



April 22, 2020

**CERTIFIED MAIL NO.** [REDACTED]

Re: 58 Pa. C.S. § 3218 Determination  
Water Supply Request for Investigation No. 348683

Subject Address:

[REDACTED]  
Monroe Township, Bradford County

Dear [REDACTED]

The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) has been investigating the possible degradation of your water supply located at the above subject address ("Water Supply"), in response to a June 17, 2019 complaint that gas well drilling activities may have affected your Water Supply. The Department's investigation, prompted by information you provided, has determined that your Water Supply was adversely affected by oil and gas activities, including but not limited to the drilling, alteration, or operation of an oil or gas well.

Please note that without any treatment, water quality sampling indicates that, on occasion, your water quality has not met (*i.e.*, is worse than) the following health and/or aesthetic statewide standards (note that Primary Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) are intended to reflect potential dangers to human health, while secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels (SMCLs) reflect the aesthetics of the water (*i.e.* taste, smell, etc.)):

Parameters	Unit	Statewide Standards or Recommended Levels	Your <u>Highest</u> Sample Results that were Detected Above Statewide Standards/Levels
Turbidity	NTU	<1	14
Manganese	mg/L	0.05	0.072

The information upon which this determination is based is summarized below.

## Summary of Investigation

Beginning on June 17, 2019, your Water Supply was screened for combustible gas as part of a nearby investigation. On July 5, 2019, during those screening operations, it was reported that your Water Supply contained methane. During inspections conducted by the Department and others, methane gas was observed in the water and the headspace of the Water Supply. Water quality samples were collected from the Water Supply on several occasions by a private consultant, and were submitted to an accredited third party laboratory for analysis. Please see the attached documents, which include analytical tables regarding the quality of the Water Supply, as well as information regarding interpreting those results.

Laboratory analytical data collected over the investigation period indicated a methane concentration of 1.3 mg/L. Free gas in the headspace of the water well has ranged between 0 % and 25 % gas by volume. Methane was not detected in pre-drill samples collected from the Water Supply in 2011.

Samples of the methane from the Water Supply were collected and sent to a specialized laboratory for isotopic and compositional analysis. These analyses allowed for a more detailed characterization of gas present in the Water Supply. The isotope and compositional analyses indicate that the stray gas in your Water Supply appears to be associated with oil and gas activities.

Methane is the predominant component of natural gas. Federal water standard limitations have not been established for methane gas. The level of concern begins above 28 mg/L methane, which is referred to as the saturation level. At this level, under normal atmospheric pressure, the water cannot hold additional methane in solution. This may allow the gas to come out of the water and concentrate in the air space of your home or building. There is a physical danger of fire or explosion due to the migration of natural gas into water wells or through soils into dwellings where it could be ignited by sources that are present in most homes/buildings. Natural gas can also cause a threat of asphyxiation, although this is extremely rare.

When the Department is made aware of methane levels greater than 7 mg/L, we notify the water supply owner of the hazards associated with methane in their water supply. While the concentrations of dissolved methane detected in your Water Supply were below this level, free gas was detected in the headspace of the Water Supply. Please be aware that the methane levels can fluctuate. This means that even with a relatively low level of methane, you should be vigilant of changes in your water that could indicate an increase in methane concentration.

It is the Department's recommendation that all water wells should be equipped with a working vent. This will help alleviate the possibility of concentrating these gases in areas where ignition would pose a threat to life or property. Please note that it is not possible to completely eliminate the hazards of having natural gas in your water supply by simply venting your well.

Over the course of the investigation, samples collected from your Water Supply contained manganese in exceedance of its SMCL of 0.05 mg/L, at a concentration of 0.072 mg/L.

Turbidity was detected above its MCL at 14 NTU. All other parameters tested during the monitoring period met their respective MCLs/SMCLs for compounds for which an MCL/SMCL exists.

The Department is continuing to work to permanently resolve this issue. Should you have any questions regarding the investigation, please contact William J. Kosmer, P.G. at 570.974.2613.

Sincerely



Jennifer W. Means  
Environmental Program Manager  
Eastern Oil and Gas District

Enclosures:

Laboratory Analytical Table  
"How to Interpret A Water Analysis Report"

cc:

William J. Kosmer, P.G.  
Stephanie Wharton  
Jonathan Pennings  
Matthew Nuss  
Carrie Knapp  
Complaint File # 348683