

PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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Winner 2009 [PAEE Business Partner](#) Of The Year Award

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Auditor General-Elect DePasquale Promises To Audit DEP Water Protection Programs

[Eugene DePasquale](#), a member of the House and a former deputy secretary with the Department of Environmental Protection, was elected to the position of Auditor General Tuesday. During his campaign he promised to use his office to monitor state agencies' efforts to protect Pennsylvania's natural resources.

On his first day in office, DePasquale said he will order a review of the state's water protection programs in order to evaluate potential threats caused by the Marcellus Shale drilling.

In addition, DePasquale said he would--

- Ensure DEP and DCNR maintains appropriate staffing levels to properly regulate and monitor natural gas drilling activities.
- Ensure consistency among DEP regional offices in enforcement and permitting activities related to natural gas drilling activities.
- Ensure DEP is monitoring water quality (including groundwater and wells) for methane and chemicals used in hydrofracking.
- Ensure gas spill plans are compliant with state and federal law.
- Ensure DEP is monitoring safe and appropriate disposal of waste fluids used in hydrofracking operations. Specifically, urge the DEP to mandate that drilling companies stop using treatment plans that are not equipped to remove certain contaminants from hydrofracking wastewater.
- Ensure impact fees are adequate to compensate Pennsylvania communities for impacts caused by natural gas drilling activities. The Auditor General will scrutinize how funds are being allocated and recommend changes to Act 13, if necessary.
- Urge changes to Act 13 that will extend the liability of drilling companies. Per Act 13, driller liability ends one year after a well is capped. This amount of time may be insufficient to determine if there have been public health problems or adverse effects to the environment as a result of drilling activities.

Just as coal is an extremely important natural resource in Pennsylvania and has had tremendous impacts on our economy for hundreds of years, DePasquale said there are adverse effects throughout the state as a result of coal mining.

As stated by the U.S. Geology Survey, "Drainage from thousands of abandoned coal mines has contaminated more than 3,000 miles of streams and associated ground waters in Pennsylvania and is the most extensive water-pollution problem affecting the four major river basins in Pennsylvania."

As Auditor General, Eugene DePasquale said he would continue to work with the Commonwealth's stakeholders, state agencies and legislative leaders to support the growth of the natural gas industry, but more importantly, to ensure that communities throughout Pennsylvania have the tools necessary to ensure safe and abundant natural resources.

For more information, visit the [DePasquale for Auditor General](#) website.

NewsClips: [DePasquale Will Audit Water Protection, Marcellus Programs](#)
[Worries About Kane Taking Aim At Marcellus Shale Hot Air?](#)