



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION III  
1650 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029**

**February 1, 2013**

Edward R. Beitler, Mgr  
Schwenksville Boro Auth WWTP  
PO Box 458  
Schwenksville, PA 19473-0458

Re: Potential Acceptance of Oil and Gas Waste  
NPDES Permit No - PA0020303

Dear Edward R. Beitler, Mgr

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the procedures that a publicly-owned treatment works (POTW) in Pennsylvania must follow and approvals that must be obtained prior to a POTW accepting a new waste, including any waste that is significantly different than a previously accepted waste, for disposal or treatment. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) is authorized to implement the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversight, with the exception of the Pretreatment Program which the EPA implements. Your facility has been identified as one which is covered by an NPDES permit issued by PADEP, but not currently covered under a Pretreatment Program approved by EPA.

Issuance of an NPDES permit authorizes a facility to discharge waste in accordance with the permit and consistent with the quantity and characteristics of the waste identified in the NPDES permit application submitted by the permittee. Where the quantity or characteristics of the waste change, the discharger is required to notify the permitting authority, obtain a revised NPDES permit, and obtain approval of revisions to its approved pretreatment program as necessary to prevent pass through and interference with operations at the POTW. For POTWs, 40 CFR Part 122.42(b) requires that the POTW provide adequate notification of:

- (1) any new introduction of pollutants into the POTW from an indirect discharger which would be subject to section 301 or 306 of CWA if it were directly discharging those pollutants; and
- (2) any substantial change in the volume or character of pollutants being introduced into that POTW by a source introducing pollutants into the POTW at the time of permit issuance.



“Adequate notice” is meant to provide the NPDES permitting authority with enough time to determine if the POTW’s NPDES permit needs to be modified to address possible effects due to the potential new or changed discharges. Therefore, this notification must be provided and revision of the NPDES permit obtained before the POTW may accept the wastewater.

Acceptance of oil and gas wastewater or other drilling waste that was not previously included in the permit application or permit would generally be considered a new introduction of pollutants or may be a substantial change in the volume or character of pollutants being introduced into the POTW. Unless a POTW has previously identified and provided analyses for all of the parameters, concentrations and volumes of the oil and gas extraction wastes in their NPDES permit application and received authorization to accept and discharge the waste through its NPDES permit, the notification requirements apply.

40 CFR Part 122.42(b) also defines the information that is required. This includes:

- (1) the quality and quantity of effluent introduced into the POTW, and
- (2) any anticipated impact of the change on the quantity or quality of the effluent to be discharged from the POTW.

The POTW must submit the notification to both PADEP as the permitting authority and EPA as the pretreatment authority. When considering the acceptance of new or changed wastewater, a POTW needs to collect information from the industrial user on the quality and quantity of the wastewater proposed to be introduced to the POTW and assess the potential impact to the POTW and the receiving waters if the POTW were to accept the wastewater. For oil and gas wastewater, that discharge characterization should include the concentrations of total dissolved solids; specific ions such as chlorides, barium, strontium, and sulfate; specific radionuclides; metals; and other pollutants that could reasonably be expected to be present in wastewater from a well. In addition to the ions, radionuclides, and metals that can be expected to be present in wastewater produced from a well, the characterization should include all chemicals used in well drilling, completions, treatment, workover or production that could reasonably be expected to be present in the wastewater.

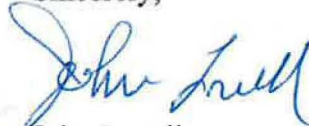
Two of the main objectives of the Pretreatment Program are to prevent the introduction of pollutants into a POTW that will interfere with the operation of the POTW, including interference with its use or disposal of municipal sludge; and to prevent the introduction of pollutants into a POTW that will pass through the treatment works or otherwise be incompatible with such works. The assessment of the potential impacts of the new/changed discharge would also need to include an evaluation of the potential for exceedance of narrative and numeric water quality requirements as well as the potential for inhibition of POTW treatment processes. EPA will work with PADEP to evaluate the new/changed discharge to ensure that the effluent limits and other requirements of the NPDES permit are appropriately revised to address numeric and narrative water quality standards, pretreatment requirements, and protect human health and the environment.

In addition, EPA also evaluates the notification to determine if the POTW will be required to develop and implement an approved pretreatment program. As an alternative, EPA may require that the POTW develop and enforce local limits to control the waste without development and implementation of a full pretreatment program in accordance with 40 CFR 403.5(c)(2). Note that all industrial user discharges to the POTW must comply with the specific prohibitions of 40 CFR 403.5(b), any applicable categorical standards, and any state and local limits.

Additional information on natural gas extraction can be found on EPA's website at the following address: <http://www.epa.gov/hydraulicfracture/>. Guidance on the basic requirements of the pretreatment program can be found on EPA's website at: [http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/pretreatment\\_program\\_intro\\_2011.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/pretreatment_program_intro_2011.pdf). Information on development of local limits including EPA's *Local Limits Development Guidance* and a spreadsheet for calculation of local limits can be found at this web address: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/npdes/?tab1=3>.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 215-814-5790 or via email at [lovell.john@epa.gov](mailto:lovell.john@epa.gov).

Sincerely,



John Lovell  
Pretreatment Program Coordinator  
NPDES Permits Branch (3WP41)  
Water Protection Division

cc: Jenifer Fields, PADEP Southeast Region  
Ron Furlan, PADEP Central Office  
Kelly Heffner, PADEP Central Office