

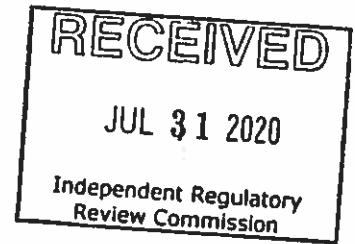
Testimony for Control of VOC Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Sources

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My name is Brian Lee, and I am a student in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak at this virtual public hearing.

The proposed rule is a step in the right direction, but it leaves significant loopholes and does not go far enough in today's environment where we are already seeing an increase in extreme weather events that ARE caused by climate change as found by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

These extreme weather events add more stress and damage to our aging infrastructure in Pennsylvania which was given a C- grade by the American Society of Civil Engineers. This global rise in temperature will also exacerbate air pollution causing COPD, asthma, and permanent lung damage in children by increasing ozone production when we already have some of the worst air quality in the nation and received failing grades from the American Lung Association.

However, global warming can be mitigated by cutting methane emissions. Methane traps about 84 Times more heat than carbon dioxide over twenty years and is responsible for 25% of the warming we are experiencing today. This is why cutting methane emissions is so important, and since methane lasts about ten years in the atmosphere, we WILL see the results of our action or inaction within our lifetime.

Currently, natural gas operators emit 1.1 million tons of methane annually in Pennsylvania which is 16 Times more than what they report to the DEP. These companies care about their short-term bottom line and the profit they make at the end of the day, not about the residents of Pennsylvania, or the long-term negative impacts they are having on our communities. These fracking wells are also disproportionately located in poor, rural communities, according to a study by Clark University, which exacerbates the inequity in our society and places a greater burden, in relation to negative health impacts, on our communities that are the most vulnerable especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. No amount of profit is worth the life of someone from our community.

It is more important now than ever for us to take a stand against the industry and protect our communities when the Trump administration has rolled back methane regulations. Governor Wolf has taken action to address climate change with his executive order to reduce emissions by 26% by 2025, but how can we expect to meet that goal when the industry is emitting 1.1 million tons of methane annually?

How can we expect this proposed rule to effectively manage methane emissions when thousands of low-producing wells are exempt from inspection requirements and the industry can reduce the number of inspections if only a small percent of their equipment is leaking? Just because their equipment is leaking less does not change the fact that they are still leaking and emitting methane into our communities.

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I want to thank you for considering my testimony. I urge the department to close the industry-friendly loopholes and adopt a strong final rule that aligns with our state's climate goals, tackles the climate crisis, protects our communities, and most of all puts Pennsylvanians before the industry. Thank you.