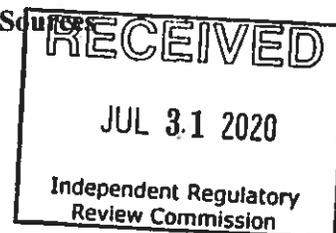


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Testimony for Control of VOC Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Sources

**Environmental Quality Board/DEP
Virtual Public Hearing 6/25/20 — 6PM**



My name is Dr. Ned Ketyer. I live and work in Peters Township, Washington County — the most heavily fracked county in Southwestern PA.

I am a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Environmental Health. Wearing my pediatrician hat, I would like to applaud Governor Wolf for proposing new rules to reduce pollution generated by fracked gas development. Decreasing air emissions of methane, VOCs, and other harmful chemicals into the air we all breathe will bring relief to adults with chronic lung disease and heart disease, and to children who suffer from asthma. It will lower the burden of disease on our youngest generation of Pennsylvanians and reduce their cancer risk from exposure to benzene, and the profound health damage associated with ground level ozone and endocrine disrupting chemicals. Parents living in Washington County and other highly fracked areas will breathe a sigh of relief knowing that you are trying to protect the health of their loved ones, and not just the financial fortunes of one industry. And parents around the world will praise you for finally trying to put a lid on the climate crisis by controlling fugitive methane leaks before it's too late.

I am also a medical consultant with SWPA Environmental Health Project — a non-profit, public health organization helping residents living near shale gas operations understand and manage the many dangers to their health. Putting on my EHP hat, I would call the governor's proposal a first step, but not nearly strong enough to protect individuals and communities. I would urge all of you to strengthen the proposed rules by first including inspections and repairs of ALL oil and gas wells — conventional and unconventional — and not just the lower producing ones. You are aware that low-producing wells are actually a big part of the state's million-ton methane problem. And second, the frequency of those inspections should be ramped up, not tamped down, since large, uncontrolled leaks are random and can only be detected with frequent and regular inspections by competent and unbiased inspectors.

I am also a board member of Physicians for Social Responsibility — Pennsylvania. My PSR hat compels me to say: "Nice try. But fracking is inherently dirty and dangerous, and new rules and regulations can't fix that fact." The overwhelming consensus revealed in the 6th edition of PSR's fracking science

Compendium is that: “There is no evidence that fracking can operate without threatening public health directly, or without imperiling climate stability upon which public health depends.”

You’ve already heard that methane is an extremely potent greenhouse gas, trapping heat in the Earth’s atmosphere 86 times more effectively than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeframe. Stopping methane leaks is low-hanging fruit for lowering greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change. The physical reality of climate change should compel you to aggressively control methane leaks as much as possible. My kids would appreciate that... and I’m sure yours will too.

Let me take my hats off and thank you for listening over these last few days of public comments and for allowing me to speak as a private citizen.

As you know, Pennsylvania residents are in a tough spot right now. COVID-19 has disrupted the best laid plans and dreams. Persistent, systemic racial injustice and bigotry remind us all of how elusive some of those dreams can be. And it is clear to everyone that the climate crisis isn’t going to fix itself.

What can I do as a private citizen to insure a better outcome from these three public health crises? I can vote — that’s the easy part. But I don’t make policy. I don’t listen to the facts and decide which road to take. That’s the hat that all of you wear. That’s your job. Adopt and then strengthen these rules to reduce the risk of poisoning the landscape, sickening our children, and accelerating the climate crisis.

Do your jobs and protect the health of the public you serve, not the profits of companies that serve you. In light of the grand jury report released today by the Attorney General, I don’t think that’s too much to ask.

Children live in a world shaped by our choices. Please choose wisely, and quickly, and reimagine a future — their future — that is clean, healthy, safe, and hopeful once again.

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