

Gordon Tomb

Dear Comments,

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Commonwealth Foundation for Public Policy Alternatives, a think tank that supports free-market approaches to Pennsylvania issues.

We urge the Delaware River Basin Commission to allow in its jurisdiction the drilling for natural gas — an activity that employs proven technologies and practices to provide significant benefits to consumers, workers and businesses.

While a de facto ban has been in place for several years in the commission's jurisdiction, drilling in the Marcellus Shale has been generating jobs, affordable gas and prosperity in the watersheds of the Allegheny and Susquehanna rivers for more than a decade.

To quote one landowner, the commission's ban is an economic iron curtain that deprives the region's property owners of their right to develop resources as they see fit.

In addition to being a senior fellow with the Commonwealth Foundation, I am a Pennsylvania native and sportsman. I regularly fish the Susquehanna between Danville and Harrisburg and find an abundance of beauty and wildlife, including eagles and very healthy smallmouth bass. A Maryland-based fishing guide describes the Susquehanna as the best smallmouth fishery in the eastern U.S.

Having worked in and around the steel, coal, trucking and forestry industries and in agriculture, my experience is that gas drilling is one of the safer industrial activities. Bureau of Labor Statistics data support this observation.

As for the transportation of gas through pipelines, the title of a 2013 Manhattan Institute report nicely summarizes the issue: "Pipelines are Safest for Transportation of Oil and Gas."

The commission's consideration of these comments will be appreciated.

Sincerely,
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