

ROETHLISBERGER'S FOOT NOT BROKEN

SPORTS, D-1



A FASHIONABLE DEFENSE

MAGAZINE, C-1



WINTER GAS BILLS DROPPING FOR MOST CUSTOMERS

BUSINESS, A-8

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Corbett outlines plan for Marcellus Shale fees

3-part proposal involves county 'impact' levies on firms drilling for natural gas

By Laura Olson
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Gov. Tom Corbett's unveiling of his proposed Marcellus Shale legislation on Monday gave lawmakers, natural-gas drillers and environmental advocates a long-awaited glimpse of what the chief executive believes should be done to regulate and support the industry.

What that legislative package will look like after the General Assembly is through with it later this fall is yet to be seen.

That three-part proposal — including a county-assessed impact fee on Marcellus Shale gas drillers, stronger environmental rules and also incentives for switching vehicles to natural gas — was met by the

Republicans who control both chambers with promises to consider it and by Democrats with cries that it missed the mark.

Environmentalists gave a stark review, saying that sending a majority of the funds raised from an impact fee back to local governments would undercut environmental efforts downstream from the drilling region.

Industry officials generally welcomed the plan, emphasizing the portions on encouraging natural gas use.

One point that most sides did agree on, however, was timing: Mr. Corbett described an urgency to make the commonwealth more competitive with fellow drilling states such as Ohio and West Virginia, and lawmakers also were eager to have a measure approved before the end of session in December.

The administration-drafted plan greatly reflects the recommendations from his Marcellus

SEE **SHALE**, PAGE A-3



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Gov. Tom Corbett discusses his Marcellus Shale plan Monday during a news conference after touring the carpenters training center in Collier. ■ For video, visit post-gazette.com

The governor's plan

IMPACT FEE

- Allows counties to impose an impact fee up to 10 years on each shale well, starting at a maximum of \$40,000 in the first year and declining to \$10,000 in year 10.
- Sends 75 percent of fee revenue to drilling counties; 25 percent to state agencies. Collects about

\$120 million in the first year; up to \$200 million in the sixth year.

PENALTIES

- Doubles penalties for civil violations to \$50,000 and for noncompliance to \$2,000.

ENVIRONMENT

- Requires operators to increase insurance on each well to \$10,000 from

\$2,000, or on an operator's aggregate to \$250,000 from \$25,000.

- Increases spacing between: drilling and water bodies; drilling and private residential water wells; drilling and public drinking water systems
- Expands operators' "presumed liability" for

polluting water to 2,500 feet around a well and to 12 months after drilling.

USAGE

- Develops "green corridors" with natural-gas fueling stations every 50 miles along key highways.
- Helps schools and transit agencies to convert buses to natural gas.

Environmentalists say shale proposal falls short

By Don Hopley
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Environmental groups were deeply critical of Gov. Tom Corbett's proposed Marcellus Shale gas impact fee and new gas drilling regulations, saying the fee is much too low and the

regulations fall well short of protecting the commonwealth's water and air resources.

Many of those groups said the governor's Marcellus Shale gas regulatory package announced Monday amounts to a giveaway of the state's resources to a gas industry making fat profits and

provides no funding for critical environmental programs with statewide benefits.

Jan Jarrett, president and chief executive officer of Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, an organization active on Marcellus issues, said the governor's proposal allows drilling

companies to "pay very little for the massive profits they make from Pennsylvania's resources."

She said the impact fee "is full of loopholes, unwieldy to administer and leaves too

SEE **GROUPS**, PAGE A-3

Bills dilute wage law for publicly funded jobs

By Tom Barnes
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

HARRISBURG — Republican legislators scored significant victories Monday in bids to water down one of their most-criticized targets, the state's 50-year-old "prevailing wage" law.

The 1961 statute requires that prevailing wages, often called "union wages," be paid by townships, boroughs and school districts on almost all of their publicly funded office building and road projects — those costing more than \$25,000.

"The prevailing wage changes would be a tremendous savings to the taxpayers — hundreds of millions of dollars," said Rep. Ron Marsico, R-Dauphin, who authored two of the six bills approved Monday by the House Labor and Industry Commit-

SEE **WAGES**, PAGE A-10



Seth Wenig/Associated Press

POSTHUMOUS HONOR

Nobel Prize winner Ralph Steinman's wife and children gather near a projected photograph of him for a ceremony in his honor Monday at Rockefeller University in New York. Dr. Steinman, a cell biologist, was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine on Monday for his discoveries about the immune system, but hours later the university announced he had died Friday. **Story, Page A-4**

CHICAGO — By age 6, children should have vaccinations against 14 diseases, in at least two dozen separate doses, the U.S. government advises. More than 1 in 10 parents reject that, refusing some shots or delaying others mainly because of safety concerns, a national survey found.

Worries about vaccine safety were common even among parents whose kids were fully vaccinated: 1 in 5 among that group said they think delaying shots is safer than the recommended schedule. The results suggest that more than 2 million infants and young children may not be fully protected against preventable diseases, including some

SEE **VACCINES**, PAGE A-2

Municipalities struggling to solve problem of sewage overflows

By Joe Smydo
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

In 2009, after three years of work, a high-level task force recommended the creation of an 11-county Three Rivers Water Planning District to help municipalities and counties address escalating stormwater and sewage overflow

problems.

That entity is no closer to creation today than it was two years ago, underscoring the hurdles to regional cooperation on water issues even as property owners bemoan widespread flooding and local governments face coming deadlines for controlling overflows into the region's

One in an occasional series

river. An Aug. 19 flash flood that killed four people on Washington Boulevard has focused new attention on Pittsburgh's stormwater problems. However, water-related problems are regional and intercon-

nected, partly because municipalities share sewer lines and because municipalities failing to properly dispose of stormwater and sewage create problems for others downstream. For those reasons — not to mention the cost of improvements — researchers and activists long have advocated addressing problems through inter-

governmental cooperation. "I just don't think the resources are going to be there to do it on a piecemeal basis," said Ty Gourley, a private consultant and former University of Pittsburgh staffer who worked on water issues.

The point has been made SEE **STORMWATER**, PAGE A-3



Weather
Partly sunny but cool. High 61, low 46. **Page B-8**

Bridge.....C-3
Business.....A-8
Classified.....D-8
Comics.....C-6
Crosswords.....C-3
Editorials.....B-6

Horoscope.....C-3
Local News.....B-1
Lottery.....B-2
Magazine.....C-1
My Generation.....C-7
Movies.....C-5

Tony Norman.....A-2
Obituaries.....B-3
Scoreboard.....D-7
Seen.....C-2
Sports.....D-1
Television.....C-8



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