

OIL AND GAS PROGRAM

DEP's Office of Oil and Gas Management is responsible for the statewide oil and gas conservation and environmental programs to facilitate the safe exploration, development, and recovery of Pennsylvania's oil and gas reservoirs in a manner that is protective of Pennsylvania's environment. The office develops policy and programs for the regulation of oil and gas development and production pursuant to the Oil and Gas Act, the Coal and Gas Resource Coordination Act, and the Oil and Gas Conservation Law; oversees the oil and gas permitting and inspection programs; develops statewide regulations and standards; conducts training programs for industry; and works with the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board and the Pennsylvania Grade Crude Development Advisory Council. The office also regulates aboveground and underground storage tanks at oil and gas well sites.

To control impacts to water, the office issues permits requiring oil and gas operators to implement best management practices for erosion and sediment control, stabilize all areas where earth disturbance is conducted, and manage post-construction stormwater rate, volume, and quality. When submitting a notice of intent for coverage under the Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit (ESCGP), oil and gas operators must also demonstrate that their post-construction stormwater management plans are consistent with county stormwater management plan requirements. Operators must also restore well sites and remove all drilling supplies and equipment not needed for production within nine months of drilling of the wells, or after the well permit expires.

Routine inspections help to ensure compliance of these permits. Between fiscal year 2020-21 through fiscal year 2021-22, DEP collected a total of \$4,342,741 in fines and penalties. These fines and penalties are used to reimburse operating costs that are incurred by DEP in the oversight of oil and gas and related environmental programs and to deter noncompliance with environmental laws. An overview of the stream permits issued, inspections completed, and violation statistics for 2021 are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the Oil and Gas Management statistics according to the latest report (2021).

Stream Crossing and Encroachment Permits Issued	See note below *
Erosion and Sediment Control Permits Issued	277 **
Unconventional Drilling Permits Issued	770
Conventional Drilling Permits Issued	227
Inspections	34,145
Violations at Conventional and Unconventional Well Sites	8,663
Fines & Penalties Collected	\$4,342,741 ***

* Note (Stream Crossing Permits): Stream Crossing and Encroachment Permits Issued (Individual Permits) = 359 Stream Crossing and Encroachment Permits Issued (General Permits) = 2,397 (Includes "new" permits only. Does not include permit renewals, amendments, transfers, etc.)

** 14 "Expedited" ESCGPs and 263 "Standard" ESCGPs

*** Note (Fines and Penalties): DEP collected \$2,573,243 and \$1,769,498 in fines and penalties in FY2020-21 and FY2021-22, respectively.

To protect water quantity, the 2012 Oil and Gas Act (Act 13 of 2012) requires a Water Management Plan that covers the water sources to be withdrawn or utilized for drilling or hydraulic fracturing of

each unconventional natural gas well project in Pennsylvania. There are additional requirements within the Susquehanna and Delaware River basins controlled by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the Delaware River Basin Commission, respectively.

Recycling of flowback and produced water from unconventional wells for new hydraulic fracturing operations reduces the amount of water to be withdrawn from freshwater sources in Pennsylvania and reduces the amount of wastewater for disposal or treatment. Based upon the 2021 waste data submitted by the Oil and Gas Operators, about 93% of the flowback and produced water from unconventional wells has been recycled. DEP's [2021 Oil and Gas Annual Report](#) includes data and trends related to DEP's permitting and inspection programs. Also highlighted in the report are notable accomplishments achieved during 2021 and some information about what to expect from this program in the future.