



Pipeline explosion in Salem Township, PA - Photo credit: WTAE.com

"Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans." - Jaques Cousteau

Greetings!

Things are really heating up on the natural gas front. Just after New York denied permitting for the Constitution Pipeline, a natural gas line exploded in western Pennsylvania. The explosion took an entire residence with it and even melted vinyl siding off a nearby home! Scary stuff to consider as older pipelines continue to lose integrity and 30,000 miles of proposed new pipelines begin to crisscross Pennsylvania. Read more in our feature articles below.

Next up, an outrageous attempt at industry kick-backs in the PA House. Representative Cris Dush (R-66) sponsored some shady legislation which would funnel our tax dollars to the gas industry to pay for legal fees incurred as they attempt to fight regulations. This is followed by an important vote happening in the PA House TODAY (May 3). Now is the time to call your representatives and make your voice heard.

On a more proactive note, after much pressure, PA finally plans to install air quality monitors in certain drilling areas across the state. The third article explains.

In Other News highlights a mysterious illness in baby horses possibly due to a neighboring natural gas well; the issue is currently under investigation. News continues with a new report on the impact of natural gas on the environment and public health. The report examines information gathered over the last six years. Last but not least, could a recent earthquake have been caused by fracking? See the sidebar for more information.

Due to Inflection Energy's ongoing cement and casing failures, our *Well Count* section is inundated with permit violations this week. [Click here to see more details on the violations.](#)

It's a slow process, but we are continuing to move forward. [Click here to see why Bill McKibben describes "Keystone-ization" as the industry's new nightmare.](#)

Mark your calendars for the upcoming RDA meeting

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Events

RDA Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, May 11, 5:30 pm
Cloud Nine Restaurant
Montoursville, PA

Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend. We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special projects, publicity, research and other endeavors. Please come join us and see what the RDA Working Group is all about. Attendance at a meeting is not an obligation to join the group.



Wednesday, May 11th and the River Songs & Water Shorts event coming up on the 21st.

Happy Spring... time to let your heart sing!

Sincerely,

Brooke Woodside
Managing Editor

[Click here to visit our Facebook page.](#)

PA Pipeline Explodes!

by Ashley Hardway - Reposted from [WTAE's website](#)

Salem Township, PA - A natural gas explosion sparked a fire with huge flames April 29 in Westmoreland County, leaving one person badly burned, causing damage to nearby utilities and prompting evacuations in the immediate area.

"It looked like you were looking down into hell. As far across my windshield as I could see was just a massive fireball," said Forbes Road Fire Chief Bob Rosatti, describing his arrival at the blast scene near Route 22 and Route 819.

The explosion happened around 8:30 a.m. and involved a 30-inch pipeline owned by Texas Eastern, a unit of Spectra Energy, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The blast caused flames to shoot above nearby treetops in the largely rural area.

Sky 4 video showed a large swath of land around the pipeline that was scorched in the explosion. A nearby house was destroyed, and a man in the home suffered burns and had to be taken to a Pittsburgh hospital.



The house was destroyed in the natural gas explosion.

The victim "told us that he heard a loud noise and compared it to a tornado. All he saw was fire and started running up the roadway and a passerby picked him up," Rosatti said.

"The heat was so intense that it was burning him as he was running," he said.

A quarter-mile evacuation zone was established. Rosatti said the explosion and fire "damaged all the trees, all the utilities going down the roadway -- the phone, cable, electric.

River Songs & Water Shorts

Saturday, May 21st
7 pm - 9 pm
Country Cupboard
7701 West Branch Highway
Lewisburg, PA

The evening will feature: Adirondack Folk Musician Dan Berggron; short documentary "water warrior" films from around the world; and discussion about the Susquehanna River.

The event is presented by the Middle Susquehanna Riverkeepers and Bucknell University.

In Other News

Mystery of Sick Foals

Was fracking to blame on PA farm?

Gural's horse-breeding farm holds a disturbing mystery health experts and the federal government are working hard to solve. For three years, the mares have been bearing foals with dysphagia - a rare, life-threatening condition preventing them from swallowing properly.

Although researchers have yet to pinpoint a cause, a Cornell University veterinary team that saved 17 of Gural's standard-bred foals has identified a primary suspect.



[Click here to read more from Press Connects.](#)

Understanding the Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Natural Gas Drilling

The body of science evaluating the potential impacts of

Burned all the telephone poles off. It kind of looks like a bomb went off."

The cause of the blast wasn't immediately clear. Rosatti said nobody was believed to be working on the line when the explosion happened.

[Click here to watch video news coverage from WTAE.](#)

NY Denies Pipeline

On April 22, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) denied the Constitution Pipeline Project - a joint venture between four oil and gas companies-proposed to transport fracked natural gas from Susquehanna County in PA through Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Schoharie counties in NY to existing interstate pipelines.

The pipeline route would have crossed hundreds of streams and wetlands, including those supplying drinking water to families along the proposed route. Using the power granted under the Clean Water Act, DEC officials rejected the companies' permit application, citing damage the project would do to water supplies along the pipeline route.

In March the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) gave the go-ahead to pipeline developers to clear-cut 20 miles of trees along the pipeline's planned route through Pennsylvania. Pointing to the fact that New York State had not yet issued a permit, Earthjustice and other environmental groups called FERC's move premature and illegal. New York's rejection of the project today bolsters support for criticism of FERC as an agency that rubber stamps fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

Remember [the Hollerans and their maple trees?](#) Sadly, they were along the PA path of destruction.

Despite FERC's conditioning its approval on Constitution's need to obtain a WQC, the Department has received reports that tree felling has already occurred in New York on the Project's right of way. This tree cutting, both clear cutting and selective cutting, has occurred notwithstanding the fact that Constitution has right-of-way agreements with the property owners where this cutting has occurred.

The tree felling was conducted near streams and directly on the banks of some streams, and in one instance has resulted in trees and brush being deposited directly in a stream, partially damming it. This type of activity, if not properly controlled, can severely impact the best usages of the water resource.

Here's what Earthjustice attorney Moneen Na Smith had to say about the Earth Day announcement:

"Today in New York City, world leaders gathered to sign the COP 21 climate agreement. Today in Albany, state leaders displayed precisely the leadership necessary to help us meet the goals of this historic climate treaty-by choosing to protect New York State's waterways and reject a massive fossil fuel infrastructure project.

unconventional natural gas development (UNGD) has grown significantly in recent years, although many data gaps remain, a broad empirical understanding of the impacts is beginning to emerge amidst a swell of research. The present categorical assessment provides an overview of the peer-reviewed scientific literature from 2009-2015 as it relates to the potential impacts of UNGD on public health, water quality and air quality. We have categorized all available original research during this time period in an attempt to understand the weight and direction of the scientific literature.

[Click here to check out the scientific paper on PLOS ONE.](#)

Hilcorp Halts Fracking Near Earthquake in PA

A natural gas company voluntarily halted fracking activity on a Marcellus Shale well in Lawrence County last week while state officials began investigating a minor, nearby earthquake.

Houston-based Hilcorp Energy stopped fracking one of the four wells it drilled on its North Beaver NC Development pad west of New Castle about noon on April 25, hours after a 1.9 magnitude earthquake was detected nearby in Mahoning.

[Click here to read more from TribLive.com.](#)

Well Count - Lycoming County VIOLATIONS

The following permit violations, issued April 6 were attributed to defective casing and cementing of the wells:

Upper Fairfield Township:
INFLECTION ENERGY (PA)
HAMILTONUNIT1H
HAMILTON3
ARWHILLEGAS1H
HAMILTON6

[Click here to see more detail for each of these violations, including past violations at each well.](#)

VIOLATIONS

The Constitution pipeline is the sort of massive fossil fuel investment that would have locked our region into continued extraction and burning of fossil fuels and irreparably damaged precious water resources at a time when we need instead to be protecting these resources and speeding the transition to 100 percent renewable energy for all."

[Click here to read more from Ecowatch.](#)

An Outrageous Legislative Assault on Regulation

NEWS FLASH: As we go to press with this issue of the RDA newsletter, we have been told that the legislative amendment discussed in the story to follow has been pulled. Apparently, a small but adequate-for-the-moment impartation of sanity descended on the PA House members. Let's hope it's true that the amendment is indeed dead and this story is now moot. Time will tell. Read on!

The Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board is made up of five members, three of whom are employed by Marcellus Shale Coalition members Consol Energy, Shell and Tenaska. Pending legislation could end up funneling money their way. Essentially, as Emily Kraffack points out in her recent blog, "What this means is OUR tax dollars will be handed over to oil and gas drilling and service corporations to fight AGAINST regulations needed to protect our drinking water and our environment where drilling occurs near OUR HOMES AND SCHOOLS!!"

Please contact your legislators immediately to protest this latest low-down attempt to nullify regulations recognized as reasonable by all but the gas industry and in-their-pocket legislators.

Thank you to Emily Kraffack of the [Connection for Oil Gas and Environment in the Northern Tier \(COGENT\)](#) for bringing the following proposed amendment to PA House budget Bill 1999 to our attention:

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1999
Sponsor: Representative Dush
Printer's No. 3176

Amend Bill, page 73, line 12, by inserting after "operations."

This appropriation includes at least \$600,000 to assist the Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board to employ outside, independent legal counsel and other experts as determined by the advisory board in its review and response to proposed and final rulemakings and other matters brought before the advisory board for its consideration.

In the Crosshairs PA House Tries to Kill New Oil and Gas Regulations

There have been 4,006 violations on 7,788 active wells since January 2009.

[Click here to view a map of PA and learn more about each of these violations.](#)

Petitions

Don't Let Oil and Gas Pollution Go Unchecked

Any day now, the EPA is expected to finalize America's first-ever national methane limits on oil & gas climate pollution-standards that 178,913 EDF Activists supported. With the finalization of this rule, we are making history.

But there's an important question still on the table: It's currently unclear whether or not the final rule will require all oil and gas companies to monitor their facilities for dangerous methane leaks. We simply can't afford to let this pollution go undetected.

Tell the EPA to require the oil & gas industry to keep track of their own climate pollution!

[Click here to sign this petition from the Environmental Defense Fund.](#)

The Fox Is Guarding the Hen House - Demand an Investigation!

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) operates as a rubber stamp on the pipeline infrastructure projects that come before it for review. FERC approval is a foregone conclusion for each project that goes before the FERC Commissioners for their vote. This extreme conflict of interest is fueled by the fact that FERC is 100% funded by the pipeline industry and the other industries it is supposed to be independently regulating. In addition, the revolving door between FERC and industry employees strengthens the capture of the agency that fuels the bias.

Help secure an independent investigation by the Government Accountability Office into the abuses of power, process and law by FERC when it comes to interstate natural gas pipelines, their compressors

We just got word that the Pennsylvania House is voting TODAY (May 3rd) on a concurrent resolution that, if passed, will block the new and much-needed oil and gas regulations.

After four years, numerous hearings and nearly 30,000 comments - the PA House is now trying to roll back environmental protections for Pennsylvania communities and families.

Just as PA's natural gas industry was about to be better regulated with the approval of the long-awaited Chapter 78 and 78a regulations, some members of the PA House are working to block these critical protections, pushing a resolution that would undo all the efforts and progress made over the past four years.

Tell your state legislators: Don't put our families at risk.

Every day, Pennsylvania residents are endangered by oil and natural gas drilling, a highly industrialized process that is banned in other states and nations because of the risks imposed. We deserve these regulations. We can't afford wait anymore.

Make sure your regulators hear from you before it's too late.

A telephone call will carry the most weight. Two of our local representatives can be reached as follows:

Jeff Wheeland
jwheeland@pahousegop.com
District Office: 570-321-1270
Capitol Office: 717-787-2885

Garth Everett
geverett@pahousegop.com
District Office: 570-546-2084
Capitol Office: 717-787-5270

[Click here to sign a petition from EDF Action.](#)

PA to Install Air Quality Monitors in Drilling Areas

Years of community effort to improve air quality monitoring in areas surrounding natural gas operations may finally pay off.

The state Department of Environmental Protection on April 27 announced it is spending \$1.56 million on 10 installations that will continually monitor fine particulate matter, or particles in the air about one-thirtieth the width of a human hair.

DEP Secretary John Quigley called the new monitoring sites an "unprecedented expansion" of air quality monitoring prompted by ongoing community concerns in areas around natural gas development.

Monitors are to be installed in Wyoming and Susquehanna counties, as well as Fayette, Indiana and Lycoming counties by the end of the year. The DEP also will install monitors in

and LNG export facilities.

Write your congressional representative now to urge their help in securing this necessary independent review.

[Click here to send your letter to all of your federal senators and congressional representatives with just one click.](#)

Defend Long-Awaited Oil and Gas Drilling Safeguards

After more than five years of hearings plus input from tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians and the legislature, the state's Department of Environmental Protection finally proposed moving ahead with new regulations for oil and gas drilling. But now, politicians voted on behalf of the industry to reject these protections, including an end to hazardous fracking waste pits.

Tell your state officials to defend long-awaited protections from oil & gas drilling pollution today.

[Click here to send a letter to state officials, courtesy of PennEnvironment.](#)

Join the Campaign to Ban Fracking in Michigan

Do you know anyone who lives in Michigan? If so, please forward this to them.

The Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan is a statewide ballot question committee for 2016, an initiative registered with the Secretary of State to prohibit horizontal fracking and frack wastes in Michigan, and end the state's commitment to "foster" the oil-gas industry.

[Click here to learn more about volunteer opportunities.](#)

Join RDA!

It costs nothing to sign up for our e-newsletter, but tax-free donations are accepted & greatly appreciated. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to RDA.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RDA relies on donations for the important work we do. In order for RDA to

Clarion, Jefferson and McKean counties by fall 2017. Installations in Towanda Twp., Bradford County, and Holbrook Twp., Greene County, were completed in March.

"We don't have any expectations coming into this expansion, merely the ambition to get a more comprehensive data set on air quality in Pennsylvania," Mr. Quigley said during a telephone news conference.

The news is an affirmation for activists who have been calling for more government oversight of the natural gas industry since the early days of the shale gas boom. "I have been advocating for these monitors for well over five years," said Emily Krafjack, a Wyoming County activist who doesn't oppose gas development, just wants it to be more tightly regulated. "But the devil is in the details. At this point, the DEP has not announced where it will position the monitors, and with only one planned for each county, placement is critical," Mrs. Krafjack said.

Most of Wyoming County's industrial activity - the Procter & Gamble factory complex in Washington Twp., natural gas well pads and compressor stations - takes place in its central and northwestern sections. So an air monitor in the mountainous southwestern corner, mostly state game lands, might not reveal possible effects of gas production.

There is no public comment period before the department decides where to place the monitors, DEP spokesman Neil Shader said.

[Click here to read the full report from PA DEP.](#)

Susquehanna Riverkeeper Event

Keeping the River: River Songs & Water Shorts



Adirondack Folk Musician Dan Berggren

This free public event is presented by:



Saturday, May 21, from 7 – 9 p.m.
in the Baylor Room of the
Country Cupboard Best Western Inn
7701 Westbranch Hwy, Lewisburg, PA 17837

The event will feature:

- Adirondack Folk Musician Dan Berggren
- Short documentary "Water Warrior" films from around the world
- Discussion about the Susquehanna River

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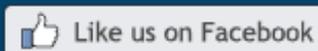


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Please note: The RDA newsletter includes reporting on a variety of events and activities, which do not necessarily reflect the philosophy of the organization. RDA practices only non-violent action in voicing the organization's beliefs and concerns.

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