

Commentary at DEP's Citizens Advisory Council 4/21/2015

It's symbolic that this meeting is taking place in the Rachel Carson State Office Building. The Environmental Protection Agency exists because of Rachel Carson's actions to ban DDT in the 1960's.

Orion magazine August 2012, "The Fracking of Rachel Carson" by Sandra Steingraber states "In 2005, fracking was granted specific exemptions from the Safe Drinking Water Act. Fracking is also exempt from key provisions within the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Chemicals used in drilling and fracking operations can be claimed as trade secrets; public release of their identity is not mandated by federal right-to-know provisions. The Environmental Protection Agency has limited jurisdiction over fracking."

Fracking and their required pipelines have been brought to Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale area as a result of the Bush-Cheney National Energy Policy in 2005. The fracking industry created by Halliburton (Cheney's company) is making billions while we ignore protection from the agencies created to protect us. Many families in the Marcellus Shale area no longer have potable water and have illnesses directly related to the chemical pollution and gases released in the air.

The Environmental Rights Amendment. Article 1, Section 27 of the PA State Constitution, relating to **Natural Resources and the Public Estate** states: The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

The Clean Power Plan is giving Pennsylvania an opportunity to invest in renewables and energy efficiency. Climate change resulting from natural gas pollutants, CO2 and methane also threatens PA residents with chronic respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Natural gas is a major emitter of methane, a greenhouse gas far more potent than the CO2 emitted from coal.

It's time to be proactive. Fracking to access natural gas needs to be subject to all provisions of the EPA, DEP, Clean Air and Water Act. If the natural gas companies can't meet or surpass these provisions than there should be a moratorium on the industry until it can prove compliance. Until this happens, the need for transmission pipelines with their environmental damage and safety risks can be put on hold. There will be no way to correct the damage being done to the planet for the generations that follow, who will damn us for leaving them with this mess.

The Citizens' Climate Lobby proposes a carbon fee and dividend program. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) proposes a Cap and Trade program. Let the market mechanism push Pennsylvania and the country toward control of climate change.

Why can't we redirect the billions, given to the oil and gas lobbies to satisfy their greed, to those with the ability to grow renewable energy and create energy efficiencies? Even those who don't believe that climate change is really happening can consider Clean Energy Policies as insurance against the risk. "If we do clean energy right, the world will be our customer". (Former Mass. Governor Patrick)

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