

Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter  
PO Box 606  
Harrisburg, PA 17108  
pennsylvania.chapter@sierraclub.org  
For Immediate Release – October 26, 2010

Contacts:

Jeff Schmidt, Pennsylvania Sierra Club Director, 717-232-0101  
Tom Au, Pennsylvania Sierra Club Conservation Chair, 717-234-7445

**Sierra Club Grateful for Pennsylvania Governor's "Stopgap" Moratorium on New Gas Drilling**

Failure of state Senate to pass drilling reform legislation leaves residents, drinking water at risk

PHILADELPHIA -- Governor Ed Rendell is expected to sign an executive order today that would put in place a moratorium on future drilling operations on Pennsylvania's state forest land. The moratorium would provide temporary relief to concerned Pennsylvanians after the failure of the state senate to advance Marcellus Shale gas reform legislation.

"Because the General Assembly could not develop an effective system for regulating Marcellus Shale gas drilling, Governor Rendell did the right thing today by declaring a moratorium on new leasing in state forests," said Pennsylvania Sierra Club Director Jeff Schmidt.

In July, as a key part of their state budget agreement, legislative leaders and Gov. Rendell agreed to an October 1 deadline to approve a severance tax. Despite meetings between the House, Senate, and the Governor last week, there was no agreement on a severance tax or other pressing Marcellus gas regulation issues, and Senate leaders have no Senate sessions planned after the November 2.

"The Sierra Club applauds this stopgap measure, but it is not enough," Schmidt said. "We are appalled that the Pennsylvania Senate failed to pass a natural gas severance tax, a state forest protection bill, or other Marcellus gas-related legislation before adjourning. Senate leadership has chosen to put political campaigning ahead of the needs of the people of Pennsylvania."

In addition to the natural gas severance tax bill, other bills to reform oil and gas regulation remained stalled. These bills would provide for an environmental study of state forest leasing, require mandatory inspection of gas wells, provide for protection of drinking water supplies, provide for public notice of gas well applications, and disclose the chemicals used in the production process.

For more information visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/naturalgas>