



Welcome to the Pennsylvania Citizens' Toolkit Resources.

With the ever expanding oil and gas operations in our region, citizens, advocacy groups, and elected officials seem to have more questions than answers. And, because so much of this industrial development is new to most communities, finding facts on the operations and the permitting approval processes can seem daunting. In an effort to help educate, inform, and guide citizens through the basic components of the process, the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) is developing a *Citizens' Toolkit*. This informational toolkit provides descriptions of key portions the public notification and participation requirements, as well as fact sheets and example templates, so that citizens and decision makers can better prepare themselves.

The Golden Rules: As citizens educate themselves on oil and gas operations and local oversight issues, engagement with local elected officials and reviewing bodies or boards is key. In order to achieve effective engagement, citizens should strive to become reliable sources of factual resources by using the following methods of presenting facts, asking questions and seeking important updates and changes at all levels of government.

- **State the facts** – using documents, reports or other factual resources, citizens should base their oral and written presentations on materials obtained via publicly accessible documents, news stories/reports and other objective resources. It is important, when and where possible, for citizens to base their comments on company documents provided as part of the application process so that specifics about the proposed project can be referenced. For example, permit applications, along with the accompanying correspondence submitted for review, provide important insights into what a company may be seeking. There is a treasure trove of publicly available documents, if you know where to look for them and how to ask to obtain access to them. See PA Right to Know Law tool section of the *Citizens' Toolkit* for more information.
- **Ask questions** – if full disclosure of pertinent facts are not available via the means outlined above, citizens can and should pose questions to decision makers. Questions can be submitted in writing or included as part of oral comments or testimony as part of the various meeting/hearing opportunities described throughout the *Citizens' Toolkit*. The most effective questions are based on facts, and not just speculation or opinions. See Public Meetings/Public Hearings tool section of the *Citizens' Toolkit* for more information.
- **State your opinions** – opinions can be included as part of citizen participation in meetings, hearings or other public comment opportunities. However, it is important to note that passion and emotion alone, are not enough. It is essential that personal opinions or accounts include references to hard facts. Be mindful that stating opinions does not mean citizens can accuse anyone or any company of a misdeed and doing so usually is counterproductive. Use your opinions wisely. See Public Meetings/Public Hearings tool section of the *Citizens' Toolkit* for more information.

Contact:

Lisa Graves Marcucci, lgmarcucci@environmentalintegrity.org