



Public Interest Center | P.O. Box 1049 | Columbus, OH | 43216-1049

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## **Ohio EPA Seeks Public Comments on Draft General Permit For Wetland and Stream Impacts at Shale Gas Well Sites**

As gas exploration, drilling and production increases in Ohio's Marcellus and Utica shale formations, Ohio EPA seeks to ensure that impacts to waters of the State are minimized while providing business with an effective and efficient permitting process. To meet these objectives, Ohio EPA has issued a draft general permit for wetland and stream impacts at shale gas well sites and is seeking public comments prior to finalizing the permit.

Under the draft general permit, authorized impacts are limited to no more than 0.5 acre of low to medium quality wetlands and 300 feet of streams. Qualifying activities include the construction of drilling pads, reserve and mud pits, fresh water and flowback water storage ponds, transmission lines and access roads. Applicants are required to mitigate any approved wetland and stream impacts by contributing to the preservation, restoration or replacement of Ohio's water resources.

Because the general permit would limit impacts, Ohio EPA could review and decide on a permit within 30 days of receiving a complete application. Applicants wanting to impact larger areas or high quality wetlands and streams will need to obtain an individual permit which is subject to a more detailed review that may last up to six months. In either case, all applicants also need to obtain a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The draft general permit and related information are available [online](#). Citizens, environmental groups, industry and other interested parties are encouraged to review the documents and submit comments to Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water, attn: Permits Processing Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, OH 43216-1049 or [patti.smith@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:patti.smith@epa.ohio.gov). The public comment period ends January 13, 2012.

The permit is expected to be finalized and made available to applicants in early 2012.

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