

Written Comments Submitted by Concerned Residents

Scott and Jessica Mathias – Williamsport, PA

I. Background

We purchased our home in 2014 in a rural area outside of Williamsport, PA along the Loyalsock Creek. At that time, there were private, family-owned homes on either side and a private wooded lot at the back which adjoined the Loyalsock State Forest. The location and peaceful/woody ambiance of the property was a big selling point for us. Four years later, in May of 2018, we learned that Pennsylvania General Energy LLC (PGE) had approached two neighbors and purchased approximately 100 acres of private land with the intention to locate gas pipelines, water pipelines and a water withdrawal site. The final sale on June 21, 2018, was completed very quietly as though not to draw attention to the transaction in a residential zoning area.

As part of this project, PGE demolished the homes on both properties, with intent to use the land for gas infrastructure to connect the company's three separately leased tracts in the Loyalsock State Forest. In other words, PGE converted three separately leased tracts into one large, contiguous tract. These are COP Tracts 724 and 723 on Jacoby and Cove Mountains in Gamble Township; and COP 726, encompassing over 3,000 acres on top of the Allegheny Ridge in Plunketts Creek Township.

In 2018, our township Supervisors altered ordinances which were proposed by their own Planning Commission with the very purpose of protecting existing homes from gas infrastructure. Supervisors removed a requirement that pipelines be set back 300 feet from existing buildings and subsequently lied, saying the oversight was an error and the 300-foot setback could be hand-written in. As township residents urged the Supervisors to put the 300-foot setback back in the ordinance, PGE attorneys pressured the Supervisors not to act. The gas drilling company was successful and the township caved by relinquishing township zoning altogether to Lycoming County zoning laws, which have no setback requirements for gas pipelines.

In 2022, a high-pressure, 16 to 20-inch diameter (permit paperwork varies and no definitive confirmation of size has been determined) natural gas gathering line was installed 300 feet or less from at least three homes. Our home is among the three, and our home and water well are within 200 feet from the pipeline. In spite of many meetings and months of citizen involvement in opposition to the project, PGE's private land purchase was combined with full compliance to the company's business plan by SRBC, DCNR, and DEP. All necessary permits were granted, the corporate corridor became a reality and the value of the 3 separate COP tracts multiplied exponentially.

While not in service at the time of this testimony, PGE has installed the pipe which will eventually be used as a high-pressure, 16 to 20-inch, unregulated Class 1 gas gathering line. PGE plans to connect this gathering line to its existing Shawnee Pipeline, which is already in place to transport gas from COP 726. These unregulated Class 1 gathering lines are so potentially dangerous PHMSA has been advocating for their regulation for years.

PGE's project included installing a permanent underground utility corridor under the creek in 2022, which PGE installed using open trenching and coffer dams, and resulted in no less than TWELVE violations of the Clean Streams and Solid Waste Management Acts (issued by DEP and the PA Fish and Boat Commission). Again and again, PGE failed to follow the law.

The project also includes a subsurface water intake in the creek, and construction of a 15-foot-wide access road which curves behind and within roughly 60 feet of our home and water well. At the end of the road, in what was

previously unbroken forest, a 120' x 240' gravel pad and 40' x 70' secondary water pumping station housing electric motors sufficient to pump water to the top of the mountain is under construction at this time.

II. Physical Health and Safety Concerns

The Loyalsock Valley is prone to flooding and rock slides due to the steep slopes. Given the Revolution Pipeline explosion in Beaver County, PA, which occurred within a week of being put into service, we remain deeply concerned about the proximity of a 16 to 20-inch diameter line running so close to our home and up and down steep, landslide-prone slopes.

There is a potential for contamination of our water well, which is less than 10 feet from the property line adjacent to PGE's project. There is the very real risk that trenching and drilling and boring into the mountainside could negatively impact the health of the aquifer and our well.

There are recently documented health and safety issues associated with methane extraction, transportation and processing. A recent University of Chicago study "connects nearby fracking activity to real, serious human health outcomes, suggesting it's not just a matter of economics or environmental sustainability-- but that policymakers and residents alike should start prioritizing the health of citizens, whether drilling new wells or plugging old ones." The study found that older adults living near fracking sites in [Bradford, Susquehanna and Tioga counties] Pennsylvania were more likely to be hospitalized for cardiovascular diseases than those who lived in nearby New York state, where fracking is banned. Other recent studies have also found greater incidents of asthma in children who live near fracking sites. We therefore worry about our own physical health being in such close proximity to the gas extraction activity that is increasing all around us.

There is also the concern that our home lies within the blast radius of this pipeline. Based on the formula that researchers have developed to estimate the blast radius if a pipeline fails, our home and that of other neighbors would be within that radius if the proposed pipeline were to rupture. The internal pressure within the pipeline is expected to be around 1400 PSI. According to the mathematical equation (*Potential Impact Radius (PIR) as measured in feet; $PIR = 0.69 * d * \sqrt{P}$ Where: d = diameter of the pipe (inches) \sqrt{P} = square root P = pressure (psi)*) this means $0.69 \times$ at least 16 inches \times square root of 1400 PSI (37.416), the blast radius is 380-foot radius from the pipeline; our home is situated at 200 feet, clearly within that radius. The need for consistent safety standards and greater oversight and regulation for high pressure pipelines, including transmission and gathering lines, is evident. Our lives and property remain at risk.

Both of us work in healthcare. Jessica is a cancer survivor who has intentionally made choices throughout her life to promote physical and psychological wellbeing and has devoted her life to caring for cancer patients. We chose our home along the Loyalsock Creek because living in this formerly beautiful setting allowed us to decompress following stress-filled days at work. We also chose to move here to escape the industrialized environment found closer to town. The development of this massive gas infrastructure project next to our home has significantly disrupted every aspect of our home life. The noise and vibration of large trucks now traveling through the former woods and within feet of our home has completely stolen our sense of place and the peaceful enjoyment of our own land.

III. Aesthetic and Financial Concerns

We have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into our home and land to improve the aesthetics and our connection with nature. Locating a high pressure gas pipeline next to our home will certainly diminish the value of our property. Our township already faces challenges retaining residents because of increasingly severe

flooding. Impacts on our quality of life from this project and other natural gas development in our watershed are escalating. The Loyalsock is a recognized scenic valley and Exceptional Value waterway, the 2018 Pennsylvania River of the Year. There are aesthetic challenges for both the residents and those who visit hoping to enjoy a wide range of outdoor recreational experiences in the creek and state forest.

In addition to the many issues wrought by the gas pipeline, significant new infrastructure is underway for the water withdrawal site to be located in conjunction with the gas pipeline. The surface water withdrawal permits allow PGE and other gas companies to remove two to four million gallons of water daily at each site, and this is the fourth such water withdrawal on the Loyalsock Creek. The gas industry is damaging the very resources that consistently attract people to this region.

IV. Psychological and Socio-Political Concerns

For more than three years we have expressed our concerns about this project through repeated contacts with SRBC, DEP, the Army Corps of Engineers, our Lycoming County Commissioners, our respective township Supervisors, the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC), the Governor's office, our local State Representatives, and leaders at the highest level of DCNR. We have not tried to deny PGE the right to access water or transport extracted gas. Our position has always been that there are other options that minimize the risk and protect quality of life in this rural neighborhood and valley.

DCNR seems to believe due diligence has been satisfied through the agency's efforts to safeguard the steep slope viewsheds by requiring PGE to attempt a micro-tunneling process for the gas pipeline – a process that has been utilized infrequently in these geologic conditions. However, DCNR has not disclosed any alternate plan should the experimental micro-tunneling process fail due to unstable geology. Neither DCNR nor PGE has guaranteed any acceptance of responsibility or shown proof of insurance to nearby homeowners should the powerful underground vibrations of the process cause structural damage to our homes or properties.

DCNR initially informed us that because PGE purchased private land, the company could not be denied these plans to connect to the state forest by this route, despite the fact that the majority of the project was being built on leased State Forest lands. In conjunction with legal counsel hired by a group of our neighbors, we were informed that the leases between PGE and DCNR were amended, though this only occurred once we brought irregularities to their attention. Part of the amended leases involved a land transfer from PGE to DCNR, deeding the two residential parcels as public lands. We did not expect DCNR to take over the project as landlord so quickly. The question about who would bear ultimate liability and responsibility for significant issues has never been addressed with us, though this is now entirely a state-sponsored project.

The Lycoming County Commissioners visited our neighborhoods on July 22, 2021. After their visit, the Commissioners wrote to DCNR and then Governor Wolf, expressing concerns about the impacts of the proposed project on our communities and urging the agency to find a better way to allow PGE to extract and transport the gas. DCNR did not disclose the lease amendments to our Commissioners, who wrote to DCNR July 23, 2021 directly expressing concern about the project and seeking to set up a meeting. The amended leases were executed *before* the Commissioners even contacted DCNR, and yet DCNR still acted as if there were matters to discuss. The deed transfers for the properties from PGE to DCNR reportedly took place on September 28, 2021.

In a recent Gettysburg Times article DCNR Secretary Cindy Dunn was quoted as saying, "Pennsylvania really stands to gain from the fact that we've protected the natural resources of our land and kept our sense of place." She goes on to say, "Climate control may be the largest external predator in our current time, but the largest

internal impact and concern is the lack of engagement of youth with the outdoors. Less and less young people are engaged directly with nature..." DCNR cannot have it both ways. It is not possible to fully and responsibly tackle climate change while continuing to allow the fossil fuel industry to thrive by privatizing profits made on public lands and then socializing the costs incurred onto the taxpayers.

Indeed, the DCNR web site claims that our forests "*provide incalculable values and benefits to Pennsylvania citizens and beyond. They filter and protect drinking water and thousands of miles of streams. They provide critical habitat for plants and animals. They sequester carbon and clean our air. They provide places for us to marvel in the scenic beauty of landscape and a wide range of recreational opportunities, such as: Hunting, Hiking, Camping, and Fall foliage viewing.*"

We agree that each of the four uses listed has "incalculable value" to the citizens of PA. This is contrasted with the extraction of methane from state lands, which is not conservation, but environmental exploitation for financial gain.

According to the Department of Community and Economic Development, Pennsylvania's natural gas industry currently employs more than 72,000 residents. Funny thing is that the state's promotion of the industry, which can only be assumed as an intent to lure more residents through jobs and to increase state revenues, has done nothing to increase the population of this state since at least 2000. While there have been fluctuations, the gas boom apparently has done nothing to attract and maintain long-term residents to this beautiful state. Indeed, in spite of (or perhaps because of) over 1,700 permitted methane gas wells, the population of our own Lycoming County is declining. Our local mall is a shell of a building with no businesses in it, and our regional airport, which the county invested millions of dollars to upgrade, has no commercial airline service. These are clearly not signs of a thriving financial community.

So, if the jobs are not attracting permanent families to this part of Pennsylvania, what might? Well, according to DCNR's website, "*As an industry sector, outdoor recreation added \$14 billion to Pennsylvania's gross domestic product in 2021, producing more than 150,000 jobs and accounting for 1.6 percent of our total economic productivity, according to U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.*" Viewed through a largescale lens, the industrialization of our state lands is a travesty, a blow to the growing outdoor recreation industry, and a trampling by gas industry bulldozers of Article 1, Section 27 of our state Constitution.

We recognize now that all permitting through DEP, SRBC and DCNR, is merely a rubber stamp for the gas industry with no real accountability or penalties. The project behind our home is a cog in a much larger gear system. Governmental agencies approve smaller portions, which then justify further development. The project has already had a damaging effect to the creek and this valley. The lack of accountability when infractions occur, the incongruence between the missions of DCNR, DEP and SRBC and their business relations with the gas industry, and the lack of consideration for our well-being and home have completely eroded our confidence that regulating agencies offer any real protection to us or our environment. Our constant need to monitor this project and fear of living next to a potentially hazardous pipeline continues to have harmful effects on our mental health and psychological wellbeing.

V. Conclusion

Pennsylvania has a sad history (timber, coal, and now natural gas) of abusing its natural resources in the name of the holy dollar and the promise of a few jobs. We have noted to DCNR that their fiduciary relationship with the gas industry is a conflict of interest with their very mandate. An agency cannot be objective with an entity with

which they are doing business. In doing so, they have a vested interest in these projects, which means that the protection and rights of the residents and the well-being of the environment becomes secondary to corporate profit and state windfalls. It is no wonder the residents of this state are leaving. Our representatives do not represent us. They tout sales pitches, espouse short-sighted endeavors, and promise riches which somehow never appear. We value the health and natural beauty of this valley as a treasure in our hearts, but we see our state continually selling it for a financial profit. We are just native Pennsylvanian's seeking to preserve our home and the beauty of this valley in which we chose to live. Allowing pipelines and other infrastructure to be developed so close to homes and other community buildings should be safeguarded with setbacks to protect the residents. This state needs to do some serious soul searching and realize that methane extraction and the resulting infrastructure are not the answer to our state's economic progress or the path to safe and reliable energy. Failure to act on behalf of the citizens and the growing need for a sustainable energy economy will only continue the bleeding of PA's population, like ourselves, from this beautiful state.

Thank you for your time in hearing our testimony and your consideration of this important legislation.

Philip Vecchio – New Kensington, PA

I would like to begin by stating that I wish no ill-will onto anyone coming across these words, and so I kindly ask that all of you return the favor. I have a young, beautiful family and a productive, non-political work life. Thank you.

With that being said, I believe human beings are the cause for my alarm when it comes to limiting our natural resource's exposure to the inherent dangers of expanding infrastructure. Before I became a union carpenter 3 years ago, I was employed by some of the largest general contractors in the United States, installing mainly pipeline systems for the natural gas industry. I have held a range of different positions throughout my career building pipelines, from general laborer to assistant to a project superintendent on a billion-dollar job.

I have seen firsthand the idea that violating some of our environmental rules and regulations is considered the "cost of doing business" in several cases. From covering up damage to existing pipeline infrastructure in the process of new construction (which is incredibly dangerous for residents in the area) to blatant disregard to protected wetlands and habitats (I have seen heavy machinery plow straight through signage for protected lands).

I am not here to argue the science behind the environmental downsides of faulty infrastructure, but to ask that everyone involved in the decision making behind future legislation understand that human beings are imperfect animals with problems of their own. Between corruption and carelessness, I tend to side with caution when it comes to advancing future projects that have the capacity to damage lives and or our natural resources; air, water, etc.

All of our families deserve a world as free from pollution as humanly possible.

Thank you for your time.

Dennis McAndrew – Elizabeth, PA

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the health and safety of communities in Pennsylvania in relation to shale gas infrastructure, specifically well pads and compressor stations. As a resident deeply invested in the well-being of our communities, I urge you to consider increasing the setbacks from these facilities to a state minimum of at least 2,500 feet. This change is essential to protect the health, safety, and overall quality of life for the residents of our great state.

David Matijevich – Smith Township, PA

I wanted to let you know what it is like living close to a Natural Gas Compressor station. I am currently living 1200 feet from the Three Brothers Compressor station Smith Township, Washington county. I am living in the family house, I've lived in this area all my life. Before the gas wells it was a very nice rural area . Now not so. Before the compressor station we could go outside in the evening to enjoy the quiet night air, listen to nature. We don't go out at night anymore the noise has ruined that. We had our back porch enclosed just so we can sit on it. The noise is high at times ,the house vibrates with a low rumble at night. I've tried to get help because of the noise ,I called everyone that I could think of from the local supervisors ,who told me to stop bothering them to Shapiro when he was the attorney general to Wolfe and even Trump, not a single answer back. I gave up ,I've come to the conclusion that no one cares because it's not their home. I attached the newspaper article that the Pittsburgh press did on us. No compressor should be this close to any home 2500 feet may be too close. I always ask, How did an industrial site get approved and allowed to be put out in an area zoned for farming. If I wanted to build a home in a commercial zoned area it would not be approved. Also when the pumps are running they start booming and rumbling , this comes thru the ground thru the foundation of your house and you can't stop it .I feel my civil rights have been violated with approval of this big station ,which has 10 pumps. Thanks for reading this.

Joel Beres – Sutersville, PA

I live close to a proposed gas compressor site in Elizabeth Township, PA.

This site is located in an economically depressed area of the township near the small village of Victory.

The current site does not have a 2500 ft setback from the closest house nor is it more than a few hundred feet feet from Douglas Run.

The people of Victory already contend with mine runoff from the now-defunct Worden Mine site that continuously turns the water in Douglas Run orange. The orange water empties into the Youghiogheny river, which is unsightly and compounds the problem. Victory is also located near the US Steel Clairton works coke plant, which is a significant emitter of particulates and other harmful air contaminants.

The current siting of this compressor, which is approximately 1/4 mile (1320 ft) from homes in Victory and Blythedale is another form of pollution for this small neighborhood that doesn't have the economic clout to defend itself from the existing air and water pollution and now will suffer from noise pollution from the compressor.

To make matters worse, the township commissioners accepted a playground as a "gift" from the compressor company that is nowhere near the site where the poorest and most affected people live. The playground is located near the village of Mount Vernon in Elizabeth Township, which is populated by persons much higher up on the economic ladder. This action is beyond the pale and demeaning.

I urge you to increase the setback to 2500 ft. It would provide some solace to the underserved and exploited community of Victory, which has become a haven for polluters and pollution.

Joey Resciniti – West Deer Township, PA

Chairman Vitali, Chairman Caser, and members of the committee,

Since early 2020, I've been working to educate my community in West Deer Township, Allegheny County about plans for unconventional gas wells and associated infrastructure proposed by Olympus Energy, LLC. Our experience in West Deer illuminates the burden placed on Pennsylvanians by the Commonwealth's delay in increasing the distance between gas extraction and the places where people live, work, learn, play, and heal.

It has long been apparent that the 500 foot setback put in place by Act 13 of 2012 is insufficient to protect public health and safety. When municipalities were given the authority to impose greater distances, many did. In 2012, West Deer Township passed an ordinance requiring a 650 setback between a deep well site and pre-existing buildings. Taken at face value, the hodgepodge of distances chosen by municipalities creates inequality and imposes health burdens based solely on which municipality one calls home. Residents in Morris Township, Washington County, where I grew up, are expected to live just 500 feet from the same infrastructure that residents in Franklin Park Borough, Allegheny County keep 1,000 feet away.

Relying on municipal ordinances for setback distances is fraught with problems. In December 2021, West Deer Township denied a conditional use application for the Dionysus well pad because the 650 foot setback distance was not met. Olympus Energy appealed the Township's decision, but the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas upheld the denial. Just before the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania was due to release their en banc decision, Olympus withdrew their appeal. The Dionysus well pad will not be constructed.

With a new board seated, West Deer Township held a public hearing for a second Olympus Energy well pad called Leto. The Leto well pad is also less than 650 feet from pre-existing buildings, but the now pro-drilling board determined that the buildings did not meet the ordinance definition for buildings and did not count for the setback requirement. This left residents just 800 feet from the proposed well pad without the protection promised by the ordinance that a well pad could not be built so close to the sturdy block buildings in their neighborhood. The residents' interpretation of the ordinance is correct, but the only recourse Pennsylvanians have against a capricious group of elected officials is to file a costly appeal. West Deer residents did appeal the approval of the Leto well pad. That appeal is expected to cost upwards of \$30,000 just at the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

West Deer Township is currently updating the entire code of ordinances including the oil and gas ordinance. At their October meeting, the five-person board discussed the setback distance that should be encoded in the new ordinance. The West Deer Township Planning Commission recommended 1,000 feet for unconventional well sites, but over the course of a year, the pro-drilling board reduced the distance to 750 feet. Now, at the moment of finalizing the ordinance, the board decided just to stick with 650 feet. After all, "we're still ahead of the state," one supervisor observed.

The supervisors' decision was based entirely on offering as much of West Deer Township to the gas industry as possible without giving any consideration to public health, safety, and welfare. This is a problem, but the bigger problem is that the board has shown a willingness to disregard the ordinance when decisions are in front of them. A development can be entirely in violation of the municipal ordinance and all residents can do is seek costly remedy in the courts. **This makes the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a place where clean air and water are not constitutional rights but paid amenities for a privileged few that can bear the burden of paying for legal representation.**

The Pennsylvania legislature must act swiftly to pass HB170 increasing statewide setbacks to 2,500 feet. All Pennsylvanians deserve to have a uniform, health-based distance between their homes and unconventional gas development. This distance should be guaranteed and not dependent on the whims of municipal officials.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.

Tom Pike – Forest Hills, PA

I was born in Murrysville. In the 1880s, Murrysville was the site of the construction of the first commercial methane gas well in history. Commercial methane extraction began quite literally in my backyard. In Murrysville, this is treated like a local point of pride.

Should we be proud of this chapter of my region's history? Three years after it was drilled, the Haymaker Well caught fire and burned, in one of the worst manmade disasters to ever strike Southwestern PA. The flames could not be extinguished. The well burned for months. The flames rose so high into the sky that the fire could be seen from Pittsburgh, 20 miles away.

You would think we would have learned from that, but today, we rely on fossil gas more than ever. We are treated regularly to news stories about casing failures, blowouts, frac-outs, and other entirely avoidable miseries.

Over and over again, in the 140 years since the Haymaker well blew out, people in power have chosen to repeat the same mistake. One explosion and months-long fire should have filled the lawmakers and regulators of our region with a deep shame and a drive to make sure it never happened again, yet here we are with more gas wells than ever. Murrysville is peppered with them, and its residents are forced to endure the consequences.

If we have to live with an energy system that shoots flames into the sky that are visible from 20 miles away, the least our government can do is specify that it shouldn't do that immediately next to our homes.

The Murrysville gas well is so revered in my hometown that it is literally emblazoned on that city's logo. Yet, even in its romanticized image on the city seal, it is depicted in flames.

Karen Gdula – Aliquippa, PA

Dear Environmental Resources and Energy Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to share comments about Well Location Restrictions. I became an advocate for unconventional well safety on September 10, 2018, the day the 24-inch Energy Transfer gathering pipeline exploded and destroyed the home located three properties from mine. I live on Ivy Lane, the site of the Revolution rupture that caused my neighborhood to evacuate. My life, and the lives of my neighbors, are forever changed.

Every component in a fracking/unconventional well system has the potential to malfunction and explode. In support of House Bill 170, I will highlight three different incidents that occurred since 2018 for the same fracking operator in Pennsylvania. I realize that gathering pipelines are not in the scope of HB170; however, I will use a gathering pipeline explosion to illustrate how forceful and immense and terrifying it is when a component in the fracking unconventional system malfunctions. Unconventional wells and compressor stations and cryogenic plants have the same fracked gas as gathering pipelines; thus, the impact is comparable.

I respectfully request your support for House Bill 170.

Nancy Ivan – West Newton, PA

Dear PA House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee,

I urge you to truly reflect on the need to increase the setbacks from compressor stations and well pads.

I live in an environmental justice area that has been sadly and detrimentally impacted with well pads, compressor stations and proposed compressor stations, that are clearly within 2500 feet. They are within 1320 feet of families, that fear the wrath of illness for themselves and their children. They are victims of improper management of townships and boros, that didn't consider the right to clean air and water. These are economically challenged areas, that are being taken advantage of, since they cannot defend themselves. Their health and lifetime homes are devalued, which leaves them immobilized, having to remain in their toxic environment /homes.

I live in the Youghiogheny river valley. The air is now being impacted by the drilling and our waterway is deteriorating, due to extraction of water from the river.

As the recent study released from the University of Pittsburgh, clearly defining the asthma levels, and rare cancers, are truly increased by living near these toxic polluters.

Please view the wellbeing of our state's residents, as paramount, over the polluter's profits. There needs to be respect for the homeowners/ families that live near these sites. Noise pollution is another factor. Recently, at Elizabeth Forward High School, they shut down the drilling operation during the football game, due to the noise and pollution, but yet the drilling site is within 1250 feet of the high school. Clearly, this is inappropriate for the health and wellbeing of our children.

The state needs to supersede the corrupt local officials that do not have the best interest of the residents, in their communities. Someone needs to define parameters for safety and health. This is your responsibility and with the support of our Governor.

I don't care if you support drilling in its entirety, but for the health and wellbeing of our commonwealth's residents, at least consider that the wells and compressor stations, be at the minimum 5000 feet, from residents and commercial businesses.

Thank you for being concerned for our well being, within our commonwealth.

Lisa Riley – Sutersville, PA

I totally support PA House Bill 170 Setback Distances for Natural Gas Well Sites and Related Infrastructure. Please pass this bill.

The Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General's 43rd Statewide Investigating Grand Jury report on the unconventional oil and gas industry highlighted the misconduct of certain companies in relation to the drilling practice known as hydraulic fracturing (fracking). Upon the conclusion of the grand jury's two-year investigation in 2020, several legislative recommendations were made that would strengthen protections for the environment and the citizens of our commonwealth.

Currently, under Section 3215 of Title 58 (Oil and Gas) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, certain setback distances are provided relative to the location of unconventional natural gas wells near buildings, streams, wetlands, etc. However, the grand jury concluded that the current setbacks do not provide adequate protection for the environment or for public health and safety and, therefore, should be increased to 2,500 feet.

The proposed legislation, PA House Bill 170, based on the first of the grand jury's eight recommendations, increases setbacks for unconventional natural gas well sites and imposes a 2,500-foot setback to certain related infrastructure, such as:

- Natural gas compressor stations
- Pits, impoundments, and storage tanks that contain drilling cuttings, flowback water, produced water, hazardous materials, chemicals, fuels, condensate, solid waste, and other waste.

This legislation also follows the grand jury's recommendation to further increase setbacks for schools and hospitals, to 5,000 feet.

As then-Attorney General Josh Shapiro stated, "Our government has a duty to set, and enforce, ground rules that protect public health and safety. We are the referees; we are here to prevent big corporations and the powerful industries from harming our communities or running over the rights of citizens." I agree with his statement, and I believe that as legislators, we must do all we can to protect the residents of our commonwealth and our constitutional right to clean air and pure water.

I understand the need to balance economics and health. This bill is a step in the right direction because currently, there is very little regulation on fracking that protects the people of our communities from known health risks associated with fracking. These health risks have been documented in several studies. Most recently, by the University of Pittsburgh. Let's listen to the science and follow the Grand Jury recommendations. They are drilling much closer than 2,500 feet at schools in my area. Per our state constitution, we are entitled to clean air and water. Please pass PA House Bill 170. Thank you.

Kimberly Laskowsky – Marianna Borough, PA

I am Kimberly Laskowsky who owns a home with a sixteen well fracking pad in front of my house.

I was never informed they were coming to be able to object, no one here was !

1st came months of dumping 18 wheeler loads of slag to fill in a wetland, the noise and contaminated dust were constant, my caps fell off my teeth, then the fillings and dissolved the tooth enamel, I also have sea shells indoors the enamel dissolved, along w everything that has glue, paint and varnish, including our vehicles.

After fracking started the lights were blinding me in my livingroom 24/7, the noise was deafening like a high pitch shop vac 24/7, the vibrations rattling my home shaking it 24/7, our nostrils were like glue, our vision blurry, our saliva thick like glue, several people on my street got very high blood pressure including myself, I ended up having an aneurysm.

I made a 1 month record of the stabbing pains in my head, 347 stabbing pains in 1 month, like a knife being stabbed into your head.

I had to keep my doors closed, open door for a minute and my air cleaner would go crazy like a machine gun.

The sticky black soot is on everything, our vehicles, homes inside and out that does not wash off.

Our homes are cracking, everything concrete is cracking and moving, mortar cracked.

Several of us including children were urine tested that are positive for fracking chemicals in very high levels as if we were on the pad itself. Their containment pond was 5 football fields big and placed right across from the children's bus stop.

The truck traffic was herendous, 1000 trucks parking and idling all night, leaving my house fill up w exhaust fumes that I had to drive away from the area to sleep in my van.

Then there's the slide. Gas co filled in the wetland area causing flood water to rise on other side of 10 Mile Creek washing out bottom of hillside causing a football field size of my street to slide, so far it's reached the middle of a lane going downhill, w the possibility of several houses going to slide.

Now we heard they're coming back to put up a bigger fracking rig that will tower over my house.

I will die w another round of their chemicals, I am chemically sensitive to everything, but did anyone ever ask if we can live w this to move us away from being exposed ? No !

These gas companies are attempting to murder me, if I die they won't be held accountable for murder ! There must be a set back distance of a mile to protect us.

Shakira Johnson – Washington County, PA

On August 3, 2019 my dad walked me down the aisle so that I could marry the man of my dreams. My dad was ecstatic. He smiled all day with his gold toothed grin wearing his signature sunglasses. He claimed it to be the best wedding he had ever been to. My dad and my mom were so happy and so proud which made me feel the same.

Little did we know a very dark cloud was coming our way very quickly.

Over 30 years ago my parents bought a 120 acre property in southwestern Pennsylvania. Eight years ago they finally built their dream home on the property. At the same time that they were moving into their beautiful new home their gas well across the road was being fracked. My dad had no qualms about living in such close proximity to this super pad. They took pride in it and watched the whole process from their front porch.

In September 2019 my dad at 71 years old rode his bike 10 or more miles a day, took care of my mom (as she was diagnosed with dementia at 62 years old), took care of his mule and horses, split wood, and took care of 120 acres. By the end of that September, just one month after he walked me down the aisle, he began to complain of numbness and tingling to his extremities and severe pain in his back.

His PCP was stumped. His symptoms progressed quickly and he started to fall, have extreme weakness, pain, and increased numbness and tingling of his extremities. He had to begin using a walker and finally fell and could not get up by himself.

By the 1st week in January 2020 his PCP finally ordered an EMG (a diagnostic test to study his nerves and muscle function). We pushed him into this appointment in a wheelchair. The specialist, after assessing the EMG immediately sent my dad to the emergency room.

He spent a week in the ICU. At this point he was basically paralyzed from the waist down and could hardly use his hands. From the ICU he was transferred to a rehab facility to begin intensive physical and occupational therapy. They tried IV immunoglobulin, plasmapheresis to try to regain his mobility, strength, and independence. The team of doctors didn't have any answers as to why this happened. It was a mystery.

He was in the rehab center and back and forth to a hospital in Pittsburgh from January to March 2020. In March we told the doctors that they needed to discharge him so that we could take him home as they were locking down due to Covid.

He was struggling. He lost all his muscle mass. He was a shell of his former self. He was able to use a walker but needed assistance with most everything. But at least he was home with his wife and dog.

He continued to push himself with his therapies but he told me all the time that he was not getting better. He told me he "felt like he was beating a dead horse." At this point his diagnosis was CIDP, chronic demyelinating poly-neuropathy.

In June 2020 my dad showed me a pretty large lump under his right armpit which was in close proximity to a port used to give his biweekly plasmapheresis treatments. He was treated with antibiotics, had an ultrasound and then a biopsy. He then let me know that he had the lump for at least a year and it kept getting bigger.

In July 2020 is when we got the news that he had a very rare salivary gland cancer in his armpit, MYOEPITHELIAL CARCINOMA. With further diagnostic testing, the PETSCAN lit up and showed that this cancer was in his lymph nodes, left lung, mass in the back of his neck, in both sides of his face (parotid glands), and possibly in his

cerebellum. Myoepithelial carcinoma is a very rare and aggressive cancer. There are not any standards of treatment or references as to how or what to expect with treatment. This cancer evaded any normal blood work and the team of doctors never had any idea that they were dealing with a man with cancer invading his whole body.

My dad endured months of agony from the neurological issues before he was finally diagnosed with this mysterious cancer. He had an agonizing fight while being treated with chemotherapy, as he suffered with severe pain, blood clots, pleural effusion, and sepsis from a blood infection. After his last chemotherapy in October he had another PETSCAN. To our shock and horror, the chemotherapy did not help to fight the cancer at all. His whole left lung was invaded and the cancer was quickly spreading throughout his whole body. That was on a Thursday. Sunday he was placed into hospice care and by the next Thursday my family and I sat with him as he took his last breath.

On a seriously devastating and tragic side note , my mom passed away 32 days later of a broken heart.

Shakira Johnson is a citizen as well as employed as a licensed Practical nurse in Washington County in southwestern Pennsylvania. Shakira's family owns 120 acres with a superpad on the property. She would like to bring attention to the EPA pertaining to pollution from fracking and gas well sites and the connection to illness in the area.

Dale Tiberie – West Pike Run Township, PA

Dale and his wife raised their son in their home in Washington County, Pennsylvania. This predominantly rural county features countless working farms, dense woodlands, and quality trout streams, which Dale, an avid angler, knows well. Yet, within the decade or so since unconventional gas industry took hold in Pennsylvania, Washington County has become the most heavily fracked county in the state, with over 1,600 active unconventional wells as of May 2018. According to estimates by the Environmental Defense Fund, Washington County levels of VOC emissions, precursors to ground-level ozone, from oil and gas development. Ozone levels in this county are barely within attainment of the EPA's 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

The Mad Dog 2020 pad is by no means the only contributor to ground-level ozone in Dale's community. Earthworks has consistently documented significant emissions at two compressor stations just a few miles from Dale's home. In fact, a PA DEP inspector recently shared the fact that his agency was responding to a complaint from that part of the township about a persistent "haze" the residents have observed.

Dale thinks a lot about the possibility of "something going wrong" at the pad – well pad fires, spills, and other accidents have happened in the county. But right behind this worry is the unknown of what he and his wife get exposed to on a daily basis by living just downhill from a well pad and in a community replete with wells and compressors. For months, the Mad Dog well pad has emitted gassy odors – at one point so strong it made him nauseated. And yet, despite communicating his concerns to the operator – and the new equipment they eventually installed in response – the odors continue and no one has told him exactly what's in his air. "That's the fear I have: Am I breathing good air or not?"

When you live in a township with 27 fracked gas wells, numerous compressors and other facilities, and occupied by a gas company poised to break ground on at least two new "super pads," you live with a lot of unknowns. But Dale knows what his symptoms are. His respiratory ailments seem incessant. The cold he had this winter was the worst he had experienced in a very long time. "I seem to have more respiratory tract problems than I've had in the past – even worse than when working in the coal mine." As we talk, his sniffles become a part of the conversation.

Dale makes sure his voice is heard, as a constant presence at township meetings and by contacting both regulators and the gas company about the ongoing problems at the well pad closest to him. Dale wants transparency about what's happening in West Pike Run Township. Not just for himself and his family's well-being, but in order to educate others. He wants the public and decision-makers to fully understand what communities like his are living with, and what the consequences are shaping up to be.

In the summer of 2022 Dale was taking a shower, his femur snapped in half. Doctors determined that he had stage four esophogeral cancer. The cancer was found on his liver, esophagus, and both femurs. The cancer is excruciatingly painful. Both of his legs broke, one twice.

Wesley Silva – Marianna Borough, PA

Hello my name is Wesley Silva Resident of Marianna Borough, Pa and former Councilman. When I moved into Marianna an outsider. I was welcomed by it's long time residents. I was taken by the town as quaint and quiet. But I fell in love with the neighborhood and my neighbors.

I purchased a delapidated house, which today may have made it to the blight list. Now I call it Home.

My neighbors began to help and check in on us. They mowed, chopped, dropped off lumber, welded, did electric work, hauled junk away and the Borough even dropped a truck off for me to load burnable items. That is the treasure of the Borough. When I came on council I wanted to repay that kindness by serving the community in which I now live.

A little history, our water plant was in violation and on the verge of being shut down. Where were the petitions? We worked for months to clean the plant and it's tanks. Former Water Supervisor, Former Councilmen, Councilwoman and I worked Tirelessly with no thanks or recognition to painstakingly rewrite the safety manuals. When we finally had to surrender the plant to be closed at the order of the DEP and lost a major source of income to the Borough and a major functioning piece of history. I was here fighting. However in the end we lost the battle and the plant was closed.

Then the gas well company came. They were real subtle at first a few banners showed up with a few donations nothing major.

We began working on a zoning ordinance, as rumors of gas well business were drawing closer to Washington County. The Borough and West Bethlehem Township worked on gas well issue for our residents with only a few revision requests from the residents. As we neared completion of the Zoning Ordinance EQT became more present in our meetings and combined Town hall meetings.

Once The Township and the Borough agreed to move forward with Zoning, EQT became even more present with opposition, bringing in outdoor organizzaions, wounded warriors, children and so forth. They began bombarding both of our meetings. They divided the communities against themselves.

EQT reeked havoc in our communities. EQT's attorney's pleaded the case for EQT leaving us overwhelmed. However despite opposition Marianna Borough succeeded in passing Zoning. Then they stormed the meeting of our neighbors in West Bethlehem Township where they won by distraction and threats. Due to these intimidating tactics zoning was not passed at there meeting. All the work, all the time, all the planning laid to waste.

EQT was present at all of our meetings one form or another. They are there to derail our efforts and community to keep a rift.

Now to the issue at hand, The Dam, it was not a rash decision nor one to be taken lightly as some stated to the contrary. Our main thought proactive not reactive. Because of the people we represent, the people that made me feel welcomed, I owe them my service.

EQT representatives came up with alternative uses for the dam and the area around it. So we agreed to work with them and to no avail we received no funds or contract with them. Before we knew it our lives would change drastically. Road closings, disruptive meetings, trying to preserve our town from being taken over by trucks and well traffic and super well pads, compressor stations and pipelines.

Now we are overwhelmed. There was a devastating landslide slide that still has our main road closed. This cause was the Gahagan well pad. The well pad was built in a flood plain. The water has nowhere to go thus has caused the landslide. The pad is 500 feet from 10-mile creek that flows into the Monogahala river-our drinking water. Truck motors running all through the day and night, loud generators that keeps residents awake nights, lights that make you think it's daytime, odors that are so pungent you don't want to go outside, mud, dust and traffic issues. We felt helpless.

Danny Russell – western PA

My name is Danny Russell I was born and raised in western Pennsylvania. I built our cabin in the peaceful rolling hills surrounded by farmland and woods were I was raised that is until the gas industry moved in. Soon our peaceful way of life was gone.

With out any warning trucks were rolling in with heavy equipment and the dirt work began, 24/7 for days across from our home! There is No respect for us at all. Our road in front of our wood cabin was constructed of red-dog soon became a dust bowl. I contacted the gas drillers, township and the police trying to get water on the road and received no help. Our wood cabin was getting covered in dust.

It just got worse from there.

Drilling started and lasted for months with noise and lights around the clock.

And still no help from any one. Our home was now not a place to come home to and relax and enjoy but now became living hell. This went on for over a year. But it did not stop there. They came back shortly after to construct pipe lines, compress stations, frack ponds and then to drill more wells.

The garbage on our once clean country road now was littered with water bottles, McDonald's bags, and gallon jugs of piss tossed out of windows by workers. There is no respect for our home or us.

Let me tell you more we had used drill mud, frack fluids and fuel oil all over our road in front of our home. The industry would clean off the road with water trucks, washing it on to our land. I had to drain our small pond that supplies our animals with water and still no help. I contacted the PA fish commission, DEP, town ship and police.

When gas line installation began between the newly drilled wells and the compressor station the gas line was constructed less than 100 yards behind our home. The pipeline had to cross a yellow boy pond.

A yellow boy is when mine water is pumped from working coalmines so the mine is not flooded and the miners can work. The next process is it goes into ponds and lime is added to take the sulfur and iron out of the water and then the lime settles in the ponds and the water now goes into the streams and we all know lime is highly corrosive. So why would u put 2 -15 inch pressured gas line through this pond?

Let me tell you it's because no one cares and they let the industry do as they please. I again contacted the DEP, department of transportation and my town ship with no help from any one. The DEP told me they couldn't find the old maps that showed there even was yellow boy ponds there, I told them just go inspect the trench because they were still excavating at that time, but they did not follow through.

The Department of transporting (who is responsible for pipelines) told me I was in a buffer zone and not enough homes were at risk so basically my family did not matter, and lastly my good ole township where every one knows everything but no one would say a word.

All for the love of money.

Linda and Walter David King – Daisytown, PA

My name is Linda King. My husband Walter and I started to build our home in 1994 it was completed in 1996. We built it on family owned property.

It was a very quiet neighborhood, with deer, raccoons, opossums, squirrels, and ground hogs roaming the area frequently. Now we rarely see as many animals. There are not as many animals as there were originally. I'm sure the noise and smells emitting from the compressor stations has something to do with this.

They have worked on the property next to ours since approximately 2007-08. The traffic on our quiet country road multiplied exponentially. The sounds and smells increased, too.

Our brother-in-law lived on the farm next to the compressor station (my ancestral home) he died in 2016 of lung and liver cancer.

Currently Walter is being treated for throat cancer he has had surgery and radiation.

The time since the Full moon and Blue Moon compressor stations have come into existence has been a nightmare to our family. And community.

I fear for the health of anyone who lives in this area.

Christine, Dave, and Mitch Barton – Canonsburg, PA

Our story began in April 2018 when Mitch woke up with a sore shoulder. We just dismissed it as he slept on it wrong. This continued on and off all summer. He has a physical job so we thought maybe he pulled something on the job.

By the end of August, it was hurting more frequently. Mitch had a quad accident the second week in September. He was banged up from the accident so he decided to see a chiropractor. The Dr. assessed his shoulder & told him that he didn't feel it was a rotator cuff injury. He noticed 2 small bumps on his clavicle.

The doctor advised that Mitch see an orthopedic doctor. So that's what Mitch did. He met with the orthopedic Dr. the beginning of October. The doctor took an x-ray & noticed a broken collarbone. "How did you do this?" The doctor asked. Mitch hadn't a clue. He told the Dr. about the quad accident a few weeks back. The doctor didn't think the accident had anything to do with this. So the doctor just wanted to watch it for a month.

Mitch went back to see him at the beginning of November. The bump on the collarbone was now the size of a quarter. The doctor dismissed it as healing over a broken bone. The doctor gave Mitch a few weeks off work to rest his shoulder and said the swelling should decrease.

One month later, it was now the size of a hockey puck. The doctor knew there was something wrong & finally ordered the MRI. We got the call from him a few days later saying he had already scheduled us to see the best orthopedic oncologist in Pittsburgh. We were shocked & sickened.

On December 19th, we got the worst news a young man & his parents could ever receive. Our 21-year-old always healthy and physically strong son was given the diagnosis of Ewings sarcoma or Lymphoma. The biopsy would finalize this. The Dr. Asked Mitch if he knew anything about Ewing Sarcoma & he answered "yes, my friend passed away from it." Mitch sat on the table as tears welled up in his eyes.

We received the official diagnosis on Dec. 28th, 2018. Mitch had Ewing sarcoma on the collarbone, which metastasized to the lung. Mitch began an intense chemotherapy treatment on Jan. 14th, 2019. His treatments were aggressive and hard. He also had surgery to remove the clavicle in March then 30 days of radiation in April to his shoulder area & lungs.

Chemotherapy lasted about a year. He finished his treatment on Dec. 31, 2019. Mitch's scans show he is NED (no evidence of disease). We continue to pray for his continued healing and good health.

He has returned to work. Mitch is recently engaged to be married on August 14, 2021!!

Rose Mary Phillips Hunter – Marianna, PA

In 2007, Rose Mary Phillips Hunter signed an agreement with Atlas America L.L.C, which states in item 20 “Lessor and Lessee to mutually agree upon drill site, pipeline and road access locations, not to be unreasonably withheld”.

This agreement was passed to Chevron, and then to EQT Corporation, who in early 2018, after multiple land surveys, elected to exercise their rights under the agreement. The well pad itself was planned to be, and is now, located on a neighboring property, but was allegedly only accessible by an access road to cross property owned by Rose (Hunter) Friend, just across from the farmhouse. The home, her current residence, is where she was born and raised, and had recently returned to in order to enjoy her retirement years.

After extensive discussion and multiple map revisions, an area just across from the barn was agreed upon by both parties, and permit applications were filed with the PA DEP. Unbeknownst to Rose, these applications were subsequently withdrawn, a new location directly across from her private parking area selected solely by EQT, and the applications were refiled and approved.

At this time, Rose was working with her second attorney, Ed Bilik, though it was later discovered that he had retired from the profession and was only acting as her representative. Mr. Bilik was to approach EQT with revisions in the proposed Surface Use and Access Road Agreements, but consistently returned to her with contracts even more in the favor of EQT than the previous version. Ultimately, Mr. Bilik informed Rose that he would come to her house with one final contract and told her that if she did not sign it, she would not receive any compensation whatsoever for the damage planned on her property. As part of the compensation, although not requested by Rose, Mr. Bilik had requested an advance on royalties in the amount of \$150,000, for the sole purpose of increasing his portion of the 7% fee for all monies exchanged. Distressed, Rose reached out for assistance, which came from Lois Bower-Bjornson and a former gas well employee, who reviewed the proposed contract and found multiple reasons not to sign. Upon his arrival, Mr. Bilik was informed of the unacceptable points. He chose to leave the documents and the premises, saying he would no longer represent her and that she owed him nothing.

Attorney John Smith was consulted and agreed to represent her. As the scheduled time to break ground was imminent, extensive negotiations were impossible. Ultimately, EQT asked if Mr. Smith would be filing an injunction. As the results of this process could lead to EQT requiring an estimated \$1M bond, this was impossible. Without any document other than the Atlas agreement, EQT proceeded to rip out over 100 feet of Osage Orange trees which provided a wind break for the house and had been standing for over 100 years, followed by various types of land-moving equipment destroying the best part of the field on that area of the property, described by EQT as being approximately 13.75 acres. A temporary dirt road was constructed as permitted by the PA DEP, directly across from her private parking area.

In addition to the distress of watching her childhood farm being churned, during this time, Rose was diagnosed with colon cancer, which required surgery followed by chemo treatments. On one of her trips for a chemo treatment, she was faced with a large semi parked on the narrow country road directly behind her vehicle. She was forced to walk into the uneven field to find a worker, who in turn searched for the driver. When he arrived, it took some time to maneuver the truck away from the parking area, making her late for her appointment and adding to her stress during a serious illness.

At the time Mr. Bilik's unprofessional activities were exposed and Rose was found to have cancer, her daughter, Karen, took her place in the dispute. She demanded that the road be moved to its original, agreed upon location, further down the road where the truck traffic would not disturb her mother's rest at night and peace by day, and where the horrendous dust would not be quite as invasive. This was met with a bold untruth from EQT, who maintained that the PA DEP required the relocation of the road because of wetlands. After reviewing maps of the land, Karen pointed out that the wetlands would in fact not be affected at all by correcting the road location. When the township's engineer finally agreed that this would be possible, EQT then stated that the road could not be corrected as the township supervisors required their location because of line of sight of oncoming traffic to trucks on the access road. Karen demonstrated that this was not true, and called a meeting of the township supervisors, the head of construction for EQT Production, two other EQT representatives, and the township engineer. The day before the meeting, EQT disclosed that they agreed to the correction and asked if the meeting could be abandoned. Karen refused. During the meeting, it was clearly delineated the reasoning behind the movement of the road.

Also during the meeting, Karen realized that there was potentially another falsehood propagated by EQT, that being the reasoning for the pull-off for trucks on another location on Rose's property. Karen asked of the township supervisors if they had required this pull-off. They firmly responded that they had not, and that, if they had, they would be liable for any issues arising from activities in that area. Karen firmly declared the plans eliminated.

The hardest battle was against the impoundment planned on the property immediately across from the farmhouse. Springwater flows from the mound just to the north, through this land, under the road and into Rose's well. EQT admitted that they were permitted to use recycled frac water in addition to fresh water in the impoundment. Should any fluids leak into the soil, it would contaminate the water Rose used to drink, cook and shower. The impoundment itself would impede the natural flow of water into her well. EQT pressed to begin their work, asking if they could remove "topsoil" for the area where the manifold pad was planned. Karen agreed, believing there would only be the removal of a couple inches of soil. She was astounded to find a huge void of between 10-15 feet in a very large, nearly square area. Further verbal agreements were halted with this egregious miscommunication. Karen contacted the archeological department of California University of Pennsylvania, and Prof. John Nass agreed to bring his students to the farm to initiate an archeological dig. Rose's family had known for a century that the land was rich in Native American history, but had kept this secret to protect the land's heritage. At some point between the years 1939 to 1940, Rose's brother, Robert Phillips, had discovered the remains of a Native American while plowing the field. Representative from a renowned Pittsburgh institute verified these. As local inhabitants began to remove some of the pieces of the find, Rose's father reburied the treasure and no further studies were permitted. Ironically, it was this very study which would delay the impoundment. Dr. Nass shared the responsibility with students of West Virginia University, under the instruction of Prof. M. Sahady. During their controlled excavation, although a possible 40% of the site had been damaged, a village midden, an arrowhead, shell, wood charcoal, daub and animal bones were discovered, along with two small features and one post hole stain. Dr. Nass had the requirements to register the land with the state. Meanwhile, Karen had contacted the PA DEP and informed them that she would initiate legal proceedings if they allowed EQT to proceed with destroying that area of the land. The PA DEP asked that the land be registered to provide documentation for revisiting the existing permit. EQT chose to hire a professional archeologist, the firm of Christine Davis Consulting. Karen protested, as this would delay filing the necessary paperwork with the state. Ultimately, Karen agreed with the condition she speak with Christine personally before their work began. During this conversation, Karen shared her frustration, which lead to the

revelation by Christine that the land had already been registered with the state in that area as a village midden with artifacts from both historic and prehistoric time periods. She provided the identifying information to obtain documentation. Faced with this accusation, the DEP stated that EQT was not required to adhere to this regulation because of the type of permit requested. It was a newer permit type, not yet listed on the banned list provided by the historical society. After much activity by all parties, EQT finally admitted they had struck Acid Producing Rock (APR). This had been identified in a proposed Incidental Coal Release Agreement as approximately 4,558 cubic yards of decomposed coal, which EQT verbally asserted had no commercial value. As this contract had not been finalized, the impoundment could not be completed due to PA DEP regulations.

Truck traffic had already begun before the road was relocated. EQT was no longer permitted to contact Rose directly. Early in the construction phase, Rose' free gas from a locally owned well, to which she and her family had been connected for decades, was disrupted one late Friday afternoon as she was preparing the evening meal. She contacted Karen, who in turn reported this to EQT. It was not evident that they were attempting to restore the gas, which meant Rose and her grandsons had to travel to another town for take-out. In the absence of any formal agreement as to the location of the road, Karen arrived on the property at 6:30AM the next day and parked her vehicle across the entrance to the access road. When the workers arrived, she refused their admittance to the work area. After a time, the contractors were sent home and an EQT representative arrived. Following his investigation, he contacted a local gas company, Columbia Gas, to assist with the repair. A company previously contracted by EQT had marked a "dead" gas line, but not the "live" one near it. A construction vehicle had travelled across the "live" line, causing it to leak. Once the leak was repaired and the gas restored, the construction contractors were permitted to continue their work, though no agreement was yet in place.

In time, the road was relocated and traffic, with the accompanying dust, lights and noise, drastically increased. Eight wells were drilled, and the fracking completed to the south. Royalties were realized for less than three full months before these were halted due to fracking of the five wells to the north. During these two winters, recirculating tanks were placed on the now-defunct manifold pad. Before the second set were assembled, this area was labeled an ASTM pad, causing an above ground impoundment to be constructed within less than 48 hours on this land, although the water lines to fill it led to the well pad itself. With the wake of vehement protests by Karen, EQT immediately disassembled the structure, which was never seen again despite EQT's claims that it had been moved to the main well pad.

Although the proposed Surface Use Agreement clearly stated "no above ground structures", a guard shack was placed on Rose' property twice. During the second incident, Karen again parked her vehicle near the guard shack, flatly refusing to move it until the offending building was removed, along with the light and port-a-john.

During the summer of 2018, EQT exercised their right to widen the road, as permitted by the township supervisors, with the condition they remain within the established eminent domain. This was violated on a bend on yet another part of Rose' property, where they had already demolished a portion of the bank well outside the area allowed. Work was stopped once again until they could reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

As of Monday, February 24, 2020, the family has been advised that the project should be completed, and all equipment will begin to be removed. As of the same date, there is still no signed agreement, nor any compensation made, for the Surface Use of the land, nor the Access Road.

Janice and Kurt Blanock – Cecil, PA

My name is Janice Blanock and I presently live in Cecil Township, Washington County PA, as I have for the last 25 years, with my husband and family.

In the early hours of December 3, 2013 my husband Kurt and I were told by doctors at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh that the MRI of our healthy 16-year-old son, Luke's spine showed a mass and that they had to remove it as soon as possible. We were also gently informed that they suspected it could be cancerous, however they would have to run more tests to be certain.

At that moment it felt like a dream, after all, we had been up all night and our bodies and minds were drained. It felt like the floor was coming out from beneath our feet and the protective walls of our safe and happy life were crumbling around us. We kept thinking we would wake up to the sound of the alarm and begin our day. Sadly, the alarm never came - this was real. For the first couple days we silently prayed that the doctors were wrong and that the tumor was benign. We were determined to be strong in front of Luke, so we held back our tears, but the instant we stepped away from his side our tears flowed uncontrollably. The news came on Thursday, December 5th – Ewing's Sarcoma. Our son has cancer, not to mention a rare and aggressive pediatric bone cancer.

Luke battled his cancer with a positive attitude, the love and support of his family, friends and community, as well as radiation, chemotherapy, and limb salvage surgery. He passed away at home on August 7, 2016.

During those agonizing and dreadful days of watching our son fight yet slowly lose his battle we did our best to enjoy each day we had together. We tried not to dwell on why or how this could have happened and basically tried to accept the idea that it was just pure "bad luck".

After some time, we learned through community members that another young man that was a member of our Church had died from Ewing's around the time Luke was diagnosed. I found that concerning since I had met the mother of another young man, that previously lived a mile or so up the road that also lost her son to Ewing's Sarcoma. The more I talked to people about Luke and this "rare" cancer the more I began to wonder if it was bad luck or something else.

On December 29, 2018 I received a call from my good friend to inform me that Luke's friend, classmate, and team member, Mitch Barton was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. I can't begin to describe the emotions that I experienced that day and for days to follow.

I have said for quite some time that I don't know what caused my son Luke's cancer but that I am deeply concerned. However, the more I learn about fracking and the oil & gas industry, the more tours I attend and see firsthand the negative health impacts on the residents of communities all over SWPA, and the destruction of our environment, the more I know that fracking is extremely dangerous and has something to do with the rise of rare cancers in Green, South Fayette, Washington and West Moreland Counties.

Those who chose to turn a blind eye and say otherwise are silently complicit in allowing it to continue and will be responsible for the long term effects it has on all citizens.

Jack and Darleen O'Neil - Coal Center, PA

Prior to moving two years ago Jack and Darleen O'Neil lived at 158 Elm Road in Coal Center for 42 years. Jack's car repair shop is still at that location. Currently they live at 249 Grange rd. Coal Center.

Jack and Darleen were witness to the beginning of oil and gas in West Pike Run Township. Jack was a former zoning board official.

There was division from the beginning. You were either a leaseholder or not. "Its all about money." At one meeting Toby Rice said "you are all jealous, because when I put a stick into the ground money comes out". Implying that those of us who were concerned with our quality of life, health and pollution were just jealous because we were not being paid.

As industry pushed their way into the township we were bombarded with "chemical like smells that would take your breath away". Constant truck traffic, bridges and roads collapse, spills of drill mud that went on for 8 miles. At one point there was drilling threw the Pennsylvania fault line and a pipeline being laid threw corrosive yellow boy. The mine once owned. Decimal levels during drilling reached to 9.9.

"We were afraid to drink our spring water."

RICE energy now EQT bought all the land from Antero. RICE energy/EQT is responsible for 3 compressor stations, the twilight, full moon and blue moon, along with the Lusk well pad, and the Sunrise pond all within ¼ of a mile from their home and business. Every well pad has to have a series of pipelines for transport. In addition there are pipelines, meter and pigging stations and additional well pads.

Numerous calls were made to the PA DEP, gaming commission, and the department of transportation concerning the yellow boy. No one listened.

Many of our neighbors are not doing to good. One little boy was born with mental/cognitive birth defects, he can't speak or walk he is 2. They live across from the Lusk pad and everything from the pad runs into their yard. Their oldest had seizures. Others have cancer, upper respiratory issues, and rashes. Friends have told us of their well water turning bad oily, they use this for watering their animals.

"We are all dying here. They do what they want when they want there is no stopping them." Jack ONeil

Bryan and Ryan Latkanich

For eight years now, Mr. Latkanich has fought with shale gas companies involved with drilling and fracking operations on his property. It started with Phillips Exploration Inc., which bought then eventually sold his property's gas-drilling rights to Atlas Energy. Chevron Appalachia LLC acquired Atlas and drilled and fracked two wells behind the brick house Mr. Latkanich finished building in 2001.

Time and again since drilling occurred in 2011 and 2012, rainwater has cascaded from the elevated well pad, flooding his backyard and leaving water pooled against the house's back wall, Mr. Latkanich said, blaming it for the bowing, cracking and shifting of his home's double cinder block foundation.

By the time the wells were completed, 18.4 acres of the 33-acre Latkanich farm were so dug up that he said he can't operate a commercial vegetable farm as he had intended nor build a house for another family member.

He declined to make public how much he was paid for the use of his land and royalties for the gas produced, but he claimed the payments were a small fraction of the millions he says he was promised. The payments, he said, don't come close to covering the damage to his home and property, his claims of water contamination, or health problems he and Ryan have experienced.

"No money is available to relocate," said Mr. Latkanich, disabled from a benign brain tumor that left him blind in one eye with impaired peripheral vision in the other eye and polycystic kidney disease, problems that developed before the drilling on his property. But he attributes recent heart problems and other health issues, including asthma and neuropathy, to chemicals and pollution from the drilling operations.

The family could hook up to a public water system. But in addition to the cost of that, Mr. Latkanich said it also could expose him to the water disinfectant chloramine, which subjects people with kidney disease to a risk of ammonia toxicity, according to the website chloramine.org.

He buys drinking water but continues using well water for bathing, showering and dishwashing, he said.

Chevron spokeswoman Veronica Flores-Paniagua said the family's well water was compromised by contamination from E. coli, a potentially lethal pathogen, before drilling and fracking got underway in 2011. The company also said his claims of damage to his property, water and home "aren't based in fact" and added that multiple water tests by the state Department of Environmental Protection found no contaminants above safe drinking water standards.

"Chevron has thoroughly investigated Mr. Latkanich's concerns, tested his water, and demonstrated that its operations have not affected Mr. Latkanich's water," she said in an email that also said the DEP tested his water in 2013 then six times between February 2017 and March 2019 in response to his complaints and the water supply was "not adversely affected by oil and gas activities."

But Mr. Latkanich showed the Post-Gazette one DEP test of his well water with measured levels of bromides, chlorides and salts — common contaminants from oil and gas operations. DEP indicated that the levels were within drinking water standards.

Ryan's deteriorating health led the family to UPMC, where he underwent toxicology testing in May 2018. The final report, made available to the family in May 2019, states, "Overall this is an unfortunate situation, however patient and family members have already removed themselves from the source of exposure, which is the definitive treatment," referring to the fact that the Latkaniches no longer drink well water.

“Certainly [I] agree with DEP/EPA involvement to address the source of this exposure,” Dr. Abesamis’ report says. His main recommendation was for the family to stay away from the source of exposure — their house and its air, in addition to the water, as much as possible.

“How do we do that?” Mr. Latkanich said. “The majority of my wealth is invested in this house and property.”

The DEP says it thoroughly investigated the Latkanich water complaint and issued findings on May 14, 2019, indicating no elevated contamination levels were found.

But John Stolz, director of Duquesne University’s Center for Environmental Research and Education, said chemicals now known to be hazardous aren’t restricted by federal drinking water standards established long before shale gas operations got underway in Pennsylvania.

“Bromide showed up in several of Bryan’s water tests and seemed to correlate with an increase in chloride,” he said, having supervised independent water testing on the Latkanich property — at Mr. Latkanich’s request — and having analyzed DEP water test results. “The presence of both can indicate groundwater impacted by brine or produced water. Why the DEP would discount this is puzzling.”

Product of wastewater — produced water or brine — containing bromide is associated with fossil fuel extraction and utilization, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states online.

So Mr. Stolz said its presence in the Latkanich well water suggests that shale produced water — water sometimes referred to as fracking fluids — has infiltrated his well.

“DEP will consider water to be safe even when chemicals are present, if the concentrations are below the maximum contaminant level” established by EPA standards, he said. “These standards are based on the general population and do not consider compromised individuals who may be at greater risk for exposure.

“The DEP also has the tendency to come to a negative determination if the levels of contaminants eventually return to ‘pre-drill’ levels, even if there had been a significant change in water quality,” Mr. Stolz said. “This makes it very difficult to defend a landowner’s claim.”

In response, DEP spokeswoman Lauren Fraley said DEP has no authority to regulate drinking water supplies and can only determine whether or not oil and gas activity has diminished water quality or quantity. But water tests revealed no evidence that oil and gas activity had impacted Latkanich well water, based on repeated water testing and site inspections.

Brine and bromide were present in the well water at fluctuating but low levels but never exceeding statewide drinking water standards and lacking characteristics typical of oil and gas activity. Prior to oil and gas activity, she said, testing showed that Latkanich well water had bacterial contamination above drinking water standards, making it unsafe to drink.

Ms. Fraley said Chevron contends that Mr. Latkanich has denied the company access to parts of his property near the well site, preventing it from permanently restoring the site and complying with the stormwater management requirements of its drilling-related permit.

Mr. Latkanich said he’ll continue to block access to his property until he reaches a financial agreement that covers the house and property damages he claims have occurred

But Ms. Flores-Paniagua, the Chevron spokeswoman, said an engineering study concluded that problems with the foundation wall resulted from design flaws, not Chevron operations. She said the company cannot complete restoration of the disputed acreage as long as it is banned from the property.

“We will not speculate on the medical condition of a child,” she said, referring to Ryan. “[Dr. Abesamis] is not a water expert. Water quality is tested by the DEP,” which says it has not found harmful levels of contamination.

Mr. Latkanich said Chevron previously offered him \$70,000 to fix the home foundation but also wanted him to sign off on water contamination claims and allow the company to tie up even more of his land by constructing drainage ditches. That caused him to end further negotiations.

“Currently the site is unrestored, and DEP is evaluating options to bring it into compliance,” said Ms. Fraley. “Restoration requirements at the conclusion are applicable to all wells and not related to potential contamination that may be alleged.”

Within days after the DEP responded to Post-Gazette questions about the Latkaniches, the department scheduled a conference with him to resolve their differences.

“While there is no formal arbitration or litigation that DEP is aware of, DEP encouraged both parties to discuss site restoration during a conference,” Ms. Fraley said.

Mr. Latkanich said he took his son and a friend — an environmental activist — with him to the conference in early June. But he said the DEP told the activist and Ryan to leave the meeting before it began. That left him alone with a DEP attorney, two DEP managers and a field inspector, two Chevron attorneys and three other company officials — nine people in all.

“I wasn’t prepared,” he said.

But he did offer — off the top of his head, he said — a settlement amount considerably higher than the \$70,000 the company had offered for damage to his house and property. His figure also included losses from the commercial vegetable business he has been unable to start. Within days, he said, he received written notification that Chevron wanted to take the issue to mediation. Chevron did not comment to the Post-Gazette on settlement amounts.

“It is our hope to amicably resolve all of Mr. Latkanich’s concerns,” Ms. Flores-Paniagua said. “Look, we do care about the community and adhere to local, state and federal regulations and do our best to be responsible operators.”

Mr. Latkanich said if the company were truly amicable, it would have met his price for settling claims of property and house damage, rather than pushing for mediation.

Ryan still has health issues but has been attending classes in the Bethlehem Center School District.

“Nothing is resolved because they do what they want and deny that anything happened,” Mr. Latkanich said. “I have a sick kid, and a medical professional is telling me why.

“Who do you believe when I have a sick kid and I’m sickened by it, too?” he said. “I’ve just been through hell.”

On behalf of Bryan and Amy Smith – Daisytown, PA

Bryan and Amy Smith live in Daisytown on Elm road West Pike Run township, 250 feet from the Lusk well pad. The well pad is not theirs it is the farmers who's farm cannot be seen. The well pad was pushed to the edge of their property. They are also surrounded by the full moon/bluemoon and twilight compressor stations, the mad dog 20/20 well pad and the sunrise pond that is piped from the Monongahala river to supply water to fracking sites. The Smiths get no financial gain they receive no money, nothing. Everything from the well pad runs into their yard, all the run off, water, chemicals, sand and dust moves threw the air. Blankets had to be put on the windows during the fracking process so the family could sleep.

Their second son was conceived and born during the fracking process. He is 9, has no cognitive skills, cannot walk, talk and is fed by a feeding tub. When a Realtor came to sell the home the Smiths were told no they live in an industrial zone. The Smith's tried to refinance when rates were low so they could move, they were told no we can't insure the property due to the well pad.

Unfortunately the Smith's well pad can't be moved, so they are stuck literally. Set backs will help others, put setbacks in place.

Lisa Scherer – Marianna, PA

The oil and gas industry is undeniably a cornerstone of our state's economy, drawing upon our abundant natural resources. However, it's essential to underscore the immense responsibility that accompanies this power. This is where setback distances step in, serving as invisible yet potent safety measures that shield our communities from potential risks associated with the operations.

These setback distances aren't arbitrary figures; they're meticulously calculated with one overarching goal in mind – to preserve our collective health and safety. Oil and gas facilities have the potential to emit a range of substances into the air, many of which can pose serious threats to our well-being. Toxic chemicals and pollutants can infiltrate the air we breathe, compromising our quality of life and putting our health at risk. Setback regulations are our guarantee that we won't be subjected to breathing in harmful substances that could harm our bodies.

While it's true that accidents within the oil and gas industry aren't everyday occurrences, their impact can be devastating when they do happen. This is where setback regulations play a pivotal role. Picture them as a protective barrier, standing between us and the facilities. In the unfortunate event of an accident, this barrier ensures that we don't feel as if we're inhaling dangerous toxins right on our doorstep or through our ventilation systems. This is particularly crucial when considering the potential for explosions, which can have catastrophic consequences. Setback distances provide us with a crucial buffer, offering a sense of security in the face of such potential hazards.

Pennsylvania boasts some of the most breathtaking natural landscapes and is home to an incredible array of wildlife. Setback distances are instrumental in maintaining this delicate equilibrium. By reducing the likelihood of habitat disruption and ensuring the cleanliness of our soil and water, we're safeguarding the health and vitality of our environment for current and future generations.

Everyone desires to live in a place where they can relish in peace and quiet. Setback distances ensure that we're not constantly bombarded by the noise, blaring lights, and other disruptions that often accompany industrial operations. They enable us to strike a balance between meeting our energy needs and enjoying a tranquil, harmonious neighborhood.

It's only fair that we, as members of these communities, have a say in the determination of setback distances. After all, we live, work, play, and cultivate our gardens in close proximity to these facilities. Every life counts, and the quality of life is a matter of great significance. Our voices should be heard in decisions that directly impact our daily lives and well-being.