

## **Butler County received \$1.8 million from Act 13 gas well impact fees**

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The \$1.8 million the County is receiving from the Act 13 Impact Fees the state imposed on natural gas producers in 2023 is down by more than \$1 million due to lower gas prices.

The County is due to receive \$1,824,523, which includes \$143,726 from the Marcellus Legacy Fund, which provides money for environmental, highway, park, water, and sewer projects, and the County's 57 municipalities will receive a total of \$2.9 million.

Statewide, counties and municipalities will receive a total of \$100,302,825 to address the impacts of gas drilling and \$63,791,090 from the Legacy Fund, and state agencies will receive \$15,540,804 from 2023 impact fees, according to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, which collects and distributes the impact fees.

The distribution is about \$100 million less than last year due to a sharp decline in the average price of natural gas from \$6.64 per unit in 2022 to \$2.74 per unit in 2023.

The addition of only 423 new wells across the state also contributed to the low price, the PUC said. Last year, the County received a little over \$3 million and municipalities received nearly \$5 million from the statewide distribution of \$278 million from 2022 impact fees. These numbers reflected increases from the previous year.

County Commissioner Kevin Boozel said some of the County's distribution will go toward the 911 center, but most will be used in the Infrastructure Bank program.

He said the Commissioners have been providing low-interest loans to municipalities for road, bridge, sewer, and water projects through the program for the last eight years. "We have about \$60 million in municipal projects," Boozel said. He said the County obtains a low-interest loan or bond to supplement the Act 13 money and loans it to municipalities at ½% interest.

In addition, the County helps municipalities obtain other grants so they can stretch the Infrastructure Bank loans as far as possible, Boozel said.

"We're grateful to have the annual allocation from the Pennsylvania Unconventional Gas Well Fund," said Commissioner Kim Geyer. "We've been able to reinvest in about \$60 million worth of projects throughout the county since 2017 in over 20 municipalities."

She said the policy for spending the County's distribution requires the Commissioners to allocate 40% to fund emergency services. If any money is left, 15% goes to technology upgrades or capital projects, and 35%, or no less than \$200,000, goes to the Infrastructure Bank. The Commissioners can spend any remaining money at their discretion, she said.

The Legacy Fund is used for trails and conservation efforts, and some of the money is given to the (Butler County) Parks and Recreation Department, the Farmland Preservation Program, and the (Butler) County Conservation District, Geyer said.

She said the Commissioners post their use of the Act 13 money on the County website.