

Congressional Hearing on Marcellus Drilling

REMARKS

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Good afternoon, and thank you, Senator Rockefeller for the opportunity to participate in this hearing.

In recent years, as Marcellus shale extraction began to escalate, the Department of Transportation recognized that these operations were taking a heavy toll on our county route system – routes that were not constructed to withstand the weights to which they were being subjected.

Citizen complaints became more frequent and some roads had been rendered nearly impassable.

The Department and industry both recognized that the issue existed and needed to be addressed.

In 2010, the Department formed a committee, with industry participation, to develop an oil and gas policy to ensure that West Virginia's transportation network would be preserved.

I would like to specifically thank Corky Demarco for his cooperation in developing a policy that doesn't hinder industry's ability to operate and is fair to both parties.

Since, March of last year the Department of Transportation has approved over 275 permits for access to state roads. To date, approximately 3,000 miles of West Virginia's roadways are being used in gas production.

Most of the damages done to our roadway as a result of natural gas drilling are being repaired by contractors directly hired and paid by the gas operators, totaling more than \$20 million dollars worth of repairs last year alone.

Since the oil and gas policy was implemented, more than 50 miles of roads were repaved with a three to four inch HLBC base and a wearing course, ten miles received full-depth base reclamation and wearing course. At least five miles of roadway have already been paved this year.

By agreements with the companies, slides have been repaired, sight distances improved, curves widened, pipes replaced and roads widened.

Most repair projects have begun within a couple of days, if not the same day as the damage occurs. Many operators have contractors on “stand-by” contracts.

Many operators are learning that preventative work done before starting the well construction is more economical and provides better relations with local citizens.

As you can see, the Department has received great cooperation from most of the gas operators in the state and I believe that cooperation has been attained by clearly stating the Departments expectations in the Oil and Gas policy.

Thank you again, Senator, for this opportunity. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.