

Work Session Summary

July 29, 2011

Attendance: Edward Coar (Chairman), Commissioner Brian Smith, Debbie Varcoe, Dean Jamieson, Mary Beth Wood, Donna Labar, Jennifer Porter and Dave Messersmith

Public Meetings/Outreach Sub-Committee Report: The Outreach sub-committee is planning two public meetings to be held over the next two months. The first one being planned for Wednesday, August 24th is entitled “Economic and Community Impacts of Marcellus Shale”. Mr. Tim Kelsey PhD. from Penn State will be speaking at this meeting. The committee discussed various ideas on how to promote this meeting and get the word out. Dave Messersmith plans to do a news release soon. Donna LaBar has offered to post the information to the Chamber’s Facebook website. The second meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 28th and will discuss methane migration. Mr. Messersmith is working on securing speakers for this meeting. Both public meetings would be held at the Park Street Complex. Commissioner Smith recommended the task force put together a public meeting with the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to speak on their involvement in public safety. Ms. Porter suggested that October might be a good time for this meeting. Mr. Messersmith also suggested the State Police be involved in this meeting. Jennifer Porter talked about the possibility of closing this meeting with a presentation on educational opportunities in the industry. The outreach committee will work on getting a date set up for this meeting.

Governor’s Marcellus Shale Advisory Committee Report/Planning Sub-Committee Report: Mr. Coar informed the group that he has e-mailed a copy of this report to all task force members. Mr. Coar felt the report recognizes the economic benefits to Pennsylvania but it also recognizes the challenges the industry present to communities and the environment. He suggested all members review this report and how it relates to each individual sub-committee.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Workforce – Ms. Porter stated that currently Lackawanna College is continuing to run its natural gas program at the New Milford campus. Ms. Porter also reported that Johnson College and Keystone College have classes that prepare students for careers in oil and natural gas extraction and alternative energy. Classes offered at these sites can be both degree and non-degree. Workforce Wayne is in the process of implementing a new grant for a technology lab to be located at the Hawley Silk Mill site. The next meeting of this sub-committee is being planned for August 15th.

Government – Commissioner Smith mentioned that he attended a meeting in Scranton along with Commissioner Tony Herzog, Lieutenant Governor Jim Cawley and the Governor’s Regional Director, Harry Forbes to discuss concerns about the industry being lost to New York and Ohio where the abundance of marketable gas is easily accessible. Growing the gas industry in Pennsylvania would strengthen Pennsylvania’s economy and help address issues with the state budget.

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Commissioner Smith stated that there is nothing new to report regarding the DRBC, however he stated that Mr. John Hines indicated that he was hopeful that some decisions would come out of the September meeting.

Also discussed, is the effort to make a conversion to natural gas as road fuel. As Commissioner Smith explained, Pennsylvania has adopted California's emissions standards which means a car dealer cannot sell a new vehicle from a car lot that is set up for natural gas. In order to revert back to EPA standards, the state legislature must act and this will most likely be a lengthy process.

Economic Development – Miss Wood reported that a grant application in the amount of \$35,000 has been sent to the Appalachian Regional Commission. This grant will be used to help increase the professional and technical jobs within Wayne County. Miss Wood also mentioned that the WEDCO website is up and they are working on improving the natural gas section. Mrs. LaBar stated that she is receiving positive feedback from the local merchants regarding the gas pipeline employees working within the County. Gas line employees are supportive of the area businesses and are helping to boost the local economy.

Other Business – Mr. Jamieson reported that Hess has become focused on other areas where gas drilling is being allowed but is continuing work in the area with a reduced staff.

It was noted the industry would not be able to make definitive decisions on their efforts in the Delaware River Basin until they are able to complete their test wells. Currently under the Delaware River Basin Commission's moratorium, the test wells that have been started cannot be completed.