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HARRISBURG, Pa. — A state lawmaker is explaining his remark that suggests the impact of Pennsylvania's booming natural gas industry includes the spread of sexually transmitted disease "amongst the womenfolk."

Democratic Rep. Michael Sturla of Lancaster County was expected to discuss the remark at a previously scheduled hearing Wednesday on gas drilling.

His remark was made in comments e-mailed to a reporter in which he accused a Corbett administration official of downplaying the seriousness of community impacts created by drilling.

The state Republican Party on Tuesday evening called the remark offensive and incredibly stupid, and called on Sturla to apologize. However, Sturla was apparently citing testimony by Troy Community Hospital from May that says among its experiences with the influx of drilling crews is an increase in sexually transmitted diseases.

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