

State Legislation: Water Well Construction Standards

Background: The CAC has long advocated for the passage of state legislation that would establish uniform water well construction standards to protect the integrity of groundwater resources. Pennsylvania is one of only two states nationwide that does not have water well construction standards in place. Without these standards, private water wells can be improperly constructed, resulting in the creation of pathways for bacteria and contaminants to degrade well water quality.

The CAC is not alone in its position that water well construction standards are needed in Pennsylvania. In 2008, the Statewide Water Resources Committee, through the issuance of the Commonwealth's State Water Plan, called upon the Pennsylvania State Legislature to pass legislation establishing statewide private water well construction standards as an integral part of the Commonwealth's water resource protection program. The Governor's Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission in 2011 reiterated this call by also recommending that private water well construction standards legislation be enacted to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water to the residents of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Ground Water Association and the Pennsylvania Council of Professional Geologists are also on record for recognizing the need for private water well construction regulations to protect human health and safety and Pennsylvania's water resources.

Policy Considerations: Approximately three million Commonwealth residents depend on private water wells for drinking water, making the integrity of water wells integral to protecting public health and sustaining Pennsylvania's groundwater quality. With approximately 20,000 new water wells drilled in the Commonwealth every year, the CAC believes it is imperative from a public health, environment, and resources management perspective that the Wolf Administration support legislation that would establish uniform water well construction standards.