

Leadership Alle-Kiski Valley's Economic Development Forum
April 14, 2011
Speaking Points: Court Gould, Sustainable Pittsburgh
Panel Session: Marcellus Shale

It is a pleasure to be invited to speak on this issue from an environmental and sustainable development perspective. I'd like to think I speak for all of us as we depend on air, water, the rich land and natural resources to make possible our shared society and economy.

The very definition of Sustainable Development provides a framework for considering the Marcellus gold rush: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Within this definition is a value that meeting our needs responsibly means not shifting a burden from one population group or even from one generation to another. Let's consider such hard and fast lessons we can derive from the principles of sustainable development:

- Be mindful of the past lest we replicate mistakes.

We've done the unsustainable in our region many times before: denuded, over-logged forests, deadly industrial air pollution, lifeless rivers, coal mining's legacy of acid mine drainage, remnant high walls and scarred landscapes all are vestiges of resource exploitation gone awry. With Marcellus, we must not replicate the past. We must not for example trade our clean water for gas. It is imperative that industry be responsible for the costs of environmental protection, clean-up and remediation, emergency repairs and response relative to Marcellus development.

- Sustainable consumption.

Toward meeting the needs of the present and the future, the promise of sustainability tells us that if we are dependent on a nonrenewable resource, we would be smart to plan our exit strategy. That is, the sustainable thing to do is use proceeds of Marcellus now to invest in alternative and renewable energy sources such that by the time the fossil-formed Marcellus gas is depleted, we are up and running with another source of abundant energy. For this I recommend a New Energy Economy Innovation Fund to invest in energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy development, and retrofit of coal burning facilities and petroleum fueled vehicle fleets to burn natural gas - all hastening transition to a clean energy future where reducing pollution from coal and oil will improve public health and save lives. To comprise such a fund we need a Marcellus severance tax. Proceeds should also contribute to the PA Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener) and assist effected localities. "Beyond Marcellus" to a renewable energy economy is the responsible, sustainable conversation sorely lacking today.

- Environmental justice.

Sustainability's sensibility of not shifting burden from one group to another brings to mind the challenge stemming from the Marcellus industry being inherently diffuse in its impacts. Not one point source to see, but rather thousands of wells all across our landscape in forests, fields, parks, suburban, and likely urban areas to come. They will be connected by thousands of miles of pipes and serviced by trucks logging thousands of heavy miles. The footprint is wide and dispersed. Further, the air emissions from each of those wells (and trucks) bring a cumulative impact that is hard to measure but of high stakes for a region that continues to be in non-attainment with the

federal Clean Air Act. For this unique industry we need a correspondingly unique level of regulatory accountability. Good regulations and standards, robust bonding requirements, disclosure, inspection and monitoring capacity and enforcement, adherence to best practices, and tracking cumulative impacts are all called for. Again these costs should not be borne by taxpaying residents but by the industry and its direct beneficiaries. We also need to ensure what little zoning powers municipalities now have are not further eroded. Indeed our communities need recourse to safeguard and mitigate impacts to residents most closely effected. Concern for environmental justice calls to question at whose expense do the spoils of Marcellus flow? To ensure sustainable development, we need a regional Marcellus Task Force be launched, comprised of all sectors, to take the Marcellus Shale Coalition up on and ensure accountability to its recently announced, very positive, set of industry principles.

In these days where sustainable prosperity is dependent on raising all boats, we can ill afford to fracture the region and any one of ours' quality of life. The principles of sustainable development are a recipe for avoiding mistakes of the past. They give a compass to marrying environmental protection with safeguarding ourselves and our communities while enhancing our regional economy. These are just a few thoughts along the over used lines of "we have to get this industry right" in order to realize its lasting potential.