

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1444

Expressing the Sense of the House of Representatives that the Susquehanna River Basin Commission should carefully consider the energy needs of the United States and the economic development needs of the region before limiting natural gas exploration and development in the Marcellus Shale formation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

RESOLUTION

Expressing the Sense of the House of Representatives that the Susquehanna River Basin Commission should carefully consider the energy needs of the United States and the economic development needs of the region before limiting natural gas exploration and development in the Marcellus Shale formation.

Whereas spending hundreds of billions of dollars every year on foreign oil to fuel cars and trucks has weakened the economy, the environment, and national security;

Whereas after decades of debate about the dangers of becoming reliant on foreign oil and how that reliance has damaged our economy and weakened our national security, the United States has grown more dependent on foreign

oil, and the dire consequences are being felt across the Nation;

Whereas the United States is borrowing itself into national bankruptcy in the amount of \$700 billion a year for imported oil, and this is not sustainable;

Whereas the public of the United States needs to know there is an alternative to our failed energy policies of the past;

Whereas energy is the Nation's single biggest challenge, the need to meet that challenge is urgent, and there is an answer through the natural gas of the United States;

Whereas in early 2008, Terry Englander, a geoscience professor at Pennsylvania State University, and Gary Lash, a geology professor at the State University of New York at Fredonia, produced estimates that the Marcellus Shale formation might contain more than 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas;

Whereas the presence of an enormous volume of potentially recoverable gas in the eastern United States has great economic significance, and this natural gas is closest to the highly populated areas of New Jersey, New York, and New England;

Whereas gas produced from the shallower, western portion of the Marcellus Shale formation could be transported to cities in the central part of the United States and have a positive impact on the stability of the natural gas supply of the surrounding region for several years;

Whereas if the Marcellus Shale formation holds up to the optimistic expectations of some natural gas experts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and West Virginia could temporarily have an enormous boost in income over the next few decades;

Whereas local economies could see an increase in employment and revenue as a result of the drilling into the natural gas-rich Marcellus Shale formation, according to a report from the Penn State Workforce Education and Development Initiative;

Whereas the above-mentioned report estimates that for each billion dollars of royalty income generated by the Marcellus Shale formation reserves, local communities could gain 7,880 jobs in the first year, and close to 8,000 in the second;

Whereas the increase in drilling has already resulted in a large demand for workers, entry-level jobs with drilling companies and well servicing companies, and a variety of jobs throughout the region;

Whereas more than 72 percent of the tri-state Susquehanna watershed, covering portions of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, are underlain by the Marcellus Shale formation and other natural gas rich shale formations;

Whereas advancements in technology for capturing natural gas in shale formations require operators to inject large amounts of water several thousand feet underground to break up the rocks;

Whereas on August 15, 2008, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) notified the natural gas operators that as of October 15, 2008, any amount of water withdrawn or consumptively used to develop wells in the Marcellus, Utica, or other shale formations in the Susquehanna River watershed would require prior approval from the SRBC;

Whereas this is the first time in the SRBC's 37-year history they are imposing this type of requirement on an entire class of projects rather than on an individual project;

Whereas the SRBC has indicated it will only consider quantity and rate of water usage, location of water (ground and surface sources) for withdrawals and consumptive uses, the potential to alter the physical, biological, chemical or hydrological characteristics of the basin's water resources, and the potential to affect interstate water quality; and

Whereas the SRBC's initial public statement has not indicated they will consider the broad energy needs of the United States or the economic development needs of communities in the immediate region: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, that it is the sense of the House of Rep-
 2 resentatives that the Susquehanna River Basin Commis-
 3 sion should give the same consideration to the energy
 4 needs of the United States and the potential jobs that
 5 could be created by a proposed project as is accorded to
 6 other factors, such as quantity and rate of water usage,
 7 location of water (ground and surface sources) for with-
 8 drawals and consumptive uses, the potential to alter the
 9 physical, biological, chemical, or hydrological characteris-
 10 tics of the basin's water resources, and the potential to
 11 affect interstate water quality, when drafting a regulation
 12 and reviewing a project application related to natural gas
 13 drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation.

○