

**SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SRBC TAKES ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST  
NATURAL GAS DRILLER**  
**Company Used Water Without SRBC Approval for Well in Bradford County**

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) today initiated enforcement action against Ohio-based Belden & Blake Corporation, a natural gas drilling company, for using water without approval from SRBC to hydraulically fracture the Marcellus shale formation in Smithfield Township, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. SRBC also ordered the company to immediately stop consumptively using water in any projects targeting the Marcellus or Utica shale formations.

The violation occurred when Belden & Blake Corporation used 600,000 gallons of water this February to target the Marcellus formation in an existing natural gas well it drilled in 1995 into the Oriskany formation. The company recompleted the well to target the Marcellus formation without SRBC approval. Belden & Blake Corporation has 15 days to respond to SRBC.

“Clearly, the company should have been aware of the Commission’s regulations,” said SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz. “The company will remain in noncompliance status and will not be able to complete additional wells in the Marcellus or Utica formations within the Susquehanna River Basin until this matter is resolved with the Commission.”

Natural gas operators withdrawing or using any amount of water to develop wells in the Marcellus and Utica shale formations in the Susquehanna watershed must have approval from SRBC. In 2008, SRBC did extensive outreach to natural gas operators making them aware of the agency’s regulations and industry’s obligations to obtain an approval to remain in compliance. SRBC’s outreach included letters to individual companies sent in June, August and October, all of which Belden & Blake received.

Belden & Blake reported they obtained the water from a public water supplier, Aqua Pennsylvania at its Sayre facility. SRBC regulations are clear that using water from any source, including that purchased from a public water supplier for natural gas development in the Marcellus, does not relieve Belden & Blake of a requirement to obtain approval from SRBC prior to undertaking its project in Bradford County.

Swartz said, “This noncompliance is unacceptable and will be dealt with firmly. Our focus is the prior-approval requirement for the consumptive use of water for hydrofracturing the shale. SRBC is still waiting to receive a certification demonstrating proper disposal of the flow back fluids that resulted from this activity.”

“The natural gas industry, as a whole, has been and continues to operate in compliance with Commission water withdrawal and consumptive water use regulations and has demonstrated a desire to work cooperatively with the Commission. This recent noncompliance by Belden and Blake has been the exception, not the rule.”

More than 72 percent of the tri-state Susquehanna watershed, covering portions of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, are underlain by the Marcellus and Utica 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](http://www.srbc.net).

The Harrisburg-based SRBC 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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