

Marcellus Shale Impact Fee: Locally Dedicated, Locally Managed

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, the statewide association that represents the interests of the 66 county conservation districts, strongly endorses a fair and comprehensive distribution formula for funding from an impact fee on the extraction of the Marcellus Shale.

Conservation districts are asked to implement and assist in many environmental programs throughout the Commonwealth. Predictable funding through an impact fee will allow conservation districts across the state to maintain and improve their environmental protection programs. These funds will supply a steady, dedicated and long-term funding stream to Pennsylvania's county conservation districts as they continue to provide crucial statewide environmental protection activities. In addition, it would allow conservation districts to more accurately plan for multi-year contracts and sustain long term projects. Most importantly, dedicated funding will allow conservation districts to accomplish additional natural resource protection projects.

Over the last decade, Pennsylvania's county conservation districts have seen a decline in state funding, but an increase in workload and responsibilities. Each of the 66 conservation districts takes its work to protect our natural resources and our environment seriously, but is often left struggling to find new resources, avenues and additional funding to keep our water resources pollution free, the air we breathe clean and the land we live sustainable.

For more than 65 years, Pennsylvania's county conservation districts have been the leading authority on local conservation efforts that sustain, protect and restore the natural resources of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Today, the conservation districts provide expertise in almost every area of natural resource conservation including the implementation of both urban and agricultural conservation programs. Based at the local level, conservation districts implement a variety of programs that address issues unique to their county. Conservation districts are a trusted part of the community and reduce the financial cost of negative environment impacts on that community.



So what specifically can the conservation districts do with additional funding?

- Support, protect and enhance the number #1 industry in PA – Agriculture;
- Provide technical assistance to install numerous Best Management Practices (BMP's), such as riparian buffers and streambank stabilization, to reduce flooding and protect the quality of our water - Sedimentation is the #1 one water pollution issue in PA;
- Provide important Best Management Practices installation and help to create nutrient management plans, allowing farmers to meet the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements without being financially burdened;
- Monitor water quality statewide and with an emphasis in the Marcellus Shale region and the Chesapeake Bay watershed;
- Complete stormwater management projects to minimize erosion and runoff;
- Assist municipalities with floodplain ordinances and stormwater management plans that protect homes and businesses from being flooded;
- Provide many environmental education opportunities for children and adults to learn about conservation and protection of natural resources;
- Implement Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) Projects to clean up our water and reduce safety risks;
- Design and install Growing Greener and PennVest projects to improve our environment and our economy;
- Implement forestry projects that protect our forests and allow for the forest industry to flourish;
- Assist farmers to develop and implement a conservation plan for their agricultural operation;
- Coordinate county farmland preservation programs with landowners to encourage statewide program participation preserving PA's farmland and open space;
- Provide administrative oversight and technical assistance to local entities involved in Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program to reduce sediment pollution from the state's 20,000 miles of unpaved public roads; and
- Initiate local conservation projects such as tire collection and recycling, rain barrel usage, pharmaceutical collection events, and other natural resource protection projects impacting all Pennsylvanians.

So Who Benefits From This Funding?

Everyone: Pennsylvania's communities, businesses, farmers, children and the environment.

