

Gillian Graber
110 Belleauwood Blvd.
Trafford, PA 15085

Dear ERE Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. Let me share with you a little bit about who I am. I am a mom of two: my son Aidan is a freshman in high school and my daughter Lilly is starting 7th grade. When I moved to my neighborhood in Trafford, Westmoreland County a decade ago, I thought my neighborhood was the perfect place to raise my kids. There is a park within walking distance with a pond to fish in and playgrounds for the kids to play and run. Right before the park, there is an ice cream shop on the corner next to the Westmoreland Heritage Trailhead. A trail that will one day get connected with the Great Allegheny Passage. This is the idyllic place where I dreamed of raising my kids, teaching them to ride their bikes on our neighborhood street with no-thru traffic, and the best trick-or-treating (ours is the neighborhood you want to go to). This dream quickly turned into a nightmare shortly after I moved in.

When you buy a home, you expect to spend money on a new kitchen, or bathroom, but not clean air. My husband and I had a crash course in air pollution and why the air near our home was making us and our kids so sick. A neighbor was using a DIY wood boiler to heat their home without proper airflow. So I got a crash course in why people say the DEP stands for "Don't Expect Protection" because while my neighbors were poisoning us, we had to decide as young parents if it was safer to stay in our home or drive in a blizzard to our old home with no furniture just to get a good night sleep free of pollution. My daughter Lilly (3 at the time) would wake up in the middle of the night screaming because she thought the house was on fire, at least it smelled like it was. I had a difficult conversation with my son Aidan's kindergarten teacher about why he had dark red circles under his eyes and was falling asleep in school. This trauma still lives with me today.

I'm telling you this because as we learned about air pollution and all the sources of pollution, you don't want your kids to experience, how much children know about their environment, and how stressful it can be for them to feel like their home is not safe. We had to take our neighbor to court to make them stop polluting our air. We settled after being poisoned for two heating seasons, and that same week in November 2014, we found out that there would be a fracking well pad located over the hill from our home. As bad as the wood smoke had been for our air, fracking was going to be worse, and I no longer believed I could count on DEP to do anything. The industry says all the time how "well regulated" they are, but those regulations are full of holes and when you have a DEP that doesn't care, violations to state and federal law go unchecked. One operator in our community has racked up 780 health and safety violations in 8 years, and the other has 151 in the same amount of time yet they keep getting permits. You tell me how THAT is well-regulated.

That fracking pad completely changed my life. Overnight, I was labeled as an Environmentalist, Activist, Tree-hugger, and worse by the oil and gas executives who wish to discredit me for being a good mother. I learned then and there that I will be damned if I let these people poison my kids. And now it's not just my kids. It's all the kids in my neighborhood.

I would like this committee to think for a second about my motivation for testifying today, to keep my kids safe. What is the Marcellus Shale Coalition's motivation? Money. Who are you going to protect?

I live in a neighborhood in transition. Houses were built in the 50s and 60s. My neighbor Bunny has been there her entire adult life with her kids, grandkids, great-grandkids, and has been through two hip replacements. When the elderly move out or pass on, young families take their place. All of these babies will be at the playground at the end of my street playing in contaminated air. Contaminated water will run off the pad into their backyards.

If there is an emergency at the well pad, Bunny and the other elderly people in my community will not be able to evacuate. The child across the street in a wheelchair will not be able to evacuate. In fact, because this well pad is about 1,000 feet from the heavily traveled road (State Route 130), many of the 3,000 homes within a mile evacuation zone would be able to be evacuated. There is one way in and one way out. The warning signs are there, but who are you going to believe? The medical professionals and families living this nightmare, or the industry profiting from our pain?

This is NOT a rural community. The studies done in Washington County and other rural counties in PA tell us about what harms and diseases await communities like mine that are just starting to see fracking happen. The only difference, instead of having 30 people within a mile, you will have 3,000 who will experience harm. **This is why we need large statewide setbacks.**

If setbacks had already been in place when I started learning about the harm to school children from fracking, the school children that attend Level Green Elementary would not have the threat of 4 well pads within a mile of the school. The thousands of people who live in my community would not breathe constant air pollution and have polluted water in their backyards.

What else would have been different in my life, if scientifically-appropriate setbacks had already been in place when I moved to Trafford? I would have been able to focus on my kids more. I could have taken them to more sports and fun events. I wouldn't have had to work so much. I wouldn't have to talk to residents on the phone at 11 p.m. because they couldn't sleep because they were scared about their air or water, or kept awake by noise from a drilling site. If setbacks had been in place, my personal life would have been very different.

If the setbacks had already been in place, my friend Danielle would not be sandwiched between three pads: Metis, Gaia, and Poseidon. When they were building the Metis well pad, we were at her having an easter egg hunt at her home for the kids, and we could hear the construction during the hunt. I thought to myself, this is only the beginning. Wait until they start fracking. You'll be lucky if you can sleep. At one point, Danielle thought about moving to another neighborhood around Pittsburgh, but every neighborhood had a well pad close to where she looked. There is nowhere to go far enough away from some sort of fracking infrastructure.

If we had appropriate setbacks, Penn Township would not have been sued by one gas company for 380 million dollars for trying to protect its residents by denying three well pads. The gas company would know that they can't bully us around, they can't threaten us and destroy our

community. Because of their threats, our township gives a blanket approval so we have no local oversight along with a lack of state oversight.

Protect PT was founded to fill a need that the state wasn't filling. I shouldn't have to do the job that the state and local governments fail to do. Everyone living in the sacrifice zone of the shale fields has a story like this, but most of them haven't been able to defend themselves and don't get to be here today. The Marcellus Shale Coalition "expressed deep disappointment" that they were not invited today meanwhile they have one lobbyist for every legislator in this state, yet they still have to bully their way into one of the few opportunities you get to hear from the people you took an oath to represent. Robert Bair part of AFL-CIO wrote that he represents over 130,000 members. But he can't speak for that many people. I come from a union household, CWA local 13 thousand, and I know we should be working together to build the new clean energy economy like AFL-CIO's president Liz Shuler wrote in a press release in June of this year when endorsing the Biden-Harris administration for the next election. We and other union families are being impacted by fracking too close to our homes. You don't need to poison one to give another a job. That is NOT solidarity. I know that a rank-and-file carpenter's union member wrote to this committee in support of this bill.

It's too late to change what happened to me and my family, but it's not too late to prevent this disaster from happening to other families. **Enact setbacks now.** Let your legacy in this committee be one of saving families across Pennsylvania. I don't care what your politics are, but I do care whose side you are on. Are you on the side of the families who live in PA and have the right to clean air and water? Do you care about a person's freedom to live a healthy life in a safe home? If you do, then do the right thing and pass HB 170 into law. I've included a map of my community that shows how many well pads have invaded our backyard. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Gillian Graber

