



June 1, 2015

The Honorable Gene Yaw, Majority Chair
The Honorable John Yudichak, Minority Chair
Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

The Honorable John Eichelberger, Majority Chair
The Honorable John Blake, Minority Chair
Senate Finance Committee

Re: Written Comments on June 1, 2015 Joint Public Hearing

Dear Chairmen and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), I respectfully submit these comments for your consideration and the record for the June 1, 2015 Joint Public Hearing on a proposed severance tax on natural gas. EDF appreciates the opportunity to offer our voice to the budget discussion. The Environmental Defense Fund is a national environmental advocacy group with some 75,000 members in Pennsylvania.

EDF applauds Governor Wolf's proposal to make strategic investments in clean energy and to provide much-needed oversight resources to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). EDF believes the budget, as proposed, offers important opportunities to better protect the public health and the environment for all Pennsylvanians and will help position the Commonwealth to capture the job growth potential and other economic benefits associated with the fast-growing clean energy economy.

In May of this year, EDF joined a large group of environmental and community-based organizations supporting three key aspects of the proposed budget. Specifically, we voiced support for the commitments to invest: (1) \$225 million in clean energy and energy efficiency, (2) \$10 million for new enforcement staff at the DEP, and (3) \$19 million to reduce the dependence of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources on extractive industries.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration forecasts that renewable energy will be the fastest-growing power source through 2040. Investing in clean energy now will help PA take advantage of this trend, bringing good-paying, high-skilled jobs to the Keystone state – just as it will help in the power sector transition away from polluting energy resources to those that are protective of public health and the environment.

Finally, it has been repeatedly documented that the DEP is suffering from a lack of oversight resources. DEP staff are top-notch professionals who have done an admirable job; but it hasn't been possible for them keep up with the breakneck pace of growth in the natural gas industry. We believe that, for Pennsylvania to take advantage of the economic benefits and the potential environmental benefits that can come from shale gas development, there must be an equal commitment to investment in these necessary personnel resources to ensure communities and the environment are protected from the impacts of development.

On behalf of the Environmental Defense Fund, thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew T. Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew T. Williams
Senior State Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager