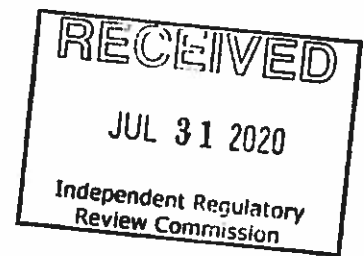


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**Testimony of Debra Topf
Before the Pennsylvania Environmental Quality Board
25 June 2020**

Good evening. My name is Debra Topf. I would like to thank the Environmental Quality Board and the Department of Environmental Protection for the opportunity to testify today.

I am a resident of Tioga County. Our farm is located about 7 miles southwest of Wellsboro and 7 miles east of the Pine Creek Gorge or what is better known as the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon.

I have lived in Tioga County my entire adult life, and my husband is a second-generation dairy farmer. While we no longer milk cows, we continue to grow hay and rent farmland to our neighbors. We cherish the fresh air, green landscapes, and peaceful nature of rural Pennsylvania. We are also blessed to have amazing natural wonders like Pine Creek and Trout Run.

Our area is also rich in natural gas deposits. About a decade ago, innovations in drilling and fracking led to a massive ramp up in development for our area. We were cautious supporters of the boom. Our area had struggled economically, and it wasn't feasible for many families like ours to still make it as farmers.

Our friends, our neighbors, and our family members all benefited from the boom. They were making good money doing good work at a time when good jobs were hard to come by. As mineral owners, we were hopeful that we could see some of those benefits. But like every oil and gas boom, there was a bust. And while production has continued to soar in Pennsylvania, we never saw the infrastructure materialize to participate in that boom due to sustained low gas prices from over-production. The industry had gotten too good at its job for its own good.

Our well was eventually sold to Shell Oil. That was welcomed news, especially given the company's reputation and commitment to reducing pollution – including their support of methane regulation and doing their part to reduce climate change emissions. However, the industry is going through another major transformation due to today's current economic environment, and our well is being sold yet again.

As landowners and royalty owners, we do not believe that our health and economic future should be at the whim of whatever company happens to own the well on our property when production finally starts. I want to know that all companies are held to the same high standard and that air pollution is reduced as much as possible. I also believe that we should protect royalty owners by reducing the amount of waste that occurs during development. That is why I support Gov. Tom Wolf's rule to cut methane and air pollution from wells like mine in Tioga County.

However, I agree that Gov. Wolf should strengthen this rule to include conventional oil and gas wells. Growing up in rural Pennsylvania, we've all heard the stories about how people could light the water of nearby creeks because there was so much methane in the water that could have been contaminated by nearby wells. We just can't afford to ignore the 72,000 conventional wells across the state that are responsible for about half of all methane pollution in the state.

A strong final rule will help ensure the air our family breathes remains clean, and that our grandchildren have a healthy future and secure climate. It will also ensure that royalty owners get a fair return on their investments by reducing methane emissions and bringing more of the resources we own to market.

Thank you.