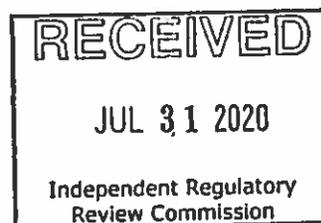


June 25, 2020

3256



I am asking Governor Wolf to secure his legacy as an environmental and climate champion by finalizing a strong rule that cuts methane pollution from existing oil and gas infrastructure.

The proposed rule would reduce emissions of methane and smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from existing oil and gas operations. I urge the DEP to close oil and gas industry loopholes and to adopt a strong final methane rule that tackles the climate crisis.

Unfortunately, PA already has some of the worst air quality in the nation. The American Lung Association's most recent State of the Air report has again issued failing grades to both the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia metro areas for their poor air quality.

Methane is 80 times more potent than carbon in the first 20 years after it is released in the atmosphere and is responsible for the 25% of the man-made global warming we are experiencing today. We cannot afford to ignore the increasingly strange weather and more severe storms and floods caused by climate change that will only get worse unless we act.

Common-sense standards that cut harmful air and methane pollution are supported by a majority of Pennsylvanians. The Wolf administration should continue its work to advance draft rules to cut methane and air pollution from oil and gas infrastructure at a time when protecting public health and safeguarding our climate is more important than ever.

It is essential that the DEP finalize a strong existing source methane rule. Specifically, the agency should:

- 1) Reduce or close the loophole in the draft rule for low-production wells that are responsible for more than half of the methane pollution from oil and gas sources in PA
- 2) Eliminate the provision that allows operators to reduce the frequency of inspections just because previous inspections did not reveal significant leaks. Both the latest research and experience of other states demonstrate that a large, uncontrolled leak can happen at any time and can only be detected with frequent, regular inspections

Background information:

In a report from 2018, [Environmental Defense Fund analyzed methane leaks](#) from Pennsylvania's conventional oil and gas wells, mostly drilled before 2008, and from unconventional wells, those unlocked since then using hydraulic fracturing. There are far more conventional wells than unconventional ones in the state, and because they are older they leak at a much higher rate. Twenty-three percent of methane at a conventional well leaked into the atmosphere compared to 0.3 percent at a fracked well, EDF estimated.

But the newer fracked wells produce considerably more natural gas than the older wells. As a result, even a small leakage rate of 0.3 percent led to a vast amount of methane entering the atmosphere, the analysis estimated. EDF calculated that fracked wells spewed about 253,500 tons of methane in 2015, and conventional wells, 268,900 tons.

Health impacts: The release of air pollutants, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) contribute to ground-level ozone or smog that can worsen respiratory diseases, such as asthma or emphysema, and increase the risk of heart disease and heart attacks. In our new COVID-19 world, we know that people with those conditions are more likely to have bad outcomes if they contract the virus. It's critical that we reduce VOC pollution as a public health imperative.

Let us leave to future generations a legacy of environmental stewardship that decreases the likelihood of a continuing warming planet by reducing pollutants that we know contribute to this warming. We owe it to our children, grandchildren and all those that follow.

Thank you,

Diane Nissen resident of Haverford, PA