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**Protect PT Joins Plum Borough in Appeal of Plum Zoning Hearing Board's Approval of a Second Fracking Waste Injection Well**

*PENNECO receives DEP violations and resident complaints. Plum Council appeals its own Zoning Board in a unique case*

**Plum Borough, Pa.** – Community group Protect PT joins Plum Borough's appeal against its own Zoning Hearing Board to stop a second gas wastewater injection well in the borough. The Zoning Hearing Board, a separate quasi-judicial body, made a judgment to allow a second injection well to be built adjacent to an existing operation.

The borough and Protect PT stand opposed to both injection wells. In December 2017, in an effort to prevent the development, the borough adopted a zoning ordinance that limits oil and gas waste disposal wells to areas zoned heavy industrial. The current site is zoned rural/residential.

"The Borough is appealing the decision of the Zoning Hearing Board because Penneco failed to show that its proposed expansion will not be detrimental the health, safety and welfare of the people of the neighborhood, and the community of Plum Borough as required by the Zoning Ordinance," said Dave Vento, Plum Borough Council Member.

The first injection well, known as Sedat 3A at 1815 Old Leechburg Road, began operating in the spring of 2021. Penneco filed a request for a second injection well, Sedat 4A, at the same location. Protect PT opposes the development for the same reasons Plum Borough raises.

Protect PT believes that the injection wells in this area will increase the risk of seismic activity, pollution of the Allegheny River, the water source for the greater Pittsburgh Area, and the risk of a failure, which has allegedly contaminated a local water source. Protect PT has filed a motion to intervene with Plum Borough in this matter at the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

"We commend Plum Borough for standing up for the health and safety of their residents," said Gillian Graber, executive director of Protect PT. "Many municipal boards feel like this industry is

so big that they can't win when in fact they have more power than they realize. The Plum residents and Protect PT stand with Plum Borough in doing what's right for the community."

Members of the Plum Borough Zoning Hearing Board said they approved the Penneco application in January due to concerns that the industry would file a lawsuit against the borough if they denied their request. "Now the Zoning Hearing Board faces legal opposition from the people they serve," said Graber.

Several residents testified at the January Zoning Board meeting that their well water had been harmed by the first injection well. Residents also say they have experienced increased noise and truck traffic.

"Living near this well impacts me and my family on a daily basis in several ways from truck traffic to noise and air emissions," said Katie Sheehan, a resident living near the injection well. Katie and her family have attended multiple EPA, state and local hearings on the injection well since 2016. "I will always be worried about the potential threat to our water. I have concerns about air quality and I have reported those concerns to the EPA, DEP and the Allegheny Health Department."

Despite these reported concerns, federal, state and county departments failed to remedy Sheehan's ongoing harm.

Scientific evidence shows there are health risks to people living near wastewater injection well sites linking it to water contamination, destroyed ecosystems, toxic leaks and earthquakes. Several residents live 500 feet away from the injection well site.

"Chemicals found in fracking wastewater range in classification from mild irritants to acute toxicants," said Laura Dagley, medical advocacy coordinator at Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania. "If people are exposed to these chemicals, either through air pollution or contamination of drinking water, they can suffer negative health impacts. Short-term exposure can lead to upper respiratory symptoms, skin rashes and difficulty breathing. Long-term exposure can lead to liver and kidney toxicity, heart and lung disease, and cancers such as leukemia. With known health impacts such as these, every effort should be made to prioritize public health and not risk exposure of local residents to these harmful substances."

The City of Pittsburgh and former Mayor Bill Peduto, along with Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Executive Director Will Pickering, wrote [a letter](#) in February 2020 asking Gov. Wolf to repeal the permit for the first well site, the Sedat 3A wastewater injection well, due to the potential threat to Pittsburgh and downstream drinking water authorities.

**The announcement will be made at a press conference on Thursday March 10, 2022 at 10 a.m. The media is invited to attend the Zoom call. Register [here](#).**

**Speakers:**

- Gillian Graber, Executive Director Protect PT
  - Katie Sheehan, Plum Resident
  - Laura Dagley, R.N.
- Matt Kelso, Manager of Data and Technology at FracTracker Alliance and Plum Resident

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