

The Honorable Thomas Corbett
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

June 10, 2013

Re: Gas Drilling in the Loyalsock State Forest

Dear Governor Corbett:

This letter concerns the Loyalsock State Forest's Clarence Moore lands. On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to respectfully request that you direct your staff at the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR): (1) to make available to the public Anadarko Petroleum Corporation's proposed development plan for these important public lands; (2) to open a formal, ninety-day public comment period on this plan; and (3) to hold six public hearings (one in each region of the state) across the Commonwealth on issues related to gas development on the Clarence Moore lands.

As I am sure you are aware, the Loyalsock State Forest is one of the most beloved parts of Pennsylvania's great natural heritage. This gem of the Pennsylvania Wilds is enjoyed annually by thousands of visitors, and is home to irreplaceable natural and recreational resources, including the Exceptional Value watersheds of Rock Run and Pleasant Stream, the Old Loggers Path and a National Audubon Society-designated Important Bird Area.

It was shocking, then, to learn that DCNR was deep in private negotiations with Anadarko to open the Clarence Moore lands to gas development.

Our shock grew when it became clear that DCNR was unwilling to share crucial information about Anadarko's development proposal.

As President Truman once noted, "Secrecy and a free, democratic government don't mix."

Since these are decisions being made about public lands, it is not surprising that the people of Pennsylvania have responded swiftly and strongly. As it became clear that DCNR was making decisions about public lands without the public, more than 10,000 concerned Pennsylvanians called, emailed and wrote to agency officials pleading for more information and a public process by which they could have their voices heard. At a recent meeting on the issue in Williamsport, nearly 500 concerned citizens turned out from across the Commonwealth to learn more and show their concern, even though the public was given only twelve days' notice before the meeting. Participants who were allowed to speak expressed serious concerns about the proposal and the process.

Clearly, the public wants to be engaged in this issue – and not just in Williamsport. Pennsylvanians strongly believe that they have a right to know about Anadarko's proposal,

and understand that DCNR works for the people of the Commonwealth.

If anything, DCNR should be meeting with and holding discussions with the owners of these lands – the people of Pennsylvania – not meeting with a private corporation while excluding the public.

For these reasons, we believe your agency should acknowledge and grant the public’s request for information, and should establish a robust process to both garner and share facts about their public lands.

We ask you to direct the DCNR to conduct a formal public input process concerning gas development on the Clarence Moore lands. First, the DCNR should make public Anadarko’s most recent proposed development plan. If the DCNR has previously agreed with Anadarko to keep the plan confidential, the DCNR should obtain a release. The DCNR should then accept public comments on this plan for ninety (90) days and hold six (6) statewide public hearings. If, after the completion of this process, the DCNR still believes that a development agreement for the Clarence Moore lands could promote the public interest, the DCNR should solicit public comment on the proposed agreement.

While DCNR may argue that it has already engaged the public in its decision-making on the Clarence Moore lands, it is plain that its engagement to date has not been adequate. Not only was the public given only twelve days’ notice of the June 3 meeting; the meeting was also held at an inconvenient time (4:00 p.m. on a weekday); no official record was made of the meeting; and many commenters were given only two minutes to speak. Other would-be commenters were denied an opportunity altogether, some because DCNR ended the meeting with people in line at the microphone, others because they could not travel to Williamsport.

The Loyalsock State Forest belongs to the people of Pennsylvania, and as the steward of this magnificent resource for the people, the DCNR has a legal duty to protect, conserve and enhance the Clarence Moore lands in the public interest. It is critical that information about drilling activity related to these lands be made accessible to the public: having the facts and the “right to know” are cornerstones of our democracy.

Moreover, as a state agency, DCNR has a responsibility to the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who are clamoring for a process by which they can participate in this crucial decision.

As Abraham Lincoln once said, “public sentiment is everything” in our nation. We hope that you will ensure that your DCNR provides the public with an ample opportunity to have its input heard.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Robbie Cross

President,
Responsible Drilling Alliance

Richard Martin

Coordinator,
Pennsylvania Forest Coalition

Curt Ashenfelter

Executive Director,
Keystone Trails Association

Philip S. Wallis

Executive Director and Vice President,
Audubon Pennsylvania

Carol Kafer

President,
Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association

Don Robertson

President,
Pennsylvania Division Izaak Walton League

David Laidacker

Susan Laidacker

Organizations United for the Environment

Mark Szybist

Staff Attorney,
PennFuture

Jeff Schmidt

Director, Sierra Club
Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter

David Masur

Executive Director,
PennEnvironment

Gary Metzger

President,
Lycoming Audubon Society

Olivia Thorne

President,
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

Wendy Lynne Lee

Kevin Heatley

Shale Justice

cc: Richard J. Allan, Secretary, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
The Honorable Ron Miller
The Honorable Gene Yaw
The Honorable Garth Everett
The Honorable Rick Mirabito
The Honorable Greg Vitali
The Honorable John Yudichak
E. Christopher Abruzzo, Acting Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Protection