

July 10, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wolf
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

We, the undersigned Pennsylvania residents, write to you today with serious concerns following Food & Water Watch's "Analysis of Right to Know Request about the Pennsylvania Department of Health Natural Gas Drilling Log". This document contains new evidence that the state's Department of Health was negligent in addressing serious health impacts of fracking affecting residents across the state. Unfortunately, for all of us and our families, we have known the failure of the previous administrations in addressing the health impacts of fracking, because we have experienced it first-hand. We are writing directly to you to ask you to please address the issue of the public health impacts of fracking by helping us and placing an immediate moratorium on fracking so that no other Pennsylvanian resident has to go through what we have endured.

One year ago, whistleblowing former Department of Health (DOH) employees came forward with accounts that the DOH employed tactics to stop its community health workers from hearing and recording the complaints of Pennsylvanians on fracking-related health impacts. DOH staff were explicitly instructed through a memo to refrain from engaging with callers with health complaints containing specific "buzzwords." The memo included words and phrases including 'fracking,' 'Marcellus,' 'hair falling out,' 'skin rash,' and 'cancer cluster.' DOH workers who heard those words in the context of a complaint were instructed to immediately end the conversation by taking the person's phone number and giving it to higher level staff. Food & Water Watch's Right to Know request has revealed that DOH did not adequately respond to the concerns brought forward by residents reporting health concerns.

Additionally, when we learned of the Corbett Administration's negligence of handling complaints from residents to DOH along with the terrible 'buzzwords' memo, we wrote a letter requesting an investigation from the PA Attorney General Kathleen Kane's office. The AG's office said publicly they would respond to our request and many of us were contacted by an AG investigator in the Environmental Crimes Unit. Yet that was a year ago and we never received any follow up or confirmation that an investigation had commenced. Following the recent Right-To-Know request from Food and Water Watch to the AG regarding our letter and information obtained by the AG office, we have since learned from Chuck Ardo, a spokesman for the AG's office in the State Impact story, "Environmental Group Accuses AG's Office of Inaction in Health Department Probe," that the AG's office did not receive the records it requested from the Corbett Administration. We cannot wait any longer for the AG; we need your help now.

New York has banned fracking and Maryland has put in place a moratorium. Both states looked at what was happening in Pennsylvania as they were coming to their decisions. In fact, some of us have spoken with elected officials and others from those states, other states, and even other countries that are looking at Pennsylvania to learn what not to do. They're also looking at the science. There are now 550 scientific papers that show problems and harms from drilling and fracking, including air pollution, water contamination, negative public health effects, earthquakes, environmental damage, and adverse community impacts. Many of those papers include data collected from the experiences of Pennsylvanians like us.

The time to right the wrongs of the past is now. We, Pennsylvanians who are being harmed by drilling and fracking are asking you, Governor Wolf, to protect our health and safety. You have proposed establishing a health registry. It isn't enough. We don't want to be counted, we want to be helped.

The negligence Food & Water Watch discovered in its analysis came as no surprise to those of us who have suffered the impacts of shale gas development. We've already filed complaints with the DOH and DEP, reported our problems to the Attorney General's office, and still we have not been helped. Our experience has discouraged others from reporting their health problems. With the health and safety of Pennsylvania's families and children, friends and communities in your hands, we urge you to take action now. We call on you to impose a statewide moratorium on the issuing of new permits for drilling and fracking in our state. Further, we call on you to immediately help every Pennsylvanian whose health has been compromised by fracking. Some of us have been waiting for years for DOH to get back to us, and many of us are among those whose stories appear in the records the DOH recently released. We were counted. We still haven't been helped. We cannot wait any longer; we are sick and need your help right now.

Sincerely,

Angel Smith, Clearville, PA*

William Smith, Clearville, PA*

Gerry Lynn Kane, Meshoppen PA*

Tom Chaffee, Warren Center, PA (DOH Case # 37)

Carol Chaffee, Warren Center, PA (DOH Case # 37)

Tammy Manning, Franklin Forks, PA*

Ed Atwood, Warren, PA*

Randy Moyer, Portage, PA (DOH Case # 31, 47)

Vera Scroggins, Brackney, PA (DOH Case # 28,30, 34)

Jenny Lisak, Punxsutawney, PA*

Craig Stevens, Montrose, PA (DOH Case # 47)

Audrey Gozdiskowski, Tunkhannock, PA (DOH Case # 55)

Patricia Farnelli, Montrose, PA*

Linda Headley, Smithfield, PA (DOH Case # 59)

Max Chilson Kingsley, PA (DOH Case #32)
Kim McEvoy, Butler, PA*

*Individual contacted Pennsylvania Department of Health, but Food & Water Watch has not received documentation of communication from Department of Health