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**Report Seeks to Minimize Impacts of Gas Drilling**

March 1, 2011 *Washington, DC*: Delaware Valley residents and others concerned about the impacts of natural gas drilling have a new source of information about the potential effects and steps that can be taken to minimize the environmental consequences. A report released today by the Pinchot Institute, a nonpartisan environmental policy research organization based in Washington, DC, outlines a series of “best management practices” that can be used by the energy industry and regulatory agencies to address major concerns raised in a series of public meetings convened in recent months by the Institute. Environmental scientists, conservation groups, local citizens, and local government planners participated in the meetings as well as representatives of the energy industry.

Throughout the region underlain by the Marcellus Shale Formation, a vast deposit of natural gas under Pennsylvania and parts of West Virginia and New York, there are concerns that a drilling technique known as hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” will lead to contamination of water supplies. Of particular concern is gas drilling in the Delaware River watershed, which provides drinking water for more than 15 million people daily. Drilling has been halted in the New York portion of the watershed until the potential effects are better understood.

The report, *Marcellus Shale: Resources for Stakeholders in the Upper Delaware Watershed Region*, addresses issues such as where and how wells are constructed, impacts on streams and groundwater resources, waste disposal, road construction, noise control and erosion. The report provides a guide to information developed by federal, state and local governments as well as conservation organizations. It also contains information from natural resource assessments in the upper Delaware River watershed, with detailed maps of the region, summaries of resource and planning studies, and key aspects of New York and Pennsylvania regulations.

The report also includes an overview of regulations and practices related to gas development in use in other regions around the country, but notes that some of these may not be directly applicable to the Delaware River watershed due to its different geology, and because drinking water protection is such a top priority there. The Delaware River Basin Commission has issued draft regulations for protecting water quality from the effects of natural gas drilling, with a public comment period that closes March 16. The report is available electronically at [http://www.pinchot.org/gp/Marcellus\\_Shale](http://www.pinchot.org/gp/Marcellus_Shale). Printed copies can be obtained by contacting the Pinchot Institute.

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