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west virginia department of environmental protection

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Office of Oil and Gas Staff  
From: James Martin, Chief  
Date: March 23, 2010  
Subject: Drilling Pit Reclamation

As you are aware, we have been reviewing various aspects of oil and gas development, particularly as it relates to Marcellus Shale drilling, to better ensure protection of the environment. One area of review has been the reclamation of drilling pits.

As a result, DEP is going to immediately start requiring that all drilling pits that contain Marcellus Shale cuttings and drilling pits that contain cuttings removed from the wellbore using a fluid-based drilling medium other than freshwater and bentonite gel must be reclaimed in the following manner, in addition to any other reclamation requirements:

- 1) The pit liner must remain intact throughout the reclamation process to ensure containment of pit materials. All excavated areas, in addition to the primary drilling pit, that are constructed to hold cuttings must incorporate the use of a liner.
- 2) Solidification of materials must be conducted to the extent necessary to prevent overflow and to ensure proper stabilization of the site. Materials to be added to assist in the solidification must be approved by the Office of Oil and Gas.
- 3) A liner must be placed over the top of the pit and any additional excavated areas to prevent water from percolating into the cuttings. This may be accomplished through the use of the existing liner or an additional liner.

This requirement does not preclude approved offsite disposal methods such as transporting the material to a landfill.