



An artistic solar array in Ontario, Canada

"If we are serious about climate change, we need to put an end to fracking not only in New York and Vermont, but all over the country" -Bernie Sanders

Greetings!

"When people run in circles, it's a very very mad world," sing Tears for Fears in an old song.

Those of us who live in Pennsylvania don't have to look far to find rampant examples of madness. These days, I'm increasingly grateful for people of sound judgment, for so many who should be smart enough to know better are indeed - running in circles.

Our newsletter opens on a bright note, a far cry from the madness that inhabits the halls of Harrisburg. RDA Board member Dianne Peeling authors the story, inviting you to the Rivertown Coalition Energy Fair, *New Day Dawning*, scheduled for this Saturday, April 23rd. Dianne provides details of the event, which will focus on renewable and sustainable energy. News of the Energy Fair is juxtaposed with the madness of SEDA-COG's plans to incentivize and subsidize methane gas build-out and infrastructure in PA.

If the SEDA-COG plans aren't a big enough dose of madness, the recent actions of Majority Chairman Gene Yaw and his cronies in the Senate Environmental Committee sure are. After investing thousands of tax-payer-funded hours in planning, writing, travel, recorded testimony, consideration of nearly 30,000 comments and re-writing, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released their proposed new regulations for oil and gas industry operations in the Commonwealth. The Republican-controlled legislature, along with the PA Independent Petroleum Producers Association (PIPP) is hoping to forestall adoption of the regulations by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). According to state Rep Greg Vitali, D-Delaware County, the regulations are long overdue. "There is a concerted effort by the conventional industry not to be regulated.... That's really what's going on," Vitali said. More details are offered in our second story, *Regulatory Temper Tantrum* by Earthworks blogger Nadia Steinzor.

Our newsfeed continues with a story by Bill McKibben that further reveals the madness of

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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

Pennsylvania's love affair with methane gas.

Next, a Harvard University professor points out that it is political will, not a lack of technology, that keeps America from making the huge strides necessary to move rapidly to a renewable energy grid.

Leave the madness behind and join RDA on the next *Keep It Wild* hike as we trek to the breathtaking vista atop Smith's Knob in the Loyalsock State Forest on Sunday afternoon, May 1st. Details in the newsfeed below.

As always, check out the sidebar for events, news and action steps.

I hope to see you at the next RDA Working Group meeting. Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 11th and come join us. There's work to be done and fun to be had. It's not all madness...I promise.

Sincerely,

Barb Jarmoska
RDA Board Member, Editor

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

New Day Dawning - Energy Fair

by Dianne Peeling, RDA Board Member

"Should Pennsylvania Incentivize Natural Gas?" This crucial question was the title of a hearing held in Harrisburg earlier this month, attended and reported on by RDA member Ralph Kisberg in our [April 4th RDA newsletter](#). Sadly, the hearing was long on the benefits of natural gas itself and short on the need to transition to renewables. For details, Ralph's article is worth another read.

On the heels of that hearing, our sister group to the south - the Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Water - is holding an Energy Fair... New Day Dawning... Saturday, April 23rd in Selinsgrove. Its focus is on renewable energy technologies currently in use in our area. Peter Jansson, an engineering professor from Bucknell University whose passion is photovoltaics, will give an overview of renewable energy coming of age in the 21st century. Mark Utz (geothermal) and Tony Engelke (solar) are businessmen in Union and Snyder Counties and beyond and will talk on the status of their respective industries in Pennsylvania today. Later company representatives will be on hand with displays and recommendations. Some of us from RDA will be attending. If you're interested in carpooling, contact me, Dianne Peeling at diannepeeling@windstream.net.

But first - a little about the Rivertown Coalition, a group from Union and Snyder counties. There is no fracking under their feet... Why are they so committed? Though there is no drilling in these counties, they live with the effects of the fracking-supporting businesses: the trucks rumbling through the main streets of Lewisburg, Montandon, Milton and others; the Northridge Waste Management Company on Route 15 in Winfield; the proposed pipeline sites and the effort of the gas industry and their lobby to override landowners' eminent domain. As people who love this state's forests and habitats, they want to keep, preserve and protect them for generations to come. Most importantly, they share RDA's concern for the health of people near the fracking areas and for every one of us as we are affected by the severe weather effects and climate change impact that the gas industry worsens.

The Energy Fair will be Rivertown's 5th annual spring workshop, and it looks to what we can do NOW...HERE. Of deep concern and serving as an impetus for them is SEDA-COG's unveiling of the multi-county long-range energy plan. See story in the [April 4th RDA newsletter](#). In the plan SEDA-COG presented for public comment, there was virtually no consideration for renewable energy in the next 5-year period. Conflict of interest reigns supreme as Don Kiel, chairman of SEDA-COG's Regional Gas Utilization Initiative Committee, is project manager of the Energy Transfer Compressor Station on Quaker State Road in the

Group is all about. Attendance at a meeting is not an obligation to join the group.



----- **New Day Dawning - Symposium**

Saturday, April 23rd
8:30 am - 12:30 pm
St Paul's UCC
400 N Market St
elinsgrove, PA

What do you know about renewable energy?

Discover the potentials of Solar and Geothermal Energy for our current and future needs at the Rivertown Coalition's 5th Annual Spring Program.

Speakers Peter Jansson, Mark Utz and Tony Engelke will enlighten attendees with their knowledge. Other representatives will be available to answer questions from their tables at the fair.

Renewable Energy Tour

Saturday, April 30th
10 am - 2 pm
St Pius X Parking Lot
112 Fairview Avenue
Selinsgrove, PA

Many homes, businesses and farms in our area are already using renewable energy. The Rivertown Coalition has arranged a tour to visit some of them.

Get onto the bus or register to receive the addresses to tour on your own within that time period.

[Click here for more information or to sign up for either event.](#)

In Other News

The Invisible Catastrophe - Aliso Canyon

Over the course of four months, 97,100 metric tons of methane

Loyalsock Valley, visible from Route 87 just north of Montoursville. The plan incentivizes building and conversions to natural gas plants, pipelines, public transportation and fueling - truly a tax-payer funded red carpet for the gas industry. The three Rivertown delegates attending SEDA-COG's presentation were aghast at the lack of any planning for development of renewable energy production. Assuming those deciding have not heard all the scientific implications of this approach, Rivertown launched a letter-writing campaign to our representatives in the SEDA-COG area. Look for information on their website - www.rivertowncoalition.org - to see their SEDA-COG letters that might help you with your own letter writing.

The following week - Saturday, April 30th - the New Day Dawning Coalition has planned a Renewable Energy Tour from 10 - 2 pm. A bus departing at 11 am will take you to some of the homes, businesses and farms in our area that are using renewable energy. Or you can pick up directions and drive yourself in that 4-hour time period. Rivertown's most recent newsletter has more information about renewables and is also available at www.rivertowncoalition.org.

Regulatory Temper Tantrum in PA

by Nadia Steinzor, excerpted from [Earthworks](#)

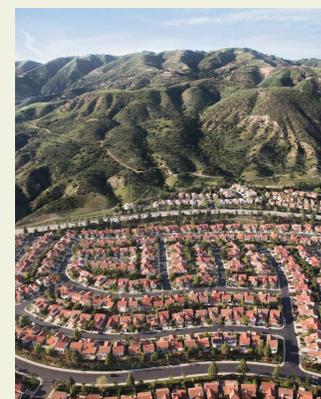
Oil and gas companies often complain about "overly burdensome" and "redundant" regulations that reduce efficiency and increase costs. In Pennsylvania, drillers are going one big step further-making it clear that they really don't want to be regulated at all.

Some state legislators are working to derail the adoption of revised regulations for well sites. They've tried (though so far failed) to prohibit rules for conventional drillers by amending the fiscal code. Now they're pushing for the House and Senate to pass concurrent resolutions disapproving of the regulations, thereby stalling the adoption of Chapter 78, and potentially also of revised rules for unconventional (Marcellus Shale) drilling, known as Chapter 78a. [Ed. Note: On April 12, the House and Senate Environmental and Energy Resources committees voted to reject the DEP regulations. Any ultimate legislative action would be subject to a veto by Governor Tom Wolf.]

After years of allowing oil and gas operations with outdated regulations, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is finally poised to change the status quo. This comes after nearly three years of revisions, several public hearings statewide and the submission of nearly 30,000 comments from the public, industry, environmental organizations and elected officials. The industry and legislators may not like the final result, but they had more than enough time and opportunity to weigh in.

Although Earthworks and its partners will continue to push for even stronger regulations to protect communities and the environment, the current revisions are a huge step forward. Among other things, Chapter 78 and 78a rules would prohibit the storage of polluting waste in open pits, trigger additional review of permits to drill near schools and playgrounds, require operators to identify old wells before drilling new ones and require immediate notification of spills and releases of harmful substances.

quietly leaked out of a single well into California's sky. Scientists and residents are still trying to figure out just how much damage was done.



[Click here to read more from the New York Times.](#)

Maryland County Becomes First in State to Ban Fracking

Lawmakers in Prince George's County voted unanimously on Tuesday to ban hydraulic fracking, becoming the first local jurisdiction in Maryland to prohibit the extraction of natural gas within its borders since the state's moratorium on the practice went into effect.

The county is following in the footsteps of towns in New York, which also used their local zoning ordinances to prohibit fracking. The energy industry sued, saying the local governments lacked the authority to issue such bans, but the state's highest court upheld the "home rule" of municipalities in 2014.

[Click here to read more from the Washington Post.](#)

Well Count - Lycoming County

The following permits were issued in Lycoming County. Click on the blue title below the company name for more information on each well.

Gamble Township:
[SENECA RESOURCES EASTON 31H 51386](#)
[EASTON 32H 51387](#)
[ANADARKO E&P ONSHORE MARILYN ELY A 1H](#)

Cascade Township



Drilling waste in PA - Photo credit: Frank Finan

In a last-ditch show of frustration, the Pennsylvania Independent Petroleum Producers Association (PIPP) has filed a lawsuit challenging Chapter 78 on the grounds that they are unfairly stringent and expensive to implement. This after the legislature in 2014 forced DEP to create a different set of rules just for conventional drillers. DEP even set up a special Conventional Oil and Gas Advisory Committee -made up largely of industry representatives - to review them.

PIPP's lawsuit seeks an injunction on the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, which is currently accepting comments on Chapter 78/78a and meeting April 21 to vote on the rules. An affirmative vote by IRRC is a critical administrative step toward adoption into law by this summer.

[Click here to read this Earthworks article in its entirety.](#)

Global Warming's Terrifying New Chemistry

by Bill McKibben, excerpted from [The Nation](#)

Our leaders thought fracking would save our climate. They were wrong. Very wrong.

Global warming is, in the end, not about the noisy political battles here on the planet's surface. It actually happens in constant, silent interactions in the atmosphere, where the molecular structure of certain gases traps heat that would otherwise radiate back out to space. If you get the chemistry wrong, it doesn't matter how many landmark climate agreements you sign or how many speeches you give. And it appears the United States may have gotten the chemistry wrong. Really wrong.

There's one greenhouse gas everyone knows about: carbon dioxide, which is what you get when you burn fossil fuels. We talk about a "price on carbon" or argue about a carbon tax; our leaders boast about modest "carbon reductions." But in the last few weeks, CO2's nasty little brother has gotten some serious press. Meet methane, otherwise known as CH4.

In February, Harvard researchers published an explosive paper in *Geophysical Research Letters*. Using satellite data and ground observations, they concluded that the nation as a whole is leaking methane in massive quantities. Between 2002 and 2014, the data showed that US methane emissions increased by more than 30 percent, accounting for 30 to 60 percent of an enormous spike in methane in the entire planet's atmosphere.

To the extent our leaders have cared about climate change, they've fixed on CO2. Partly as a result, coal-fired power plants have begun to close across the country. They've been replaced mostly with ones that burn natural gas, which is primarily composed of methane. Because burning natural gas releases significantly less carbon dioxide than burning coal, CO2 emissions have begun to trend slowly downward, allowing politicians to take a bow. But

[ANADARKO E&P ONSHORE](#)
[DAVID C DUNCAN A-3H](#)
[DAVID C DUNCAN B-7H](#)
(renewal)

Cogan House Township:
[ANADARKO E&P ONSHORE](#)
[KENMAR HC A4H](#)
[KENMAR HC A5H](#)
[KENMAR HC A6H](#)
[KURT H HAUFLE A-1H](#)
[KURT H HAUFLE A-3H](#)
[KURT H HAUFLE A-5H](#)

LESS GAS - MORE WASTE

February 2016 NG production values for PA decreased 8% compared to January.

10 million gallons of liquid waste was reported for February, which is a 5% increase over January tallies.

VIOLATIONS

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

Tell Obama, "No More Off-Shore Oil & Gas Drilling"

In a big victory for tireless grassroots activism, the Obama administration has withdrawn its plan to allow drilling off our Atlantic coast - but it will soon decide whether oil and gas drilling are allowed in the Arctic or Gulf of Mexico between 2017 and 2022, and so the decision it makes this year will have far-reaching consequences for years to come.

Whether it's to protect our climate from the 60 billion tons of harmful carbon dioxide locked up in offshore oil and gas reserves, or to stop the next BP oil disaster or catastrophic oil spill in the Arctic, taking new offshore drilling off the table is critical. It's time to speak up and have your voice heard.

Take action right now to show the Obama administration that you support keeping dirty fuels in the ground, and oppose any new offshore oil and gas

this new Harvard data, which comes on the heels of other aerial surveys showing big methane leakage, suggests that our new natural-gas infrastructure has been bleeding methane into the atmosphere in record quantities. And molecule for molecule, this unburned methane is much, much more efficient at trapping heat than carbon dioxide.

The EPA insisted this wasn't happening, that methane was on the decline just like CO2. But it turns out, as some scientists have been insisting for years, the EPA was wrong. Really wrong. This error is the rough equivalent of the New York Stock Exchange announcing tomorrow that the Dow Jones isn't really at 17,000: Its computer program has been making a mistake, and your index fund actually stands at 11,000.

These leaks are big enough to wipe out a large share of the gains from the Obama administration's work on climate change - all those closed coal mines and fuel-efficient cars. In fact, it's even possible that America's contribution to global warming increased during the Obama years. The methane story is utterly at odds with what we've been telling ourselves, not to mention what we've been telling the rest of the planet. It undercuts the promises we made at the climate talks in Paris. It's a disaster - and one that seems set to spread.

The Obama administration, to its credit, seems to be waking up to the problem. Over the winter, the EPA began to revise its methane calculations, and in early March, the United States reached an agreement with Canada to begin the arduous task of stanching some of the leaks from all that new gas infrastructure. But none of this gets to the core problem, which is the rapid spread of fracking. Carbon dioxide is driving the great warming of the planet, but CO2 isn't doing it alone. It's time to take methane seriously.

[Click here to read McKibben's article in its entirety.](#)

McKibben is the author of a dozen books, most recently *The Bill McKibben Reader*, an essay collection. A scholar in residence at Middlebury College, he is co-founder of 350.org, the largest global grassroots organizing campaign on climate change.

Nitty-Gritty Solutions to the World's Climate Crisis

by Charlie Smith, excerpted from [The Georgia Straight](#)

A Harvard University historian of science says that with sufficient political cooperation between governments, it's possible to generate enough power from renewable sources to meet all of North America's electricity needs. And that could sharply reduce greenhouse-gas emissions that are linked to climate change.

In a phone interview with the Georgia Straight, Naomi Oreskes said that this can be accomplished by focusing on three major areas: integration of electricity grids, feed-in tariffs and demand-response pricing.

"I've got a joke now where I say to people that I'm going to talk to you about something really exciting now: it's grid integration," she said with a laugh. Her tone turned serious as she admitted that it's sometimes difficult to discuss this topic because it doesn't sound exciting.

If grids were better connected, it would enable B.C. or Quebec hydroelectric power to replace coal-fired power in other provinces and some states. According to Oreskes, research by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Mark Jacobson at Stanford University and a group at the University of Colorado Boulder shows potential for an even greater impact.

"Imagine now that we have Mexico in the mix as well, and you've got all that fantastic solar capacity in the southwest United States and Mexico," Oreskes said. "They've done the modelling to show that there is enough power between hydro, wind and solar to fully power North America so long as you have grid integration to solve the intermittency problem. That's actually a very exciting result, because this technology already exists."

drilling!

[Click here to sign this petition from the Sierra Club.](#)

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 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](#)

Oreskes was in Vancouver earlier this month to deliver the spring Wall Exchange lecture at the Vogue Theatre. It was sponsored by UBC's Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies.

Feed-in tariffs are payments to people who generate their own renewable energy - perhaps through wind, solar, tidal or geothermal sources - and flow it back into the grid. The utility, in turn, resells it to another customer. The B.C. Liberal government has refused to implement a feed-in tariff for B.C. Hydro, citing its "efforts to minimize electricity rate increases."

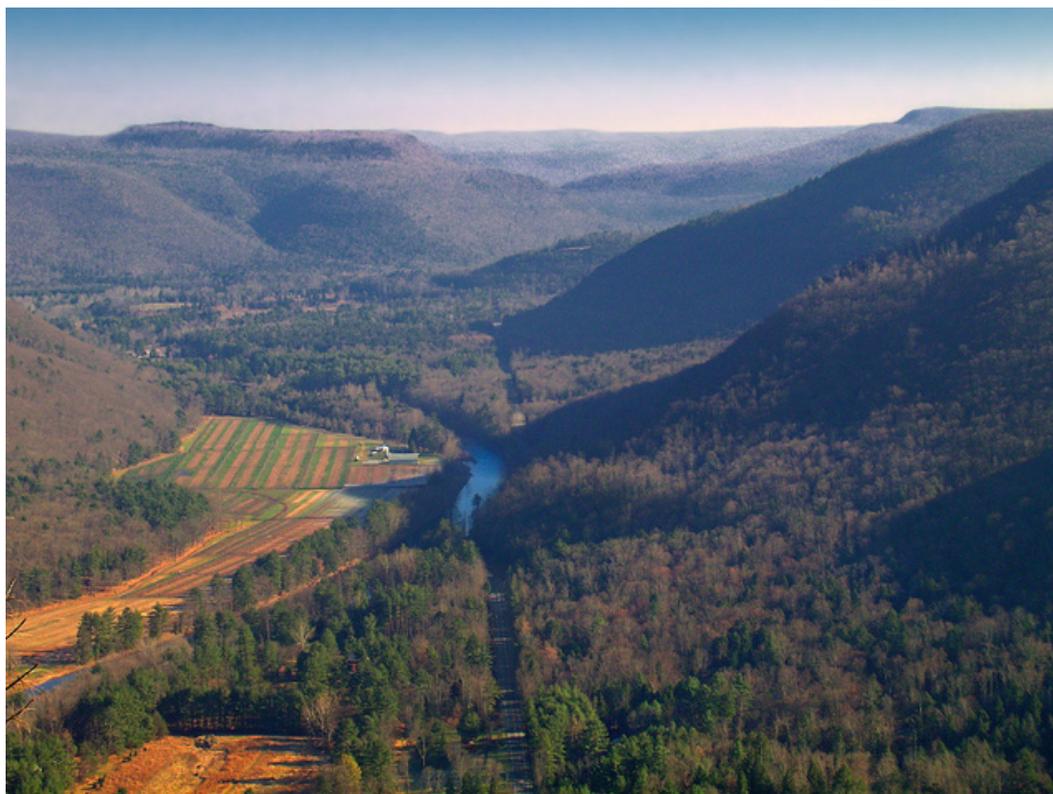
In Massachusetts where she lives, the state government limits how much renewable energy ratepayers can feed back into the grid. Oreskes called this "crazy" in light of the threat of climate change.

"We should be encouraging everyone to maximize their distributed-energy potential," she stated. "There's a huge amount of untapped potential that's being blocked by regulatory limits on how much distributed energy people can feed in."

[Click here to read the full article from the Georgia Straight.](#)

Keep it Wild - Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming Hike to Smith's Knob

Mark your calendars! Our next *Keep it Wild* hike will be to Smith's Knob on **Sunday, May 1st**. Hikers will gather at **1 pm** across from the ranger station on Little Bear Creek Road. Due to concerns with the long and challenging ascent, we may begin the hike on the gentler slope of Painter's Run. Look for the event on RDA's Facebook page in the very near future.



The view from Smiths Knob vista - Photo credit: Onlyinyourstate.com

Smiths Knob is notable for its round, distinctive peak - a geologic anomaly among the plateaus that dominate the region. At first, the trail is steep, but it soon becomes more gradual. The hardwood forest is open, with a thick understory of striped maple. Even in the summer, you can see deep into the woods. Following an old forest road, you approach the ridgeline high above the Loyalsock. You soon pass two scenic vistas of the Loyalsock far below.

[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 continue its valuable education and advocacy outreach in 2016 and beyond, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

You can send a membership donation to the address listed at the bottom of this email, [click here to donate via PayPal](#) or [click here to download our current membership form](#) to fill out and send in along with your donation.

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Woodlander.....\$50
Guardian.....\$100
Naturalist.....\$500
Preservationist.....\$1,000

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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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