

April 7, 2025

Jessica Shirley, Acting Chair
Environmental Quality Board
16th Floor Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Rulemaking Petition on New and Expanded Setbacks for Unconventional Natural Gas Facilities

Dear Acting Chair Shirley,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry (PA Chamber), I am writing to urge members of the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to reject the rulemaking petition on new and expanded setbacks for unconventional natural gas facilities and refrain from advancing further study on this issue.

The PA Chamber is the largest broad-based business association in Pennsylvania, representing nearly 10,000 businesses. Our membership includes companies involved in all aspects of the natural gas industry including the extraction, processing, and transportation of natural gas, as well as local distribution companies that deliver natural gas to end users.

As several other stakeholders have also noted, over the past fifteen years, Pennsylvania's policymakers have worked diligently to create regulations and update statutes related to natural gas production that ensure a balance between public safety, environmental protection, and responsible energy development. In fact, Pennsylvania has already implemented some of the most stringent setback distances in the nation, and these proposed additional setbacks essentially outright prohibit natural gas development across the Commonwealth.

The proposed regulations not only pose a significant threat to Pennsylvania's natural gas industry, but to the thousands of jobs it supports. Pennsylvania's natural gas is a key driver in our economy, contributing billions of dollars in economic activity and providing well-paying jobs in communities across the state. Expanding setbacks severely restrict the ability of companies to operate, causing a substantial loss of employment opportunities and undermines the economic benefits created by Pennsylvania's natural gas industry. At a time when Pennsylvania must stay competitive in attracting investment and job growth, especially in the energy sector, adopting policies that would effectively cripple one of our most vital industries is a step in the wrong direction.

The consequences of implementing additional setbacks also extend well beyond job losses. Pennsylvania is a global energy leader and a critical hub for both traditional and emerging energy markets. Our natural gas industry is key to affordable, reliable energy, playing a critical role in lowering energy costs for families and businesses across the Commonwealth. It has also helped to reduce Pennsylvania's Power sector CO2 emissions by 46 percent between 2005 and 2020, far outpacing the transportation and industrial sectors¹. Further restricting development not only increases energy costs but could result in increased reliance on less environmentally friendly energy sources.

As previously noted, Pennsylvania's current regulations already strike a successful balance between environmental protection and responsible energy development. Imposing further restrictions would not only have a significant economic impact but jeopardizes the reliability and affordability of energy for all Pennsylvanians.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the EQB not to accept this rulemaking petition.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,



Amy Brinton
Director, Government Affairs
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

Cc: Members of the Environmental Quality Board
Senator Bartolotta
Senator Boscola
Representative Causer
Senator Comitta
Representative Fiedler
Representative Neilson
Representative Nelson
Representative Rader
Representative Vitali
Senator Yaw

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=PA>