

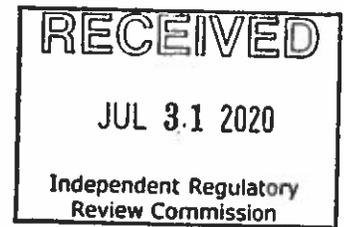
3256

**Kathy Cooper**

---

**From:** ecomment@pa.gov  
**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2020 11:06 AM  
**To:** Environment-Committee@pasenate.com; IRRRC; environmentalcommittee@pahouse.net; regcomments@pa.gov; ntroutman@pasen.gov; timothy.collins@pasenate.com; gking@pahousegop.com  
**Cc:** c-jflanaga@pa.gov  
**Subject:** Comment received - Proposed Rulemaking: Control of VOC Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Sources (#7-544)

CAUTION: **\*\*EXTERNAL SENDER\*\*** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.



The enclosed comment was received as part of the following testimony:

**Testimony name:** Public Hearing 3 - Proposed #7-544  
**Testimony date:** 6/25/2020 12:00:00 AM  
**Testimony location:** WebEx

**Re: eComment System**

**The Department of Environmental Protection has received the following comments on Proposed Rulemaking: Control of VOC Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Sources (#7-544).**

Commenter Information:

Christine Smerker  
(cesmerker@gmail.com)  
1609 Valley Brooke Ct.  
Wexford, PA 15090 US

Comments entered:

Oral comments given at 25 June 2020 hearing. See emailed written comments below:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak as a private citizen and concerned mother of three young children.

Public health and the environment are not mutually exclusive, and the current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted their connection vividly. Air pollution worsens heart and lung ailments, and these conditions are also tied to poorer outcomes from this virus. In a time when one of the safest places for our children to play should be outside, we put them at risk in a state with some of the worst air pollution in the nation. For our health and safety, Pennsylvanians need the DEP to finalize a strong existing source methane rule that protects the health of Pennsylvanians and

our environment.

Pennsylvania is the third largest greenhouse gas polluting state in the nation, and it is the second largest natural gas producing state in the country. As a resident of Allegheny County, a region the American Lung Association gives a failing grade for air quality, common-sense standards that cut harmful air and methane pollution are important to my family's well-being and the health of my community. All Pennsylvanians have the constitutional right to breathe clean air, and access to it should not be dependent upon our zip code.

Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas, over 80 times more potent than carbon in the first 20 years after it is released in the atmosphere. Methane is additionally responsible for 25 percent of the human-caused climate change we are facing today. Oil and gas operations also release toxins into the air, like benzene, which can contribute to heart, liver, kidney and central nervous system damage, as well as blood disorders and cancer. The dangers oil and gas operations present highlight the critical need for them to be strongly regulated, which includes closing the loophole in the draft rule for low-producing wells that are responsible for more than half of the methane pollution from oil and gas sources in the state. The provision that allows operators to reduce the frequency of inspections based on previous inspections not revealing leaks should also be eliminated. Large, uncontrolled leaks can happen at any time and can only be detected with regular inspections.

In order to ensure that Pennsylvania is attractive place to live and do business, we need to further our work in cleaning our air. A majority of Pennsylvanians support action on addressing climate change. Let us work together to make Pennsylvania a leader in addressing climate change and protecting the health and well-being of all of our citizens. Thank you for your time.

---

No attachments were included as part of this comment.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Shirley

---

Jessica Shirley  
Director, Office of Policy  
PA Department of Environmental Protection  
Rachel Carson State Office Building  
P.O. Box 2063  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063  
Office: 717-783-8727  
Fax: 717-783-8926  
ecomment@pa.gov