

***For Immediate Release***

On March 24, the Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation informed Governor Rendell of their intent to sue the Governor if he leases additional land in state forests for gas drilling in Marcellus Shale. The basis for the suit is the Governor's failure to fulfill his responsibilities under Article I Section 27 of the Pennsylvania constitution. Section 27 states:

“The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.”

The Governor bears specific responsibility for ensuring the rights and protection set forth in the amendment.

1. At present, approximately 700,000 acres of state forest land are already under lease for gas drilling. The Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation contends that all the uses of state forest lands - economic, recreational and aesthetic - need to be balanced. The issuance of an additional \$180,000,000 in leases to reduce shortfalls in the 2010 budget ignores the need for this balance and violates the Article I, Section 27 of the constitution.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1985 for the purpose of protecting and restoring the quality of water in the Commonwealth. The actions of the foundation have successfully mitigated pollution in all regions of the Commonwealth and through its actions the foundation has donated over \$1.2 million to local organizations for environmental protection and restoration.

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