

724-830-3101 Work
724-830-3029 Fax
724-244-5895 Cell

R. Tyler Courtney
Westmoreland County Commissioner
2 N Main Street, Suite 101
Greensburg, PA 15601
rcourtne@co.westmoreland.pa.us

News Release

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Westmoreland Commissioner Tyler Courtney Publicly Questions Governor's Plans for Future Natural Gas Impact Fees

Greensburg, PA - Westmoreland County Commissioner Tyler Courtney is publicly questioning how Governor Tom Wolf's Natural Gas Severance Tax plans will affect the natural gas impact fees that counties and local governments currently receive. This week, Commissioner Courtney sent a letter to Governor Wolf requesting clarification of the Governor's recent proposals involving natural gas extraction in the Commonwealth. In his letter, Courtney points out that the Governor plans to place a cap on local fund distribution from his proposed extraction tax. This would replace the current impact fee that is adjusted annually based on the current and new gas wells created in Pennsylvania.

"Of primary concern to me and many of my colleagues is the future of the local impact fee imposed on drillers as part of Act 13 of 2012," stated Courtney. "This current plan not only caps local fund distribution, it also is vague in how that money will come back to our communities" he concluded.

In addition to questions regarding the fee and its distribution, Courtney points out that communities in Westmoreland County that have been both directly and indirectly impacted by the natural gas industry have used the impact fee funding to augment critical services like Emergency Management (911) and transportation infrastructure improvements.

"The Governor's proposal appears on its surface to penalize counties with drilling and reward those without" said Courtney.

Commissioner Courtney currently serves as Co-Chair of the Natural Gas Task Force for the County Commissioners Association of PA (C.C.A.P.). The letter to the Governor is attached to this Press Release.

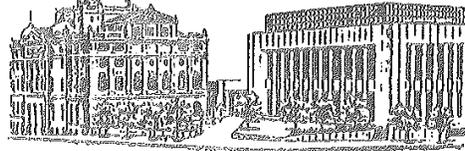
CONTACT: Commissioner Tyler Courtney, 724-830-3101

Westmoreland County Pennsylvania

**R. Tyler Courtney
County Commissioner**

2 North Main Street, Suite 101
Greensburg PA 15601-2494

Governor Tom Wolf
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120



AREA CODE 724
830-3100
FAX: 830-3029
TDD 830-3802
800-442-6926

March 16, 2015

Dear Governor Wolf,

I am writing to you today with questions regarding your recent proposals involving natural gas extraction in the Commonwealth. Currently I serve as Co-Chair of the Natural Gas Task Force for the County Commissioners Association of PA (C.C.A.P.) and am a County Commissioner for Westmoreland County. Of primary concern to me and many of my colleagues is the future of the local impact fee imposed on drillers as part of Act 13 of 2012.

Under your 2015-2016 budget proposal, it appears that you intend to cap the local government share from an extraction tax at \$225 million, as replacement for the current impact fee. As prices increase and infrastructure improves, Pennsylvania will hopefully see increased development which should lead to increased funding which should lead to a greater amount of money flowing to the affected counties and municipalities. Under your plan, how will the money flow back to counties and local governments? How will money be distributed to counties and municipalities which may not presently have drilling but will in the future? Will the \$225 million then be spread further between the local governments resulting in lower local return? It's of great concern that the plan to cap the amount based on the past statistics will not fairly compensate the affected counties and municipalities as was intended under Act 13.

I am able to present you with stories from throughout the Commonwealth concerning how these impact fees received have helped Counties and municipalities. Speaking for Westmoreland I can tell you first hand the money has enabled us to fund various programs in our county operations; ones that have been impacted directly and indirectly by the gas industry. These include Emergency Management Services (911), transportation infrastructure and the ability to hire a Human Services Director which helps us to more efficiently use precious Human Services dollars, just to name a few. Our municipalities have used their funds to make road repairs and improvements to their infrastructure as well.

I look forward to your answers. Please feel free to respond either by email or letter so that I may share your response with many concerned local government officials who will be affected by the proposed changes. My business card with all pertinent contact information is enclosed for your convenience.

In your service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Tyler Courtney'. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

R. Tyler Courtney
CCAP Co-Chair - Natural Gas Task Force, Westmoreland County Commissioner

cc: County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
State Senator Kim Ward
State Senator Gene Yaw
State Representative Tim Krieger
State Representative John Maher