

## DECEMBER 2012

### **Two Years of (Pa.) Gov. Tom Corbett**

HARRISBURG: Tom Corbett was elected as the Governor of Pennsylvania on November 2, 2010 (the day before our first Pittsburgh rally). Here's what Mr. Corbett has been doing:

**Taking Fracking-Industry Money:** Mr. Corbett's electoral career was launched in 2004 with the help of \$450,000 from Chesapeake Energy's Aubrey McClendon. Then, for his 2010 campaign, he took at least \$1.8 million directly from oil and gas interests, plus \$6 million funneled through the Republican Governor's Association (including a single \$300,000 lump from Chesapeake), while still more money was laundered too many times to be traceable.

**Making Industry-Friendly Appointments:** Cabinet level appointees (including DEP, DCNR, PennDOT, and DCED) came directly from the energy industry. Alongside these, Mr. Corbett's "Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission" included representatives of Chesapeake, Chevron, EQT, Exxon Mobil, and their trade group, the Marcellus Shale Coalition. Not one member of the Commission represented a public health perspective.

**Enacting Special-Interest Legislation:** Along with State Senate President Joseph Scarnati (himself the recipient of over \$350,000 from this industry), Gov. Corbett pushed 'Act 13' through the Legislature to supersede the Oil & Gas Act and pave the way for fracking across the state. Its special treatment for "unconventional gas," and no other industry, is worth billions to Corbett campaign contributors.

Act 13 prohibits local zoning ordinances from restricting natural gas activities in any part of any community. To fulfill candidate Corbett's promise of "No severance tax," it substitutes an "impact fee," only some of which goes to the affected municipalities (which they can spend only for infrastructure to support drilling).

No money goes for public health, but some "impact fee" is earmarked to subsidize the growth of markets for shale gas.

Months after passing Act 13, legislative leaders from Bucks and Montgomery Counties got Mr. Corbett's signature on a bill exempting their counties from the very law for which they'd given him their votes.

**Dismantling Environmental Oversight and Conservation:** While channeling some "impact fee" revenue to DEP and DCNR, Gov. Corbett has cut their allocations from the General Fund, making these agencies dependent on the industry which



*Demonstrators outside the 'DUG East' Conference, Nov. 15 (Pittsburgh), while DEP's Mike Krancer spoke to gas industry delegates.*

they're intended to regulate. By Executive Order, he mandated a "money back guarantee" to ensure that drilling permits are promptly approved, while inspections have been throttled by top-level political reviews. Public oversight of DCNR has been decimated, and grant-making for scientific studies of shale gas extraction has been derailed.

**Making Secret Sweetheart Deals:** Mr. Corbett guaranteed \$1.8 billion in tax relief for a proposed Shell Petrochemical plant, for which Shell has promised nothing in return. He agreed to negotiate with Shell in secret, so there is no way of knowing what other concessions may eventually be granted.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### **Longmont, Colorado, referendum passes: Fracking banned in the city**

LONGMONT: Over the objections of elected officials, against legal advice, and in spite of a half-million dollar media blitz by the oil and gas industry, citizens of Longmont adopted a ban on fracking by an almost two-to-one vote. ([ourlongmont.org](http://ourlongmont.org).)

As noted in coverage by the [New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com), Longmont is now 'bracing for lawsuits', under the premise (posed by one of the oil and gas industry's campaigners, a former mayor) that Longmont is 'going contrary to state laws'. As in Pennsylvania, the industry will be attacking with its most effective weapon: a system of laws which simply does not allow for the possibility of citizens choosing to protect their homes and health.

**We encourage you to print copies of this newsletter and to distribute it freely. You can download it – and share your comments or suggestions – at [www.marcellusprotest.org/news](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/news).**

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### Strong-Arming Local Government:

Using provisions of Act 13 already overturned by Commonwealth Court, Mr. Corbett's PUC has abetted financial extortion of local governments by fracking operators. A half-million dollar "impact fee" payment to one township was withheld, until a drilling company (engaged in a dispute with the township) suggested that it had "influence" over the PUC process; when the township caved in to the driller, the PUC released payment. (Commonwealth Court has since ruled that the PUC had no authority under Act 13 to interfere with those payments.)

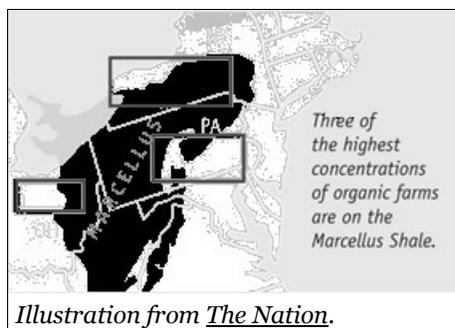


*The Secretary of Environmental Protection, Michael Krancer, leads the Corbett administration's support of the fracking industry.*

As we know from friends in other states and other nations, Pennsylvania is now a scandalous example of political corruption for the benefit of the fracking industry. At the same time, Pennsylvania shows what seems to be necessary for extreme energy extraction to prosper: buying elected officials, demanding special privileges and tax concessions, holding the purse-strings over all levels of government, and dismantling protections on health and environment. The "game-changer" of fracking isn't what we were promised; and, seeing what happens to us in Pennsylvania, others may not be so easily fooled.

### Fracking our Agriculture

BROOKLYN: In an article appearing in its Dec. 17 edition, [The Nation](#) summarizes the growing awareness of fracking's threat to human health, through pollution of our food. Anecdotal evidence from shale 'plays' in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming is raising concerns among farmers, ranchers, and scientists about the toxic substances entering our food chain.



'animals tend to have greater exposure to environmental threats than humans' they argue that agricultural animals are showing now the effect that humans can be expected to demonstrate over time.

They conclude: "Without careful science demonstrating not the absence of proof of harm, but rather the clear absence of harm, regulations cannot protect the food supply or the health of individuals living

And, in November, [M. Bamberger and R. Oswald](#) surveyed the evidence of '... animals as sentinels of human health in areas experiencing extensive shale gas and oil extraction.' Noting that

near gas operations. *Until we can protect public health with greater certainty, unconventional shale gas extraction should be severely limited or banned.'*

## A Range of Resources

**Read All About It:** Our searchable reference library is now open to everyone, at [www.marcellusprotest.org/resources](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/resources). Here are some particularly valuable places to look:

Comprehensive reading-list: [www.marcellusprotest.org/reading\\_list](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/reading_list) An annotated bibliography of source materials on the impacts of fracking.

Al Jazeera "[Fault Lines](#)" A 20-minute documentary, filmed in Pennsylvania.

Follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](#)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus\\_SWPA](#)).

### Upcoming Events in December:

(Full details, with latest updates, and a more extensive list of events, on-line at [www.marcellusprotest.org/event\\_calendar](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar).)

**December 5 (Pittsburgh): Bid Opening for Fracking the Pittsburgh Airport.** The Airport Authority has solicited offers for leases. Bids will be opened in public; you won't need to clear TSA security to attend.

**December 8 (Butler, PA): 'Water for Woodlands' Fundraiser.** Dinner hosted by Marcellus Outreach Butler, to help provide water to residents of Butler County community hit by fracking. See [www.marcellusprotest.org/woodlands](http://www.marcellusprotest.org/woodlands) for reservations.

**December 28 (New York and Los Angeles, only): Premier of 'Promised Land'.** (General release, January 4; December's limited opening is to beat the deadline for Academy Award nominations.) Starring Matt Damon as a gas-industry 'landman', the film's producers say it '...explores America at the crossroads where big business and the strength of small-town community converge.'

**Updated information on these topics (with links to original sources), along with our calendar of upcoming events, and other resources, can be found at [www.marcellusprotest.org](http://www.marcellusprotest.org).**