

CELLAR TECH

Containment Well Cellar Systems



Ex-DEP chief seeks safer, cleaner drilling

By Randy Leonard – Medill News Service
Oct. 11, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C. – WASHINGTON – Environmental problems with shale gas extraction can and should be managed, the former head of Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection told U.S. senators this week.

Kathleen McGinty, now a vice president who oversees clean energy development for property development firm Weston Solutions, is part of a Department of Energy advisory board that is calling both for more extensive measurement of environmental impact from gas well development and for a clearinghouse to share best practices between states familiar with gas production and those relatively new to the process.

Most of the environmental damage from shale gas extraction occurs from aspects other than the fracking process, such as concrete seals failing or spills on the surface, members of the advisory board said. A blown coupling at a well in western Pennsylvania released more than 10,000 gallons of fracking liquid to a pasture and stream in April, according to the Pennsylvania Department of the Environment.

"Shoddy shale operations can adversely impact water quality," McGinty told the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Tuesday. "Yet, fracturing per se seems not to be the culprit."

Environmental problems are more likely associated with poor well construction, according to advisory board member Mark Zoback, a geophysics professor at Stanford University and advisor to Backer Hughes, which offers services related to shale gas production. Building secure wells using the best-known techniques is crucial to avoiding contamination in shallower aquifers, Zoback told the Senate committee.

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US producers must exceed safety rules to gain public trust: Range exec

San Francisco (Platts)
28Sep2011 – 250 pm EDT/1850 GMT

The US exploration and production industry must hold itself up to the highest environmental standards – even going beyond what is required by regulators – to gain the public confidence that's needed to exploit highly prospective oil and gas plays such as the Marcellus Shale, a Range Resources executive said in San Francisco Tuesday.

"We can no longer just say 'Tell me what the rules are, I'll do that.' ... You've got to do things above and beyond the way it used to be. Eventually regulation will pull itself up to that level and we'll raise the bar," said Range Senior Vice President Ray Walker.

"Pennsylvania is the prime example and Marcellus is ground zero for all of this," he said.

From The Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, Draft Well Construction Rules on Senate Bill 165

Comment deadline: Dec. 5, 2011

F. Surface Water Infiltration:

(1) Before drilling out below the first casing string, liquid-tight cellar must be constructed to prevent surface infiltration of fluids. If a reserve pit is used to contain cuttings and drilling fluids, the flow ditch to the reserve pit must also be liquid tight.

Increasingly State regulators are demanding liquid tight cellars.

As per Alaskan Code 18 AAC74.045

"(2) wellhead sumps for exploration or production wells located onshore or on artificial islands or ice islands; for exploration or production wells drilled and completed after December 30, 2008 and located onshore or on artificial islands or on ice islands, wellhead sumps shall be designed and installed to be sufficiently impermeable."