



Winter Report

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EPA moves to limit Marcellus air pollution

PennEnvironment backs strong health standards

With public concern in Pennsylvania intensifying over pollution from Marcellus Shale gas drilling, the Environmental Protection Agency has proposed new rules to curb harmful air emissions from oil and gas operations.

“We applaud the EPA’s efforts and expect them to move ahead with the strongest possible protections from air pollution caused by gas drilling,” said PennEnvironment’s Erika Staaf.

Pollution reductions from 25-30 percent

The proposal is the first nationwide step toward protecting communities from air pollution released by extensive oil and gas drilling. EPA estimates when the proposed amendments are fully implemented, they will result in massive reductions in air pollution from gas drilling, including:

- Reducing smog-forming VOC (volatile organic compounds) pollution by 540,000 tons, equal to an industry-wide reduction of 25 percent;
- Cutting emissions of methane, a major contributor to global warming, by 3.4 million tons—equal to a reduction of about 26 percent industry-wide; and
- Decreasing air toxics by 38,000 tons, a reduction of nearly 30 percent.

At the same time, recent studies have shown that air pollution from gas drilling threatens the public’s health. For example, Southern Methodist University



Tim Shaffer

▲ Proposed EPA regulations will reduce toxic air pollution from gas drilling sites by nearly 30 percent.

researchers found that gas drilling in Texas’ Barnett Shale produces 70 percent as much smog-forming pollution as all the cars and trucks in the area.

And Wyoming’s Sublette County, home to thousands of gas wells but with a population of less than 9,000, suffers from unhealthy air pollution more commonly associated with big cities like Los Angeles.

Thousands join nationwide call to action

In order to show broad public support for this proposal, PennEnvironment worked with groups across the nation to collect and deliver tens of thousands of comments to the EPA in support of its regulatory efforts to reduce air pollution from gas drilling.



Staff

Training

Hundreds of Pennsylvanians across the state have attended trainings with PennEnvironment staff, like Field Director Adam Garber (right), as part of our Marcellus Shale Citizen Empowerment Project. See P. 3 for more details.



To our members

I've got good news, bad news and better news. First, the good news. As we closed the book on 2011, we had the chance to celebrate as the EPA proposed new rules to cut toxic air pollution from gas drilling.

The bad news? We're still facing formidable odds in the fight to keep Pennsylvania safe from drilling, including a governor who's pocketed huge campaign contributions from drilling companies and a Legislature that refuses to stand up to him.

Fortunately, there's better news. From Pittsburgh to Scranton to Bucks County, growing numbers of us are demanding that our leaders protect our environment and our communities from drilling. And the best news of all? We know that Pennsylvanians from all walks of life care deeply about our environment, our families' health and the places we love. No matter how powerful and well-heeled the gas industry lobbyists may be, when people come together to defend our environmental values, we almost always find a way to win. Thanks for being a part of it.

David Masur
Director

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Recent action

Study finds Pa. fourth in nation for solar jobs

Across the nation, jobs in the solar energy sector are growing much more rapidly than average industries, according to a Solar Foundation report released by PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center.

The report, "National Solar Jobs Census 2011," showed that roughly 4,700 Pennsylvanians are employed in the solar industry, ranking the state 4th in the nation for jobs in this clean energy sector.

PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center partnered with Vote Solar, local elected officials and solar companies to release the report at news conferences in Scranton, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia.

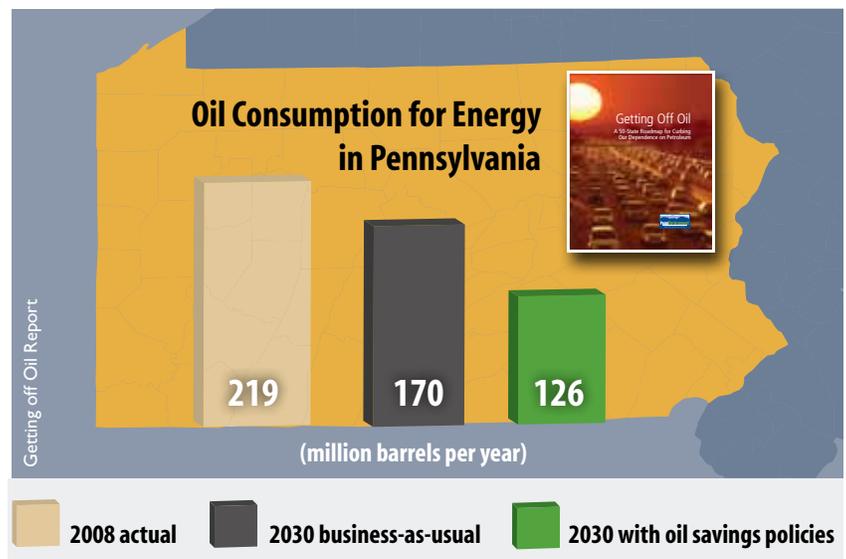
PennEnvironment has also helped secure more than 100 legislative co-sponsors for a bill that would further boost the renewable energy credits that have been so effective in expanding the state's growing solar industry.

Blueprint shows how to cut oil use by nearly one-third

America took a huge step toward ending our dependence on oil this past summer with the adoption of a new PennEnvironment-backed fuel economy standard for cars and light trucks.

However, this is just a start. To guide us the rest of the way, we joined our national federation in releasing "Getting Off Oil: A 50-State Roadmap." The study shows how increasing auto fuel economy standards, improving public transportation, and implementing greener building codes could reduce our oil use by more than 30 percent by 2030.

Rep. Gregory Vitali congratulated PennEnvironment on the release. "This report brings needed attention to a very important issue," Vitali said. "Pennsylvania has a huge transportation sector and this report identifies many ways our state can help reduce our nation's dependency on oil."





Danger in the air: Pa. is nation's 6th smoggiest state

The air in Pennsylvania was unhealthy to breathe on at least 35 days in 2010, making it the nation's sixth smoggiest state according to a report by PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center.

The report, entitled "Danger in the Air," tabulated the number days on which it was dangerous for children, the elderly, and people with respiratory diseases like asthma to be outside breathing the air, and ranked states and local communities.

The greater Philadelphia area was ranked the fifth smoggiest large metropolitan area, and Pittsburgh was nineteenth. Among medium-sized metropolitan areas, Lancaster, the Lehigh Valley, and Reading were in the smoggiest 20.

Public not always alerted

On days with elevated levels of smog pollution, children, the elderly and people with respiratory illness suffer the most.

Children who grow up in areas with high levels of smog may develop diminished lung capacity, putting them at greater risk of lung disease later in life.

"Pennsylvanians deserve clean air. But on far too many days, Pennsylvanians are exposed to dangerous smog pollution," said Adam Garber, field director for PennEnvironment. "For the sake of our children, we must make every day a safe day to breathe."

PennEnvironment's research also included new data showing that the problem is even worse than the public thought. For example, research shows that on seven days in 2010, residents in the Philadelphia area were exposed to smog levels that were found to be dangerous to breathe—but because of outdated federal air quality rules, the public was never alerted to unhealthy air levels.

Similarly, other metropolitan areas across the state were exposed to additional high-smog, no-alert days, including Pittsburgh

(6 days), Reading (15 days), York (12 days), as well as 11 other metropolitan areas detailed in the report.

A call to clean the air we breathe

The report came as the Environmental Protection Agency began to consider new public health protections from smog pollution, which would dramatically cut smog across the country and reduce the number of unhealthy air days in Pennsylvania.

PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center released our findings at press events in Philadelphia, Allentown, Scranton, Harrisburg, State College and Pittsburgh. We were joined at these news conferences by, among others, Dr. Jim Plumb of Physicians for Social Responsibility and state Reps. Steve Samuelson (Bethlehem) and Ken Smith (Scranton).

"Poor air quality negatively impacts all Pennsylvanians," said Rep. Smith, speaking in Scranton. "Proper air quality regulations will ensure quality of life here in Pennsylvania for decades to come."



America's smoggiest areas

*Rank Area: # Smog Days in 2010

- 1 Riverside-San Bernardino, CA: 110
- 2 Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA: 69
- 3 Baltimore, MD: 33
- 3 Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV: 33
- 5 **Philadelphia, PA-NJ: 29**
- 6 Houston, TX: 27
- 7 Atlanta, GA: 23
- 7 Sacramento, CA: 23
- 7 St. Louis, MO-IL: 23
- 10 Louisville, KY-IN: 19

Source: "Danger in the Air," PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center.

For more, visit www.PennEnvironmentCenter.org



The Marcellus Shale Citizen Empowerment Project

Pennsylvania hasn't seen a land grab as reckless and destructive as the rush for Marcellus Shale gas since the coal boom a century ago—and the environmental consequences this time could prove to be even worse.

Gas drilling companies predict they will drill as many as 50,000 wells across Pennsylvania—devastating local streams and rivers, carving up our beautiful state forests, and polluting our air with smog and other dangerous pollutants.

To meet this challenge head on, PennEnvironment has launched the Marcellus Shale Citizen Empowerment Project.

The project is organizing meet-ups across the state to train more than 1,000 Pennsylvanians with the skills and knowledge they need to protect our streams, rivers, forests and communities.

Teaming up with local organizations, including the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, University of Scranton, and League of Women Voters, to name just a few, we've already organized 17 trainings with nearly 400 people in attendance.



To attend a training or host one in your community, email agarber@pennenvironment.org.

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PennEnvironment

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PennEnvironment

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind PennEnvironment. We focus exclusively on protecting Pennsylvania's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Updates on the places we love

PennEnvironment staff and supporters are working to protect many of our most beloved places.

Our rivers and streams: In December, PennEnvironment organized Protect Our Natural Heritage Meet-ups to protect local streams and other open spaces. In Chestnut Hill, Southampton and Carlisle, people organized in support of Growing Greener, the state's premier land and water conservation program.

Allegheny National Forest: In 2000, President Bill Clinton declared 60 million acres of national forest, including parts of the Allegheny, off-limits to most logging. When some U.S. House members pushed to undo the limits, PennEnvironment members called on our lawmakers to defend our forest.

Our state parks: Recently, Gov. Tom Corbett considered turning over state parks to private companies. We urged lawmakers to stand up for our parks.



Jango, Flickr

◀ When Gov. Corbett floated the idea of turning over state parks to private companies, PennEnvironment strongly objected—and so did hundreds of our members.

Left: Ricketts Glen State Park.