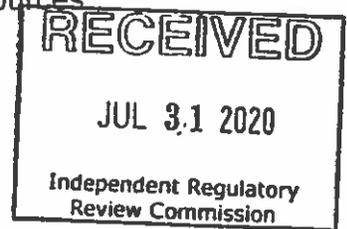


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Testimony for Control of VOC Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Sources

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I live in Independence Township which is a rural area west of Pittsburgh in Beaver County. As a homeowner, a mother of a young child, and a science teacher living in an agricultural area surrounded by oil and natural gas industry development, I stay aware of the effects of this industry on public health and our environment. I was happy to hear of the proposed regulations to reduce VOC emissions from oil and natural gas sites in our state. It is imperative that we act to reduce air pollution and slow climate change.

Controlling VOC's will lead to a reduction in ground level ozone. Our poor air quality is only going to get worse with the opening of Shell's cracker plant. I can see the lights from the construction of the plant above the horizon when I look toward our neighbor's farm. I, myself, have asthma. Many people across our state have respiratory and cardiovascular diseases which are, if not caused by, exacerbated by air pollution. I especially want clean air for my daughter and all the other children. As a teacher, there have been times when my students could not go out to recess due to the condition of our air. How is it that we still have such a problem with our air quality? It is shameful. Article I Section 27 of the Pennsylvania constitution states: "The people have a right to clean air..." We know this is part of our state constitution. If industry infringes on this right, they must face consequences.

The control measures in the proposed rulemaking will also reduce methane emissions. Pennsylvania is the second-largest producer of natural gas in the United States, and the third-largest greenhouse gas polluting state. As Pennsylvanians, if we want to reap the benefits of natural gas, we must take responsibility for its methane. Methane is proven to contribute at a higher rate than carbon dioxide to climate change.

I have suffered from Lyme disease and regularly have to remove ticks. We cannot go out into our yard and woods without checking for ticks. After one walk to my mailbox, I removed nine ticks from my pant legs. As a child in western Pennsylvania, I never had to worry about this. I could roam freely without a tick check. I wish my daughter could have this carefree outdoor enjoyment. Part of this increase in ticks *may* be attributable to the already increasing average temperatures due to climate change. Certainly if the temperatures continue to rise due to greenhouse gases such as methane, infected ticks will become more of a problem.

We are also already experiencing negative effects on agriculture due to changing weather patterns. As we all know, this is the canary in the coal mine and the tip of the melting iceberg when it comes to climate change. The impending results of a rising average temperature on our world will be catastrophic for humans and many other species. Again, I want us to think of our youth. They are calling for the change needed to give them the future they deserve. Their collective voice is pleading for drastic change which they know must happen now. Let us not be lulled into complacency by the false statements of those who do not recognize the truth of science. Let us also not confine our thinking to believe that unsustainable and harmful industries are the best way to create jobs in our state. The oil and gas industry has already taken advantage of good people with lies about the harmlessness of their impacts on air and water. Pennsylvanians want and need a healthy ecosystem. This proposed rulemaking is a step in the right direction in protecting us all.

This is an opportunity we cannot miss! Close loopholes. Do not let low producing wells go unchecked. Eliminate the provision that allows operators to reduce the frequency of inspections if previous inspections do not reveal significant methane leaks. It is in the interest of public health and the economy to utilize the best technology for the lowest emission limitation. In this proposal, the EPA defines RACT (reasonably available control technology) as "the lowest emission limitation that a particular source is capable of meeting by the application of control technology that is reasonably available considering technological and economic feasibility." If it is not economically feasible, then perhaps this is not the correct energy source or the right product to benefit Pennsylvania, and the operator should not be attempting this work. Instead cleaner industries with sustainable jobs can replace them. Damage to public health and the environment does not come without an economic cost.

Put into effect the strongest oil and natural gas air pollution regulations you can for the people of Pennsylvania. Ensure that accurate inspections are done and correctly reported. Ensure a path to enforcement. And don't be satisfied. After this rule has been tightened and enacted, know that this is just the first step. Continue on with the critical work of keeping the people safe and stopping the emissions that contribute to climate change.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.