



Save our Forests

Protect Penn's Woods with a freeze on new gas leases

About 1.5 million acres of Pennsylvania state forests sit atop the Marcellus Shale, a mile-deep formation rich in natural gas. Energy companies are flocking here to tap into this highly prized and profitable resource, and paying property owners for the rights to drill on their land. These companies are now pushing the state to open up more of its state parks and forests to allow further gas exploration and extraction, putting our historic Penn's Woods at risk.

Already one-third of state forest lands, 700,000 acres, are available to the drilling industry, with almost 139,000 acres opened for Marcellus drilling in just the past 16 months. At least 100 wells are slated for drilling in state forests just this year, and another 1,500 well pads containing 5,000 to 6,000 wells could be drilled in the next 10 years on forest land.

Enough is enough. We need a freeze on new gas leases in state forests to protect them now and into the future. Our public natural resources should not be used as a cash cow to close budget gaps. We must pass the Save our Forests legislation (HB 2235) right now.

New drilling leases harm our precious natural resources.

Drilling involves clear-cutting swaths of forest land to install well pads, as well as building access roads, pipelines and other infrastructure. In many cases, added new infrastructure will mean significant disruption to our otherwise well-maintained and managed forests.

Many of Pennsylvania's best and most pristine waterways are located on state land. Natural gas drilling uses a process called "fracking" in which millions of gallons of water mixed with chemicals is forced down into the shale in order to extract the gas. These fluids, as well as potential leaks from gas wells and pipes, pose an immense threat to our waterways.

New drilling leases will fragment out forests, making them more susceptible to disease; damage endangered species habitat; and allow weeds and insect pests to enter the state's forest ecosystems.

New drilling leases threaten Pennsylvania industry and jobs.

Pennsylvania's \$1 billion outdoor tourism industry relies heavily on our state parks and forests, which offer more than 2,500 miles of trails and opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling and ATV riding.

Additionally, the timber industry, which employs about 70,000 people, relies on Pennsylvania's state forests, one of the nation's largest sustainable systems certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. This certification increases the value of our timber by giving our lumber industry access to lucrative foreign markets. Last year, state forests generated nearly \$20 million from timber sales. Fragmenting our state forests during the drilling process would threaten that certification and revenue.

New drilling leases could destroy Pennsylvania's legacy.

Pennsylvania is no stranger to environmental destruction at the hands of a booming industry. Landscapes are still scarred from our coal industry. We must not sacrifice the long-term health and well being of our state for short-term gain, as we have in the past.

This isn't just a problem for those living near our parks and forests. Residents of Pennsylvania's urban areas rely on the state parks and forest systems to escape the cities' concrete and asphalt and connect with outdoors education and recreational opportunities not easily found in urban areas.

What you can do:

Contact your state legislators and urge them to support the Save our Forests legislation (HB 2235). This bill puts a three-year freeze on leasing additional state forest land for natural gas drilling. The bill also gives the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources discretion to decide if state forests can withstand additional drilling and requires the agency to compile a yearly report on the impact of drilling in state forests.

Visit at www.pennfuture.org and click *Take Action*. Also visit our *Responsible Drilling Campaign* pages for more information.

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture)

610 N. Third Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1113

1518 Walnut Street, Suite 1100
Philadelphia, PA 19102-3406

Regional Enterprise Tower
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2770
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1853

Center for Energy, Enterprise and the Environment
212 West Gay Street
West Chester, PA 19380-2942

15 Public Square, Suite 101
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-1702

