

EQB sets regulations on subsurface exploration

HARRISBURG—The Environmental Quality Board has adopted regulations governing subsurface exploration in natural and wild areas, classification of gas wells and water obstructions and encroachments.

The board is a 21-member independent panel of executive agency officials, legislators and citizens charged by law with approving all regulations to be administered by Pennsylvania Department of

Environmental Resources.

The new wild and natural area rule will allow DER to issue "non-development leases" permitting directional drilling for oil and gas exploration underneath these areas without disturbing the surface.

Under the new gas well classification regulation, DER will classify each existing and new gas well in the Commonwealth after application by the operator.

Classification will be

based on criteria set by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and will allow the operator to receive payment in line with prices set by the 1978 National Gas Policy Act.

Before adoption, the regulation, as approved by EQB August 21, was modified to incorporate suggestions made by extensive public comment and to reflect FERC orders.

The new water obstruction and encroachments

regulation is an interim one adopted to make the department's rules and regulations concerning such water barriers consistent with the state Dam Safety and Encroachment Act signed this week by Gov. Dick Thornburgh.

In other action, EQB adopted recommendations relating to its own procedures. The board voted to continue to exempt itself and the department from certain sections of The

Pennsylvania Code's General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure.

It also decided to institute a mechanism whereby certain controversial issues could be discussed at special non-action sessions.

Should EQB be faced with a controversial technical matter on which it needs additional "executive

summaries", the board chairman will conduct a poll of EQB members and will convene a special session if five members desire such a meeting. Discussion at such a "no-vote" session will be limited to the specific issue for which the meeting was called.

EQB's next voting session will be in the Fulton Bank Building, Harrisburg, at 10 a.m. Monday, December 10.

DER sets interim policy on strip mine studies

HARRISBURG—Environmental Resources Secretary Clifford L. Jones said today DER will require more detailed environmental studies of strip mine operations that could adversely affect state parks.

Jones said the information would be requested under a federal surface mining act provision that requires state agencies to consider whether or not an operation will adversely affect parklands.

The secretary stressed, however, that this is an interim policy that will be in effect until the department can draft a permanent policy and procedures.

"There is growing pressure for strip mining on the borders of some of our

most important and sensitive state parks," Jones said. "So I have implemented this interim policy to give us time to develop fair, uniform rules and regulations."

"I realize this could slow down the processing of strip mine applications at a time when we are trying to speed up the process to help the industry mine more coal more efficiently."

"But we would rather cause a small delay than grant a permit that could result in serious, long-term damage to one of Pennsylvania's most precious natural or recreational areas."

Jones said strip mines can do more than spoil the

landscape or cause water pollution.

"Heavy truck traffic can cause dust and noise. A mine could ruin a lovely view. It could destroy wildlife habitat or a delicate water table that helps sustain a community of rare or unusual plants."

Jones said he will ask the department's Ad Hoc Committee on Surface Mining to join the DER staff in developing proposed rules and regulations to implement this policy.

That committee developed amendments to Pennsylvania's surface mining law that will bring the state into compliance with federal

requirements. The panel also will review the department's implementing regulations.

The task force is made up of surface miners, environmental groups, citizen groups and representatives of the various DER bureaus affected by the laws.

Jones said that an operator will be required to perform additional environmental studies only when DER's Bureau of Surface Mine Reclamation decides that the proposed mine could affect a state park adversely.

He said the policy will apply to all new and all existing permit applications.

Aluminum drives may benefit organizations

PHILADELPHIA - With the arrival of November and the approach of the religious holiday seasons, Pennsylvania religious organizations may earn funds to support seasonal activities by sponsoring congregational aluminum recycling drives.

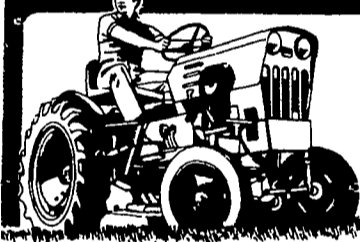
The Reynolds Aluminum Recycling Company operates mobile recycling units in Pennsylvania to pay individuals and organizations 23 cents per pound for all-aluminum beverage cans and other recyclable all-aluminum products.

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products such as pie plates, foil, frozen food and dinner trays and dip, pudding and meat containers, Reynolds recycles certain other aluminum items - including siding, gutters, storm door and window frames, lawn furniture tubing and aluminum castings - which are also worth 23 cents per pound if properly prepared. This aluminum must be free of all foreign materials, cut to lengths not exceeding three feet and should not be mixed with aluminum cans.

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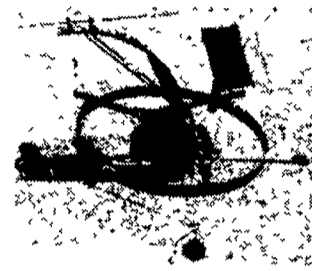
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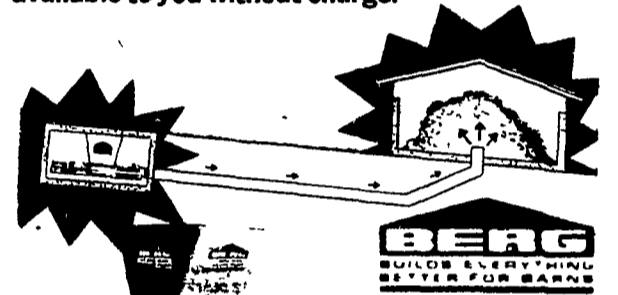
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