

Environmental Policy Positions

A significant promise of Governor Tom Wolf's 2014 campaign was to levy a severance tax on the oil and gas drilling industry in Pennsylvania. While to date, the Republican-led Legislature in Harrisburg has blocked this tax from becoming reality, it still remains one of Pennsylvania's best opportunities to generate much needed revenue, and guarantee that there are funds available to mediate the environmental impact of natural gas drilling, often known as fracking. The enactment of a strong severance tax/extraction fee regimen while maintaining Pennsylvania's environmental regulations is the most important statewide environmental issue.

Locally, the 177th faces a grave environmental and public health issue itself. The kicking up of construction dust has brought attention to the fact that the hidden danger of lead poisoning exists throughout the district's neighborhoods. Lead and heavy metals in the soil pose serious threats to the health and safety of children and all our residents. Mitigating and controlling the impact of contamination from the shuttered factories and plants of our past is the most important local environmental issue.

Finally, the 177th has a long stretch of the Delaware River and the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford and Pennypack watersheds within its boundaries. It is actually part of an important Coastal Zone as well. Restoring, developing and protecting the water ways and increasing public access to the river is a vital issue, both for the environment and for the quality of life of our residents.

Joe's platform on environmental issues focuses on:

- Levying a severance tax and extractions fees on gas drillers without compromising the quality of Pennsylvania's environmental regulations
- Addressing the heavy metal contamination in the neighborhoods of the 177th
- Restoring and protecting our district's waterways while increasing access to this valuable natural resource by residents
- Fiscal and environmental responsibility through support for growth in renewable energy, including seeking out opportunities for growth through investment in 'Green Jobs.'

Fracking and Severance tax

Pennsylvania currently has one of the lowest effective tax rates on shale gas in the nation, and is the only state without a severance tax. Joe supports the Governor's plan to abolish impact fees and implement a fair severance tax in place of the fees. A strong severance tax and/or extraction fee structure will help balance the budget, and provide a new revenue stream for the state. It will help ensure that the natural gas industry pays a fair share to support the state of Pennsylvania in which it does business.

While the Marcellus Shale and possibly the Utica Shale give Pennsylvania a unique opportunity to attract the industry, Joe believes the state needs to ensure that the proper regulations and monitoring agencies are in place to mitigate the negative health and environmental consequences of fracking. Groundwater contamination is particularly alarming, and there needs to be more funding put forward for public health studies of the effect of fracking and its byproducts on Pennsylvanians. Joe supports a moratorium on new fracking while the impact of current drilling projects can be studied and ascertained with the negative impacts mitigated and contained.

In 2017, the Republicans sought to [use a natural gas severance tax bill \(HB 1401\) to jam through their extreme, anti-environmental agenda](#). Plain and simple, the passage of this bill would make it easier for oil and gas companies to pollute our air and water, putting the health and future well-being of all of our families at risk. Joe strongly believes in and supports a severance tax for Pennsylvania. He does not believe, however, that finally paying their fare share should entitle industry to rewrite our environmental protection laws as they see fit. Joe pledges to fight for legislation that balances our budget while maintaining our right to clean air and water.

Historical Heavy Metal Contamination

In just the last year, the neighborhoods of the 177th have seen the improper demolition of a former smelting plant, additional information detailing the dangers of ‘Mount Wawa’ and the formation of the Get the Lead Out: Riverwards group. Joe fully supports the advocacy of local residents and will work with concerned neighbors towards the goals to address childhood lead poisoning by supporting education, intervention and responsible mitigation of playgrounds and public spaces.

Joe is aware that the current hot spots for this issue are in the areas closest to the Aramingo shopping corridor in Fishtown/Olde Richmond. However, other neighborhoods, particularly Bridesburg, Port Richmond and Frankford also have many brownfields and the remnants of industrial activity. Joe will work, just like any good local government official should, to protect and help all of the neighborhoods that face these problems. He will work to help each neighborhood learn from the successes and failures of the others. He will provide a strong and clear voice advocating for the protection of our communities by making private developers responsible, holding governmental agencies accountable and keeping the public informed of changes and developments affecting them.

Restoration, Protection and Access to Waterways and the Delaware River

The Delaware River and its tributaries in the 177th, the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Creek and Pennypack Creek, are essential elements in the landscape of our neighborhoods. Joe will

support appropriate development around the waterfront, including plans that are already underway for the Bridesburg Riverfront Park at the end of Orthodox Street. As a state legislator he will be prepared to establish regular funding streams for recreation areas and the still-developing bike and walking trail going through the district.

In addressing waterfront issues it will be important to coordinate with the overall plan for the river that is being planned and implemented right now. Joe will secure a seat at the table of the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation and other private and public entities to ensure that community voices are heard, respected and incorporated into the planning processes.

Environmental and fiscal responsibility and Support for renewable energy

Joe supports a combination of environmental and fiscal responsibility that would provide the state of Pennsylvania with strong and diversified energy resources to protect it from economic fluctuations and adverse environmental impacts. Pennsylvania has an opportunity to be a leader in renewable energy, particularly solar and wind. Joe believes current plans to expand natural gas transport in and through Philadelphia must be closely reviewed and, at the very least, matched with equal investment in renewables. The key is a plan that will reach or exceed the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) as established in Act 213.

With respect to revenue raised from the severance tax on fracking, it must be distributed responsibly and fairly across the state. A portion of this revenue must be used to mitigate the effects of fracking on the communities where fracking is most prevalent. All Pennsylvanians should feel benefits from this tax.

After the tax is in place, Joe will work to ensure that wages and working conditions for those in the natural gas industry do not suffer. Further, Joe supports funding for clean energy investment that would create jobs and allow those who rely on the natural gas industry to find jobs in the sustainable energy industry. The Clean Energy Incentive Program (CEIP) is a program mandated by the federal government under the Clean Power Plan. The CEIP can provide a platform upon which to establish a solid transition to diversify Pennsylvania's energy portfolio.

Joe supports renewable energy and tax credits for those who take advantage of clean energy technologies. His focus will be to increase those credits in residential situations for everyday citizens. However, he will work to close loopholes and correct flaws in corporate programs that have often permitted credits for projects that are outside Pennsylvania. Joe will advocate projects that keep these credits in-state so that Pennsylvania receives the full benefits of having more jobs as well as improvements to its environment.