

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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IN RE: ROULETTE OIL & GAS COMPANY, LLC'S APPLICATION
FOR THE CLARA FIELD #20 INJECTION-DISPOSAL WELL,
CLARA TOWNSHIP, POTTER COUNTY

* * * * *

BEFORE: MEGAN LEHMAN, Hearing Officer
TOM DONAHUE, Program Manager
KURT KLAPKOWSKI, Acting Deputy Secretary
SUSAN G. PRICE, PG.P.

HEARING: Tuesday, July 25, 2023
5:37 p.m.

COP

LOCATION: F.W. Gunzburger County Office Building
1 North Main Street
Coudersport, PA 16915

SPEAKERS: David Saulter, Deborah Janci, Barbara
Laxon, Laurie Barr, Steven Mehl, Erick Duzick, Frank
Weeks, Mary Ann Heston, Diane Weeks, Margaret Henry

Reporter: Noelle Gair

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ALSO PRESENT:

JAMES W. REYNOLDS, Owner - Roulette Gas & Oil
Company, LLC

Carrie Kuminitz, Project Consultant

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NONE OFFERED

P R O C E E D I N G S

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2 -----
3 HEARING OFFICER: I'm the Regional
4 Communications Manager for the Pennsylvania
5 Department of Environmental Protection's
6 Northcentral Regional Office in Williamsport, and I
7 will serve as the Hearing Officer this evening.
8 Thank you all for coming, and thank you to the
9 Potter County Commissioners for their use of the
10 building this evening.

11 I'd like to introduce my colleagues
12 from DEP. At the front table we have Tom Donohue.
13 He is the Environmental Program Manager in the
14 District Oil and Gas Operations. Kurt Klapkowski,
15 he is the Deputy Secretary for the Bureau of Oil and
16 Gas Planning and Program Management. And we have
17 Susan Price, Professional Geologist Manager in Oil
18 and Gas Management. And we actually have several
19 other members of our Oil and Gas staff and other
20 support staff from our Regional Office here tonight
21 as well.

22 Our purpose tonight is to hold a
23 formal public hearing for DEP's Oil and Gas Program
24 staff to hear your testimony about the Roulette Oil
25 and Gas Company's Application for the Clara Field

1 Number 20 Injection Disposal Well located in Clara
2 Township, Potter County.

3 If you have not already, please pick
4 up a copy of our Fact Sheet, which is at the front
5 table. It has more information about the
6 Application, the review process, and how you can
7 submit a written comment as part of that review
8 process. Now, if you would like to speak tonight
9 and have not already done so, this is your final
10 opportunity. We have the sign-in sheet for speakers
11 at the front-left there, and at this time we have
12 eight people signed up. We were planning to do
13 about three minutes person, but with the number of
14 people we're going to go ahead and extend that to
15 five minutes is the maximum. So if anybody is
16 prepared to speak, you may go up to five minutes,
17 but we will be firm with that timeline - time limit,
18 sorry. So if you'd like to register, please go
19 ahead and do that. Your name has to be on the list
20 before we start the hearing in order to be one of
21 the testifying parties this evening.

22 In addition to this evening, I
23 mentioned we also have opportunity for written
24 comments. You can send those via email or written
25 mail and those must be received no later than 4:00

1 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8th. If you would like to
2 submit written testimony, again, be sure to take
3 home the Fact Sheet that has the details of the
4 deadline, where to send it, and all that.

5 Another important note, not
6 everybody's comfortable with public speaking. DEP
7 does give equal consideration to all public
8 comments. It doesn't matter if that comes in
9 verbally tonight or in written format, equal
10 consideration. So those who speak tonight, you may
11 also submit written comments. So if you decide you
12 have more that you'd like to say than the five
13 minutes allows, you absolutely may submit at any
14 length in written comments.

15 So please note that our purpose here
16 tonight is to listen to your comments and gather
17 input as part of DEP's review of the Permit
18 Application. DEP staff do not directly answer
19 questions or respond to individual comments during
20 this formal proceeding. And I should also mention
21 we do have a Court Reporter here tonight that's
22 recording all of the comments. They are all
23 recorded into our official record with this Permit,
24 and they will be provided a response after the close
25 of a public comment period along with the written

1 comments, and that's called a comment and response
2 document. So that's actually something that we will
3 publish. And if you signed up, even if you're not
4 speaking, there's a separate sign up if you'd like
5 to receive that, we will provide that as well after
6 that's issued.

7 Okay?

8 Before we begin public testimony, we
9 have one short presentation to go over the
10 Permitting process, but I'd also like to recognize
11 that we do have representatives from the Applicant
12 here tonight, and they've agreed to be available
13 after the hearing, as well as some of our staff will
14 be around. So if we have a little bit of time at
15 the end, if anybody has any questions or wants to
16 clarify anything, I do want to acknowledge, so you
17 know who you're looking for. We have Jim Reynolds,
18 who is the owner of Roulette Oil and Gas, and Carrie
19 Kuminitz (phonetic) who is a Project Consultant
20 sitting back there. Thank you. Thank you for
21 coming.

22 Now, Tom Donohue will give a brief
23 overview of the Permitting process.

24 MR. DONOHUE: Hi, everyone. Let me
25 explain a little bit how we're set up in Oil and

1 Gas. It's a little bit different than the rest of
2 the regions in DEP. For well permitting, oil and
3 gas well permitting, it's split up into two offices
4 that cover the entire state. There's an office in
5 Meadville, which covers the northern half of the
6 state, and an office in Pittsburgh, which covers the
7 southern half of the state. This is in Potter
8 County, of course, so it's covered by the Meadville
9 Office, the permitting aspect of it. We have three
10 monitoring and compliance offices in Oil and Gas,
11 one in the Meadville Office, one in the Pittsburgh
12 Office, and one in the Williamsport Office, and our
13 Williamsport Office is the office that's responsible
14 for the monitoring and compliance for this well
15 site. The monitoring and compliance that's the
16 inspectors and the water quality specialists who
17 actually go out to the site. Emergency response is
18 also handled by the Williamsport Office for this
19 area.

20 So the first thing that needs to
21 happen before DEP even receives an Application for
22 an injection well is that the EPA has to issue an
23 injection well permit. They do this through their
24 underground injection control program. The EPA is
25 responsible for the injection, well integrity,

1 protection of groundwater and closure requirements;
2 the review of all those. We could have an optional
3 pre-application meeting with the applicant, and
4 during the pre-application meeting, we discuss the
5 project overview and items to be submitted with the
6 application and -.

7 Sue, do you remember, did we have a
8 pre-application meeting for this?

9 MS. PRICE: We did. It was last year,
10 maybe, like, February.

11 MR. DONOHUE: Okay.

12 Thanks. Yeah, we had a pre-
13 application meeting with Roulette about a year ago
14 or so.

15 Once the EPA issues their permit and
16 the pre-application meeting is held, then the
17 drilling application is submitted to DEP, along with
18 an erosion and sediment control plan, a control and
19 disposal plan, the EPA permit, and the approved EPA
20 application. We have multiple permitting technical
21 staff review portions of the application to ensure
22 that it meets the requirements of our laws and
23 regulations.

24 So there's four or five basic parts of
25 DEP's review. The first part of our review is the

1 drilling application review itself. And since this
2 well has already been drilled, we call it a Change
3 of Use Permit to convert the production well into
4 the disposal well. This application review
5 addresses the well location, distance restrictions,
6 notifications, coal mine issues, threatened and
7 endangered species and basically any other
8 locational issues that we regulate.

9 There's an erosion and sediment
10 control plan that's submitted, and this is meant to
11 address the prevention of runoff from the site.
12 There's a control and disposal plan review. The
13 control and disposal plan is a description of
14 operations, pollution prevention measures, waste
15 disposal methods, pollution incident response, and
16 an implementation schedule. And both the E&S plan
17 and control and disposal plan are required to be
18 submitted and approved as part of the application
19 review. And this is different than a typical
20 unconventional or a conventional well, which those
21 two plans are required to be on-site, but not
22 necessarily required to be approved, but for
23 disposal wells, they're required to be approved as
24 part of the permit.

25 There's a mechanical integrity review

1 that we do, and this is typically an oil and gas
2 inspector that looks at the casing and cementing to
3 make sure that it meets our well construction and
4 operating requirements. Finally, there's a geologic
5 review, which we'll have a licensed professional
6 geologist do, and this is meant to ensure that the
7 injection formation has integrity and there's no
8 pathways to fresh groundwater or to basement rock.
9 During the geologic review, we'll also assess the
10 potential for induced seismicity and potentially put
11 special conditions on the permit - on an issued
12 permit to require monitoring for any potential earth
13 movement.

14 After a well is permitted, DEP
15 compliance staff, this is the staff in the
16 Williamsport Office, they'll take over to enforce
17 the permit. We'll conduct periodic site inspections
18 for surface issues, and well integrity issues or
19 well issues themselves. And also the operator is
20 required to meet various EPA and DEP monitoring and
21 reporting obligations.

22 About this hearing itself, while
23 everyone is welcome to communicate environmental
24 concerns and feedback at any time during or after
25 DEP's review, formal testimony received today and

1 two weeks afterwards - there's going to be a two-
2 week comment period after this, that will all be
3 considered by our technical staff as they review the
4 Application. At the conclusion of the review, DEP
5 will issue a decision on the application and produce
6 a comment response document that answers all of your
7 comments and questions that you either wrote to us
8 or that you're going to speak to us today.

9 That's about all I have. Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER: Grab the sign-in
11 sheet. So now we'll begin the formal Public Hearing
12 on the Roulette Oil and Gas Company's Application
13 for the Clara Field Number 20 Injection Disposal
14 Well, and I will go over a few ground rules. So far
15 you seem like a very polite audience, so I think
16 this will go well. Right.

17 First, please turn off cell phones or
18 put them on vibrate, and if you need to take a call,
19 just please step outside. I will call on people to
20 speak in the order in which they signed up. When
21 your name is called, please come up, and I would
22 suggest come up on this side and just be careful not
23 to trip on the cords. Say your name and give your
24 comments. If you - you can spell your name as well,
25 but we also have the sign-in sheet, so -. Please

1 speak loudly and clearly into the microphone so
2 everyone can hear you, including the stenographer.

3 So we are allowing each person five
4 minutes to offer testimony, and I will keep time.
5 The two of us will be keeping time, and we do have a
6 warning sign. You may or may not see it because
7 people tend to not look at us, but it's there. If
8 your time is up, I will stand up and approach and
9 give you a moment to finish to wrap up what you're
10 saying, but if you see me stand up, that means your
11 time is over. Please be respectful of everyone's
12 opportunity to speak and to be heard. So that means
13 don't interrupt while others are speaking, by
14 clapping, booing or speaking out of turn. Thank you
15 for your cooperation with these ground rules.

16 As a reminder, our purpose tonight is
17 to listen and gather formal public comments as part
18 of our review process. DEP does not directly
19 respond to comments or questions offered tonight,
20 but we will respond to all of them given formally,
21 as we both explained previously in that comment and
22 response document when the permit decision is
23 reached.

24 Okay?

25 So our first registered speaker is

1 David Saulter.

2 MR. SAULTER: Thank you. David
3 Saulter. I'm from Hebron Township and the current
4 President of God's Country Chapter of Trout
5 Unlimited, which -.

6 Can you hear me now? I'm not used to
7 speaking into one of these things.

8 But as a Chapter member in Trout
9 Unlimited, we've been an organization in Potter
10 County for 44 years now. In the mid-80s, there was
11 another attempt to use some shallow gas wells in the
12 fishing creek area as injection brine well
13 recipients. I guess our biggest concern is the fact
14 that why Well Number 20, what was the criteria or
15 the process that Roulette Oil and Gas went through
16 to determine that this was the best well out of,
17 apparently, the 344 that they operate currently
18 within the state? Per the DEP, their authorization
19 search details here, the technical review on this
20 well has not been completed yet, according to this.

21 Is that correct?

22 MR. DONOHUE: Correct.

23 MR. SAULTER: Okay.

24 Per the oil and gas related injection
25 well requirements, class-II disposal wells, they

1 make up about 20 percent of the total number in the
2 country of 180,000. Per the regulations, all oil
3 and gas-producing states require the injection of
4 brine into the origin fading formations or similar
5 formations from where the brine came from. In that
6 Application, there's no designation where all this
7 brine is coming from. I find it kind of ironic that
8 if you look at Clara Township, there's only five or
9 six wells being operated by all that oil and gas.
10 Out of the 340 that they currently operate, there's
11 three abandoned wells under their EPA listing and
12 one that's plugged. How come the abandoned wells
13 haven't been considered? Why haven't they been
14 plugged? And why would you give a permit to a
15 company that's not in compliance with your existing
16 regulations?

17 The construction of the well, you said
18 it's already been drilled. When was it drilled? By
19 whom? When was the last time the casing was
20 inspected? And what process is involved in the
21 inspections of the casing in the existing piping
22 welds that are there? If I was a resident of Clara
23 Township, I would be appalled at the fact that they
24 want to use their township for a disposal of brine
25 generated in other townships, other counties, given

1 that they're not producing any gas or oil, any
2 significant amount within that Clara Township. The
3 construction and conversion standards and regular
4 testing are mandated. If I understood you
5 correctly, this isn't being classified as an
6 injection well, but as an existing well, I forget
7 what you -.

8 MR. DONOHUE: It's due to the Change
9 of Use. It's -.

10 MR. SAULTER: It's the Change of Use.

11 MR. DONOHUE: The Permit Application,
12 as to change the use to a disposal well.

13 MR. SAULTER: So everything hasn't
14 been reviewed and approved as of yet?

15 MR. DONOHUE: Correct.

16 MR. SAULTER: The last review Was in
17 September of '22. The technical review is still
18 pending. The applicant has been issued a deficiency
19 letter, but there was no - thank you. No listing of
20 what the deficiency was. Is it just in the review
21 process or the completeness? Has the company put up
22 the bond necessary for this well and what other -?
23 I guess the biggest question I have, how did you
24 determine Clara Number 20 was the best site out of
25 all the wells that you operate?

1 I think my time is probably pretty
2 close. Thank you.

3 HEARING OFFICER: You did a great job
4 on the time. Thank you very much, sir. The next
5 person registered to speak is Deborah Janci. And
6 then I typically will just say the next few names to
7 remind people where they're at so they're ready when
8 it's their turn. So after that is Barbara Laxon and
9 Laurie Barr. So first we have Deborah. For those
10 speaking, feel free to adjust this if you need it.
11 It says it's best that this is kind of pointed
12 towards your chin.

13 MS. JANCI: First, I want to thank you
14 for having this public hearing and allowing our
15 comments. My name is Deborah Janci. I'm a citizen
16 of Clara Township. I live on Clara Road. And
17 yesterday I called in at 11:58., the time was 12:00
18 to get your name in here. I thought a whole lot of
19 people would be coming, and I was the second person.
20 I was shocked by that. But anyway, dismayed. And I
21 thank the continuing advocacy of our Clara Township
22 Commissioners and the boards of state, you know.

23 Clara Township, we voted for Home
24 Rule. Apparently that's an issue. I mean, how do
25 you fight back against something like this? We're a

1 Township of 66 households. We don't have money.
2 There's money galore with this just gas and
3 exploration. I paid - and my husband, we paid real
4 estate taxes for 44 years to Pennsylvania. And now
5 it's a scary thing. And we finally have internet
6 now we have Tri-Co Connections. Before we had
7 Frontier, and they're in trouble for not providing
8 adequate services. We don't have cell phone
9 connection where we live.

10 So you go on the internet and start
11 going down the rabbit hole and there's a lot of
12 scary stories about injection wells on the internet.
13 They've had all kinds of problems with contamination
14 of aquifers in California, Ohio, Texas. It goes on
15 and on. So it's quite frightening for the average
16 uneducated person. And I learned a few words when I
17 went on the Internet. Brine. When you think of
18 brine, you think of a water softener brine. You
19 think of saltwater. It's more than that. It has
20 benzenes, ethylbenzene, xylene, radium. And by the
21 way, I found out that the EPA federal government
22 doesn't test for radium. It's up to the state, and
23 the state hasn't done that because, of course, we're
24 exposed to radiation every day, but not in such
25 concentrated form. And I wondered why my Subaru got

1 rusty wheels after they were spraying it on the
2 road.

3 Another word I learned was migration,
4 and migration, when used in injection well, there
5 are several ways the fluid can migrate. You have an
6 old well. It isn't examined correctly. You have a
7 crack at the casing. It goes into the upper areas
8 where you don't want that water. It can go down the
9 well, migrate to another well, shoot out that one.
10 They can spill it all over at the site. Now,
11 there's been accommodations for that. There's
12 emergency plans. I looked at that. I looked how
13 deep the well was.

14 I think when you repurpose a well, the
15 casing has to be thicker. I don't know if that's
16 right or not. And then I reviewed the response to -
17 we had a - in 2020 we had a lot of questions for the
18 EPA, and they addressed a lot of things, but there
19 were some questions that I had. You know, it says
20 Protection of springs and surface water bodies is
21 outside the scope of the EPA UIC permitting
22 authorities they're limited to groundwater. So the
23 state, I understand, is responsible.

24 Okay.

25 So will the state address that? I

1 know I have three springs that are right behind our
2 property, and when it rains and the water tables up,
3 it comes like a brown snake down the yard. There's
4 28 wells in the Clara Field, two in the Clara tract.
5 You're going to play Whack-a-Mole when the fluids
6 come up. That's all I have to say. Thank you for
7 listening. Do the right thing.

8 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Deborah.
9 The next speaker is Barbara Laxon.

10 MS. LAXON: Can I make a request? That
11 Laurie Barr go first?

12 HEARING OFFICER: Oh, okay.
13 If you'd like to switch spots, that's
14 fine. Sure.

15 Okay.
16 Laurie Barr, as long as Laurie's okay
17 with that?

18 MS. BARR: Yeah, I'm find with that.
19 Thank you so much. And I have 12 pages though. I
20 know they're going to give me the - but I'm going to
21 read it and if I don't get to the end, I'm going to
22 make it available. I'll make it available online,
23 and I have a lot of links here, so you can follow
24 the links for more information. But I'd like to
25 start out by saying thank you for having a hearing

1 and - and that I strongly oppose the proposed
2 injection well project and I'm requesting the DEP
3 deny the authorization of the permit based on the
4 following.

5 James Reynolds and Robert Benson have
6 a long history of abandoning wells, including
7 injection wells, while operating them under
8 authorization, EPA UIC Permit Number PAS2R940BPOT.
9 This has been well documented by the Department of
10 Environmental Resources, Department of Environmental
11 Protection, dating back to 1984. Officers of
12 Roulette Oil and Gas, LLC have operated wells in
13 Pennsylvania under business names of the following
14 four companies according to records of the DEP and
15 the DER. Roulette Oil and Gas Company, LLC. Benson
16 and Reynolds Gas Company, Potter-McKean Resources,
17 Inc., Potter-McKean Resources of Pennsylvania, also
18 identified as Potter-McKean Resources of PA, again,
19 in the DEP's inventory.

20 The companies listed above operated
21 wells that have been identified by DEP's database as
22 abandoned. James Reynolds is the managing partner
23 of Roulette oil and Gas, LLC according to the Oil
24 and Gas Operator Ownership and Control Information
25 form that was filed with the injection well

1 Application. While doing business as Benson and
2 Reynolds company, beginning in around 1983, the
3 company received permits to operate eight injection
4 wells located in Clara and Hebron Township, Potter
5 County. I requested the Benson and Reynolds files
6 from the DEP, and I received them and I have them
7 online and I'll provide everybody with links to
8 them. And I'm going to give the DEP an electronic
9 copy of this so that they'll have live links to the
10 records.

11 Inspection reports and DEP files
12 reflect the operators recited in 1990 and again in
13 '94 for abandoning wells. Ownership of the eight
14 injection wells was transferred to Potter-McKean
15 Resources in 1994. The following is a crop of a
16 Matson 120 Wells Inspection Report conducted in
17 1990. All eight wells had been abandoned at the
18 time of the 1990 inspection, according to DEP
19 records, and I have screen grabs of those records,
20 and I have crops of these, and they'll be available
21 online. So most of the pages are pictures.

22 In addition to being abandoned, DEP
23 files reflect that these wells leaked and vented
24 natural gas into the atmosphere for many years. The
25 max in one well was last inspected on site by the

1 DEP in 1993. It may still be venting greenhouse
2 gases today. According to the Pennsylvania
3 Department of State, Potter-McKean Resources, Inc.
4 was created in 1994, and the officers, according to
5 the Department of State, are James Reynolds, and
6 Robert Benson and Peter Matricas (phonetic). DEP
7 records reflect that James Reynolds and Robert
8 Benson are Officers of Pottery-McKean Resources,
9 Inc. Currently have one well in the company's
10 inventory that is identified by the DEP's online
11 database as abandoned. This abandoned well, owned
12 by Potter-McKean Resources, is located in Keating
13 Township, Potter County. Potter-McKean Resources,
14 Inc. well inventory is available online on the DEP's
15 website.

16 Eight injection wells, along with 70
17 other wells, were transferred to Potter-McKean
18 Resources, from Potter-McKean Resources to Potter
19 McKean Resources of Pennsylvania. According to the
20 Pennsylvania Department of State, the officers are
21 James Reynolds and Robert Benson Senior. James
22 Reynolds and Robert Benson Senior, owners of Potter-
23 McKean Resources in Pennsylvania currently have 20
24 wells in their inventory. Among them are two wells
25 that are identified on the DEP's database as

1 abandoned.

2 I'm going to skip - because I'm
3 running out of time. The Matson well - the Matson 7
4 well in Clara Township was originally cited for
5 violating Pennsylvania's Oil and Gas Act by the
6 Department in 1993. For 30 years, from '93 to
7 present, according to DEP records, the Matson 7 Well
8 and the Matson 3 Well have been abandoned, and they
9 were abandoned by the company owned by James
10 Reynolds and Robert Benson in Clara Township, Potter
11 County. The same town that's applying for the
12 permit now. These are still abandoned wells.

13 All right.

14 Thank you. Who gets this?

15 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Lori.

16 Barbara, you ready now?

17 MS. LAXON: Uh-huh (yes.)

18 HEARING OFFICER: Okay.

19 And then the next person is Stephen
20 Mehl.

21 MS. LAXON: Yeah, I could have given
22 her my time. It's only going to take me a couple of
23 minutes to read this, and then I'm going to show
24 some pictures.

25 Okay.

1 So the injection well that we're here
2 to comment on is to be maintained or not by Roulette
3 Oil and Gas, which we have documented does not have
4 a history of maintaining its properties properly or
5 plugging their abandoned wells. And I'll show the
6 pictures. These wells do not have adequate access.
7 They do not have adequate signage. They have bushes
8 going up through the engines, the pump jacks, the
9 supposed containment corrosion on all parts of the
10 wells and tanks are clearly visible. So despite any
11 future amendments to this ejection well site, due to
12 the nature of the materials, they will corrode or
13 deteriorate sooner or later, especially when poorly
14 maintained.

15 And I also had some questions about
16 the transport of waste to the site and the roads
17 that are just - they're not highways. They're back
18 mountain roads and these are big waste trucks that
19 are going to be on these roads and this is a danger
20 for the trucks, the roads, danger for leakage from
21 the trucks. Is Roulette Oil and Gas going to be
22 responsible for all of this? Will there be an issue
23 with the time of day that these trucks are allowed
24 on the road? All of this kind of information?

25 Also, I wanted to say that the

1 location near the top of the hill is guaranteeing
2 that any leakage, and it will leak eventually, will
3 spread in all directions to contaminate nearby
4 creeks that are all part of the Upper Allegheny
5 Watershed and any underground water resources. And
6 I say that because I and my family, we both kayak
7 and fish in this watershed and let our children, and
8 in my case, great-grandchildren play in these
9 waters, and all of my friends that live around here
10 also have their children playing in these waters.
11 And I - because of all of these things, I'm asking
12 that this well permit be denied.

13 And I have a few pictures here. This
14 is one picture of a Roulette Oil and Gas Well. You
15 can see the condition of the well. Everything is
16 all corroded and coming apart. And they just, you
17 know, they just recently went around and stuck these
18 little stickers because there was no signage the
19 last time we looked at this, but they ran around and
20 stuck little stickers on some of them. But as you
21 can see on others, there is no stickers. There is
22 no signage to say who they belong to.

23 And you can see, these are - I don't
24 know why Laurie printed these, they're not the most
25 egregious. There are some that are rusting through

1 that you can almost see through the tank, and as you
2 can see, there is no appropriate signage to tell you
3 who belongs to it. And you can see that they're in
4 the weeds. There's weeds - some of them are a lot
5 worse with the weeds growing up in between the pump
6 jacks and the engine and everything else.

7 I mean, supposedly some of these are
8 listed as active wells and some of them are, you
9 know, I don't - abandoned. It's - nothing is very
10 well appropriate. Some that are obviously abandoned
11 are listed as active, and others that are listed as
12 abandoned that are not maintained or doing anything.
13 And that's it. Thank you.

14 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Barbara.
15 Next is Steven Mehl, and then after him, the next
16 two will be Erick Duzick and Frank Weeks.

17 MR. MEHL: I just want to say thank
18 you for everyone coming out tonight. I'm sure you
19 could think of a number of things you'd rather be
20 doing than being here tonight, but this is really
21 important. My name is Steve Mehl. I'm here
22 representing Clara Township as a Township
23 Supervisor. I'm going to state unequivocally that
24 Clara Township is not anti-gas or oil.

25 We understand the need for America to

1 be energy independent and have worked closely with
2 the gas and oil industry. We actually live in gas
3 and oil country, but there's a difference between
4 gas and oil production and the injection well
5 proposed by Roulette Oil and Gas. Because many of
6 the landowners in Clara Township are not full-time
7 residents, but camp owners and township officials
8 work full time at other jobs. We respectfully
9 request a 30-day extension from the 8 August
10 deadline for comments and questions to be entered
11 into the record. I will submit this in writing
12 also, but I want to go on the record.

13 My question is this. Why did we have
14 to request this hearing? Why isn't the EPA and DEP
15 open and honest about what's going on? Projects as
16 consequential as this, this one deserves
17 transparency. Something's wrong here. The EPA
18 approved this Permit to inject 15,500 barrels a
19 month into this proposed injection well. That's 186
20 barrels annually. That's 1,000,860 barrels over a
21 ten-year period.

22 Well, most of us here don't have much
23 barrel is. So put it in perspective. We all know
24 what a gallon of milk looks like. There's 42
25 gallons per barrel. So that would be 651,000

1 gallons a month, 7,812,000 gallons annually, and
2 78,120,000 gallons over the ten-year Permit. Does
3 Roulette Oil and Gas have that much waste from their
4 300-plus wells or are other plans in store? Other
5 ideas?

6 I'm sure an approved injection well
7 would go at a very high price in Potter County.
8 Does anyone in this room, including DEP, think or
9 believe that injecting 78,120,000 gallons of toxic
10 water waste into the ground here in Potter County
11 would not affect our environment or our groundwater
12 or our surface water? According to the EPA, it is,
13 I quote, unlikely to contaminate our water aquifers
14 and our surface waters. Clara Township Officials
15 contend it is more than likely to contaminate
16 underground and our surface waters.

17 According to EPA's comments to our
18 questions and concerns last year, Potter county is a
19 great place for injection well. The geography and
20 the geology is perfect. Their engineering is
21 adequate and their oversight is immaculate when they
22 come and check once a year. The EPA considers the
23 geology for an injection well to be great. It's
24 impermeable they say. They reviewed extensive
25 information about the proposed injection zones,

1 i.e., the Cooper 5-0 Formation, the Sheffield 3-1
2 Formation, Kane 3-0 Formation to confirm the
3 suitability that the injection zones can receive the
4 volume of fluids I just mentioned to be injected
5 without fracturing, without leaking.

6 They state that the geologic
7 formations indicate an absence of faults or
8 fractures within a one-mile radius of the injection
9 well. And yet, we know numerous wells have leaked
10 and fractured three, four and even five miles away,
11 just like up here in North Hollow Road. The EPA
12 notes that the confining shales of the Bradford and
13 the Venango groups and trust me, I have no idea what
14 I'm talking about.

15 Okay?

16 These are actual documents from the
17 EPA and they like to throw a lot of good words
18 around.

19 Okay?

20 But it's their words. Are impermeable
21 shales that separate the injection fluids by
22 approximately 1,150 feet of rock. They state that
23 the shale formations have been demonstrated to serve
24 as combining formations to many injection projects.
25 But have some leaked? Have some fractured? The

1 geology in Pennsylvania is not nicely stacked
2 formations like many places in the country. The
3 lines go vertical, they go horizontal and they go
4 sideways. None of the aquifers are safe because in
5 the end, it's the pressure that wins.

6 The gas and oil is toxic. It's
7 radioactive by EPA's own study and admission. The
8 alpha-type, you know, the kind that cause cancer.
9 There are those who say and want to believe, oh,
10 this isn't an harmful solution, but that's not true.
11 And it's corrosive; so corrosive that it ends the
12 well casings and they will eventually fail.

13 Government engineers believe that they
14 can create something that won't fail. But history
15 has proven over and over that's not true. We are
16 contemplating pumping a solution in the ground that
17 no one can observe, no one can monitor what's going
18 on until it's too late.

19 Are you chasing me out?

20 HEARING OFFICER: Your time has up,
21 sir. I was giving you a chance to finish your
22 sentence though. I can see you were at the end of
23 the page. Thank you very much.

24 Okay.

25 Erick Duzick?

1 Okay.

2 And then after Erick, we have Frank
3 Weeks and then Mary Ann Heston.

4 MR. DUZICK: Hello, I'M Erick Duzick,
5 I live in Coudersport. I'm an Engineer for the last
6 12 years or so for an oil and gas company. I just
7 want to say I'm in support of this project. There
8 are hundreds and thousands of wells in Pennsylvania
9 right now, 400 to 500 injection wells, injecting gas
10 into the ground in Potter County right now. We have
11 no problems with that. There's minimal groundwater
12 contamination in Potter County from oil and gas
13 activities, if any, that I know of. And I think
14 that there's a lot of hype because people see the
15 news reports as the one person was saying, and they
16 don't really understand geology and how it actually
17 works.

18 Another thing, you know, people think
19 steel and cement corrode. They're underground,
20 there's no oxygen. They don't corrode like what you
21 see on surface. On surface you do have corrosion,
22 but thousands of feet below ground, it's a static
23 environment. There's none of that. And basically,
24 that's what I want to say is that if anybody has any
25 questions, then feel free to ask me anything.

1 Thanks.

2 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Frank
3 Weeks?

4 MR. WEEKS: This is going to be short.
5 Frank Weeks. I live in Clara Township. I live
6 there with my wife for 35 years on Fishing Creek. I
7 want to thank the panel for coming here and
8 listening to our comments.

9 Number one, there is no city public
10 water supply in Clara Township. All of our water
11 sources are natural. There's springs are wells.
12 There is no plan B. Cases of bottled water
13 delivered to my house are just not going to cut it.
14 The risk of this project, however small, is a
15 catastrophic damage to the water sources. water
16 supplies all over the country are being threatened,
17 and that's all we hear from government. Protect
18 your water supply. So why are we going to allow
19 this industry to threaten my water supply? It's
20 just somebody can make a profit. I don't think
21 that's a good enough reason.

22 Here we see, we have all the I's
23 dotted, all the T's are crossed. It looks great on
24 paper, but this industry has a long history of
25 violations, infractions, failures, fines and

1 penalties. Drilling companies, they just look on
2 its failures as a consequence of doing business.
3 The public has no reason to believe that this new
4 project is going to be any different.

5 We look forward to the Commonwealth of
6 Pennsylvania to protect our citizens from this risky
7 project.

8 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Next is
9 Mary Anne Heston.

10 Okay.

11 After Mary Anne, we have Diane Weeks
12 and Margaret Henry.

13 MS. HESTON: I spent some time this
14 afternoon trying to write my comments. I've been
15 thinking about this injection well for months, since
16 I heard about it and I have not done the kind of
17 work, the diligence, that Laurie Barr has put into
18 her research. But I think, like all of you, I'm
19 concerned. And I know that others have greater
20 stakes here, whether they're financial or personal,
21 and they probably have more knowledge of the issues
22 surrounding these injection wells.

23 Most of us don't get motivated or
24 actively engaged until our property or our families
25 are threatened. That's human nature, perhaps.

1 However, much we wish it were otherwise.

2 My main concern is that whatever the
3 outcome of this particular hearing, we remember that
4 all sides represented must, in the end, work
5 together for the best of all possible outcomes. DEP
6 resisted granting this public hearing at first.
7 They had reviewed the public comments submitted
8 during the period that the EPA conducted its own
9 permitting process, and perhaps they felt that they
10 know all the concerns that were going to be given
11 tonight. And in addition, I just want to mention
12 that DEP, the Department of Environmental
13 Protection, and I want to emphasize that word,
14 because they get real opposition from different
15 fronts, certainly from the industry.

16 You know, there's frustration, I'm
17 sure, with the paperwork that needs to be filed, the
18 inspections, the criticism from people who are
19 fearful, rightfully so, for their property and their
20 water, but they also get a lot of criticism from our
21 state legislators, and they need public support and
22 political support to do their job. Without money,
23 without resources, without adequate personnel, they
24 can't cover all these concerns that have been
25 expressed tonight. There just isn't enough to do

1 that job well.

2 But there's also, I want to say,
3 responsibility from all of us as citizens to become
4 better informed, to not rely on a few individuals to
5 do this kind of work, informing others of what's at
6 risk. We all benefit from the information age, and
7 I'm speaking extemporaneously now because I feel
8 that without public engagement, nothing's going to
9 change. You know, it's a political issue as well.
10 If we don't get involved, we cannot be pointing
11 fingers at others.

12 I also recognize that there is
13 frustration and anger coming from those who have
14 been tragically impacted by environmental pollution
15 and degradation; those who have seen their family
16 members sickened, their animals, their land and/or
17 water poisoned. People who have studied and covered
18 these stories are consequently skeptical of any sort
19 of protection coming from the government. However,
20 we know that finger pointing and name calling have
21 become all too common and all too corrosive in our
22 politics and our communities, and none of it leads
23 to the more important work of problem-solving for
24 long term good.

25 Please remember that in any enterprise

1 involving groups of people, there are some who do
2 their best and some who do not. Don't assume the
3 entire group is at fault, and please avoid the cop-
4 out of cynicism, assuming the worst of others or
5 that nothing is to be gained - oh, I'm sorry for my
6 emotion. And I'll finish up.

7 In working with those with whom we
8 disagree. It's not just ourselves who have
9 something at stake, who will live with the
10 consequences of our interactions or worse, our
11 inactions. Our children and grandchildren, our
12 communities, our beautiful county, our world, all
13 depend on our better selves working together.

14 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Diane
15 Weeks. After Diane, we have Margaret Henry, and
16 Margaret is the final person signed up tonight.

17 MS. WEEKS: Hello. My name is Diane
18 Weeks. I live in Clara Township, fourth generation.
19 Hopefully fifth and sixth will come along. We have
20 spring water, and we're at the headwaters.
21 Everybody downstream from us gets their waters from
22 us. If this water is ruined, everybody below us is
23 ruined.

24 I don't understand, as Mr. Saulter
25 said, why Clara Township? Except for one reason -

1 two reasons. We're low income. There's not many
2 people. There's a lot of seniors. It's blatant
3 discrimination. Why are you picking Clara Township?
4 There's no way that the DEP or the EPA can guarantee
5 that you will not damage our environment. You don't
6 have enough staff to regulate. There's violations
7 constantly from frackers.

8 You can't guarantee it, so it should
9 not go in. You cannot guarantee it that it won't be
10 damaged. So absolutely, I am appalled, Mr. Saulter.
11 I am beyond appalled that you would even try to jam
12 that in this little county, in our little township
13 because we don't have the money to fight it, but it
14 is discrimination, and it should definitely be a
15 violation that you should try to do that.

16 Once that's fractured, you have no
17 control over where it's going, so you cannot
18 guarantee it, so it should not happen.

19 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Margaret
20 Henry, our final speaker.

21 MS. HENRY: Everything that I want to
22 tell you today can be summed up in how many, how
23 many kids have died in the Canon-McMillan School
24 District because of an exceptionally rare form of
25 cancer called Ewing Sarcoma. More than a handful

1 folks and more than 67 have been diagnosed with
2 either Ewing Sarcoma or some other rare form of
3 cancer. And of course, just like cigarettes don't
4 cause cancer, until they did, fracking injection
5 wells and the chemicals that these companies are
6 permitted to use unbeknownst to us because of
7 proprietary bullshit, excuse my French.

8 It's absolutely ridiculous what they
9 expose people to. And people are dying. They're
10 not just sick with tremors and unbeknownst
11 conditions. They are freaking dying, and they're
12 children. How many houses do they have to explode
13 before they get a grip on the fact that methane and
14 oil and all that go together, and when they use the
15 force that is required to pump that disgusting
16 compound of fracking fluid down into those wells, it
17 backs up. It goes into people's homes. It goes
18 into the groundwater. It goes into their wells.
19 It's crazy. It's beyond crazy. It's inhumane, and
20 it ought to be illegal.

21 How many -? Well and you know, I can
22 answer this. How many people do you know that have
23 died from direct causes of fracking? My first
24 encounter with this was a guy named Terry Greenwood.
25 Google him, look him up. And if you want to know

1 about the power of companies and what they can put
2 you through, Google Ray Kimmel, Dimock,
3 Pennsylvania, Craig Stevens, and you'll find out
4 what they've done to people and how these people
5 have stood up to corporations.

6 And you know, I want to know what's
7 going on at the DEP, that stands for Department of
8 Energy Production because it no more stands for
9 Environmental Protection than WTF is a French
10 phrase. You guys got to get a grip on this.
11 You have absolutely no right to poison us. None
12 whatsoever.

13 HEARING OFFICER: Thank you. Thank
14 you for everybody who came out tonight and for those
15 who took the time to speak. This will conclude
16 tonight's public hearing. As a reminder, we are
17 accepting written comments also through Tuesday,
18 August 8th, and those can be of any length, so if
19 you wish to submit written comments or questions,
20 please take that handout with the details. We
21 appreciate everyone's time and your thoughts, your
22 comments, and your interest in this matter. As I
23 said, some of our staff and also the Applicant will
24 be here for a little while after if anybody has
25 anything as you're heading out, but otherwise, have

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a safe trip home and good night.

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HEARING CONCLUDED AT 6:27 P.M.

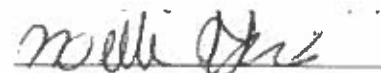
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CERTIFICATE

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I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, hearing officer Lehman was reported by me on July 25, 2023 and that I, Noelle Gair, read this transcript and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Dated the 11th day of August, 2023.



Noelle Gair,

Court Reporter