

MAY 2013

Vote in Pennsylvania’s May 21 Primary

PITTSBURGH: In this historically one-party town, the election that matters is the Democratic Primary. This year, on May 21, Pittsburgh voters will choose the candidate who will almost certainly become the City’s next mayor. It’s a race with serious implications for the future of fracking here.

Bill Peduto threw down his challenge to Luke Ravenstahl’s re-election long before the Mayor took his name off the ballot. But the ‘old guard,’ who put Mr. Ravenstahl into office, couldn’t allow Mr. Peduto to be rewarded for breaking ranks. So they gave the party endorsement—and immediate front-runner status—to Jack Wagner. Now, other than Mr. Peduto, the only credible Democrat still in the race is State Rep. Jake Wheatley.

Rep. Wheatley hasn’t been visible on the fracking issue; as for the other two, the difference is clear (although Mr. Wagner tries to keep it fuzzy): Mr. Peduto has repeatedly and publicly reiterated his commitment to the Pittsburgh’s 2010 ban on drilling—which, as Councilman, he helped to put into law.

By contrast, Mr. Wagner talks around the question, saying only that, since no one seems to want to drill in the City, Pittsburgh’s ban doesn’t need defending. But, his coyness notwithstanding, we suspect that Mr. Wagner should know very well what the drillers want: They threw a \$1000 per person fund-raiser for him, and they didn’t pony-up just to talk among themselves.

We’ve already seen what the gas industry’s money can buy—in our State, County and municipal levels of government. Sometimes we may feel cynical, convinced that it doesn’t matter who gets elected. But the fracking industry is betting otherwise; and, so far, recent history seems to be proving them right.

[For sources, see [our website](#) and “Jack Wagner Waffling on Pittsburgh’s Fracking Ban” at [KeystonePolitics.com](#).]

To Our Readers:

If you’re holding a paper copy of *Marcellus Monthly*, please also check our on-line edition to take advantage of the live links to details and sources for our stories. (Links are shown underlined throughout this issue.)

And “Get involved!” You can contribute articles for *Marcellus Monthly*, add new materials to our on-line “Resources” page, and help to start local groups in your area. Attend the “Frack Forum” on May 11 or write to info@marcellusprotest.org.



Marchers cross the bridge to Washington’s Landing, en route to demonstrate at the Pittsburgh office of the DEP.

Earth Day, 2013

PENNSYLVANIA: A state-wide “Day of Action” was held at all six Regional Offices of the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection (**DEP**). More than 40 organizations joined the coalition for events. In our area, organizing was led by the **Shad-bush Collective** and by **Marcellus Outreach Butler**.

In **Pittsburgh**, where DEP’s office sits on an island in the Allegheny River, some 75 fracktivists arrived by boat, by bicycle, and on foot to “occupy” DEP’s lobby with the message “Make it Our DEP.”

In **Meadville**, 100 people marched to the Northwest office, with a coffin symbolizing the death of agriculture, tourism and the environment because of DEP’s failure to do its job.

In **Williamsport** (where the Regional DEP office oversees fracking in Bradford and Tioga Counties), fracktivists carried banners listing The Harmed and representing local species.

Protesters also gathered at DEP offices in Harrisburg, Norris-town and Wilkes-Barre, to bring demands including:

- Appoint an environmental expert without industry ties (to replace Michael Krancer as Secretary);
- Allow no more toxic secrets (such as the cover-up of water testing results); and
- Provide justice for those harmed by the oil and gas industry.

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‘Marcellus Protest’ is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): www.thomasmertoncenter.org

We encourage you to print copies of this newsletter and to distribute it freely. You can download it from our website: www.marcellusprotest.org/news.

Pennsylvania Petro-Politics: This month in Harrisburg

It's been a busy April for Pennsylvania's elected officials, and for the gas industry lobbyists who surround them.

From the Executive Branch, Gov. Tom Corbett was in South America lining up customers for gas exports from Pennsylvania. He signed a joint declaration with Brazil to "promote collaboration ... particularly related to oil and natural gas", and offered the Brazilians a copy of Pennsylvania's "Act 13" to show them how it's done. Later in his trip, he met with Chilean businessmen [*sic*] about their "... interest in Pennsylvania's natural gas."

The trade mission was billed as "privately funded" by the Team PA Foundation (which Mr. Corbett co-chairs), who chose the business representatives to travel with him. One company selected for the trip is the Marcus Hook Refinery, which Sunoco is converting to liquefy natural gas for export. (The plan depends upon construction of a new pipeline from Mark West's processing plant in Houston, PA, for which the Pennsylvania PUC can invoke the power of *eminent domain*.)

On his return, the Governor took time to cut the ribbon for a CNG fleet refueling station, built for Waste Management with state funding. (On the one hand, Mr. Corbett emphasizes the cost savings to fleet owners from burning cheap natural gas; on the other hand, he offers no explanation for why taxpayers, through the DEP, should be paying for the CNG infrastructure.)

Over on the Legislative side, House members from the Gas and Oil Party (GOP) launched their branded "Marcellus Works" initiative, intended to "... create incentives for the use of natural gas". Insisting that their consumption subsidies "won't cost taxpayers a dime," they explained that the money comes from "... tax dollars collected from the Marcellus industry."

In the other chamber, State Sen. Tim Solobay is running away from his statement—made on-the-record while defending Range Resources and the DEP—that "*A majority of the negative voices out there are paid activists [who] do nothing but spread false rumors and scare people.*"

Then, finally, in the Judicial Branch, two Republicans on the state Supreme Court have tipped Gov. Corbett that the Court is split 3-3 on his appeal to reinstate Act 13's preemption of local zoning. Although the Corbett Administration is a party to the suit, it seems that Justices Ronald Castille and J. Michael Eakin had no ethical qualms over leaking the Court's deliberations to him. By doing so, they hand the Governor an opportunity to appoint a seventh Justice who is sure to vote in his favor, as soon as Jane Orié's resignation becomes effective on May 1.

On the other hand, if Chief Justice Castille couldn't hold up a ruling until the Governor is able to act, a tie vote would resolve the matter by upholding the lower court, denying the Administration's appeal and affirming community zoning rights.

Earth Day [*continued from p. 1*]

The day's coverage in the mainstream media was mixed: Most outlets reported the protesters' positions accurately, although one Pittsburgh TV station had to 'balance' its coverage with a statement from the fracking industry's "Marcellus Coalition" in support of its friends at the DEP.

Meanwhile, the DEP issued its own publicity, kicking off "Earth Month" with an interactive exhibit, *DEP at Home* promoting "energy efficiency and environmentally beneficial products for the home" and reminding "people to do their part to care for the Earth's air, land and water."

From other parts of the world, we heard of Earth Day activities against fracking in Canada, England and Ireland.

A Range of Resources

Please check out our recently redesigned 'Resources' page at www.marcellusprotest.org/resources, and follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](https://www.facebook.com/MarcellusProtest)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus_SWPA](https://twitter.com/Marcellus_SWPA)). Here is a sampling of our recent recommendations:

"The Power of Protest": The Delaware Riverkeeper, Maya van Rossum, talks about how (and why) to become active in the fight to demand a sustainable energy path that rejects fracking, drilling and other extreme forms of extraction.

"Legal Fractures in Chemical Disclosure Laws": Harvard Law School debunks the industry-based "FracFocus" chemical registry as an ineffective tool for compliance, and by implication, other self-governance schemes such as the new, so-called **Center for Sustainable Shale Development**.

Upcoming Events in May:

(Full details, with latest updates, and a more extensive list of events, on-line at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.)

May 11 (Pittsburgh, PA): Frack Forum (1:00 pm). Our fourth bimonthly Frack Forum, at the Friends Meeting House in Shadyside (Pittsburgh). Pot-luck lunch followed by "How to Fight the Frackers—An Organizers' Panel" featuring four local groups.

May 21 (State-wide): Primary Election Day. See our Page 1 article for what's at stake in Pittsburgh.

May 22 (Washington, DC): Stop the Frack Attack. Come to DC, lobby your representatives, and attend Senate Committee sessions. Marcellus Protest is one of 140 Member Organizations of the Stop the Frack Attack Network.

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.