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**WEST VIRGINIA RESIDENTS AND GROUP AGAINST SMOG & POLLUTION
APPEAL CHESAPEAKE ENERGY MARCELLUS SHALE PERMITS.**

CHARLESTON, West Virginia (October 14, 2010) – On Tuesday West Virginia residents filed an appeal before the West Virginia Air Quality Board challenging two air permits recently issued to Chesapeake Energy for a large—and growing—Marcellus Shale operation in West Virginia’s northern panhandle.

The new permits allow Chesapeake Energy to construct two new natural gas compressor stations. With these two facilities included, the Chesapeake project will expand to include 3 compressor stations; over 25 well pads; and a complex, interconnected network of pipes, storage tanks, and flares all five miles or less from each other on a patch of land straddling Wetzel and Marshall Counties. (This project includes the McDowell B well, where a late-September well explosion resulted in a fire emergency crews battled for 8 days.)

The compressors themselves produce significant quantities of air pollution, and the many flares, storage tanks, gas processing activities, and equipment leaks produce air pollution as well. “When you add it all up, it’s hundreds of tons of pollution.” said Bill Hughes, a Wetzel County resident and the named appellant in this case.

The appeal challenges the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection’s decision to treat each of these air pollution-emitting activities as separate sources for permitting purposes. The Clean Air Act establishes tougher air pollution control requirements for major sources of air pollution. WVDEP has permitted these compressor stations under less-protective minor source permits, and Chesapeake’s other emissions sources avoid permitting requirements entirely.

When asked to comment on the importance of this appeal, Ed Wade, Jr. of the Wetzel County Action Group (WCAG) stated, “there have been many complaints about noxious gas releases over the past few years by residents who have wells on all sides of their homes. Regulating emissions at just the new compressor stations will not eliminate those problems.”

“Rather than considering total air pollution from the Chesapeake project, WVDEP is dividing these related activities up piecemeal. As it stands right now, air pollution from the Chesapeake project isn’t adequately monitored or controlled to satisfy the requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Left unaddressed, this would be bad news for our air quality and bad news for our health,” said Joe Osborne, Legal Director of the Group Against Smog and Pollution, the organization filing the appeal on behalf of Mr. Hughes.

The most significant pollutants generated by Marcellus Shale operations like Chesapeake’s are volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), and a variety of air toxics such benzene, toluene, and hydrogen sulfide. The amount of pollution oil and gas extraction and processing creates is hard to believe. In the Dallas-Fort Worth area, located in the Barnett Shale gas play, annual NOx and VOC emissions from the oil and gas sector exceed emissions from all motor vehicles. A 2008 analysis by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment concluded that VOC and NOx emissions from Colorado’s oil and gas operations exceed motor vehicle emissions for the entire state.

In addition to being unhealthy in their own right, NOx and VOCs react with other compounds in the atmosphere to produce ozone and particulate matter. Much of the Northeastern U.S. already fails to meet federal health-based standards for ozone and particulate matter. The Chesapeake project is less than 10 miles from the Pennsylvania border. Southwestern Pennsylvania fails to meet federal standards for ozone and particulate matter. Marshall County, WV fails to meet federal standards for particulate matter.

“Because so many areas in or downwind of the Marcellus Shale region fail to meet these standards, it’s all the more important that the air impacts of operations like Chesapeake’s are minimized. One way to help do that is by making sure permitting authorities like WVDEP are properly aggregating air emissions from Marcellus operations,” Osborne said.

“I’ve told people from neighboring counties in Pennsylvania that tons of air pollution are being sent your way, we don’t want them, you can’t return them and they are marked ‘do not return to sender’ it’s your problem now,” Hughes added.

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MORE INFORMATION

ABOUT GASP

The Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. (GASP) is Pittsburgh-based non-profit citizens group working for a healthy, sustainable environment. Founded in 1969, GASP serves as a watchdog, educator, litigator, and policy-maker on many environmental issues with a focus on air quality in southwestern Pennsylvania.

<http://www.gasp-pgh.org>

ABOUT WCAG

The Wetzel County Action Group is located near New Martinsville, in Wetzel County WV. It supports economic development for the county and state; and works to ensure that economic development does not negatively impact the safety, economic interests, and quality of life of the Citizens of Wetzel County. It has been actively focused on the economic, social and environmental impact of Marcellus Shale gas exploration for over four years

<http://www.wcag-wv.org/Default.htm>

ABOUT AIR POLLUTANTS

Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)

NO_x is linked to acid rain and respiratory problems. NO_x may form particulate matter or ozone.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

Are a large class of chemicals with a high vapor pressure. Some VOCs are highly toxic. VOC exposure may produce eye, nose, and throat irritation; headaches, poor coordination, nausea; and liver, kidney, or brain damage. Some VOCs are suspected or known carcinogens. VOCs may form particulate matter or ozone

Particulate Matter

Particulates include both solid particles and liquid droplets that commonly result from fossil fuel combustion. Fine particulates are linked to such health problems as asthma attacks and possible asthma onset, coughing and difficulty breathing, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, heart attacks, stroke, cancer, and premature death. Children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory or cardiovascular ailments are especially sensitive to particulate matter.

Ground-level Ozone

Ozone exposure is linked to respiratory problems, asthma aggravation, and permanent lung damage. Children, the elderly, and individuals with existing respiratory problems are most susceptible to ozone exposure.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Low level exposure to CO may produce fatigue and chest pain. Higher concentrations result in impair vision, poor coordination, headache, dizziness, and nausea. Exposure to high concentrations of CO can be fatal.