a manner prescribed by the department by regulation as will
6 exclude all gas or fluids from the coal seam, except as may be
7 found naturally in the coal seam itself, and will enable the
8 monitoring of the integrity of the production casing.

9 Section 308. Protection of water supplies.

10 (a) General rule.--A well operator who affects a public or
11 private water supply by pollution or diminution shall restore or
12 replace the affected supply with an alternate source of water
13 adequate in quantity or quality for the purposes served by the
14 supply. The quality of a restored or replaced water supply will
15 be deemed adequate if it meets the standards established under
16 the act of May 1, 1984 (P.L.206, No.43), known as the
17 Pennsylvania Safe Drinking Water Act, or is comparable to the
18 quality of the water supply before it was affected by the
19 operator if that water supply did not meet these standards.

20 (b) Pollution or diminution of water supply.--A landowner or
21 water purveyor suffering pollution or diminution of a water
22 supply as a result of the drilling, alteration or operation of
23 an oil or gas well may notify the department and request that an
24 investigation be conducted. Within 10 days of the notification,
25 the department shall investigate the claim. If the department
26 finds that the pollution or diminution was caused by the
27 drilling, alteration or operation activities or if it presumes
28 the well operator responsible for pollution under subsection
29 (c), the department shall issue orders to the well operator as
30 are necessary to assure compliance with subsection (a). The

1 orders may include orders requiring the temporary replacement of
2 a water supply where it is determined that the pollution or
3 diminution may be of limited duration.

4 (c) Presumed responsibility.--Unless rebutted by one of the
5 five defenses established in subsection (d), it shall be
6 presumed that a well operator is responsible for the pollution
7 of a water supply that is within 1,000 feet of the oil or gas
8 well where the pollution occurred within six months after the
9 completion of drilling or alteration of the well.

10 (d) Defenses.--In order to rebut the presumption of
11 liability established in subsection (c), the well operator must
12 affirmatively prove one of the following five defenses:

13 (1) The pollution existed prior to the drilling or
14 alteration activity as determined by a predrilling or
15 prealteration survey.

16 (2) The landowner or water purveyor refused to allow the
17 operator access to conduct a predrilling or prealteration
18 survey.

19 (3) The water supply is not within 1,000 feet of the
20 well.

21 (4) The pollution occurred more than six months after
22 completion of drilling or alteration activities.

23 (5) The pollution occurred as the result of some cause
24 other than the drilling or alteration activity.

25 (e) Independent survey.--An operator electing to preserve
26 its defenses under subsection (d)(1) or (2) shall retain the
27 services of an independent certified laboratory to conduct the
28 predrilling or prealteration survey of water supplies. A copy of
29 the results of the survey shall be submitted to the department
30 and the landowner or water purveyor in a manner prescribed by

1 the department.

2 (f) Other remedies preserved.--Nothing in this section shall
3 prevent a landowner or water purveyor who claims pollution or
4 diminution of a water supply from seeking any other remedy at
5 law or in equity.

6 Section 309. Use of safety devices.

7 A person engaged in drilling an oil or gas well shall equip
8 the well with casings of sufficient strength and with other
9 safety devices as may be necessary in a manner prescribed by
10 regulation of the department and shall use every effort and
11 endeavor effectively to prevent blowouts, explosions and fires.

12 Section 310. Plugging requirements.

13 (a) General rule.--Upon abandoning a well, the owner or
14 operator of the well shall plug the well in a manner prescribed
15 by regulation of the department in order to stop a vertical flow
16 of fluids, other than artesian flow, or gas within the well
17 bore, unless the department has granted inactive status for the
18 well under section 304 or the well has been approved by the
19 department as an orphan well under section 303. If the
20 department determines that a prior owner or operator received
21 economic benefit, other than economic benefit derived only as a
22 landowner or from a royalty interest subsequent to April 18,
23 1979, from an orphan well or from a well which has not been
24 registered, the owner or operator shall be responsible for the
25 plugging of the well. In the case of gas wells penetrating
26 workable coal seams which were drilled prior to January 30,
27 1956, or which were permitted after that date but not plugged in
28 accordance with this act, which the owner or operator of the
29 well or a coal operator or his agent proposes to plug for the
30 purpose of allowing the mining through of the well, the gas well

1 shall be cleaned out to a depth of at least 200 feet below the
2 coal seam in which the mining through is proposed and, unless
3 impracticable, to a point 200 feet below the deepest mineable
4 coal seam. The gas well shall be plugged from that depth in
5 accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the act of
6 December 18, 1984 (P.L.1069, No.214), known as the Coal and Gas
7 Resource Coordination Act, and the regulations of the
8 department.

9 (b) Areas underlain by coal.--Prior to the abandonment of a
10 well in an area underlain by a workable coal seam, the well
11 operator or owner shall notify the coal operator, lessee or
12 owner and the department of the well operator's or owner's
13 intention to plug and abandon the well and submit a plat, on a
14 form to be furnished by the department, showing the location of
15 the well and fixing the date and time at which the work of
16 plugging will be commenced, not less than three working days nor
17 more than 30 days after receipt of the notice, in order that
18 their representatives may be present at the plugging of the
19 well. The notice may be waived by the department and the coal
20 operator, lessee or owner, who may waive their right to be
21 present, but the waiver by a coal operator, lessee or owner
22 shall be in writing and a copy attached to the notice of
23 abandonment filed with the department under this section.
24 Whether or not the representatives appear, the well operator
25 may, if the operator has fully complied with the requirements of
26 this section, proceed at the time fixed to plug the well in the
27 manner as prescribed by regulation of the department. When
28 plugging has been completed, a certificate shall be prepared and
29 signed on a form to be furnished by the department by two
30 experienced and qualified people who participated in the work

1 and shall set forth the time and manner in which the well has
2 been plugged. One copy of the certificate shall be mailed to
3 each coal operator, lessee or owner to whom notice was given by
4 certified mail, and another copy shall be mailed to the
5 department.

6 (c) Abandoned wells.--Prior to the abandonment of a well,
7 except an uncompleted bore hole plugged immediately upon
8 suspension of drilling in an area not underlain by a workable
9 coal seam, the well operator shall notify the department of the
10 well operator's intention to plug and abandon the well and
11 submit a plat or the longitude or latitude of the well, on a
12 form to be furnished by the department, showing the location of
13 the well and fixing the date and time at which the work of
14 plugging will be commenced, not less than three working days nor
15 more than 30 days after the time when the notice is received, in
16 order that the department representative may be present at the
17 plugging of the well. The notice or waiting period may be
18 verbally waived by the department. In noncoal areas where more
19 than one well has been drilled as part of the same development
20 project and the wells are now to be plugged, three working days'
21 notice shall be provided to the department prior to plugging the
22 first well of the project, subject to waiver of notice described
23 in this section. In the plugging of subsequent wells, no
24 additional notice shall be required if the plugging on the
25 project is continuous. If the plugging of subsequent wells is
26 delayed for any reason, notice shall be given to the department
27 of the continuation of the project. Whether or not a department
28 representative appears, the well operator may, if the well
29 operator has fully complied with the requirements of this
30 section, proceed at the time fixed to plug the well in the

1 manner as prescribed by regulation of the department. When
2 plugging has been completed, a certificate shall be prepared and
3 signed on a form to be furnished by the department by two
4 experienced and qualified people who participated in the work,
5 and shall set forth the time and manner in which the well was
6 plugged. A copy of the certificate shall be mailed to the
7 department.

8 (d) Wells abandoned upon completion of drilling.--When a
9 well is to be abandoned immediately after completion of
10 drilling, the well operator shall give at least 24 hours' notice
11 by telephone, confirmed by certified mail, to the department and
12 to the coal operator, lessee or owner, if any, fixing the date
13 and time at which the work of plugging will be commenced. The
14 notice may be waived by the department and the coal operator,
15 lessee or owner, who may waive their right to be present.
16 Whether or not a representative of the department or of the coal
17 operator, lessee or owner, if any, appear, the well operator
18 may, if the well operator has fully complied with the
19 requirements of this section, proceed at the time fixed to plug
20 the well in the manner provided by regulation prescribed by the
21 department. The well operator shall prepare the certificate of
22 plugging and mail copies of the certificate of plugging as
23 provided in subsections (b) and (c).

24 (e) Orphan wells.--If a well is an orphan well or abandoned
25 without plugging or if a well is in operation but is not adopted
26 under section 303, the department shall have the right to enter
27 upon the well site and plug the well and to sell the equipment,
28 casing and pipe at the abandoned well or unregistered well site
29 as may have been used in the production of the well in order to
30 recover the costs of plugging. In the case of a well which is in

1 operation but has not been adopted, the department shall make an
2 effort to determine ownership of the well and provide written
3 notice to the owner of pending action which may be taken under
4 this subsection. If the department cannot determine ownership of
5 the well within 30 days, the department may proceed under this
6 subsection. Costs of plugging shall have priority over all liens
7 on equipment, casing and pipe, and the sale shall be free and
8 clear of any liens to the extent the costs of plugging exceed
9 the sale price. If the equipment price obtained for casing and
10 pipe salvaged at the abandoned well or unregistered well site is
11 inadequate to pay for the cost of plugging the abandoned or
12 unregistered well, the owner or operator of the abandoned or
13 unregistered well shall be legally liable for the additional
14 costs of plugging the well. Notwithstanding provisions to the
15 contrary, and provided that a reasonable attempt failed to place
16 plugging materials at the producing formations, an orphan well
17 in a noncoal area may be plugged from the casing seat as the
18 attainable bottom of the well.

19 (f) Limitation of liability.--A person is not subject to
20 liability for environmental remediation related to an orphan
21 well and is not required to plug an orphan well solely because
22 the person obtains approval from the department to plug an
23 orphan well. A person undertaking the plugging of an orphan well
24 with approval from the department is eligible for all
25 protections and immunities provided under 27 Pa.C.S. § 8107
26 (relating to project liability limitation and exceptions). The
27 notice provisions under 27 Pa.C.S. § 8107 shall not apply to the
28 approval and protections provided under this section. Notice to
29 the department and the surface owner shall be provided on forms
30 developed by the department. When plugging has been completed, a

1 certificate shall be prepared and signed on a form to be
2 furnished by the department by two experienced and qualified
3 individuals who participated in the work and set forth the time
4 and manner in which the well was plugged. A copy of the
5 certificate shall be mailed to the department.

6 (g) Persons who voluntarily plug an orphan well.--Persons
7 who voluntarily plug an orphan well may either:

8 (1) apply to the Commonwealth Finance Authority for a
9 \$5,000 payment per well plugged payable from the Marcellus
10 Legacy Fund established under 58 Pa.C.S. § 2315 (relating to
11 Statewide initiatives); or

12 (2) be credited for each plugged well in the form of a
13 permit-fee waiver for any succeeding well permit application.

14 (h) Notification.--With respect to the coal operator, lessee
15 or owner, if any, notification shall be accomplished under this
16 section by sending notice to the persons to whom tax notices for
17 the workable coal seams are sent, as indicated in the assessment
18 books, if available, or as indicated in the records of the
19 recorder of deeds office in the county in which the seams are
20 located. If certified mail or notification is returned
21 undeliverable, the applicant shall include a completed affidavit
22 attesting to the attempted delivery, which shall satisfy the
23 notification requirements under this section.

24 Section 311. Alternative methods.

25 If provision is made in this act for adoption of regulatory
26 requirements for casing, plugging or equipping a well, a well
27 operator may request the authority to use an alternative method
28 or material by filing an application with the department
29 describing the proposed alternative method or material, in
30 reasonable detail, indicating the manner in which it will

1 accomplish the goals of this act and regulations adopted under
2 this act. Notice of filing of an application shall be given by
3 the well operator by certified mail to all coal operator or
4 operators affected. A coal operator may, within 15 days
5 following the notice, file objections to the proposed
6 alternative method or material. If no objections are filed
7 within the 15-day period and if none are raised by the
8 department, the department shall make a determination whether to
9 allow the use of the proposed alternative method or material.
10 Section 312. Well reporting requirements.

11 (a) General rule.--A well operator shall file, either
12 electronically or a hard copy, with the department, on a form
13 provided by the department, an annual report specifying the
14 amount of production on the most well-specific basis available.
15 Annual reports shall also specify the status of each well,
16 except that in subsequent years only changes in the status must
17 be reported. The Commonwealth shall have the right to utilize
18 the information in enforcement proceedings, in making
19 designations or determinations under section 1927-A of the act
20 of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as The Administrative
21 Code of 1929, or in aggregate form for statistical purposes.

22 (b) Records.--

23 (1) Well operators shall maintain a record of each well
24 drilled or altered.

25 (2) A record of the well containing information as
26 required by regulation shall be filed with the department
27 within 30 days of cessation of drilling.

28 (3) A completion report containing additional
29 information as required by regulation shall be filed with the
30 department within 30 days after the completion of the well

1 and shall be kept on file by the department.

2 (4) Within 90 days after the completion of drilling or
3 recompletion of a well, if requested by the department, the
4 well operator shall submit a copy of the electrical,
5 radioactive or other standard industry logs if they have been
6 run.

7 (5) If requested by the department within one year, the
8 well operator shall file a copy of drill stem test charts,
9 formation water analysis, porosity, permeability or fluid
10 saturation measurements, core analysis and lithologic log or
11 sample description or other similar data as compiled. No
12 information shall be required unless the well operator has
13 had the information compiled in the ordinary course of
14 business. No interpretation of the data is to be filed.

15 (c) Collection of data.--Upon notification by the department
16 prior to commencement of drilling, the well operator shall
17 collect for the department additional data as the department
18 shall specify, such as representative drill cuttings and samples
19 from cores taken and any other geological information that the
20 operator reasonably can compile. No interpretation of the data
21 is to be filed.

22 (d) Retention and filing.--All electrical, radioactive or
23 other standard industry logs, drill stem test charts, formation
24 water analyses, porosity, permeability or fluid saturation
25 measurements, core analysis and lithologic logs or sample
26 description or other similar data as compiled, required under
27 subsection (b) or drill cuttings required under subsection (c),
28 shall be retained by the well operator and shall be filed with
29 the department within three years after completion of the well.
30 Upon request of the well operator, the department shall extend

1 the date for the filing of the data, but the extension shall not
2 exceed five years from the date of completion of the well,
3 provided that the department shall have the right to utilize the
4 information in enforcement proceedings, in making designations
5 or determinations under section 1927-A of The Administrative
6 Code of 1929 or in aggregate form for statistical purposes.
7 Section 313. Notification and effect of well transfer.

8 The owner or operator of a well shall notify the department,
9 in writing, in a form as the department may direct by
10 regulation, of the sale, assignment, transfer, conveyance or
11 exchange by the owner or to the owner of the well within 30 days
12 after the sale, assignment, conveyance or exchange. No transfer
13 shall relieve the well owner or operator of an obligation
14 accrued under this act, nor shall it relieve the well owner or
15 operator of the obligation to plug the well until the
16 requirements of section 315 have been met, after which time the
17 transferring owner or operator shall be relieved from any
18 obligation under this act, including the obligation to plug the
19 well.

20 Section 314. Coal operator responsibilities.

21 (a) General rule.--

22 (1) At any time prior to removing coal or other
23 underground material or extending the workings in a coal mine
24 within 500 feet of an oil or gas well of which the coal
25 operator has knowledge or an approved well location of which
26 the coal operator has knowledge, the coal operator shall
27 forward, by certified mail, to or file with the well operator
28 and the department a copy of the relevant part of the coal
29 operator's maps and plans which it is presently required by
30 law to prepare and file with the department, showing the

1 pillar which the coal operator proposes to leave in place
2 around each oil or gas well in the projected workings.

3 (2) Following the filing of maps and plans, the coal
4 operator may proceed with mining operations in the manner
5 projected on the maps and plans, but the coal operator shall
6 not remove any coal or cut any passageway within 150 feet of
7 a well or approved well location until written approval has
8 been granted as provided in this section.

9 (3) If, in the opinion of the well operator or the
10 department, the plan indicates that the pillar proposed to be
11 left around a well or approved well location is inadequate to
12 protect either the integrity of the well or the public health
13 and safety, the well operator affected shall attempt to agree
14 with the coal operator upon a suitable pillar, subject to the
15 approval of the department, but, failing to agree, the well
16 operator may, within 10 days from receipt of the plan, file
17 objections in accordance with section 701 to the proposed
18 plan indicating the size of the pillar to be left with
19 respect to each well.

20 (4) If no objections are filed within the 10-day period
21 or if none are raised by the department, the department shall
22 grant approval to the coal operator reciting the following:

23 (i) The filing of the maps or plans.

24 (ii) That no objections have been made to the plan.

25 (iii) That the pillar proposed to be left for each
26 well is approved in the manner as projected.

27 (b) Objections.--

28 (1) If objections are filed by a well operator or are
29 raised by the department, the department shall direct that a
30 conference be held in accordance with section 701 within 10

1 days of the filing of the objections.

2 (2) At the conference the coal operator and the person
3 who has filed the objections shall attempt to agree upon a
4 proposed plan showing the pillar to be left around each well,
5 which will satisfy the objections and be approved by the
6 department, and, if the plan is agreed upon, the department
7 shall grant approval to the coal operator reciting the filing
8 of the plan and that the pillar to be left for each well is
9 approved as agreed upon.

10 (3) If no plan showing the pillar to be left with
11 respect to each well can be agreed upon at the conference,
12 the department shall, by an appropriate order, determine the
13 pillar to be left with respect to the well.

14 (4) In a proceeding under this section, the department
15 shall follow as nearly as possible the original plan filed by
16 the coal operator. The department shall not require the coal
17 operator to leave a pillar in excess of 100 feet in radius,
18 except that, if it is established that unusual conditions
19 exist requiring the leaving of a larger pillar, the
20 department may require a pillar up to but not exceeding 150
21 feet in radius.

22 (5) The pillar to be left with respect to each well as
23 determined by the department shall be shown on the maps or
24 plans on file with the department as provided in subsection
25 (a), and the department shall approve the pillar to be left
26 for each well.

27 (c) Pillars of reduced size.--Application may be made at any
28 time to the department by a coal operator to leave a pillar of
29 less size than that shown on the plan filed by the operator or
30 approved or determined by the department under the provisions of

1 this section. If an application is filed, the department may,
2 following the procedure prescribed in this section, by an
3 appropriate order, determine a different plan showing a pillar
4 of less size with respect to all wells covered by the
5 application and shall grant approval for the pillar to be left
6 with respect to each well.

7 (d) Violation.--No coal operator shall, without the written
8 approval of the department after notice and opportunity for
9 hearing as prescribed in this section, remove any coal or cut
10 any passageway so as to leave a pillar of less size with respect
11 to an oil or gas well than that approved by the department under
12 this act.

13 (e) Construction.--Nothing in this act shall be construed to
14 require a well operator to pay for a coal pillar required by law
15 to be left around a well drilled prior to April 18, 1985. A
16 requirement for a coal operator to leave a pillar of coal of a
17 certain size around a well drilled after April 18, 1985, shall
18 not in any way affect the rights which the coal operator would
19 have had prior to April 18, 1985, to obtain payment for the
20 coal, nor any duty or right which the well operator, storage
21 operator or land owner may have had prior to April 18, 1985, to
22 pay for or not to pay for the coal.

23 (f) Mining through plugged wells.--A coal operator who
24 intends to mine through a plugged oil or gas well must file a
25 plan to completely remove a pillar from around the well in
26 accordance with subsection (a). This plan shall be subject to
27 the requirements of this section. No coal operator may mine
28 through a plugged oil or gas well of which the coal operator has
29 knowledge until written approval has been granted by the
30 department in accordance with this section.

1 (g) Establishment of conditions.--The Bureau of Deep Mine
2 Safety in the department shall have the authority to establish
3 the conditions under which the department may approve a coal
4 operator's plan to mine through a plugged oil or gas well.

5 Section 315. Bonding.

6 (a) General rule.--

7 (1) Upon filing an application for a well permit and
8 before continuing to operate an oil or gas well, the owner or
9 operator of an oil or gas well shall file with the department
10 a bond for the well and the well site on a form to be
11 prescribed and furnished by the department. A bond filed with
12 an application for a well permit shall be payable to the
13 Commonwealth and conditioned that the operator shall
14 faithfully perform all of the drilling, water supply
15 replacement, restoration and plugging requirements of this
16 act. No bond or bond substitute shall be required for any
17 well drilled prior to April 18, 1985, where the well would
18 have otherwise been subject to the bonding requirements of
19 section 215 or 603.1 of the former act of December 19, 1984
20 (P.L.1140, No.223), known as the Oil and Gas Act. The amount
21 of the bond required shall be in the amount of \$2,500 per
22 well for at least two years following the effective date of
23 this act, after which time the bond amount may be adjusted by
24 the Environmental Quality Board every five years to reflect
25 the projected costs to the Commonwealth of performing well
26 plugging.

27 (2) In lieu of individual bonds for each well, an owner
28 or operator may file a blanket bond, on a form prepared by
29 the department, covering all of its wells in this
30 Commonwealth as enumerated on the bond form. A blanket bond

1 shall be in the amount of \$25,000 for at least five years
2 following the effective date of this act, after which time
3 the bond amount may be adjusted by the Environmental Quality
4 Board every two years to reflect the projected costs to the
5 Commonwealth of performing well plugging. An adjustment may
6 not exceed the prior amount by more than \$10,000.

7 (3) Liability under the bond shall continue until the
8 well has been properly plugged in accordance with this act
9 and for a period of one year after filing of the certificate
10 of plugging with the department. Each bond shall be executed
11 by the operator and a corporate surety licensed to do
12 business in this Commonwealth and approved by the secretary.
13 The operator may elect to deposit cash, certificates of
14 deposit or automatically renewable irrevocable letters of
15 credit from financial institutions chartered or authorized to
16 do business in Pennsylvania and regulated and examined by a
17 Federal agency or the Commonwealth, which may be terminated
18 at the end of a term only upon the financial institution
19 giving 90 days' prior written notice to the permittee and the
20 department or negotiable bonds of the United States
21 Government or the Commonwealth, the Pennsylvania Turnpike
22 Commission, the State Public School Building Authority or any
23 municipality within the Commonwealth, or United States
24 Treasury Bonds issued at a discount without a regular
25 schedule of interest payments to maturity, otherwise known as
26 zero coupon bonds, having a maturity date of not more than 10
27 years after the date of purchase and at the maturity date
28 having a value of not less than \$25,000, with the department
29 in lieu of a corporate surety. The cash deposit, certificate
30 of deposit, amount of the irrevocable letter of credit or

1 market value of the securities shall be equal at least to the
2 sum of the bond. The secretary shall, upon receipt of
3 deposits of cash, letters of credit or negotiable bonds,
4 immediately place the cash, letters of credit or negotiable
5 bonds with the State Treasurer, whose duty it shall be to
6 receive and hold the cash, letters of credit or negotiable
7 bonds in the name of the Commonwealth, in trust, for the
8 purpose for which the deposit is made. The State Treasurer
9 shall at all times be responsible for the custody and
10 safekeeping of deposits. The operator making deposit shall be
11 entitled from time to time to demand and receive from the
12 State Treasurer, on the written order of the secretary, the
13 whole or any portion of collateral deposited upon depositing
14 with the State Treasurer, in lieu of the collateral
15 deposited, other collateral of the classes specified in this
16 act having a market value at least equal to the sum of the
17 bond and also to demand, receive and recover the interest and
18 income from the negotiable bonds as the bonds become due and
19 payable. When negotiable bonds mature or are called, the
20 State Treasurer, at the request of the owner of the bonds,
21 shall convert the negotiable bonds into other negotiable
22 bonds of the classes specified in this act as may be
23 designated by the owner. If notice of intent to terminate a
24 letter of credit is given, the department shall give the
25 operator 30 days' written notice to replace the letter of
26 credit with other acceptable bond guarantees as provided in
27 this act, and if the owner or operator fails to replace the
28 letter of credit within the 30-day notification period, the
29 department shall draw upon and convert the letter of credit
30 into cash and hold it as a collateral bond guarantee.

1 (b) Release.--No bond shall be fully released until all
2 requirements of this act identified in subsection (a) or section
3 313 are fully met. Upon release of all of the bonds and
4 collateral as provided in this section, the State Treasurer
5 shall immediately return to the owner the amount of cash or
6 securities specified in the bond.

7 (c) Noncompliance.--

8 (1) If a well owner or operator fails or refuses to
9 comply with the applicable requirements of subsection (a),
10 the regulations promulgated under this act or the conditions
11 of the permit relating to this act, the department may
12 declare the bond forfeited and shall certify the same to the
13 Attorney General, who shall proceed to enforce and collect
14 the full amount of the bond and, where the owner or operator
15 has deposited cash or securities as collateral in lieu of a
16 corporate surety, the department shall declare the collateral
17 forfeited and shall direct the State Treasurer to pay the
18 full amount of the funds into the Well Plugging Restricted
19 Revenue Account or to proceed to sell the security to the
20 extent forfeited and pay the proceeds of the sale into the
21 Well Plugging Restricted Revenue Account.

22 (2) A corporate surety or financial institution that
23 fails to promptly pay in full a forfeited bond shall be
24 disqualified from writing further bonds under this act or
25 other environmental act administered by the department.

26 (3) A person aggrieved by reason of forfeiting the bond
27 or converting collateral under this section shall have a
28 right to appeal to the Environmental Hearing Board in the
29 manner provided by law.

30 (4) Upon forfeiture of a blanket bond for a violation

1 occurring at one or more well sites, the person whose bond is
2 forfeited shall submit a replacement bond to cover all other
3 wells the person owns or operates within 10 days of the
4 forfeiture. Failure to submit the replacement bond
5 constitutes a violation of this section as to each of the
6 wells owned or operated by the person.

7 (d) Individuals.--

8 (1) An individual who cannot obtain a bond to drill new
9 wells due to an inability to demonstrate financial resources
10 may meet the collateral bond requirements of subsection (a)
11 by making phased deposits of collateral to fully
12 collateralize the bond. Individuals shall be limited to
13 drilling 10 new wells per calendar year. The individual
14 shall, for each well to be drilled, deposit \$500 and shall,
15 thereafter, annually deposit 10% of the remaining bond amount
16 for a period of 10 years. Interest accumulated by the
17 collateral shall become a part of the bond until the time
18 when the collateral, plus accumulated interest, equals the
19 amount of the required bond. The collateral shall be
20 deposited, in trust, with the State Treasurer as provided in
21 subsection (a) or with a bank selected by the department
22 which shall act as trustee for the benefit of the
23 Commonwealth, to guarantee the individual's compliance with
24 the drilling, water supply replacement, restoration and
25 plugging requirements of this act. The individual shall be
26 required to pay all costs of the trust.

27 (2) Individuals may continue to use phased collateral to
28 obtain permits so long as they have not missed payments for
29 wells drilled under this subsection and so long as they
30 remain in compliance with this act and regulations and

1 permits issued under this act. If an individual has missed
2 payments for wells under this subsection, the operator shall:

3 (i) immediately submit the appropriate bond amount
4 in full; or

5 (ii) cease all operations and plug the wells in
6 accordance with section 310.

7 (3) For the purposes of this subsection, the term
8 "individual" means an applicant who is a natural person doing
9 business under the person's own name.

10 (e) Preservation of remedies.--All remedies for violation of
11 this act, regulations adopted under this act and conditions of
12 permits are expressly preserved. Nothing in this section shall
13 be construed as an exclusive penalty or remedy for violations of
14 law. No action taken under this section shall waive or impair
15 any other remedy or penalty provided in law.

16 (f) Change of law.--Owners or operators who have failed to
17 meet the requirements of this section prior to August 1, 1992,
18 shall not be required to make payments under this section on a
19 retroactive basis as a condition of obtaining a permit under
20 this act nor shall the failure be deemed a violation of this
21 act.

22 CHAPTER 5

23 UNDERGROUND GAS STORAGE

24 Section 501. Underground gas storage.

25 Underground gas storage shall be conducted in accordance with
26 58 Pa.C.S. Ch. 32 Subch. C (relating to underground gas
27 storage).

28 CHAPTER 7

29 ENFORCEMENT AND REMEDIES

30 Section 701. Conferences.

1 (a) General rule.--The department or a person having a
2 direct interest in a matter subject to this act may, at any
3 time, request that a conference be held for the purpose of
4 discussing and endeavoring to resolve by mutual agreement a
5 matter arising under this act. Unless otherwise provided,
6 conferences shall be held within 90 days after a request for a
7 conference is received by the department, and notice of the
8 conference shall be given by the department to all interested
9 parties. A representative of the department shall attend the
10 conference and the department may make recommendations. An
11 agreement reached at a conference shall be consistent with this
12 act and, if approved by the department, the agreement shall be
13 reduced to writing and shall be effective, unless reviewed and
14 rejected by the department, within 10 days after the close of
15 the conference. The record of an agreement approved by the
16 department shall be kept on file by the department with copies
17 furnished to the parties. Scheduling of a conference shall not
18 affect the authority of the department to issue an appropriate
19 order to compel compliance with this act.

20 (b) Notification.--If a coal operator is to be given notice
21 by the department of a proceeding to be held under this section,
22 the department shall also send simultaneously a copy of the
23 notice to the collective bargaining representative of the
24 employees of the coal operator.

25 Section 702. Public nuisances.

26 A violation of section 306, 307, 308, 309 or 310 or of a
27 rule, regulation, order, term or condition of a permit relating
28 to those sections constitutes a public nuisance.

29 Section 703. Enforcement orders.

30 (a) General rule.--Except as modified by subsections (b),

1 (c) and (d), the department may issue orders necessary to aid in
2 enforcement of this act. An order issued under this act shall
3 take effect upon notice, unless the order specifies otherwise.
4 The power of the department to issue an order under this act is
5 in addition to any other remedy which may be afforded to the
6 department under this act or other law.

7 (b) Suspension and revocation.--

8 (1) The department may suspend or revoke a well permit
9 or well registration for a well in continuing violation of
10 the following:

11 (i) This act.

12 (ii) The act of June 22, 1937 (P.L.1987, No.394),
13 known as The Clean Streams Law.

14 (iii) The act of July 7, 1980 (P.L.380, No.97),
15 known as the Solid Waste Management Act.

16 (iv) Any other statute administered by the
17 department.

18 (2) The right of the department to revoke a permit or
19 registration under this subsection shall not be effective
20 until a final administrative determination has been made of
21 the violation and no appeal is pending in which a stay has
22 been granted.

23 (3) A suspension order of the department shall
24 automatically terminate if the violation upon which it is
25 based is corrected by the operator in order to bring the well
26 into compliance with this act.

27 (c) Written notice.--Prior to the suspension or revocation
28 of a well permit or registration, the department shall serve
29 written notice upon the well operator or its agent of the
30 intention of the department to suspend or revoke and shall state

1 with specificity the statutory provisions, appropriate rule or
2 regulation or other reason and the factual circumstances which
3 surround the violation upon which the suspension or revocation
4 is based. The well operator shall have 15 days to request a
5 conference with the department to give cause why the action
6 should not be taken. Upon receipt of the written notice, the
7 department shall hold a conference and shall, within 15 days
8 after the conference, make a decision on whether to suspend or
9 revoke the well permit or registration. The department shall
10 provide written notice of the department's decision to the well
11 operator or its agent, which shall become effective upon receipt
12 of the notice.

13 (d) Immediate orders.--An order of the department requiring
14 the immediate cessation of drilling operations shall only be
15 effective if authorized by the secretary or a designee.

16 (e) Grievances.--A person aggrieved by an order of the
17 department issued under this section shall have the right,
18 within 30 days of receipt of the notice, to appeal the action to
19 the Environmental Hearing Board.

20 Section 704. Restraining violations.

21 (a) General rule.--In addition to other remedies provided in
22 this act, the department may institute a suit in equity in the
23 name of the Commonwealth for an injunction to restrain a
24 violation of this act or the rules, regulations, standards or
25 orders adopted or issued under this act and to restrain the
26 maintenance or threat of a public nuisance. Upon motion of the
27 Commonwealth, the court shall issue a prohibitory or mandatory
28 preliminary injunction if the court finds that the defendant is
29 engaging in unlawful conduct, as defined by this act, or in
30 conduct causing immediate and irreparable harm to the public.

1 The Commonwealth shall not be required to furnish bond or other
2 security in connection with the proceedings. In addition to an
3 injunction, the court, in equity, may level civil penalties as
4 specified in section 706.

5 (b) District attorney.--In addition to other remedies in
6 this act, upon relation of the district attorney of a county
7 affected or upon relation of the solicitor of a municipality
8 affected, an action in equity may be brought in a court of
9 competent jurisdiction for an injunction to restrain a violation
10 of this act or the rules and regulations promulgated under this
11 act or to restrain a public nuisance or detriment to health.

12 (c) Concurrent penalties.--Penalties and remedies under this
13 act shall be deemed concurrent. Existence or exercise of a
14 remedy shall not prevent the department from exercising another
15 remedy at law or in equity.

16 (d) Jurisdiction.--Actions instituted under this section may
17 be filed in the appropriate court of common pleas or in
18 Commonwealth Court, and those courts are granted jurisdiction to
19 hear the actions.

20 Section 705. Criminal penalties.

21 (a) General violation.--A person who violates a provision of
22 this act commits a summary offense and, upon conviction, shall
23 be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$300 or to
24 imprisonment of not more than 90 days, or both. Each day during
25 which the violation continues is a separate and distinct
26 offense.

27 (b) Willful violation.--A person who willfully violates a
28 provision of this act or an order of the department issued under
29 this act commits a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be
30 sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$5,000 or to

1 imprisonment of not more than one year, or both. Each day during
2 which the violation continues is a separate and distinct
3 offense.

4 (c) Authority.--The department may institute a prosecution
5 against a person or municipality for a violation of this act.
6 Section 706. Civil penalties.

7 In addition to other remedies available at law or in equity
8 for a violation of this act, a rule or regulation of the
9 department or an order of the department, the Environmental
10 Hearing Board, after a hearing, may assess a civil penalty
11 regardless of whether or not the violation was willful, but
12 penalties need not be assessed for accidental violations or
13 those that resulted in no damage or risk of adverse effect on
14 natural resources or the property of others. The civil penalty
15 shall not exceed \$25,000, plus \$1,000 for each day during which
16 the violation continues. In determining the amount, the
17 Environmental Hearing Board shall consider the willfulness of
18 the violation, damage or injury to the natural resources of this
19 Commonwealth or their uses, endangerment of the safety of
20 others, costs of remedying the harm, savings resulting to the
21 violator as a result of the violation and other relevant
22 factors. The Environmental Hearing Board shall mitigate the
23 penalty amount for any person who voluntarily plugged an orphan
24 well in accordance with this act. The penalty shall be payable
25 to the Orphan Well Plugging Fund and shall be collectible in the
26 manner provided at law for the collection of debts. If a person
27 liable to pay a penalty neglects or refuses to pay the same
28 after demand, the amount, together with interest and costs that
29 may accrue, shall become a lien in favor of the Commonwealth on
30 the real and personal property of the violator, but only after

1 the lien has been entered and docketed of record by the
2 prothonotary of the county where the property is situated. The
3 Environmental Hearing Board may transmit to the prothonotaries
4 of the respective counties certified copies of the liens, and it
5 shall be the duty of each prothonotary to enter and docket the
6 liens of record in the prothonotary's office and index them as
7 judgments are indexed, without requiring payment of costs as a
8 condition precedent to entry. Notwithstanding any other
9 provision of law to the contrary, actions for civil penalties
10 under this act may be commenced at any time within a period of
11 five years from the date the offense is discovered.

12 Section 707. Existing rights and remedies preserved and
13 cumulative remedies authorized.

14 Nothing in this act shall prevent the Commonwealth or a
15 district attorney from proceeding in a court of law or in equity
16 to abate pollution forbidden under this act or abate a nuisance
17 under existing law. It is declared to be the purpose of this act
18 to provide additional and cumulative remedies to control
19 activities related to drilling for or production of oil and gas
20 within this Commonwealth, and nothing in this act abridges or
21 alters rights of action or remedies existing in equity or under
22 the common law or statutory law, criminal or civil. Neither this
23 act, the granting of a permit under this act nor an act done by
24 virtue of this act stops the Commonwealth in exercising rights
25 under the common law or decisional law or in equity, from
26 suppressing a nuisance, abating pollution or enforcing common
27 law or statutory rights. No court of this Commonwealth with
28 jurisdiction to abate public or private nuisances shall be
29 deprived of jurisdiction in an action to abate a private or
30 public nuisance instituted by a person on grounds that the

1 nuisance constitutes air or water pollution.

2 Section 708. Production of materials, witnesses, depositions
3 and rights of entry.

4 (a) General rule.--The department may make inspections,
5 conduct tests or sampling or examine books, papers and records
6 pertinent to a matter under investigation under this act it
7 deems necessary to determine compliance with this act, and duly
8 authorized agents and employees of the department are authorized
9 at all reasonable times to enter and examine a property,
10 facility, operation or activity.

11 (b) Entry and access.--An owner, operator or other person in
12 charge of a property, facility, operation or activity, upon
13 presentation of proper identification and purpose for inspection
14 by the agents or employees of the department, shall give the
15 agents and employees free and unrestricted entry and access and,
16 upon refusal to grant entry or access, the agent or employee may
17 obtain a search warrant or other order authorizing entry and
18 inspection. It is sufficient probable cause to issue a search
19 warrant authorizing an examination and inspection if there is
20 probable cause to believe that the object of the investigation
21 is subject to regulation under this act and that access,
22 examination or inspection is necessary to enforce the provisions
23 of this act.

24 (c) Department powers.--The department shall have the power
25 in any part of this Commonwealth to subpoena witnesses,
26 administer oaths, examine witnesses, take testimony or compel
27 the production of books, records, maps, plats, papers, documents
28 and other writings as it may deem necessary or proper and
29 pertinent to proceedings or investigation held by the
30 department. In case of refusal to obey a subpoena served upon a

1 person, the court shall, on application of the department, have
2 power to enforce the subpoena in contempt proceedings. The fees
3 for serving a subpoena shall be the same as those paid to
4 sheriffs for similar services.

5 (d) Witnesses.--The department or a party to proceedings
6 before the department may depose witnesses residing within or
7 outside this Commonwealth in the manner prescribed by law for
8 taking depositions in civil actions.

9 (e) Witness fees.--Witnesses summoned before the department
10 shall be paid the same fees as those paid to witnesses in the
11 courts of record of general jurisdiction. Witnesses whose
12 depositions are taken under this act and the officers taking the
13 depositions shall be entitled to the same fees as those paid for
14 similar services in the courts.

15 (f) Ownership information.--A purchaser of oil or gas shall,
16 upon request, provide to the department information necessary
17 for the department to determine ownership of facilities from
18 which the oil or gas was obtained. The purchaser shall provide
19 notice to the owner of the facilities identified to the
20 department. The information shall be kept confidential for a
21 period of five years. The department shall have the right to
22 utilize the information in enforcement proceedings. The
23 department may only request information under this section when
24 a well does not meet the requirements of section 301(h).

25 Section 709. Unlawful conduct.

26 It shall be unlawful for a person to:

27 (1) Drill, alter, operate or utilize an oil or gas well
28 without a permit or registration from the department as
29 required by this act or in violation of the rules or
30 regulations adopted under this act, orders of the department

1 or in violation of a permit issued by the department.

2 (2) Conduct activities related to drilling for or
3 production of oil and gas:

4 (i) contrary to this act, rules or regulations
5 adopted under this act, an order of the department or a
6 term or condition of a permit; or

7 (ii) in a manner that creates a public nuisance or
8 adversely affects public health, safety, welfare or the
9 environment.

10 (3) Refuse, obstruct, delay or threaten an agent or
11 employee of the department in the course of lawful
12 performance of any duty under this act, including, but not
13 limited to, entry and inspection.

14 (4) Attempt to obtain a permit or identify a well as an
15 orphan well by misrepresentation or failure to disclose all
16 relevant facts.

17 (5) Cause the abandonment of a well by removing casing
18 or equipment necessary for production without plugging the
19 well in a manner prescribed under section 310. The owner or
20 operator of a well may temporarily remove casing or equipment
21 necessary for production if it is part of the normal course
22 of production activities.

23 Section 710. Collection of fines and penalties.

24 Fines and penalties shall be collectible in the manner
25 provided by law for the collection of debts. If a person liable
26 to pay a penalty neglects or refuses to pay after demand, the
27 amount, together with interest and costs that may accrue, shall
28 be a judgment in favor of the Commonwealth upon the person's
29 property, but only after the judgment has been entered and
30 docketed of record by the prothonotary of the county where the

1 property is situated. The department may, at any time, transmit
2 to the prothonotaries of the respective counties certified
3 copies of all judgments, and it shall be the duty of each
4 prothonotary to enter and docket them in the prothonotary's
5 office and index them as judgments are indexed, without
6 requiring the payment of costs as a condition precedent to
7 entry.

8 Section 711. Third party liability.

9 If a person other than the well operator renders a service or
10 product to a well or well site, that person is liable with the
11 well owner or operator for violations of this act arising out of
12 and caused by the person's actions at the well or well site, in
13 accordance with State law.

14 Section 712. Inspection reports.

15 (a) Posting required.--The department shall post inspection
16 reports on its publicly accessible Internet website. The
17 inspection reports shall include:

18 (1) The nature and description of violations.

19 (2) The operator's written response to the violation, if
20 available.

21 (3) The status of the violation.

22 (4) The remedial steps taken by the operator or the
23 department to address the violation.

24 (b) Removal.--The department shall remove a notice of
25 violation issued in error from the public record as soon as
26 practical after the department learns of the error.

27 (c) Training required.--The department shall provide
28 adequate training to its inspectors.

29 (d) Minor violations.--The department will adopt a practice
30 and procedure to alleviate the unwarranted use of notices of

1 violation for minor violations that pose no material harm to the
2 public health or environment, including the development of
3 separate forms for inspections where warnings rather than
4 notices of violation will be issued and where compliance can be
5 accomplished within 48 hours. Warnings under this subsection,
6 and the alleged violations upon which they are based, may not be
7 the basis for a civil penalty when compliance is achieved within
8 48 hours.

9 CHAPTER 9

10 RELATED FUNDS, PARTIES AND ACTIVITIES

11 Section 901. Well plugging funds.

12 (a) Appropriation.--Fines and civil penalties collected
13 under this act shall be deposited in the Orphan Well Plugging
14 Fund. Other than permit fee surcharges under this section,
15 permit fees collected under this act are hereby appropriated to
16 the department to carry out the provisions of this act.

17 (b) Abandoned Well Plugging Fund.--To aid in indemnifying
18 the Commonwealth for the cost of plugging abandoned wells, a \$50
19 surcharge is added to the permit fee established by the
20 department under section 301 for new wells. Money collected as a
21 result of a surcharge shall be paid into the Abandoned Well
22 Plugging Fund and shall be expended by the department to plug
23 abandoned wells which threaten the health and safety of persons
24 or property or pollute the waters of this Commonwealth.

25 (c) Orphan Well Plugging Fund.--

26 (1) A \$100 surcharge for wells to be drilled for oil
27 production and a \$200 surcharge for wells to be drilled for
28 gas production are added to the permit fee established by the
29 department under section 301 for new wells. Surcharges shall
30 be deposited into the Orphan Well Plugging Fund and shall be

1 expended by the department to plug orphan wells. If an
2 operator rehabilitates a well abandoned by another operator
3 or an orphan well, the permit fee and the surcharge for the
4 well shall be waived.

5 (2) Expenditures by the department for plugging orphan
6 wells shall be limited to fees collected under this act and
7 58 Pa.C.S. Ch. 32 (relating to development).

8 Section 902. Local ordinances.

9 Except with respect to ordinances adopted under the act of
10 July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the Pennsylvania
11 Municipalities Planning Code, and the act of October 4, 1978
12 (P.L.851, No.166), known as the Flood Plain Management Act, all
13 local ordinances and enactments purporting to regulate oil and
14 gas well operations regulated by this act are superseded. No
15 ordinances or enactments adopted under the Pennsylvania
16 Municipalities Planning Code or the Flood Plain Management Act
17 shall impose conditions, requirements or limitations on the same
18 features of oil and gas well operations regulated by this act or
19 that accomplish the same purposes as set forth in this act. The
20 Commonwealth, by this enactment, preempts and supersedes the
21 regulation of oil and gas wells.

22 Section 903. Effect on department authority.

23 This act does not affect, limit or impair the right or
24 authority of the department under the act of June 22, 1937
25 (P.L.1987, No.394), known as The Clean Streams Law, the act of
26 January 8, 1960 (1959 P.L.2119, No.787), known as the Air
27 Pollution Control Act, the act of November 26, 1978 (P.L.1375,
28 No.325), known as the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act, and the
29 act of July 7, 1980 (P.L.380, No.97), known as the Solid Waste
30 Management Act.

1 Section 904. Relationship to solid waste, surface mining,
2 underground injection wells, wastewater treatment and
3 recycling by centralized waste treatment facilities
4 and storage tanks.

5 (a) General rule.--The obligation to obtain a permit and
6 post a bond under Articles III and V of the act of July 7, 1980
7 (P.L.380, No.97), known as the Solid Waste Management Act, and
8 to provide public notice under section 1905-A(b)(1)(v) of the
9 act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as The
10 Administrative Code of 1929, for a pit, impoundment, method or
11 facility employed for the disposal, processing or storage of
12 residual wastes generated by the drilling of an oil or gas well
13 or from the production of a well which is located on the well
14 site shall be satisfied if the owner or operator of the well
15 meets the following conditions:

16 (1) the well is permitted under the requirements of
17 section 301 or was registered under the former act of
18 December 19, 1984 (P.L.1140, No.223), known as the Oil and
19 Gas Act;

20 (2) the owner or operator satisfies the financial
21 security requirements of section 315 by obtaining a surety or
22 collateral bond for the well and well site; and

23 (3) the owner or operator maintains compliance with this
24 act and applicable regulations of the Environmental Quality
25 Board.

26 (b) Noncoal surface mining.--Obligations under the act of
27 December 19, 1984 (P.L.1093, No.219), known as the Noncoal
28 Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act, or rule or
29 regulation promulgated under the Noncoal Surface Mining
30 Conservation and Reclamation Act, for a borrow area where

1 minerals are extracted solely for the purpose of oil and gas
2 well development, including access road construction, shall be
3 satisfied if the owner or operator of the well meets the
4 conditions imposed under subsection (a)(1) and (2) and the owner
5 or operator maintains compliance with this act and applicable
6 regulations of the Environmental Quality Board.

7 (c) Solid Waste Management Act.--Except as otherwise
8 provided in this section, nothing in this section shall diminish
9 duties or obligations that an owner or operator may have under
10 the Solid Waste Management Act. This section shall not apply to
11 waste classified as hazardous waste under the Solid Waste
12 Management Act or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of
13 1976 (Public Law 94-580, 42 U.S.C. § 6901 et seq.).

14 (d) Road spreading of brine for dust control, road
15 stabilization, anti-icing and de-icing.--Consistent with the
16 provisions of the Solid Waste Management Act which require the
17 department to encourage the beneficial use or reuse of residual
18 waste derived from commercial and industrial purposes where the
19 use does not harm or threaten public health, safety, welfare or
20 the environment, the department shall approve the use of brine
21 for dust control, road stabilization, anti-icing and de-icing
22 upon application using forms developed by the department and in
23 accordance with conditions reasonably necessary for the
24 protection of the environment and prevention of pollution. With
25 respect to any aspect of water quality, applicants may rely on
26 regional characterization of the brine. The department may not
27 impose conditions requiring brine to exceed the physical
28 character or chemical composition of a commercial product for
29 which the brine is an effective substitute. Persons engaged in
30 the beneficial uses of brine shall maintain records and make

1 reports as the department requires.

2 (e) Secondary products from produced water.--Notwithstanding
3 any provision of law to the contrary and to promote beneficial
4 uses and legitimate recycling, material derived from produced
5 water from conventional formations, including, but not limited
6 to, salt, is not waste if:

7 (1) the material is of a physical character and chemical
8 composition that is consistently equivalent to an
9 intentionally manufactured product or raw material; and

10 (2) the use of the material presents no greater threat
11 of harm to human health and the environment than the use of
12 the product or raw material.

13 (f) Regional characterization of produced water.--Generators
14 of produced water from conventional formations may satisfy an
15 obligation to provide a chemical analysis of the waste through
16 certification that the physical properties and chemical
17 composition of the produced water are fairly represented by a
18 regional analysis of produced water submitted to the department
19 and the solid waste management or treatment facility that
20 receives the waste.

21 (g) Class II injection wells.--Notwithstanding any provision
22 of law to the contrary, Class II well permits issued by the
23 Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to the Safe Drinking
24 Water Act (Public Law 93-523, 21 U.S.C. § 349 and 42 U.S.C. §§
25 201 and 300f et seq.) shall be deemed to satisfy the
26 department's obligation to consider potential pollution
27 resulting from underground injection or disposal to the wells.
28 Unless or until the Commonwealth takes primacy of the Class II
29 Underground Injection Control (UIC) program, the department's
30 review and approval, if any, of injection wells shall be limited

1 to a review of surface activities related to construction,
2 modification, operation or closure of the well.

3 (h) Wastewater treatment and recycling requirements.--A
4 centralized waste treatment facility that was authorized by the
5 department prior to August 20, 2010, to treat, for disposal,
6 recycling or recovery of material, wastewater generated from
7 exploration, production or gathering activities associated with
8 conventional oil and gas well operations or any new centralized
9 waste treatment facility that treats, for disposal, recycling or
10 recovery of material, wastewater generated from exploration,
11 production or gathering activities associated with conventional
12 oil and gas well operations shall not be subject to the
13 requirements of 25 Pa. Code § 95.10 (relating to treatment
14 requirements for new and expanding mass loadings of Total
15 Dissolved Solids (TDS)). As used in this subsection, the term
16 "centralized waste treatment facility" shall have the meaning
17 given to the term "centralized waste treatment (CWT) facility"
18 in 40 CFR 437.2(c) (relating to general definitions).

19 (i) Storage tanks.--Permanent aboveground or underground
20 tanks that are used to store brines, crude oil, drilling or frac
21 fluids and similar substances or materials and are directly
22 related to the exploration, development or production of crude
23 oil or natural gas regulated under this act, as well as liquid
24 traps and associated gathering lines directly related to oil or
25 gas production and gathering operations, are exempt from the
26 obligations under the act of July 6, 1989 (P.L.169, No.32),
27 known as the Storage Tank and Spill Prevention Act, and any rule
28 or regulation promulgated under the Storage Tank and Spill
29 Prevention Act.

30 CHAPTER 11

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

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Section 1101. Regulatory authority.

(a) General rule.--The Environmental Quality Board shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this act. The board shall consult with the council in the formulation and development of all regulations and policies effecting conventional oil and gas operations to ensure consistency with the duties of the council and purposes of the act of June 23, 2016 (P.L.375, No.52), known as the Pennsylvania Grade Crude Development Act. Policies adopted by the department after April 16, 2012, shall expire within three years of the effective date of this act with respect to conventional operations unless revised and reissued in accordance with this section.

(b) Limited applicability.--Immediately upon the effective date of this subsection, the provisions of 58 Pa.C.S. § 3226 (relating to Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board) are limited in applicability to unconventional oil and gas operations. The department may consult with the Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board in the formulation, drafting or presentation stages of regulations applicable to conventional oil and gas operations.

Section 1102. Construction.

(a) Unconventional wells.--Nothing in this act shall be construed to apply to unconventional wells.

(b) Coal and Gas Resource Coordination Act.--

(1) The requirements under section 5 of the act of December 18, 1984 (P.L.1069, No.214), known as the Coal and Gas Resource Coordination Act, for the issuance of a permit under the former act of December 19, 1984 (P.L.1140, No.223), known as the Oil and Gas Act, shall apply to this act.

(2) Nothing in this act shall be construed to change,

1 repeal or otherwise affect the provisions of the Coal and Gas
2 Resource Coordination Act.

3 Section 1103. Land recycling and remediation.

4 (a) General rule.--The cleanup and remediation of spills and
5 releases from oil and natural gas operations shall not be
6 required to comply with the notice and review provisions of the
7 act of May 19, 1995 (P.L.4, No.2), known as the Land Recycling
8 and Environmental Remediation Standards Act. The provisions of
9 this section shall not be construed to affect, limit or impair
10 other obligations or rights of operators or other responsible
11 parties established under the Land Recycling and Environmental
12 Remediation Standards Act whenever site remediation is
13 voluntarily conducted or required.

14 (b) Reporting.--The following apply to spills onto the
15 ground at a well site:

16 (1) The following spills must be reported within two
17 hours of discovery:

18 (i) more than 5 barrels of oil within a 24-hour
19 period; or

20 (ii) more than 15 barrels of brine within a 24-hour
21 period if the total dissolved solids concentration of the
22 brine is equal to or greater than 10,000 mg/kg.

23 (2) Spills of less than 5 barrels of oil or less than 15
24 barrels of brine need not be reported unless there is an
25 immediate threat to public health, safety or the environment.

26 (c) Water pollution.--A spill from oil and natural gas
27 operations polluting or threatening to pollute waters of this
28 Commonwealth must be reported immediately upon discovery.

29 (d) Standard for crude oil in soil.--Notwithstanding the
30 provisions of 25 Pa. Code Ch. 250 (relating to administration of

1 Land Recycling Program), the attainment standard for crude oil
2 in soil shall be 10,000 mg/kg of total petroleum hydrocarbons.
3 For sites remediated under the attainment standard under this
4 subsection, the person conducting the remediation shall submit a
5 report to the department documenting attainment of the standard.
6 The remediation standard is not applicable to spills or releases
7 involving materials other than crude oil.

8 (e) Conventional oil and gas operations.--Regardless of
9 whether a person conducts remediation in accordance with the
10 Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act,
11 remediation of a spill related to conventional oil and gas
12 operations may be conducted according to established field
13 practices, including bioremediation, to attain the chosen
14 cleanup standards consistent with the protection of public
15 health and the environment.

16 Section 1104. Repeal.

17 Repeals are as follows:

18 (1) The provisions of 58 Pa.C.S. (relating to oil and
19 gas) are repealed insofar as they relate to conventional
20 wells.

21 (2) All acts and parts of acts are repealed insofar as
22 they are inconsistent with this act.

23 Section 1105. Continuation.

24 Except as otherwise provided in this act, all conventional
25 oil and gas well activities initiated under 58 Pa.C.S. (relating
26 to oil and gas) or under the former act of December 19, 1984
27 (P.L.1140, No.223), known as the Oil and Gas Act, shall continue
28 and remain in full force and effect and may be completed under
29 this act. Orders, rules and decisions which were made under 58
30 Pa.C.S. or the former Oil and Gas Act as to conventional wells

1 and which are in effect on the effective date of this section
2 shall remain in full force and effect until revoked, vacated or
3 modified under this act. Contracts, obligations and collective
4 bargaining agreements entered into under 58 Pa.C.S. are not
5 affected nor impaired by this act. Nothing in this act shall
6 alter the common law establishing the subsurface as the dominant
7 estate in Pennsylvania, or alter or abridge the terms of any
8 contract, mortgage or other agreement entered into prior to the
9 effective date of this section.

10 Section 1106. Effective date.

11 This act shall take effect immediately.