



Text File

Introduced: 2/7/2012

Bill No: 2012-0079, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

Whereas, in 2003, the discovery of a "Super Giant" natural gas field named the Marcellus was announced and, for the most part was viewed as an economic godsend to Pennsylvania, a state that has seen decades of economic decline and population losses; and,

Whereas, despite the profound changes the character of Pennsylvania's landscape, economy and, its government will see, little was done to prepare for this sea change event. There were no environmental or planning impact studies; no health risk assessments; and, no meaningful transparent public processes or discussions between state and local government; and,

Whereas, the Oil & Gas industry has initiated a drilling campaign in Pennsylvania in a policy vacuum and has unduly influenced state elected officials so that they may provide to them the path of least resistance to the riches that lie beneath the Commonwealth; and,

Whereas, the State Legislature is about to enact legislation that is to the detriment of local government and to those who reside in Pennsylvania's 2,661 municipalities; and,

Whereas, this pending legislation will strip away *all local zoning and planning authority* as it would apply *only* to the *Oil & Gas* industry. All others, be they corporate, institutional or governmental must still abide by local zoning and planning ordinances; and,

Whereas, any local ordinance that *may* impact the Oil & Gas industry must receive approval from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission - a non-elected body and the Commission would have the authority to, among other things, bring lawsuits against local governments on behalf of private parties, and in doing so render moot the ability for citizens to implement and effectuate local community-wide comprehensive planning and zoning codes.

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved That The Council Of The City Of Pittsburgh Does Hereby Convey This Sense Of Council To The State Assembly & Governor Of Pennsylvania:

The Council of the City of Pittsburgh stands foursquare in opposition to Senate Bill 1100 and House Bill 1950. It severely hampers the ability of the local governing body to plan and develop the city in a way that is consistent with its long-standing authority to do so. We oppose the conveyance of special rights to one entity, to the detriment of the rights and privileges of *all* others. After due diligence and consideration, the City of Pittsburgh enacted a ban on shale gas extraction because of the adverse effects to the people's health, welfare and safety. To enact such a law as Senate Bill 1100 and House Bill 1950, without the benefit of environmental & health risk assessments, public hearings at the local level, and more, is clearly an abdication of the government's moral and legal obligation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the Commonwealth.

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Be It Further Resolved that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh joins with many other municipalities and local elected officials in their opposition to the passage of Senate Bill 1100 and House Bill 1950 and conveys to the State Assembly a sense of deep concern and opposition to the stripping of local zoning and planning authority. To do so would render our obligation to serve the people moot. We therefore ask that the Assembly set aside these pending bills and engage in a state wide dialogue with local officials to arrive at a solution that accommodates the needs of all parties, not just one.