



Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Upper Makefield Pipeline DEP Webinar, May 1, 2025

Questions & Answers

Note: Due to time constraints, the below questions, submitted for the May 1 webinar, were not addressed during the virtual meeting. For all other questions addressed during the virtual May 1 townhall, please see the recorded webinar on [DEP's website](#).

1. How should we further advocate for in-person meetings, given the response from 4/29 to the PIP doesn't acknowledge in-person meetings?

Answer: On April 15, 2025, DEP issued a deficiency letter to Sunoco Pipeline L.P. (SPLP) for their March 21, 2025, Public Involvement Plan. Deficiency #15 notified SPLP that some public meetings should be in person. In the April 29, 2025, revised Public Involvement Plan, SPLP addressed this deficiency by agreeing to host in-person meetings for the interim site characterization report, the remedial action plan, and the final report.

2. Sunoco performed a soil gas survey on our property at XXXX. Sunoco's report states that results of the passive gas survey performed on properties throughout the neighborhood were compared to the PADEP Statewide health standard vapor intrusion screening values for residential sub-slab soil gas (Residential SVss). The report goes on to state that it is important to note that the soil gas samples were not collected underneath the slab foundation of residences; rather, they were collected at other locations on properties.

Can the DEP provide additional information on this type of testing during tomorrow's DEP pipeline webinar? Does the DEP believe that Sunoco performed this testing correctly/effectively? I am confused about how the results of my soil gas survey (which did detect Toluene on my property) can be compared to the PADEP Statewide health standard vapor intrusion screening values for residential sub-slab soil (Residential SVss) when the samples were actually collected at other grassy locations on our property and not actually collected underneath the slab foundation of my home.

Answer: SPLP performed a passive soil gas survey in the Mount Eyre neighborhood. The results of that survey were included in the vapor intrusion investigation progress report, available on [DEP's website](#). Passive soil gas (PSG) surveys are a site characterization tool to look for the presence and distribution of subsurface contamination. They are usually considered a qualitative, not a quantitative, measurement tool; the results give an idea of the magnitude of contamination. DEP does not accept PSG as a sampling methodology to determine that vapor intrusion risks are acceptable or not; indoor air or sub-slab sampling can be used for that purpose.

It appears that the PSG survey was performed appropriately, and it shows that further testing is still needed.

3. I know that ET and PADEP have been discussing sub-slab testing for VOCs as a way to test for indoor air quality. As you are aware, there is radon in our neighborhood and many homes have radon mitigation fans. Since radon mitigation fans work by sub-slab depressurization, can radon mitigation fans alter the true results of any sub-slab testing done in our neighborhood for VOCs? My concern is the possibility of false negatives if the radon fan's influence on airflow and pressure lead to inaccurate results in a VOC slab test. Also, I know that the current air quality testing that has taken place at a few residences is not the sub slab test method, but could the radon mitigation fans have had any effect on those air quality results as well?

Answer: Sub-slab sampling is not representative of vapor intrusion (VI) if a radon system is operating at a home. Vapor concentrations could be higher if the system is turned off. In other words, the sub-slab results would not be sufficient to tell us if there would be an excess VI risk without the radon system. The results also would not tell us if the radon system is effective for VOC vapor intrusion.

Radon systems are commonly installed at buildings with chemical VI, and they are effective when designed and installed properly. The indoor air sampling collected so far will show if the radon system is mitigating VI (if present); the indoor air results will indicate if risks are acceptable as long as the system is operating.

4. If bottled water is still a necessary precaution, why isn't the radius of homes provided with free POET systems expanded to all who may be affected?

Answer: DEP's order requires SPLP to install POETs in properties with potable wells that have concentrations of volatile organic compounds exceeding the MCLs within the Mount Eyre neighborhood watershed, plus a 500-foot buffer around the watershed. At this time, we have not seen evidence that the pipeline release contamination has spread outside of the watershed. SPLP has been installing POETs, or reimbursing homeowners who install POETs, at any property within the watershed area that requests one.

5. Why are septic tanks and the soil underneath the septic tanks of contaminated houses not being tested?

Answer: Septic tanks will have minimal petroleum contamination in them because household well water has been treated for several months. Septic tanks may be serviced as they normally would be. SPLP will be required to evaluate potential soil contamination from septic systems resulting from well water contamination. That work will be part of the site characterization, which will take place in the coming months. The evaluation may involve sampling or calculations of transport of petroleum contaminants through the septic system into soil.

6. Is the DEP Clean Water Program going to do similar stream analysis at the three other sleeve locations (Dig 1, 4 and 16) in other counties?

Answer: DEP is not currently planning any stream survey work in the areas where the three Chapter 105 Water Obstruction and Encroachment general permits were issued to SPLP on March 24, 2025. These permits were issued to allow exploratory investigations on the Twin Oaks Pipeline in Delaware and Montgomery counties and not as a result of a known maintenance activity or release. These permits are required because the earth disturbance activities will encroach on a stream or wetland. SPLP has not reported to DEP any environmental impacts from these sites as a result of their work.

7. Why isn't SPLP identify monitoring wells for the entire area? SPLP has only engaged 3 households regarding recovery wells, one of the properties they purchased. They have barely tried to engage the community, why isn't DEP forcing them to engage with property owners before they take the easy way out by going in the roadway?

Answer: SPLP is required to perform a sufficient site characterization of the groundwater contamination. They did identify locations for eight proposed wells in the April 18, 2025, Site Characterization Work Plan, but that figure was not made public. Groundwater characterization can be accomplished with wells in different locations, and many may not need to be on residential properties. Characterization is iterative, and as SPLP installs and samples wells we'll have a better picture of where additional wells will need to be drilled.

8. The SPLP response does not include public town hall meetings for back-and-forth dialogue in mode that all generations can take part in. Additionally, SPLP screens out questions from the electronic format they have identified and use. Why isn't DEP pushing for at least a few future in-person meetings?

Answer: On April 15, 2025, DEP issued a deficiency letter to SPLP for their March 21, 2025, Public Involvement Plan. Deficiency #15 notified SPLP that telephonic townhall meetings were insufficient for taking public questions and that some meetings should be in person. In the April 29, 2025, revised Public Involvement Plan, SPLP addressed these deficiencies by agreeing to hold virtual meetings on a platform that includes chat and by hosting some in-person meetings.

9. How do you" know it's (soil contamination) localized to one property"? Has the DEP done any soil sampling and analysis?

Answer: DEP does not know that soil contamination caused by SPLP's pipeline leak is localized on one property. Additional sampling is necessary to determine the extent of the contamination. In the April 18, 2025, Site Characterization Work Plan, Verdantas on behalf of SPLP described the location of the soil investigation in the pipeline release area which was performed in February 2025. As indicated in those figures (which were partially redacted in the public version of the document), the contamination found at that time was present on one property. The Work Plan proposes additional sampling to delineate the extent of this contamination.

10. I believe by PA state law, homeowners are required to disclose the information related their property. SPLPs reasoning isn't fair to homeowners of the impacted properties, properties adjacent to those properties and future buyers of those properties. Why isn't DEP pushing for transparency?

Answer: The Constitution of Pennsylvania contains an individual right to privacy, which, in some instances, includes the privacy of individual home addresses that are contained in government records. DEP is committed to being as transparent as possible while also upholding its obligations to respect individuals' right to privacy enshrined in the Constitution of Pennsylvania. In that vein, DEP has released documents to the public while redacting information that would disclose private home addresses.

11. I understand the limits identified for safe drinking water, but SPLPs product shouldn't be in our water. What amount of product below safe drinking water standards, is enough to determine if this is SPLP product from their pipeline?

Answer: Under DEP's March 6, 2025, order, SPLP is responsible for addressing their petroleum release to an Act 2 standard. The available data from potable wells indicates a core area of groundwater impact in the Mount Eyre neighborhood. Installation and sampling of monitoring wells will better define the true extent of the contamination and help to distinguish any other possible sources of petroleum in the aquifer.

12: If sharing contaminated well locations is not possible, can DEP obtain and share site characterization images (such as the bedrock fractures) with the private well information removed? Some images would still contain useful information from studies conducted on our properties.

Answer: This figure is from the RETTEW Field Services, Inc. March 26, 2025 "Electrical Resistivity Imaging Report." It shows the inferred bedrock fracture traces determined by RETTEW from their electrical resistivity surveys.

