

**Statement for the  
House Consumer Affairs Committee  
February 24, 2011**

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER

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State Fire Commissioner

Good morning Chairman Godshall, Chairman Preston and members of the Committee. I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify before the Committee on House Bill 344.

It is my responsibility as State Fire Commissioner to advise the Administration on all matters of fire safety within the Commonwealth. As many of you know, in 2000, Governor Tom Ridge appointed me Fire Commissioner. Two weeks ago, Governor Tom Corbett reappointed me. I now will have had the privilege of serving the Commonwealth under four Governors. I would like to think that I have been able to serve as Fire Commissioner in both Republican and Democratic Administrations for one main reason - I care deeply about the safety of our firefighters. Ensuring their safety has been my top priority from the first day I took

However, I feel pretty confident that those who have taken advantage of the training offered to date have sufficient knowledge to respond safely to an incident ensuring that "Everyone Goes Home™" after any Marcellus Shale incident.

To this point in time, the Marcellus Shale industry has been very supportive of OSFC in the development and delivery of training for first responders in the areas impacted by the Marcellus Shale drilling. Without the support of the Marcellus Shale Coalition and Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association, OSFC would have never been in a position to provide the training we have done.

House Bill 344 deals specifically with oversight that will better ensure gas pipeline safety. As the State official charged with the safety of Pennsylvania's Fire Service, I fully support the intent of this bill. It is my understanding that under current law the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) has no authority to inspect the installation of Marcellus Gas pipelines, control the location of those pipelines, or require the industry to prove that regular maintenance is being performed on pipelines. It is my understanding that HB 344 will address those issues.

This lack of enforcement concerns me greatly and could put Pennsylvania citizens and first responder at great risk. I am confident the overwhelming majority of the gas industry will comply with the pipeline standards established by the United States Department of Transportation. However, there always is the potential for a

Marcellus Shale industry, the Pennsylvania Independent Oil and Gas Association, state and local government officials, and first responders -- we can further enhance safety with regards to Marcellus Shale gas well drilling. By doing so, we will provide the necessary protection for our citizens today and in the future.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.