



For Immediate Release

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New Commission to Gather Citizen Input on Marcellus Drilling

HARRISBURG, PA (August 30, 2011) — A new commission launching this week will give the citizens of Pennsylvania an opportunity to tell their side of the story about drilling in the Marcellus Shale.

Former state Representatives Carole Rubley and Dan Surra will co-chair the Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission, which will hold hearings across Pennsylvania to gather citizen perspectives on the Marcellus Shale and produce a final report for policymakers. The first of five hearings will take place Wednesday in Southwestern Pennsylvania (see full schedule of hearings below).

“Marcellus Shale development will have a huge impact on our Commonwealth and it is critical that we get it right,” Surra said. “This commission will give citizens an opportunity to add their voice and bring some necessary balance to this critical debate.”

“The Commission will give the people of Pennsylvania an opportunity to weigh in on this important issue,” said Rubley. “Their input should inform state policies to ensure gas drilling is conducted in a responsible manner.”

Earlier this year, Governor Tom Corbett’s Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission, heavy with industry representatives, produced a report and recommendations on shale drilling. The Citizens Commission is intended to supplement that work and delve deeper into a variety of issues, including water and air quality, social impacts of gas drilling, the drilling tax, and impacts outside Marcellus communities.

“The unbalanced makeup of Corbett’s Commission was clear in the report – it failed to accurately represent the science, the facts and the experiences of the experts and citizens of Pennsylvania and elsewhere who know the ramifications of gas drilling first hand” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and appointed member of

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the Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission. “The goal of this Commission is to give everyone who wants to share information and testimony a fair and equal opportunity to be heard, and to provide meaningful guidance to the decisionmakers of Pennsylvania,” van Rossum added.

“The Governor’s commission told part of the story,” said Thomas Au, of the Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter. “The citizens of Pennsylvania have a different story to tell.”

The Citizens Commission was formed by eight leading civic and environmental organizations to give Pennsylvanians living with drilling in their backyard a place to speak out and recommend action.

The Commission will hold five hearings across Pennsylvania in August and September. Each hearing will be held from 6-9 p.m., with the first hour reserved for expert testimony and the remaining two for public input.

In early October, the Commission will produce a report documenting the opinions and concerns of citizens to be delivered to Governor Corbett and the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

The hearing schedule is:

Southwestern Pennsylvania

Aug. 31, 2011, 6-9 pm: South Fayette Middle School, 3640 Old Oakdale Rd., McDonald, Pa

Southeastern Pennsylvania

Sept. 6, 2011, 6-9 pm: The Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Northeastern Pennsylvania

Sept. 13, 2011, 6-9 pm: Lycoming College, Academic Center on Mulberry Street, Room D001, Lower Level, Williamsport, Pa.

Sept. 14, 2011, 6-9 pm: Wysox Volunteer Fire Company, P.O. Box 2, Lake Rd., Wysox, Pa.

Central Pennsylvania

Week of Sept. 18, 2011, Harrisburg, Pa. (Details TBA)

Citizens can sign up to participate at these hearings at the Commission’s web site: <http://citizensmarcellusshale.com> or by calling Stephanie Frank at 717-255-7181

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS: Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, Clean Water Action, Keystone Progress, League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, Penn Environment, Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter, and the CLEAR Coalition.

The Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission was formed by eight civic and environmental organizations in Pennsylvania to assess the impacts, both positive and negative, of natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale and to identify the steps needed to ensure drilling occurs in a responsible manner. Learn more: <http://citizensmarcellusshale.com>.