

PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

**PUC Bureau of Investigation and
Enforcement vs.
Mifflin Energy Corporation**


**Public Meeting of September 21, 2023
3019782-OSA
Docket No. M-2023-3019782**

STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIR KIMBERLY BARROW

On April 9, 2020, a natural gas explosion occurred in Waynesburg, Greene County Pennsylvania. A service line running directly from a natural gas well to a residential customer failed, a so-called “farm tap.” Mifflin Energy, the owner of the well and the natural gas extracted from it, now enters into a settlement to pay a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred thousand dollars. Mifflin Energy no longer owns the facilities, as they have been sold to Mifflin Energy Resources, a company that the Petition states is unaffiliated with Mifflin Energy. Today we publish the Joint Settlement in the Pennsylvania Bulletin for comment.

Whoever owns the facilities in this case, the Commission is still obligated to ensure the facilities are safely managed. I would expand that our Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement has concluded that farm tap facilities, that are designed like the facilities here, are subject to the Commission’s authority to enforce federal regulations. The Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement relied on a Letter of Interpretation from PHMSA in making this conclusion. Not only must the facilities at issue be reviewed to ensure safe service, but the new owners should also conduct a comprehensive review of their facilities to prevent further dangerous conditions. All operators with farm taps must ensure that the facilities which are their responsibility are well-maintained. When modifications are made to farm taps, as happened here, facility owners must reevaluate whether the modifications were installed safely. I ask all natural gas drillers in Pennsylvania who are supplying gas to landowners via farm taps to use this incident as a prompt to review the design and operational safety of their own farm taps.

September 21, 2023
Date


Kimberly Barrow, Vice Chair