

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 24 Issue 10

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

October 2022



DEP Adds Final-Omitted Reg. Limiting Methane Emissions From Conventional Oil & Gas Facilities To Oct. 12 EQB Agenda [PaEN]

The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

Inside this issue:

Baltimore County Police cited by EPA for hazardous	5
DEP Announces Bigger Rebates to Help More Pennsylvanians Buy Electric Vehicles	6
DEP Awards \$3 Million to Restore Watersheds	9
DEP Begins Investigation at Former Erie Coke Property	12
DEP Files Remediation Plan for Bishop Tube Site	14
DEP Provides \$2.9 Million to Replace Old Diesel	16
DEP Issued NOVs To Conventional Oil & Gas Companies	18
Drought Watch Remains for 36 Counties, DEP Asks for Continued Voluntary Water Conservation	21

Late Friday, the Department of Environmental Protection notified members of the Environmental Quality Board that Part II of the final regulation limiting volatile organic compounds and methane from conventional oil and gas facilities has been added to

the agenda of the [October 12 Board meeting](#) as a final-omitted rulemaking.

Part I of the regulation covering unconventional shale gas facilities was already approved by the EQB and by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, but is opposed by Republicans in the

General Assembly. [Read more here.](#)

Conventional oil and gas facilities account for 80 percent of methane emissions from the oil and gas industry in Pennsylvania because they have done little or nothing to control them.

(continued on page 2)

DEP and Partners Join in Litter Cleanup in Luzerne, Call on All Pennsylvanians to Help "Pick Up Pennsylvania" This Fall

Local cleanup events happening now through November 30

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) partnered with local leaders in Luzerne Borough in a litter cleanup on

Toby Creek today and called on all Pennsylvanians to join in the "Pick Up Pennsylvania" statewide fall campaign to clean up streams, rivers, and lakes in their community.

"Pick Up Pennsylvania, which began in 2004, is a lynchpin

in the anti-litter movement growing in Pennsylvania, and DEP is pleased to support this grassroots campaign for community volunteers," said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh.

(continued on page 3)

**DEP Adds Final-Omitted Reg. Limiting Methane Emissions From Conventional Oil & Gas Facilities To Oct. 12
EQB Agenda [PaEN] (continued)**

The regulation would affect 4,719 conventional well owners of approximately 27,260 facilities.

The unconventional shale gas industry accounts for 20 percent because they have implemented some controls. [Read more here.](#)

DEP said both parts of the regulation are needed to comply with a mandate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

to adopt controls on methane emissions from oil and gas operations by December 16 or face the potential loss of over \$500 million in federal highway funds. [Read more here.](#)

Source: PA Environmental Digest

DEP and Partners Join in Litter Cleanup in Luzerne, Call on All Pennsylvanians to Help “Pick Up Pennsylvania” This Fall (continued)

DEP Northeast Region Acting Director Joe Buczynski joined leaders from the Luzerne County Citizens' Blight Committee, Keep Northeastern Pennsylvania Beautiful, and other community volunteers at the creek cleanup near the borough fire hall this morning.

“Anyone who frequents their local creek or stream, whether for swimming, fishing, kayaking, or other recreation, can tell you how unpleasant it is to have to look at trash while trying to enjoy the water,” said Buczynski. “DEP is pleased to join forces with the Luzerne County Citizens' Blight Committee and our regional Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful chapter, who make a positive impact in our area and serve as a statewide model.”

The Pick Up Pennsylvania fall campaign runs September 1 through November 30 each year. It's coordinated by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and sponsored by DEP, PennDOT, and the Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Zone Cleanup. This support provides registered events with free trash bags and gloves.

“PennDOT spends nearly 14 million dollars a year cleaning up litter along Pennsylvania's roadways, money that should be spent to maintain and improve our transportation network,” said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. “We are grateful to the many community volunteers who help clean up litter during Pick Up Pennsylvania and throughout the year.”

Residents can use this [Events Calendar](#) to join Pick Up Pennsylvania cleanup events in their community. Those who'd like to register their own local cleanup event can do so at [Organize an Event](#). Individuals, families, neighbors, students, civic organizations, and local governments are invited to participate.

During the 2021 Pick Up Pennsylvania fall campaign, nearly 14,000 volunteers canvassed their communities to remove 745,380 pounds of trash and 99,200 pounds of tires from Pennsylvania's lands, waterways and coastal regions.

“When we formed the Luzerne County Citizens Blight Committee, we knew about the problem of trash and illegal dumping spots in the northeast and we knew something had to be done,” said Greg Griffin, head of the committee. “Our group is committed to getting rid of trash so the area can look nice and clean for residents and visitors to enjoy.”

Since the committee formed in 2018, members have voluntarily picked up hundreds of tons of trash along highways, wooded areas, creeks, streams, and other problem spots throughout northeast Pennsylvania.

The Wolf Administration released its Litter Action Plan in 2021 in response to a 2019 Pennsylvania Litter Research Study which found Pennsylvania has more than 500 million pieces of litter on its roadways. The action plan includes strategies for all Pennsylvanians to fight litter in their communities. As part of the plan, the state launched a public awareness campaign, PA Fights Dirty, this summer. The campaign calls upon Pennsylvanians to ensure every piece of their trash, regardless of size, is disposed of properly.

(continued on page 4)

DEP and Partners Join in Litter Cleanup in Luzerne, Call on All Pennsylvanians to Help “Pick Up Pennsylvania” This Fall (continued)

DEP identifies many ways Pennsylvanians can be anti-litter at www.dep.pa.gov/litter.

PennDOT provides many additional litter cleanup volunteer opportunities, including Adopt-A-Highway, Litter Brigades, and more at their roadside beautification web page.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that about 80% of marine debris originates as land trash.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Baltimore County Police cited by EPA for hazardous waste violations at firing range in Timonium, Md.

The Baltimore County Police Department will pay a \$15,800 penalty for hazardous waste violations associated with the improper management of lead-contaminated soil at an outdoor firing range in Timonium, Maryland, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today.

The outdoor firing range is used by county police officers for firing practice of primarily handguns, which use bullets made of lead and a copper alloy. The soil at the firing range is considered hazardous waste due to lead concentrations from bullets, and it must be handled and disposed of in accordance with EPA regulations.

Exposure to high levels of lead may cause serious health problems. Lead is toxic and exposure to lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. Children six years old and younger are most susceptible to the effects of lead, but it can also be harmful to adults. EPA efforts to reduce lead exposure have contributed to blood lead levels in U.S. children steadily dropping over the past four decades, but lead exposure persists in communities throughout the country.

EPA cited the police department for violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the federal law governing the treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA is designed to protect public health and the environment, and avoid long and extensive cleanups, by requiring the safe, environmentally sound storage and disposal of hazardous waste.

Alleged violations included: operation of a hazardous waste management facility without a permit, failure to provide hazardous waste management training to staff, failure to provide hazardous waste responsibilities in written job descriptions, and failure to have a hazardous waste contingency plan.

The EPA website has more information about [EPA's hazardous waste program](#) .

Source: U.S. EPA

DEP Announces Bigger Rebates to Help More Pennsylvanians Buy Electric Vehicles and \$3.4 Million for Installation of 54 Fast Chargers in Major Traffic Corridors

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced it's offering bigger consumer rebates for electric vehicles, with a focus on working-class households, and providing \$3.4 million in Pennsylvania Volkswagen settlement funds for installation of 54 DC fast chargers in 16 locations in major traffic corridors.

"DEP continues to work strategically to support Pennsylvanians' growing interest in zero-emission electric vehicles, supporting electric vehicle purchases for working-class Pennsylvanians and funding installation of fast chargers along major traffic corridors in locations where no fast charging infrastructure currently exists," said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh.

"By reducing nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, carbon dioxide, and other pollutants from the transportation sector, we make the air quality healthier in our communities, while helping to slow down climate change and its impacts," Ziadeh added.

As of September 1, the DEP [2022-2023 Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate program](#) is offering Pennsylvanians a bigger rebate for the purchase of a new or used battery electric car or truck. The amount has increased from \$750 to \$2,000 or \$3,000, depending on household income.

The program also lowered the household income levels eligible for a rebate. For example, a family of two with an income of \$69,000 is eligible for a \$2,000 rebate for a battery electric vehicle. A family of four with an income of \$55,500 is eligible for a \$3,000 rebate.

With a total of \$2 million available, the rebate program aims to help get about 1,000 more electric vehicles on the road in Pennsylvania.

The program was established by [state law in 2004](#) and is funded by the utilities gross receipts tax.

The [Driving PA Forward DC Fast Charging Grants program](#) awarded \$3.4 million in Pennsylvania Volkswagen settlement funds to projects that will install 54 DC fast chargers in 16 high-traffic locations in 12 counties. DC fast chargers can charge a battery electric vehicle to 80 percent in 20 to 60 minutes.

(continued on page 7)

DEP Announces Bigger Rebates to Help More Pennsylvanians Buy Electric Vehicles and \$3.4 Million for Installation of 54 Fast Chargers in Major Traffic Corridors (continued)

The majority of the projects will help build out [electric vehicle corridors](#) across Pennsylvania, where charging stations are available every 50 miles. The [Pennsylvania Department of Transportation](#) is heading up development of these corridors and other charging networks across the state, using National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding.

The Driving PA Forward DC Fast Charging program provided grants to the following projects:

- **6406 Truck Plaza LLC:** \$195,039 to install two plugs at a travel plaza/truck stop within one mile of I-80 Exit 42 in Emlenton, Venango County.
- **Applegreen Electric:** \$250,000 to install eight plugs at a Pennsylvania Turnpike plaza serving the I-476 corridor in Jim Thorpe, Carbon County, and \$500,000 to install eight plugs at two Turnpike plazas serving I-76 westbound and eastbound in Somerset, Somerset County.
- **Blink Network:** \$233,268 to install two plugs at a KwikFill convenience store within one mile of I-80 Exit 29 in Harrisville, Venango County.
- **Coen Markets Incorporated:** \$240,000 to install two plugs at the Coen Market convenience store within one mile of I-76 Exit 91 in Donegal, Westmoreland County, and \$240,000 to install two plugs at the Coen Markets Travel Plaza within a mile of I-70 Exit 6 in Claysville, Washington County.
- **Evgo Services LLC:** \$118,673 to install four plugs at a Wawa store within one mile of U.S. 202 in Malvern, Chester County; \$145,528 to install four plugs at a Wawa store on PA-611 in Pipersville, Bucks County; \$165,663 to install four plugs at a shopping center 2 miles from Rt. 422 in Collegeville, Montgomery County; and \$167,326 to install four plugs at a Wawa on Rt. 202 in North Wales, Montgomery County.
- **Giant Eagle, Inc.:** \$210,000 to install two plugs at a GetGo store within one mile of I-79 Exit 14 in Waynesburg, Greene County.
- **Raceway Management Company, Inc.:** \$205,618 to install two plugs at a Onvo Travel Plaza within one mile of I-81 Exit 219 in New Milford, Susquehanna County, and \$222,752 to install two plugs at the Onvo Travel Plaza within a mile of I-78 Exit 13 in Bethel, Berks County.
- **Sheetz, Inc.:** \$250,000 to install four plugs at a Sheetz store within one mile of I-70 Exit 57 in New Stanton, Westmoreland County, and \$250,000 to install four plugs at a Sheetz within a mile of I-81 Exit 77 in Harrisburg, Dauphin County.

(continued on page 8)

DEP Announces Bigger Rebates to Help More Pennsylvanians Buy Electric Vehicles and \$3.4 Million for Installation of 54 Fast Chargers in Major Traffic Corridors (continued)

With these grants, Driving PA Forward has now funded installation of 106 DC fast charging plugs in 34 locations around the state. Driving PA Forward launched in 2018 to permanently reduce NOx emissions in Pennsylvania by supporting clean transportation projects with funding from the commonwealth's \$118.5 million settlement with Volkswagen.

Battery electric vehicle registrations in Pennsylvania more than doubled from March 2020 to March 2022, from 11,343 to 23,689 registrations.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Awards \$3 Million to Restore Watersheds Statewide by Reducing Water Pollution

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) awarded \$3 million in grant funding to local governments and organizations to restore the health of local watersheds around the state by reducing water pollution.

“Reducing current and future nonpoint source pollution is critical to restoring the health of the water ecosystems Pennsylvanians depend on,” said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh. “It requires painstaking work based on understanding the impact that activities on land have on our streams and rivers. DEP is pleased to support communities across Pennsylvania who are working to improve their watersheds one stream segment, one land parcel, one best-practice project at a time.”

The grants target nonpoint source pollution, or pollution that enters streams and rivers from widespread sources, rather than from a single specific discharge point, such as a pipe. About 95% of water-quality-impaired watersheds in Pennsylvania are affected by the following types of nonpoint source pollution:

- Nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution from agricultural activities, urban storm-water runoff, and streambank and shoreline erosion; and
- Iron, aluminum, and acidity pollution associated with energy resource extraction and acid mine drainage (AMD).

Funding comes from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, authorized through Section 319(h) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act.

[The DEP Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grants program](#) supports projects that carry out best management practices specified in plans for 42 watersheds around the state, with special consideration for projects in Pennsylvania’s share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Development of new plans for additional impaired watersheds is also supported.

The 2022 Section 319 Grant funding went to the following recipients:

Statewide

- **Villanova University:** \$644,493 to continue the National Monitoring Program study to conduct long-term observation and analysis at three stormwater management sites on campus: a stormwater wetland, a bioinfiltration rain garden, and the Commons student housing development/stormwater infrastructure site. This monitoring study follows past strategies and leverages a long dataset to inform future recommendations for design and implementation of stormwater best management practices throughout the state.

(continued on page 10)

DEP Awards \$3 Million to Restore Watersheds Statewide by Reducing Water Pollution (continued)

Allegheny County

- **Hampton Township:** \$343,799 for floodplain restoration and reconnection, stream segment restoration, and streambank buffer enhancements along Pine Creek. The projects annually will remove approximately 20.7 pounds of nitrogen, 2.3 pounds of phosphorus, and 15.7 tons of sediment from the creek. For more details, see the [Pine Creek Watershed Implementation Plan](#).

Clearfield County

- **Clearfield County Conservation District:** \$219,347 for Phase 1 of a two-phase AMD treatment project for Montgomery Creek in Pike Township. The flow and content of three AMD discharges into Killer Tributary will be monitored for 18 months. The data will inform development of a treatment system that will be constructed in Phase 2. The entire project will remove 73% of the AMD in the Killer Tributary and significantly improve water quality downstream on the main stem of Montgomery Creek. For more details, see the Montgomery Creek Watershed Implementation Plan.

Dauphin County

- **Tri-County Conewago Creek Association:** \$104,000 to design and apply for permitting for stream segment restoration, streambank buffer planting, and bioswale enhancement projects at locations on Hoffer Creek, Conewago Creek main stem, and unnamed tributaries to Conewago Creek in Londonderry and Conewago townships. When constructed, the projects annually will remove 3,839 pounds of nitrogen, 773 pounds of phosphorus, and over 655,000 pounds of sediment from Conewago Creek. This project is part of the Conewago Creek Watershed Implementation Plan as well as the Dauphin Countywide Action Plan in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan.

Indiana County

- **Indiana County Conservation District:** \$322,920 to design and construct an animal heavy use area and manure storage facility at a farm in East Mahoning Township at the headwaters of South Branch Plum Creek. Providing a stabilized area for livestock to congregate in winter months and preventing soil erosion and nutrient runoff, project annually will remove 450 pounds of nitrogen and 62 pounds of phosphorus from the creek. For more details, see the South Branch Plum Creek Watershed Implementation Plan.

(continued on page 11)

DEP Awards \$3 Million to Restore Watersheds Statewide by Reducing Water Pollution (continued)

Lancaster County

- **Donegal Chapter of Trout Unlimited:** \$188,500 to design and permit projects at three sites in Fulton Township to restore stream segments and plant forest buffers on the main stem Conowingo Creek and the Little Conowingo Creek.

These projects are part of the Conowingo Creek Watershed Implementation Plan as well as the Lancaster Countywide Action Plan in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan.

Lebanon County

- **Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited:** \$457,645 to complete design and permitting for a stream restoration project on Hammer Creek at Barry Farm. The project will reconnect the floodplain, install livestock exclusion fencing, and plant forest buffers around restored stream segments and wetlands. These will stabilize approximately 8,800 linear feet of streambank, restore 3 acres of wetlands, and install 17 acres of forest streambank buffers, reducing sediment erosion at this site by over 80 percent. This project is part of the Hammer Creek Headwaters Alternative Restoration Plan as well as the Lebanon Countywide Action Plan in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan.

Schuylkill County

- **Schuylkill Headwaters Association:** \$292,450 to design and permit a reclamation project for abandoned de-silting basins encompassing 100 acres in Schuylkill Haven. Coal waste will be removed, floodplain will be restored, a wetland will be created, and streambank will be stabilized and planted with a forest buffer along a segment of the Schuylkill River. The project is a priority of the Upper Schuylkill River Watershed Implementation Plan.

York County

- **York County Conservation District:** \$510,879 to restore a stream segment and plant two acres of riparian buffer along a tributary to South Branch Codorus Creek at Terra Farm in Codorus Township to reduce urban and agricultural nonpoint source pollution in this impaired stream. This project annually will remove 6,000 pounds of nitrogen, 10,200 pounds of phosphorus, and 72.8 tons of sediment. The project will advance the Codorus Creek Watershed Implementation Plan as well as the York Countywide Action Plan in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Begins Investigation at Former Erie Coke Property

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently began field activities as part of its environmental investigation at the former Erie Coke Inc. property at 925 E. Bay Drive in the city of Erie.

This phase of the investigation will assess the extent of contaminants in soils, groundwater, surface water, and sediments at the site.

“The investigation of this site is a big undertaking and one that will take time,” said DEP Northwest Regional Director Erin Wells. “The information gathered is critical to DEP, the community, and ultimately the reuse of the site.”

Since DEP announced in January that it would begin conducting further environmental investigation at this site, several steps have been completed as part of the process authorized under the Pennsylvania Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA). To date, DEP has finalized a scope of work for the project, assigned a DEP-approved contractor, and finalized a work plan for the investigation.

When Erie Coke shut down in December 2019, DEP successfully sought a court order to freeze \$1 million of Erie Coke’s finances for use of removing waste from the site. When those funds were exhausted, DEP requested U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) involvement to address waste remaining in tanks, containers, and piping, which posed an immediate threat to public health, welfare, and the environment.

Since then, the EPA has removed and disposed of waste, demolished buildings, recycled appropriate scrap materials, and is actively mitigating risks associated with remaining tanks, containers, and piping posing the greatest threat to public health, welfare, and the environment. The EPA expects removal actions at the former Erie Coke property to be completed in October.

Over the next few months, DEP contractors will conduct a boundary survey, clear and remove vegetation to access sample locations, perform soil borings, conduct a geophysical survey, and sample groundwater, surface water, soils and sediment.

(continued on page 13)

DEP Begins Investigation at Former Erie Coke Property (continued)

DEP also created a website dedicated to providing information on the site and the investigation. The website includes a timeline for steps included in the process, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to documents such as the completed work plan, which is also available in hard copy format at the Raymond M. Blasco M.D. Memorial Library.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Files Remediation Plan for Bishop Tube Site in Chester County

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) filed a remediation plan that addresses contamination in soil, groundwater, and surface water, and provides for a public water connection to a private homeowner at the Bishop Tube Hazardous Site Cleanup Act (HSCA) site in East Whiteland Township, Chester County.

“This remediation plan represents the culmination of a thorough assessment and review of a complex site,” said DEP Southeast Regional Director Pat Patterson. “We believe this remedy selection will provide a comprehensive pathway for cleaning up and reusing the site in a way that is protective of public health and the environment.”

The site will be remediated to a combination of background, statewide health, and site-specific standards in accordance with the [Land Recycling Program](#). After considering several courses of action, DEP selected a combination of in situ chemical injections, soil mixing, engineering practices, institutional controls, and long-term monitoring to address the soil, groundwater, and surface water contamination. The residence with the impacted private well will be connected to an existing public water line.

The injection of chemical oxidation or reducing agents creates a chemical reaction that destroys harmful contaminants and produces harmless byproducts. It is commonly described as “in situ” because it is conducted in place, without having to excavate soil or pump out groundwater for aboveground cleanup.

Several industrial businesses manufactured stainless steel tubes at the 13.7-acre Bishop Tube HSCA site from the 1950s to 1999. Trichloroethylene (TCE) is considered the primary site-related contaminant of concern because its concentrations within soil, groundwater, and surface water are generally higher than other chlorinated solvents at the site and it poses the most substantial threat to human health and the environment. TCE is a commercial-grade solvent that was commonly used as a degreasing agent for manufactured metal parts. Besides being a known carcinogen, prolonged exposure to TCE can result in serious neurological, cardiac, reproductive, and developmental health problems.

DEP received and responded to hundreds of comments, including those received at a virtual public hearing in November 2021. For information on the Bishop Tube site, please visit: www.dep.pa.gov/bishoptube.

(continued on page 15)

DEP Files Remediation Plan for Bishop Tube Site in Chester County (continued)

The Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act was signed into law in 1988 to provide DEP the funding and authority to address hazardous substances and contaminants in the environment. To date, the program has conducted nearly 900 actions in communities across Pennsylvania, cleaning up groundwater, capping or removing contaminated soil, and ensuring thousands of people have access to safe drinking water.

Spurce: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Provides \$2.9 Million to Replace Old Diesel Vehicles with Clean-Energy Models

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced \$2.9 million in grant funding to replace old diesel trucks and school buses with zero- and low-emission vehicles. The funding comes from Pennsylvania's share of the national settlement with Volkswagen Group of America for cheating on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions tests. To date, the Wolf Administration has awarded more than \$64 million statewide.

"With Driving PA Forward Truck and Bus Fleet Grants, DEP is helping school districts, municipalities, and businesses switch to cleaner transportation, so that Pennsylvania's kids, employees, and communities can breathe healthier air as they go about their day-to-day lives," said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh. "This comprehensive approach to reducing vehicle emissions will help improve Pennsylvanians' health while also helping to slow climate change."

By replacing older polluting engines and equipment with new technologies, funded projects remove nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and hydrocarbon pollution from the air. These pollutants contribute to ground-level ozone, or smog, which [EPA has shown has negative health impacts](#), including asthma attacks and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Zero- and low-emission vehicles also lower carbon dioxide emissions, helping to lessen climate change.

The new Driving PA Forward Truck and Bus Fleet Grant-funded projects will take 42 old diesel trucks and buses off the road, replacing them with electric, propane, compressed natural gas, and new clean diesel vehicles. The projects are located in high-population areas with dense traffic and high air pollution levels.

Two school districts, one municipality, and one business received funding:

- **City of Pittsburgh:** \$1,374,000 to replace eight old diesel garbage trucks with four electric recycling trucks and chargers and four compressed natural gas garbage trucks. Annually, the project will remove 1.38 tons of nitrogen oxides (NOx), 314 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2), and other pollutants from the air.
- **School District of Philadelphia:** \$936,000 to replace six old diesel school buses with six electric school buses and charging equipment. Annually the project will remove one-third ton of NOx, 51 tons of CO2, and other pollutants from the air.
- **Sysco Leasing:** \$463,050 to replace 21 old diesel freight trucks with 21 new clean diesel freight trucks at two company sites, one in Philadelphia and one in Jackson Township, Butler County. Annually the project will remove 5.6 tons of NOx, 423 tons of CO2, and other pollutants from the air.

(continued on page 17)

DEP Provides \$2.9 Million to Replace Old Diesel Vehicles with Clean-Energy Models (continued)

- **North Penn School District, Montgomery County:** \$199,435 to replace seven old diesel school buses with seven new propane school buses at North Penn High School in Lansdale. Annually the project will remove 3.9 tons of NOx and other pollutants from the air.

[Driving PA Forward](#) launched eight grant programs in 2018 with the goal of permanently reducing nitrogen oxides in Pennsylvania by replacing a large number of older diesel vehicles and equipment and promoting cleaner transportation technologies with funding from the commonwealth's \$118.5 million settlement with Volkswagen.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Issued NOVs To Conventional Oil & Gas Companies For Abandoning 55 Wells Without Plugging Them During September Alone

A Dramatic Increase In New Well Abandonments

The Department of Environmental Protection issued notices of violation to conventional oil and gas companies for abandoning 55 wells without plugging them during September alone, according to [DEP's Oil and Gas Program Compliance Database](#).

That brings the total number of NOVs issued by DEP for abandoning wells without plugging them in the Third Quarter of 2022 to 163 conventional wells and three unconventional shale gas wells.

That's more NOVs issued for abandoning conventional wells than in the first six months of 2022-- 163 from July through September versus 159 from January through June. [Read more here.](#)

So far in 2022 a total of 322 notices of violation were issued for conventional wells and 32 for unconventional shale gas wells for abandoning without plugging them for a total of 354 wells.

And these were only the wells DEP inspectors caught companies abandoning during their regular inspections.

Every oil and gas well abandoned by the oil and gas industry means taxpayers have to pick up the cost of plugging and cleaning up those sites.

Background

Conventional oil and gas well companies have so far shifted over \$5.1 billion in well plugging costs to taxpayers because they are required to put up zero bonds to cover plugging costs for wells they drilled before April 1985-- which is most of them-- and only limited bonding for wells since then that does not begin to cover taxpayers' plugging costs. [Read more here.](#)

The conventional industry also passed legislation in July that Gov. Wolf allowed to become law blocking any attempts to increase the bonding amounts for 10 years. [Read more here.](#)

To put the 322 notices of violation for abandoning conventional oil and gas wells so far this year in perspective, that's many more than the number of wells DEP plans to plug-- 249-- with the initial \$25 million from the new, highly touted, federal taxpayer-funded Bipartisan Infrastructure Law conventional oil and gas well plugging program. [Read more here.](#)

It's also important to understand, notices of violation are DEP's first step in trying to get a driller's attention that a violation has occurred and they need to take steps to resolve the issue.

[DEP's Oil and Gas Program Compliance Database](#) has incomplete information on how these violations were resolved.

(continued on page 19)

DEP Issued NOVs To Conventional Oil & Gas Companies For Abandoning 55 Wells Without Plugging Them During September Alone (continued)

In terms of past enforcement actions, DEP only assessed monetary penalties against 15 of the 256 conventional oil and gas operators who received notices of violation for abandoning wells without plugging them over the last six years, according to [DEP's response to a Right to Know request](#) to the Oil and Gas Management Program for penalty information covering conventional operators from 2016 through 2021. Read more here.

During those same six years, DEP issued over 4,270 notices of violations for abandoning wells. [Read more here.](#)

It is clear abandoning wells without paying the cost of plugging them is a pervasive part of the way conventional oil and gas industry's operate. [Read more here.](#)

Counties With Newly Abandoned Wells

In July, August and September, conventional operators were given NOVs for abandoning wells without plugging them in these 12 counties-- Butler (7), Cambria (7), Crawford (1), Elk (2), Erie (8), Forest (3), Greene (1), McKean (7), Mercer (3), Venango (103), Warren (4) and Westmoreland (17).

DEP issued NOVs for abandoning three unconventional shale gas wells-- two in Wyoming County and one in Westmoreland County.

Companies Abandoning Wells

In July, August and September, these 41 conventional operators were given NOVs for abandoning wells without plugging them-- All American Energy (1); Allshouse Excav. (9); Allshouse, Terrance L. Jr. (4); Apex Energy (1); Apollo Resources LLC (8); AZCO OPR (1); BV Gas LLC (1); C&D Gas Co. (2); Champion Bolt Corp (2); Cobra Resources (5); Dannic Energy Corp (1); Diversified Prod (2); Dorso LP (1); Energy Exploration & Dev. (1); Equitrans LP (1); Five Star Investment Group (1); FM Sloan Inc. (2); Fyrerols Reservoir Consulting (3); Grace M. Marzalen (1); Hartstown Oil & Gas Explor (1); Horizontal Exploration (6); HypePark Foundry & Mach Co. (1); Lazy Oil Co. LLC (2); Lendrum Energy LLC (40); LT Oil Co LLC (9); Magi Oil (1); Marvin Sanders Oil (1); Michael Harju (1); Mid East Oil (1); Millcreek Twp. School District (1); Nucomer Energy (1); PA Mineral Services (1); Pierce & Peterson (2); Pin Oak Energy Partners (1); Questa Petro Co. (2); Redfoot Daniel A (1); Reel Resources (2); Repasky Christopher S. (27); STK Investments LLC (1); Timberline Energy (9); Titus Energy (1); West Silas (1); and Wilmoth Interests (1).

The number of conventional oil and gas operators give NOVs for newly abandoned wells clearly continues to show well abandonment is pervasive in this industry. [Read more here.](#)

Chesapeake Appalachia was issued notices of violation by DEP for abandoning two unconventional shale gas wells without plugging them in Wyoming County and Diversified Prod. LLC for one unconventional shale gas well in Westmoreland County.

(continued on page 20)

DEP Issued NOVs To Conventional Oil & Gas Companies For Abandoning 55 Wells Without Plugging Them During September Alone (continued)

DEP Conventional Drilling Compliance Review

On July 30, Gov. Wolf directed the [Department of Environmental Protection](#) to conduct an evaluation of how it regulates conventional oil and gas wells to prevent new abandoned wells, tighten review of permit transfers, review compliance with environmental safeguards and make recommendations for changes and actions, including criminal sanctions.

The evaluation was due to the Governor's Office by September 1, but no information from the report has been released as of this writing. [Read more here.](#)

On August 18, Kurt Klapkowski, Acting DEP Deputy Secretary for Oil and Gas Management, told DCED's [PA Grade Crude \[Oil\] Development Advisory](#) Council the conventional oil and gas driller compliance review will evaluate at least the last five years of compliance.

When asked whether DEP's evaluation and accompanying recommendations would be in a public document, Klapkowski said, "... don't know the answer to that question. All I can say is what was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, the instructions that we were given in terms of preparing a report for the conventional industry's record of compliance."

To track oil and gas facility compliance with Pennsylvania's laws and regulations, visit DEP's [Oil and Gas Program Compliance Database](#) and search by company.

You will be shocked at what you find.

Source: PA Environment Digest

Drought Watch Remains for 36 Counties, DEP Asks for Continued Voluntary Water Conservation

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced after a meeting of the Commonwealth Drought Task Force that, despite recent rainfall, 36 counties remain on drought watch, with continued voluntary water conservation requested.

“Conditions have improved with the recent rain, but we need to see continued meaningful precipitation over several months and have public water suppliers in affected counties returning to normal operations before the drought watch can be lifted,” said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh. “We ask Pennsylvanians in these counties to continue to use water wisely and follow simple water conservation tips to ease the demand for water.”

The following counties are on drought watch: Berks, Bucks, Bradford, Cameron, Carbon, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Dauphin, Delaware, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Potter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, and Wyoming. For a map of drought declarations that’s updated daily, see the [DEP drought web page](#).

Residents on drought watch are asked to reduce their individual water use by 5 to 10%, or a reduction of three to six gallons of water per day.

DEP is notifying all water suppliers in these counties of the need to monitor their supplies and be prepared by updating their drought contingency plans as necessary. Varying localized conditions may lead water suppliers or municipalities to ask residents for more stringent conservation actions.

Ways to Conserve Water at Home

There are many ways to conserve water at home, including:

Run water only when necessary. Don’t let the faucet run while brushing your teeth or shaving. Shorten the time you let the water run to warm up before showering.

(continued on page 22)

Drought Watch Remains for 36 Counties, DEP Asks for Continued Voluntary Water Conservation (continued)

Run the dishwasher and washing machine less often, and only with full loads.

Water your garden in the cooler evening or morning hours, and direct the water to the ground at the base of the plant, so you don't waste water through evaporation.

Water your lawn only if necessary. Apply no more than 1 inch of water per week (use an empty can to determine how long it takes to water 1 inch). Avoid watering on windy and hot days. This pattern will encourage healthier, deeper grass roots. Over-watering is wasteful, encourages fungal growth and disease, and results in shallow, compacted root systems that are more susceptible to drought.

When mowing your lawn, set the blades to 2-3 inches high. Longer grass shades the soil, improving moisture retention. It also grows thicker and develops a deeper root system, so it can better survive drought.

Check for and repair household leaks. For example, a leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water daily.

Sweep your sidewalk, deck, or driveway instead of hosing it off.

Replace older appliances with high-efficiency, front-loading models that use about 30 percent less water and 40-50 percent less energy.

Install low-flow plumbing fixtures and aerators on faucets.

Set up a rain barrel to be ready to repurpose rain when it does fall. For information, see this [Penn State Extension guide](#).

Find more tips at the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#).

How DEP Determines Drought Conditions

To determine drought conditions, DEP assesses information on public water supply levels and data on four indicators: precipitation, surface water (stream and river) flow, groundwater level, and soil moisture. Declarations aren't based on one indicator alone, such as precipitation.

The DEP Drought Coordinator monitors the indicators in close partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), which maintains gauges in streams and wells in many locations across Pennsylvania.

(continued on page 23)

Drought Watch Remains for 36 Counties, DEP Asks for Continued Voluntary Water Conservation (continued)

There are normal ranges for all four indicators. DEP makes drought status recommendations after assessing departures from these ranges for all indicators for periods of 3-12 months. For a map that's updated daily to show the status of all four indicators for each county, see the [USGS Pennsylvania drought condition monitoring website](#).

DEP shares these data and its recommendations with the state and federal agencies and other organizations that make up the Commonwealth Drought Task Force. Drought watch and warning declarations are determined by DEP, with the concurrence of the task force.

Drought emergency declarations follow the same process, with final approval by the governor. No county is in drought warning or emergency status at this time.

For more information on how DEP monitors conditions and makes drought status declarations, see the [drought management fact sheet](#).

Spurce: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)