

**Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Citizen Comment on Proposed Rulemaking Regarding Well Location Restrictions (House Bill
170)**

Dear Environmental Resources and Energy Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to share comments about the need to put at least 2,500 feet of distance between frack wells and the lives they are endangering.

Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community (BCMAC) was formed in 2011 after a group of residents learned about the threat posed by fracking to the pristine, High-Quality Ambridge Reservoir. Long before all the other impacts of frack wells became known, BCMAC understood that wells in the Reservoir's spring-fed watershed could contaminate a water supply that is vital to 30,000 residents in eight municipalities.

We now work to protect Beaver County residents from the dangers of Shell's fracking-fed Ethane Cracker, which was built to justify the proliferation across Southwestern Pennsylvania of frack wells that, given what we know now about their health impacts, sit far too close to our homes, schools, and hospitals.

For us, your support of House Bill 170 is timely for three other reasons: first, predatory tactics from landmen are on the rise in Beaver County's Hanover Township; second, there is now evidence that both radioactivity and "forever chemicals" like PFAS (which includes the deadly PFOA) are in fracking fluids; and third, the blue hydrogen that is likely to be used for ARCH2 will unfortunately foster more fracking in our region. All three of these developments point to the looming possibility of further petrochemical buildout here.

Beaver County does not want to become another Washington County, Pennsylvania's most fracked county, where some form of fracking infrastructure is visible at almost every turn. Unsurprisingly, Washington County is where, according to a study reported in early 2021 by Kristina Marusic of *Environmental Health News*, fracking chemicals were found in the urine of children living in three households within two miles of numerous wells, pipelines, and compressor stations.

Sparked by rising community concerns about fracking's impacts in eight Southwestern Pennsylvania counties that include both Washington and Beaver, the Pennsylvania Department of Health contracted researchers at the University of Pittsburgh to conduct three observational epidemiological studies focusing on asthma, childhood cancers and birth outcomes. Those studies, conducted from 2021 to 2023, produced the following results:

- Asthma sufferers living close to wells during the production phase had an increased chance of their asthma worsening.

- Children who lived within 1 mile of one or more frack wells had 5 to 7 times the chance of developing lymphoma, a relatively rare type of cancer, compared to children who lived in an area without wells within 5 miles.
- Infants born to pregnant women who lived near wells during the production phase were 20-40 grams (about 1 ounce) smaller at birth.

On Oct. 19, Pennsylvania's Physicians for Social Responsibility released its ninth edition of a compendium of scientific, medical, government and media reports on the petrochemical industry's health effects. PSR's compendium references almost 2,500 papers linking fracking to impacts that include asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and birth defects.

Clearly, natural gas and petrochemical infrastructure that starts with frack wells is harming the health and wellbeing of Pennsylvania residents, and our elderly are among the most vulnerable. With Beaver County aging at a faster rate than the state and nation according to census data, our more than 20% of elderly residents will experience more difficulty breathing toxic emissions from fracking and, with weaker immune systems, will experience more health impacts from those toxins. Research has shown significant associations between shale gas development and hospitalization rates for the elderly.

There is no question that we need more distance between us and infrastructure. We sorely need Protective Buffers to protect Pennsylvania residents. We support House Bill 170 and respectfully request your support as well.

Sincerely,

Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community

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