



State Representative • 31st Legislative District

Steve Santarsiero

CAPITOL OFFICE: 121B East Wing • PO Box 202031 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2031 • Phone: (717) 787-5475

CONSTITUENT SERVICE OFFICE: 277 N. Sycamore St. • Newtown, PA 18940 • Phone: (215) 968-3975
Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

WEBSITE: www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero • **EMAIL:** RepSantarsiero@pahouse.net

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this finds you in good health.

Two of the most critical issues before the House this fall concern the extraction of natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation and the need to fund the rebuilding of our decaying transportation infrastructure.

Recently, Governor Corbett proposed a plan to impose a roughly 1 percent impact fee on the natural gas drillers. That is about one-fifth the size of the average drilling tax that most states impose on drillers. Under the plan, what little revenue the fee would generate would be given exclusively to the communities where the drilling occurs.

At the same time, the governor has called for state pre-emption of local ordinances that control drilling. That would effectively deprive those communities where drilling is happening of the right to pass laws regulating the activity. For these reasons and others discussed at more length in this issue (see page 2), I oppose the governor's plan.

Meanwhile, Governor Corbett's special transportation infrastructure commission made its report at the end of the summer. It recommended a number of motor vehicle-related fee increases designed to raise about \$1.5 billion over the next five years to help fund road and bridge projects. The state Department of Transportation, however, estimates that the state needs to invest about \$3 billion **yearly** to address the problem.

As yet, the governor has not stated whether he supports his commission's recommendations or some other approach. What is clear is that the state can ill afford to delay much longer in addressing this issue. However, the Republican leadership of the House – which controls the legislative agenda – will not move any legislation on the issue until Governor Corbett makes his preferences known. In my view, any responsible plan needs to focus on rebuilding or replacing existing roads and bridges before we begin the construction of roads where none currently exists.

Please check my website at www.pahouse.com/santarsiero for updates on these and other issues.

Regards,

Stay Informed

Visit My Updated Website and Sign Up for E-mail Alerts!



Visit my website at www.pahouse.com/Santarsiero to stay up-to-date on my legislative and community initiatives. You can also sign up to receive e-mail alerts about my progress in Harrisburg and state-related issues that affect your life by clicking "E-mail Alerts" and filling out the form.

You can also stay up-to-date with me via Facebook (www.facebook.com/RepSantarsiero) and on Twitter (@RepSantarsiero).



Scan here with your smartphone's QR reader to get connected!



Rep. Santarsiero assesses flood damage in Yardley Borough with U.S. Sen. Bob Casey (center) as a result of Tropical Storm Lee. Bucks County was included in a Federal Disaster Declaration due to the significant damage sustained to homes and businesses.

MARCELLUS SHALE CORNER

Legislative Update

The extraction of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale formation presents us with a possible economic boon. It also could prove to be an environmental catastrophe, if it is not done right. We need to be sure that Pennsylvania has an adequate regulatory framework in place and sufficient personnel in the agencies responsible for enforcing those regulations to ensure that we get the benefits of natural gas without destroying our environment for generations to come. One need look no further than the example of the coal industry to see what happens when the environment is ignored – Pennsylvania faces billions of dollars in clean-up costs resulting from decades of poorly-regulated coal extraction.

Toward that end, since going to Harrisburg I have fought for a reasonable natural gas drilling tax to help pay for environmental protection and other important state needs as well as a stop to all further drilling in our state forests and, to the extent legally possible, in our state parks. That is why I recently opposed H.B. 1950, the governor's Marcellus Shale legislation.

House Bill 1950 is a bad approach to the gas extraction issue for several reasons, including:

- The fee is too low. Rather than impose a tax on the drillers, as most other states do, H.B. 1950 would impose a roughly 1 percent fee that is optional by county. That's about one-fifth the size of the average extraction tax levied in other states and completely inadequate to fund the needed oversight, let alone our other needs I want like rebuilding transportation infrastructure and education.
- The revenue is not shared. The impact fee established by H.B. 1950 would only be assessed and collected in counties with active natural gas drilling wells in the Marcellus Shale area, and direct revenue from the fee (a full 75 percent of the total revenue stream) would be limited to only those counties. Moreover, most of the rest of the revenue that the fee would generate would be used for programs that exclusively help those areas. While I believe that money does need to go to those communities where drilling is occurring to help them cope with the impacts of the industry, it should not go there almost exclusively.
- It will encourage drilling in state forests and parks. The bill would transfer a comparatively small amount of money annually to the Growing Greener program – which, among other things, helps to fund open space purchases statewide – but that money would not come out of the pockets of the drilling companies. Instead, it would come from the Oil and Gas Lease Fund, which gets its revenue from the leasing of state lands for drilling. So, in a truly perverse arrangement, H.B. 1950 proposes to fund state open space purchases by destroying open space in our state forests and parks. In fact, the only things “growing greener” as a consequence of this bill would be the wallets of oil and gas industry executives at the expense of Pennsylvania citizens.
- It takes power away from local governments. House Bill 1950 would severely limit the ability of local governments where the drilling is taking place from passing laws that protect their citizens and communities.

House Bill 1950 passed largely along party lines. As a member of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and Democratic Chairman of the Subcommittee on Parks and Forests, I remain concerned that this legislation was fast-tracked through the House with no review by our committee – instead it was assigned to the Finance Committee.

In short, H.B. 1950 is a poor substitute for legislation that passed the House with bipartisan support last year, which would have instituted a fair and reasonable drilling tax. I offered the language from that bill as an amendment to H.B. 1950 in an effort to make H.B. 1950 a better piece of legislation; unfortunately, the Speaker of the House never allowed my amendment to be brought before the House for a vote.

Hundreds of you have called, e-mailed and written requesting legislative action on a fair natural gas drilling tax comparable to those in other states, which would be enough to protect the environment and benefit all Pennsylvanians. This bill does not meet that standard. Instead it gives industry a pass while placing more of the burden on the people of Pennsylvania and our environment. I will continue to fight for a better result for all of Pennsylvania.



Rep. Santarsiero answers Marcellus Shale-related questions at a town hall meeting held for residents of the 31st Legislative District.



Rep. Santarsiero hosts a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing in Newtown on Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling issues.

Safety in Youth Sports

I recently voted for a new law designed to improve concussion management in youth sports and to increase awareness regarding the devastating, lifelong effects they can cause when not handled properly.

The Safety in Youth Sports Act requires students and a parent or guardian annually to read and sign a concussion and head injury awareness sheet before the student participates in practice or competition so they are better informed about injuries that may be sustained on the field and how treatment would proceed. The act also requires coaches to complete a concussion certification course annually.

Also under the new law, a player who exhibits symptoms of sustaining a concussion will be removed from play and not be able to return to play until cleared by an appropriate medical professional.

While the measure was moving through the legislative process, I was pleased to hold a local roundtable discussion on its significance. We discussed a variety of concerns regarding the safety of student athletes and I once again thanked the representatives from St. Mary Medical Center, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit and Council Rock North Athletic Department who were present, offered valuable testimony and have been proactive on concussion management issues in youth sports.

"As a parent of children in youth sports, this issue is of particular importance to me."



Scan this code with your smartphone to listen to the roundtable in its entirety.



Santarsiero Hosts College Financial Planning Seminar

Pennsylvania families with children of all ages recognize that a college education is one of the most important things we can do for our children to prepare them for success in life. In turn, it's never too early or too late to start planning for college.



Earlier this fall I hosted my public seminar on college financial planning. The event featured presentations on savings and investments in Pennsylvania's 529 programs, college loan information and ways to minimize large amounts of debt upon graduating. The seminar also included discussions on the college application process.

The constantly rising costs of a college education continue to outpace inflation and, without proper planning, those costs can jeopardize a family's ability to ensure a child's access to higher education. College is an investment that will pay off given that the earnings gap, between those with a high school diploma and those with a bachelor's degree or beyond, is estimated to exceed \$1 million over a lifetime.

To access a video of this year's seminar, please visit my website.

On Sept. 27, the House of Representatives unanimously adopted Rep. Santarsiero's resolution designating September as College Savings Month in Pennsylvania.

Texting While Driving Ban Signed Into Law

I am pleased to announce that texting while driving will soon be illegal in Pennsylvania.

The governor recently signed into law a bill prohibiting text messaging while driving. The new law goes into effect in March 2012.

Under the law, texting behind the wheel will be recognized as a primary offense, which means that police would have the ability to pull over motorists for doing so. Texting under the law is defined as anything from a text message to an instant message, electronic mail or other written communication composed or received on an interactive wireless device. The penalty for that violation will be \$50 and will not add points to the driver's record.

I have been a strong advocate for this ban that makes texting while driving a primary offense. I've fought for this to be an inclusive bill that also would have banned talking on a hand-held cell phone while driving. Through parliamentary measures, the hand-held cell phone ban was excluded in the bill that passed. I will continue to call for the addition of that ban to our distracted driving laws.





STATE REP. STEVE SANTARSIERO

121B East Wing
P.O. Box 202031
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2031

lpo.kaf. 1211

Update: Edgewood Village Sewer Extension and Community Improvement Projects Under Way

Earlier this year I was successful in obtaining nearly \$3 million in state assistance to help Lower Makefield Township.

The first part of that money – \$850,000 – is going to the much-needed Edgewood Village Sewer Extension Project. Extending public sewer lines into historic Edgewood Village will help address community health and safety issues and bring economic development to this area of Lower Makefield. This project is expected to bring 250 permanent jobs to the area and create 100 temporary jobs.

The rest of the money – \$2 million – will go to recreational needs in Lower Makefield. Half of that will help fund the building of a long-awaited community center for the township. The center will provide ample space for Lower Makefield's

senior citizens group and other organizations to hold meetings and other events.

The other half of the grant will fund the repair of existing recreational facilities as well as build additional baseball fields on the Samost property (where the public mulch piles are currently located), upgrade the existing fields at the adjacent Stoddard complex and build a special needs playground at Memorial Park. Reconstruction of existing tennis and basketball courts at Community Park are nearly completed.

These projects have long been priorities for the community and I am happy that I was able to secure the \$2 million state grant to make them a reality.



Work is under way to revitalize historic Edgewood Village into a town center for Lower Makefield Township.



Lower Makefield Township is scheduled to break ground on new baseball fields in spring 2012.



STATE REP. STEVE SANTARSIERO

121B East Wing
P.O. Box 202031
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2031

lpo.kaf. 1211

Update: Newtown Place Sound Barrier Request

After meeting with residents of Newtown Place and making their request to PennDOT for sound barriers to protect their neighborhood from increasing noise from the Newtown Bypass, I am pleased to report that Sen. Chuck McIlhinney has joined our effort and we are working together with Newtown Township to request about \$2 million in transportation funding.

Together Sen. McIlhinney and I measured out the area for the sound walls and are supporting a Transportation Infrastructure Project proposal to be included in a transportation funding bill should the governor agree to address Pennsylvania's \$3 billion transportation funding needs.



MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- **FREE notary services**
- **Car registrations, special tags, titles and license applications**
- **Information on financial assistance for higher education**
- **Birth certificate applications**
- **Pennsylvania income tax problems**
- **Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones**
- **Complaints or questions about utilities and the PUC**
- **Consumer complaints**
- **Complaints about road conditions**
- **Problems or questions about PennDOT**
- **Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups**
- **Disability plates and placards**
- **PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens**
- **Complaints and problems with insurance companies**
- **Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions**
- **Any other question or issue with state government!**