Action Alert Proposed Injection Well. The DEP Needs to Hear Residents and Those Living Downstream

Pennsylvania oil and gas well regulators took photos of tall sumac trees growing through gaping holes in a plastic liner of a secondary containment system (SCS) surrounding three large tanks during the most recent inspection. These tanks provide storage of regulated substances generated by oil and gas production. The SCS in this case is an earthen berm lined with plastic that is intended to contain fluids if a leak or spill occurs.

Next to the tanks is the Clara Field 20 (Clara 20) well, API #105-21374. This well has received authorization by the EPA to operate as a Class II-D disposal injection well. The EPA authorization was one of two permits required to convert the gas well into an injection well. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is currently reviewing the second and final permit required. This well is situated on a mountain in Clara Twp., Potter County, near the PA/NYS border. The area drains toward tributaries of the Allegheny River which is a source of drinking water for the City of Pittsburgh. Wildlife including endangered species and people living in communities in PA and NYS rely on this watershed.

Many area residents believe that if DEP authorizes this permit the facility would pose a significant threat on the environment and communities downstream.

It seems the underfunded, overburdened DEP should have suspended the review process or denied the permit when DEP inspections revealed the deteriorated conditions of the proposed injection well site. Concerned citizens have contacted the DEP and requested a public meeting to discuss this permit. According to the DEP’s website, due to staff and technology limitations, public meetings “continue to be suspended at this time”.

The Pennsylvania DEP has not offered a public comment period. However, those interested may send comments to the DEP may email: ra-epoilgasdropbox@pa.gov or ra-epoilandgas@pa.gov subject line: Clara Twp. injection well, API #105-21374.