

**Pennsylvania Forestry Association
Policy Statement on
Gas Drilling in the Marcellus Shale and
Development of Wind Generators on Public and Private Lands
In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

Background:

In 2008, the Pennsylvania Forestry Association adopted a policy on “Wood Biomass as a source of Renewable Energy”. This policy recognizes and supports the role of forests in helping to meet our existing and future energy needs compatible with the sustainable management of our forest resources. Currently, the Commonwealth is experiencing a boom in new energy projects including drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation and the construction of wind farms on many of the state’s forested ridges. The following Pennsylvania Forestry Association policy statement addresses the organization’s position on these two specific forms of energy development in relationship to the maintenance and management of our forest resources within the Commonwealth

Existing Situation:

Pennsylvania’s dominant land use is forest and the state contains 17 million acres of forest in Federal, state and private ownership. These forests are important in providing many economic, social and environmental benefits. Millions of these forested acres are over the Marcellus Shale formation and/or occupy the mountain ridges with high potential for wind energy projects.

Our Policy:

The Pennsylvania Forestry Association recognizes the importance of forestlands for addressing the nation’s need for energy, both renewable and non-renewable. Energy projects must be evaluated to minimize the impacts on the sustainability of all of our natural resources. To help achieve energy independence, to protect our valuable natural resources, and to recognize landowner rights, the Association advocates adherence to the following principles on all federal, state and private forestlands:

1. Achieve energy independence through a variety of energy resources, both renewable and non-renewable. No one resource can meet all of our growing energy needs.
2. Emphasize renewable energy sources that reduce carbon emissions from fossil fuels.
3. Private landowners have the right to make a reasonable return from the natural resources on their property.
4. Encourage landowners to manage the resources they control for long-term sustainability and for the benefit of existing and future generations.
5. Design energy projects to minimize the impacts on the long-term sustainability of the forests, farms and the water resources.

- 6. Continue coordination between the appropriate natural resource management agencies to reduce adverse impacts and to identify and implement positive resource improvement projects to offset any unavoidable resource impacts.**
- 7. The Commonwealth should require adequate bonding requirements to ensure that all sites are completely restored to their original productive quality once the impact of development and subsequent energy extraction is completed. Access roads should be located and designed to also best achieve forest management and other natural resource management goals.**
- 8. Rights-of-way for gas pipelines and electric power lines should follow existing infrastructure and roads where they exist. Where they do not exist, they should utilize other openings where possible to minimize habitat fragmentation.**
- 9. Water withdrawals should be managed to avoid withdrawals from small, headwater streams. Groundwater levels and quality should be monitored on all oil and gas projects.**
- 10. Provide adequate treatment facilities for water used in the “fracking” process to remove compounds used in the slurry mixture before the water is returned to the land or waterways of the Commonwealth.**
- 11. Require wind projects to utilize the latest research results to minimize mortality to bats and birds.**
- 12. Consider mitigation of any significant loss of wildlife or plant habitat or recreation lands, for more than the initial period of construction; by donation of land or conservation easements to a unit of government or land trust. This should not be a land exchange and it would be the leaseholders responsibility, not the landowners.**
- 13. Utilize wood fiber removed from energy sites, roads and rights-of-ways for wood products or biomass use.**
- 14. A severance tax is appropriate and is recommended for the leaseholder. Allocate a portion of a severance tax for infrastructure maintenance in affected townships.**
- 15. A portion of the Commonwealth’s share of a severance tax should be allocated to the restoration of abandoned mines and the capping of “abandoned” oil and gas wells to protect and improve water quality and site productivity.**
- 16. The Commonwealth should retain the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Lease Fund as established in 1955 for its original intended use. This fund retains revenues from leasing of non-renewable energy resources on public land and reinvests these funds into state park and state forest assets for future generations.**
- 17. The Commonwealth should continue being prudent in lease sales on state properties. Criteria to consider are location and timing in response to environmental and economic conditions.**
- 18. Encourage an accelerated education program for landowners on leasing for gas extraction, wind power, and rights-of-ways; along with the**

impacts of site construction, and associated support facilities on the land and existing uses.

- 19. Support legislation to require the mineral rights owner of a parcel, when those rights are separate from the landowner's deed, to pay any Clean and Green back taxes, penalties and additional amounts of real estate taxes required. These are to be paid by reason of ineligibility when surface development occurs for oil or gas drilling and removal.**
- 20. All proposed energy projects must strictly adhere to the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Program (PNDP) rules throughout exploration, construction, extraction and transport of the energy. These rules are designed to fully support and embrace the protection of threatened and endangered species, and species and resources of special concern.**

This policy is subject to review and revision at any time by the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association.

Adopted on:

Signed by: