



# PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

Edited By: David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

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## **Study: 3,000 Foot Presumption Of Water Well Pollution Liability Needed Around Gas Wells**

The [Center for Rural Pennsylvania](#) Friday released the findings of an unbiased and large scale study of water quality in private water wells in rural Pennsylvania before and after the drilling of nearby Marcellus Shale gas wells, according to Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Bradford), Center Chair.

One significant finding in the report recommends increasing the zone of presumptive liability and private water well testing from 1,000 to 3,000 feet from Marcellus Shale gas wells due to increased levels of bromide, sediment and metals found by the study.

The Governor's [Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission](#) recommended increasing the liability zone to 2,500 feet from public water supply wells.

The study is entitled, "[The Impact of Marcellus Gas Drilling on Rural Drinking Water Supplies](#)," was a Center-sponsored research project conducted by Dr. Elizabeth W. Boyer, Bryan R. Swistock, James Clark, Mark Madden, and Dana E. Rizzo of Pennsylvania State University.

One research recommendation is for additional setback requirements for natural gas drilling companies between the location of gas wells and nearby private water wells for presumed liability and certified mail notification.

"The research found that bromide levels in some water wells increased after drilling and/or fracking. These increases may suggest more subtle impacts to groundwater and the need for more research. Bromide increases appeared to be mostly related to the drilling process. A small number of water wells also appeared to be affected by disturbances due to drilling as evidenced by sediment and/or metals increases that were noticeable to the water supply owner and confirmed by water testing results.

"Increased bromide concentrations in water wells along with sporadic sediment and metals increases were observed within 3,000 feet of Marcellus gas well sites in this study. These results suggest that a 3,000 foot distance between the location of gas wells and nearby private water wells is a more reasonable distance for both presumed responsibility and certified mail notification related to Marcellus gas well drilling than the 1,000 feet that is currently required."

