

# NEWS AND VIEWS



TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR • PATRICK MCDONNELL, DEP SECRETARY

## Providing Efficient and Effective Service

By Patrick McDonnell, Secretary

DEP's budget dollars are best spent providing efficient and effective service to our commonwealth.

One of the ways we're achieving that objective is through our strategic investment in Information Technology (IT). We have been catching up to the 21st century, modernizing the tools we use for several key purposes -- to enhance our business processes, improve efficiency of our staff time, enable internal decision-making, and encourage continuous improvement in all these regards. Perhaps most important, though, we want our IT functions to improve the information we present to the public, regulated community, related non-profit organizations, and government leaders at all levels. Our goal is to present the data that drives our decisions in accessible and understandable ways.

I commend our staff for doing just that in this year's [Oil and Gas Annual Report](#). As always, it's a data-rich almanac of the industry in this state, and the role that regulation plays in ensuring that Pennsylvania's air, land and water are protected from pollution while helping the industry thrive. This year, we've taken a modern approach in sharing that data, as you'll learn in our first story below. I encourage you to click through to the report itself. I promise you'll learn quite a lot about our state, as told through the lens of one industry.

### TOP STORIES

#### Oil and Gas Annual Report Goes Digital, Providing Easier Access to Data, Trends

Pennsylvania is the second-largest producer of natural gas in the country and one of the most transparent states in making information publicly accessible.

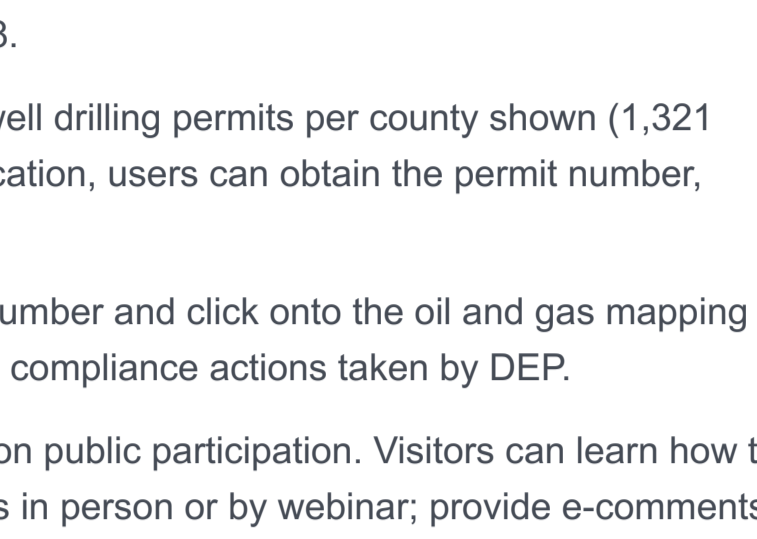
For the first time, [DEP's annual report](#) on oil and gas activities is entirely digital, improving access to 2016 permit activity, inspections, operator compliance, and enforcements for conventional and unconventional wells.

Technology has made it easier to highlight trends. For example, in 2016 natural gas production from unconventional wells reached its highest level (about 5.1 trillion cubic feet) while the number of new unconventional wells drilled was the lowest since 2008.

And now, not only are the number of unconventional well drilling permits per county shown (1,321 total), but the permits are mapped. By clicking on a location, users can obtain the permit number, operator name, issuance date, and other information.

For an even deeper dive, visitors can use the permit number and click onto the oil and gas mapping site to get production data, inspection results, and any compliance actions taken by DEP.

The annual report also features an expanded section on public participation. Visitors can learn how to attend Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board meetings in person or by webinar; provide e-comments on regulations, policies, general permits, and other proposals under development; and sign up for email notifications.



#### Recycling is a Success, Economically and Environmentally

In the nearly 20 years since Pennsylvania adopted the Municipal Waste Planning Recycling and Waste Reduction Act, Pennsylvanians have bought in in a big way. At that time (1988), the state's approximately 1,500 municipal dumps were nearing or at capacity, and there was no statewide plan to help municipalities deal with trash.

Now, more than 90% of Pennsylvania residents have access to recycling programs, and the industry provides tens of thousands of well-paying jobs. In 2015 alone, Pennsylvania recycled more than 10.3 million tons of material and employed 66,000 people.

Unfortunately, one of the critical pieces of the law -- a \$2-per-ton fee on trash collected -- is set to expire. In June 2017, [DEP Deputy Secretary for Waste, Air, Radiation and Remediation George Hartenstein testified](#) before the Joint Legislative Conservation Committee to permanently reauthorize the fee and ensure the continued success of the program.

DEP has previously awarded multi-year grants to local governments using proceeds from the tipping fee through the Recycling Development and Implementation (Section 902) Grants. Applications for 902 Grants regularly exceed available funds, and grants have not been awarded since 2015 due to lack of funds and uncertainty of the future of the program.

"Recycling isn't just a good environmental practice -- it supports Pennsylvania workers and communities financially as well," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell in a [press release](#) on the subject. "We need to make sure that we continue to have the resources to support this tremendous sector of our economy."

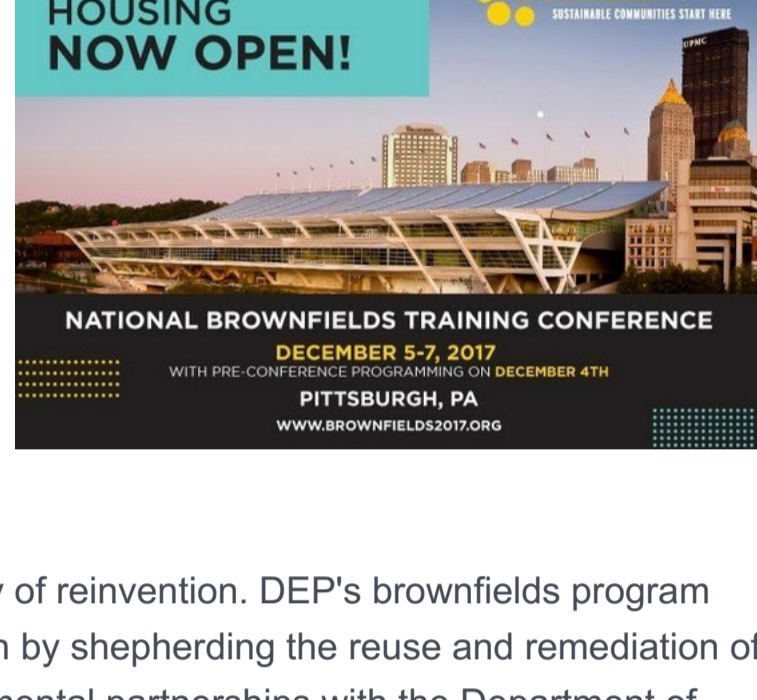
*Recycling supports Pennsylvania's economy!*



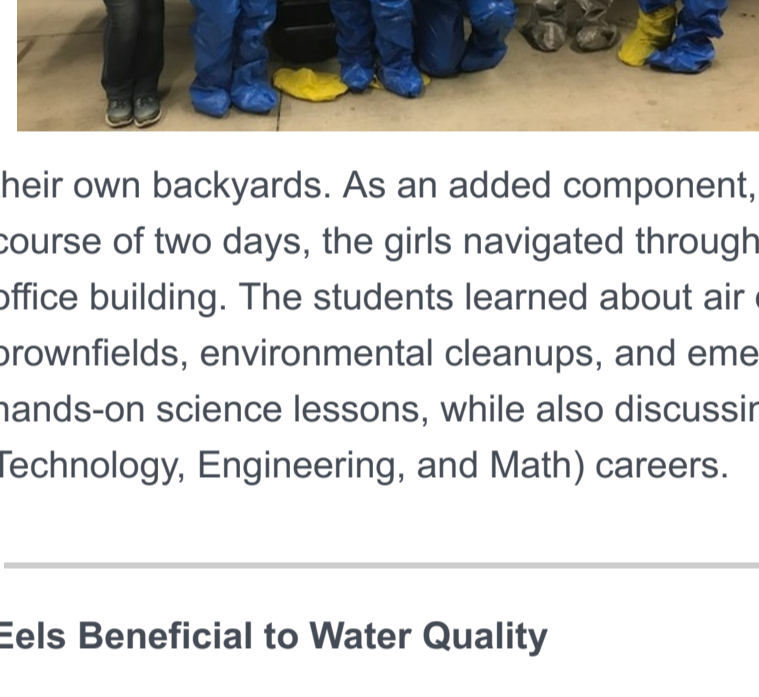
#### Pittsburgh Hosting National Brownfields Conference

More than 20 years after the first national conference was held in Pittsburgh in 1996, professionals and civic leaders from across the country will return for the 2017 National Brownfields Training Conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. The event, cosponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and International City/County Management Association (ICMA), will take place December 5 through 7, 2017.

Pennsylvania has a rich industrial history and a legacy of reinvention. DEP's brownfields program facilitates new opportunities across the commonwealth by shepherding the reuse and remediation of polluted land or hazardous sites. Through interdepartmental partnerships with the Department of Community and Economic Development, businesses and industries from steel mills to dry cleaners and military bases to railyards [transform into housing, shopping, office space, and healthcare facilities](#). DEP's own Southwest Regional Office on Washington's Landing is just one of the many brownfields that have been recycled to housing, recreation, and commercial uses where an industrial site once stood.



### NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE



#### DEP Hosts Girls Day to Encourage STEM Careers

After receiving a grant from the Society of Women Environmental Professionals (SWEPE), the Norristown Area School District brought approximately 150 ninth-grade female students to the DEP Southeast Regional Office to demonstrate the variety of work done by our department.

One of the main goals of the project was to show the students that not only can girls have awesome science jobs, but that these jobs exist right here, in their own backyards. As an added component, only female DEP employees participated. Over the course of two days, the girls navigated through six DEP learning stations and a tour of our LEED Gold office building. The students learned about air quality, stormwater, drinking water, radiation protection, brownfields, environmental cleanups, and emergency response. The staff engaged the students in hands-on science lessons, while also discussing the importance of pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) careers.

#### Eels Beneficial to Water Quality

The Muddy Run Pumped Storage Project is a hydroelectric project on the eastern shore of the Susquehanna River in Lancaster County. It is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and its operation requires a Water Quality Certification from DEP, which DEP issued in 2014. Pumping water from the river and then discharging water to generate power can adversely affect aquatic life and water quality. The fluctuating water levels in the river can also have negative impacts on migratory species, such as the American shad and the American eel.

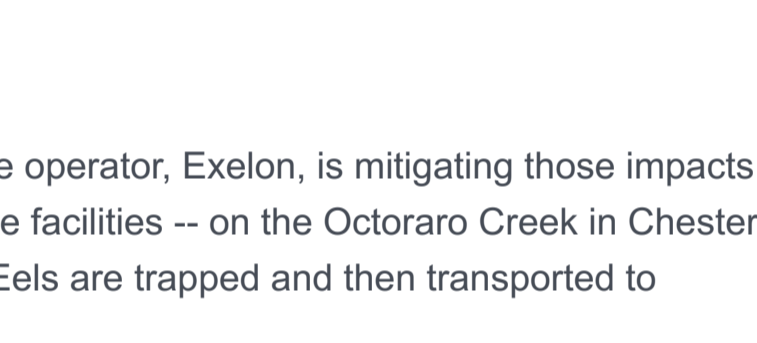


Photo credit: Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)

As compensation for the impacts to the aquatic life, the operator, Exelon, is mitigating those impacts by implementing a program to trap eels at two separate facilities -- on the Octoraro Creek in Chester County, and below the Conowingo Dam in Maryland. Eels are trapped and then transported to multiple locations in the Susquehanna watershed.

Most recently, the eels have been released in Shewago Creek in Dauphin and Lancaster counties, Beaver Creek in Dauphin County, and the north branch of Muddy Creek in York County. The trapping takes place daily from May 1 until Sept. 15, with transporting occurring at least once per week during that period.

This year, 26,000 eels have been collected and stocked in Pennsylvania waters. Eels are a host species to freshwater mussels and play an important role in water quality filtering in local streams and rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. They have been largely absent in the watershed since the first dams on the lower Susquehanna were constructed.

### ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

## AIR QUALITY ACTION DAYS

**Orange:**  
Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.

**Red:**  
Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.

*What you can do:*

- Maintain your vehicle: Save gas, money, and the air.
- Commute smarter: Bike, carpool or take transit to work.
- Save energy: Turn off lights, turn down thermostat in winter & up in summer.

pennsylvania  
 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
 PROTECTION

### SOCIAL SCENE

**Patrick McDonnell**  
@SecMcDonnell

Following

Happy [#BayAwarenessWeek](#)! We're working to reduce pollution flowing into our rivers in PA, and ultimately, the [#ChesBay](#).  
[@chesbayprogram](#)



**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**  
June 30 at 9:10am · 🌐

Weigh in early: How can Pennsylvania improve local waters in our 43 Chesapeake Bay watershed counties? Share your ideas or concerns by submitting your comments at this link by July 7:  
<http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/eComment/>



**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**  
June 30 at 3:09pm · 🌐

"York County PA demonstrates a model approach to stormwater, one that demonstrates creative use of stormwater management principles and that we hope will inspire other municipalities across the Bay watershed to take similar actions." -DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell  
<http://ow.ly/8dDQ30dcf9E>

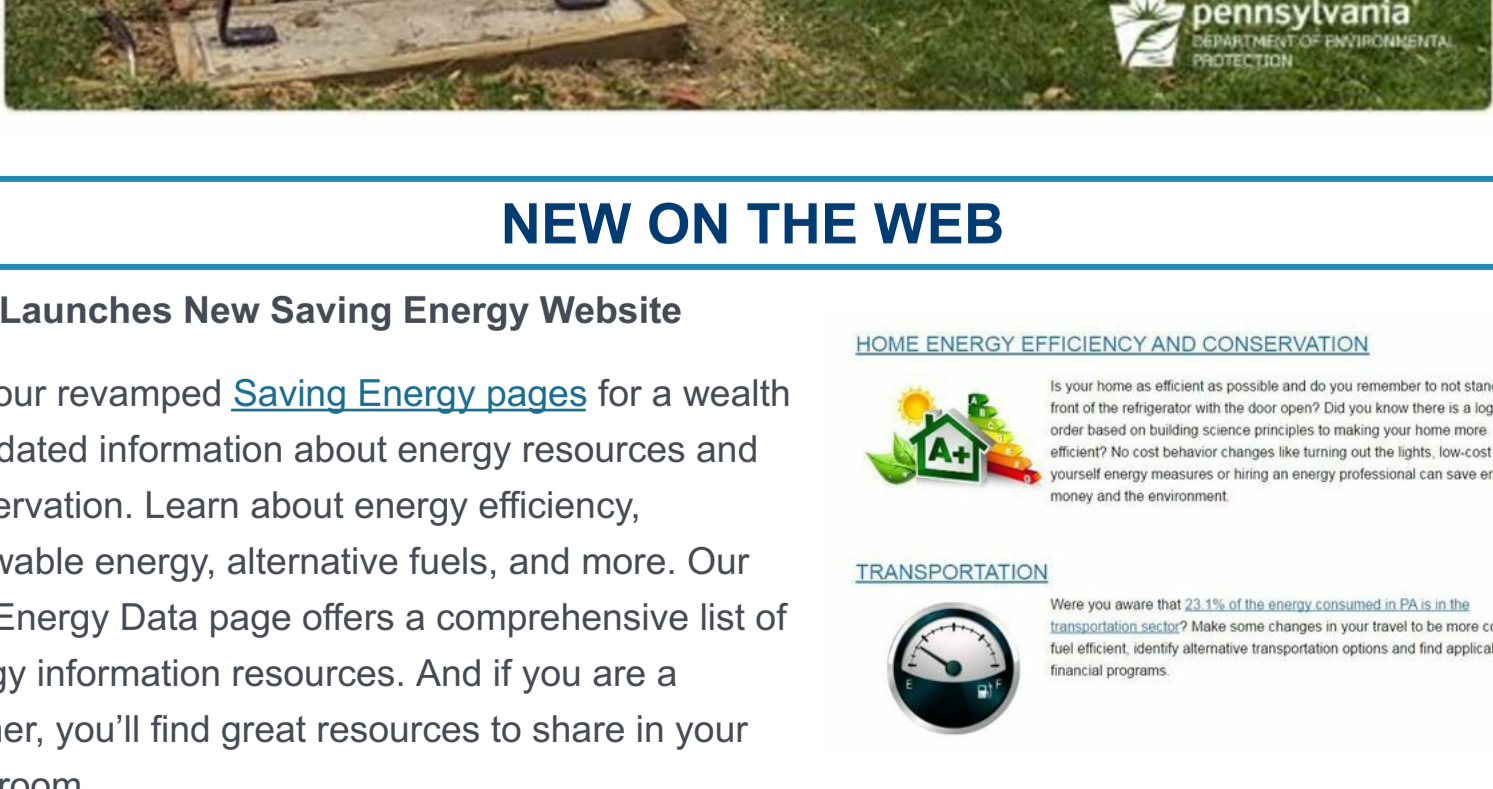


458 Views

**Patrick McDonnell**  
@SecMcDonnell

Following

When you sit on this bench along the Susquehanna River, be sure to pick up some litter in honor of Mike Texter. [ow.ly/wOvE30d3y9X](#)



### NEW ON THE WEB

#### DEP Launches New Saving Energy Website

Visit our revamped [Saving Energy pages](#) for a wealth of updated information about energy resources and conservation. Learn about energy efficiency, renewable energy, alternative fuels, and more. Our new Energy Data page offers a comprehensive list of energy information resources. And if you are a teacher, you'll find great resources to share in your classroom.

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

Is your home as efficient as possible and do you remember to not stand in front of the refrigerator with the door open? Did you know there is a logical order based on building science principles to making your home more efficient? No cost behavior changes like turning out the lights, low cost do it yourself energy resources or hiring an energy professional can save energy, money and the environment.

TRANSPORTATION

Have you aware that 23.1% of the energy consumed in PA is the transportation sector? Make some changes to your travel to be more fuel efficient. Identify alternative transportation options and find applicable financial programs.

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH

**How long does water have to stand before mosquitoes can breed in it?**

Mosquito eggs can hatch in as little as six days in certain conditions. Some mosquito eggs can even dry out completely, then rehydrate and hatch if reintroduced to water. It is important to make sure that water isn't standing in birdbaths, kiddie pools, garden pots, firepits, or unwanted receptacles for very long. [DEP recommends](#) emptying water-holding containers at least once a week to prevent mosquitoes from breeding, using [Bti products](#) on standing water, like in ornamental pools.

Have a question you would like to see featured as a question of the month? Submit your questions to [ra-epnews@pa.gov](mailto:ra-epnews@pa.gov).