

Bret Jennings

Councillor, Great Bend Borough

Chairman, Hallstead Great Bend Joint Sewer Authority

With living in Susquehanna County, I have been seeing all the oil and gas development and have been wondering has anyone looked at any increases to the recognized pollutants: total nitrogen (TN), total phosphorus (TP), and total suspended solids (TSS)?

Or, how much has oil and gas development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed increased the recognized pollutants that the Commonwealth and lower subdivisions are responsible for removing?

Some areas this would be caused from oil and gas development run off, removal of planted tree buffers installed around water bodies and building increased drainage systems while increasing the weight holding ability of dirt roads for oil and gas development.

Some of the developments are well pads, pipelines, compressor stations, holding yards for pipes and chemicals, fleet truck maintenance facilities and building new gas company operational headquarters. On the small scale locally, it could be a few acres here, a few acres there, but when looking at it from a watershed level it is hundreds of miles of development or a good size urban area added to the watershed.

One small way to look at this is from the documents from each oil and gas related project which are highly theoretical, but instead using cross boarder testing that is already done to locate waterway crossing into New York State from Pennsylvania as gas drilling expanded in the Susquehanna River Basin. Examples would be the Snake creek or Choconut creek basins in Susquehanna county. Both are large enough, both cross the NYS and PA lines before entering the Susquehanna River and both were developed quickly to allow for a few years of pre, during and post oil and gas development.

If PA does not meet the 2025 reduction goals or fails to assure the EPA of progress to meet that goal or the past 2017 goals in the interim, the EPA as in the 2009 December letter where they spelled out the areas where they could use thier oversight with NPDES permits to force compliance. This will financially affect municipalities with MS4 or stormwater permits and the wastewater permits.