

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****June 12, 2026****Contact:** Shannon Smith, FracTracker Alliance, [smith@fractracker.org](mailto:smith@fractracker.org), (814) 449-0659**PA DEP Approves Unusual “Mineral Brine” Well in Erie County, Raising Concerns About New Regulatory Loophole**

*FracTracker appeals permit, citing unresolved questions about testing and sale of highly saline subsurface water that can contain radium, metals, and other contaminants*

**Erie County, PA** — FracTracker Alliance appealed a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection permit that appears to create a new pathway for producing and distributing “mineral brine” from a conventional well in Erie County. The appeal is active before the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board as Case No. 2026062. The docket is available [here](#).

On May 12, 2026, PA DEP approved Authorization ID 1566294, Permit No. 049-25514, allowing BCD Properties, Inc. to drill and operate the Danylko 6 well in McKean Township, Erie County. The permit was issued by DEP’s Oil and Gas Management Program as a conventional drill & operate well permit. In the application, BCD identified the proposed well type as “Other” and specified “Mineral Brine.”

Danylko 6 is listed in PA DEP’s public oil and gas data with the well type “Undetermined,” even though it is a newly permitted well with a known operator, location, permit date, and spud date. FracTracker found this unusual because “Undetermined” is typically associated with older wells where key information is missing from historic records.

The [permit](#) raises urgent questions because it appears to treat the Danylko 6 well differently from a standard oil or gas production well. Its special conditions require BCD to report annual brine production and to submit an additional report listing the volume of brine distributed to each customer, along with customer names and addresses. The permit also states that gas and oil from the well must be managed as solid waste, while separately prohibiting Danylko 6 brine from being mixed with “waste brine” or with brine from any well permitted by DEP as an oil or gas well.

FracTracker’s appeal asks the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board to review whether DEP adequately determined and explained the legal and regulatory status of the brine before issuing the permit. The appeal also raises concerns that the permit does not appear to require



chemical or radiological testing of the brine before it is sold, distributed, used, disposed of, or applied to roads or land.

“This permit raises urgent questions about whether PA DEP has created a new loophole for the commercial sale of highly saline subsurface water that can contain radioactive materials, metals, and other contaminants,” said Shannon Smith, Executive Director of FracTracker Alliance. “If brine from conventional oil and gas wells is too risky to spread on roads when it is managed as oil and gas wastewater, DEP should not allow the same or similar material to evade scrutiny simply because it is relabeled as ‘mineral brine.’”

Brine is highly saline subsurface water that can contain metals, radioactive materials, and other contaminants. [Research](#) on brines from conventional oil and gas wells and commercial brine road products has found contaminants of concern, including radium and metals, at levels that raise environmental and public health concerns. [A 2022 DEP-commissioned Penn State study](#) found that conventional oil and gas brine was no more effective than rainwater for dust control and that runoff from brine-treated roads contained chloride, sodium, and radium. [A 2023 peer-reviewed study](#) in Environmental Pollution found that liquid brine road products can contain elevated trace metals and radium activity comparable to oil and gas produced waters.

The Danylko 6 permit follows a separate dispute involving BCD Properties’ nearby Danylko 4 conventional gas well. In April 2025, [DEP notified](#) BCD Properties that its coproduct determination for Danylko 4 brine did not meet DEP’s residual waste regulations. [DEP advised](#) that continued road spreading of wastewater may result in enforcement action. [BCD Properties appealed](#) that determination to the Environmental Hearing Board, and that [appeal was terminated in May 2026](#).

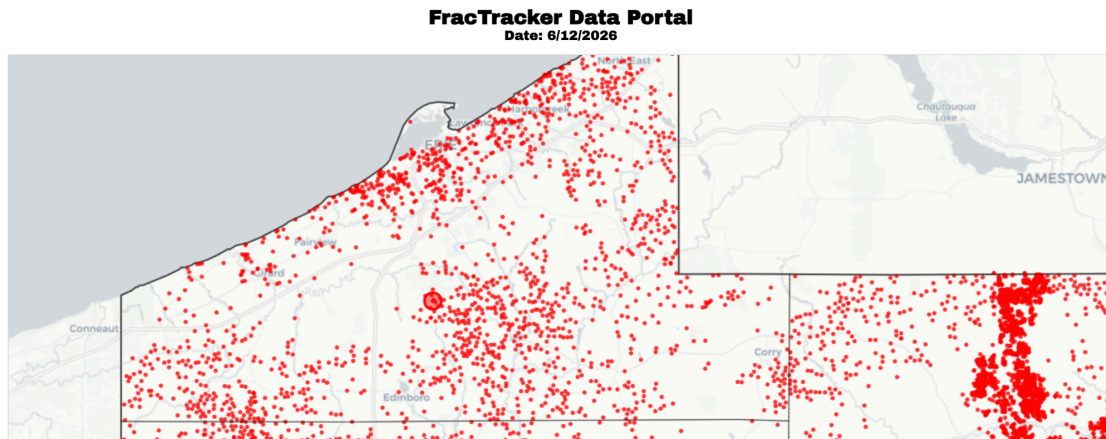
FracTracker’s analysis of PA DEP data found that BCD Properties, Inc. operates 101 active wells in Pennsylvania as of June 10, 2026. Yet PA DEP’s public oil and gas [waste reports](#) do not appear to include waste-production or waste-disposal records for BCD Properties after 2017.

FracTracker found that 96% of Pennsylvania conventional wells that reported disposing of oil and gas waste through road spreading between 2020 and 2025 were listed as “active” as of June 1, 2026. FracTracker is monitoring whether additional conventional operators seek to reclassify or re-permit wells in ways that could allow brine to be sold or distributed outside the regulatory framework that applies to oil and gas wastewater.

The Danylko 6 permit also ties abandonment status to whether the well is used to produce brine, raising additional questions about how “mineral brine” wells will be tracked, regulated, and eventually plugged.



DEP has stated in prior testimony that roadspreading of conventional oil and gas wastewater has not been authorized by DEP’s Office of Oil and Gas Management since 2017. FracTracker’s appeal does not claim that the Danylko 6 permit itself authorizes roadspreading. Instead, the appeal challenges DEP’s decision to approve a brine-production well without clearly resolving what rules apply to the brine after it is produced.



Location of the Danylko 6 “mineral brine” well in Erie County, PA. <https://wells.fractracker.org/>, June 12, 2026.

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