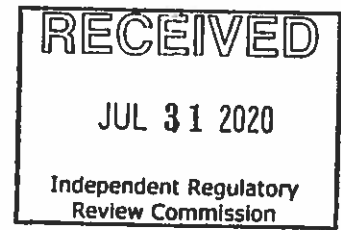


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Testimony for Control of VOC Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Sources

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Good afternoon.

My name is Inge Williams and I am the pastor of Friedens Lutheran Church in Shartlesville, Pennsylvania in northern Berks County. I speak today as a policy council member of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania. Our mission is to advocate, in response to God's love in Jesus Christ, for wise and just public policies in Pennsylvania that promote the common good. We work in partnership with the seven Lutheran Synods in the state (representing some half a million Lutherans), 17 Lutheran social ministry organizations and our seminary, outdoor, and campus ministries.

In our work to serve the marginalized following the example of Christ, we already see the effects of climate change. Our Lutheran social ministry organizations have been involved in finding housing for climate refugees who came to Pennsylvania following both Hurricane Maria and the recent earthquakes in Puerto Rico. Congregations in Reading hosted "Camp Noah," a ministry aimed to help children heal from the trauma of natural disaster, in this case new residents of Reading who had lived through Hurricane Maria. Local congregations showed up for their neighbors in my neighboring community of Hamburg and in Schuylkill County following the extreme rain events

that caused flash flooding in the summer of 2018. In my own town of Shartlesville, the orchard owner has had to take out crop insurance each of the past five years because of erratic weather patterns, making the lure of selling his historic family-owned orchard land to warehouse builders loom ever larger. I've sat with children receiving respiratory therapy treatments because of their asthma, and I've had older parishioners with COPD call with regret that they can't attend outdoor worship because of our hotter and more humid summers. And whether they would utter the words climate change or not, I see the increasing frequency of extreme weather events — the clear effect of human fossil fuel consumption — having a negative psychological effect on Pennsylvanians, increasing their sense that the world is spinning out of control and eroding their faith in the government which is tasked with promoting our commonwealth's well-being. The truth is that climate change puts further pressures on the poor and the vulnerable: those whom Christ calls the church to serve and protect.

In a Lutheran understanding, it is the role of the state to uphold the law. And the role of the law is to protect those who cannot protect themselves. And the role of the church is to remind the state to uphold the law. We cannot make methane regulations: only you can do that. And so I call on you today to do what only you can do: protect vulnerable Pennsylvanians by addressing climate change by reducing or 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 Pennsylvania, and eliminating the provision that allows operators to reduce the frequency of inspections just because previous inspections did not reveal significant leaks, because 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.

Because methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas but remains in the atmosphere for a shorter period of time than carbon dioxide, it seems to

me that methane regulation is a low-hanging fruit in the governor's efforts to cut greenhouse gas pollution in the commonwealth. I urge you today to protect public health by closing loopholes and moving forward on meeting our state's climate goals.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I also thank you for your work to serve the common good and protect the most vulnerable in our commonwealth.