

**SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Susan Obleski  
Director of Communications  
Office: (717) 238-0423, x316  
Cell: (717) 215-7278

**SRBC'S PROPOSED CHANGES AFFECTING NATURAL GAS  
DRILLERS AND ENERGY PROJECTS OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) is taking public comments until August 15 on proposed regulatory revisions to streamline the use of SRBC-approved water for natural gas drilling in the Marcellus and other shale formations. The proposed revisions also clarify that large energy projects requiring federal licensing must obtain SRBC approval.

“The proposed changes affecting the natural gas industry will improve the Commission’s administrative efficiency once water sources have been approved, and provide greater flexibility in the use of approved water sources by the industry,” said SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz. “It is important to note that our thorough reviews of stream withdrawals will not change under the proposed regulations.”

The primary objective of the revised regulations is to allow natural gas drillers to use water from any of their SRBC-approved water sources at any approved drilling pad in the Susquehanna basin. Currently, companies must specify, pay for and obtain SRBC approval for water sources for each and every drill pad.

Swartz said, “Unlike other regulated industries that have stationary sites, the natural gas industry relies on its drillers moving from site to site, and numerous sources of water can help reduce transport issues such as truck traffic. To manage and protect the basin’s vital water resources while meeting the dynamic needs of the natural gas industry requires greater agility on our part. The proposed regulatory revisions would provide us the needed flexibility.”

Another key provision in the proposed revisions would clarify SRBC’s regulatory review authority over energy projects undergoing licensing, relicensing or license amendments through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission or Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Several energy projects, including the hydroelectric dams and pump-storage facilities on the lower Susquehanna River, are currently undergoing or are about to undergo federal licensing review.

Swartz said, “The Susquehanna basin is increasingly at the hub of energy production, and several energy projects are subject to federal relicensing in the coming years. The Commission has determined these large-scale, water-based energy projects can affect the basin’s water resources and are subject to the Commission’s review.”

SRBC exercises concurrent jurisdiction with federal agencies over certain classes of projects using the basin's water resources. The proposed revisions would incorporate this current practice into SRBC's regulations.

Other proposed regulatory revisions address a number of administrative matters, including procedures for appealing SRBC decisions and other administrative matters.

In conjunction with the public comment period, SRBC scheduled two public hearings to explain the proposed revisions and to take public comments:

- August 4, 10:00 a.m., Rachael Carson State Office Building, Auditorium, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pa.
- August 5, 7:00 p.m., Holiday Inn-Elmira Riverside, 760 East Water Street, Elmira, N.Y.

Persons planning to present oral testimony at a public hearing should provide prior notice, if possible, to Richard Cairo, General Counsel, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, 1721 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102, Phone: (717) 238-0423, ext 306, Fax: (717) 238-2436, E-Mail [rcairo@srbc.net](mailto:rcairo@srbc.net).

The proposed regulatory changes are available on SRBC's web site at [www.srbc.net/programs/projreview.htm](http://www.srbc.net/programs/projreview.htm). Written comments can be submitted on or before August 15, 2009 to Richard Cairo, whose contact information is provided above.

SRBC is scheduled to take final action on the proposed regulatory changes at its next quarterly business meeting on September 10, 2009.

### **Natural Gas Well Development in the Susquehanna Basin**

More than 72 percent of the tri-state Susquehanna watershed, covering portions of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, are underlain by the Marcellus and other organic-rich shale formations. Advancements in technology for capturing natural gas in those shale formations require operators to inject large amounts of water under pressure several thousand feet underground to fracture the formation to stimulate the flow of gas. For more information on SRBC's regulation of natural gas well development projects, go to SRBC's web site at [www.srbc.net/programs/projreviewmarcellus.htm](http://www.srbc.net/programs/projreviewmarcellus.htm).

### **Susquehanna River Basin Commission**

SRBC ([www.srbc.net](http://www.srbc.net)) is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on December 24, 1970 by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, New York, and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Maryland, where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.

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