



Author Naomi Klein conducts an interview while filming *This Changes Everything*

"If you care about justice, you must see this."

-Kim Naidoo, former Director of Greenpeace International referring to the film, *This Changes Everything*

Greetings!

RDA is delighted to be back at the Community Arts Center on Fourth Street in downtown Williamsport to again host a free public film screening. We invite you to join us at 7:30 pm on Thursday, April 7th as we bring you *This Changes Everything*. Based on Naomi Klein's book of the same name, this documentary was filmed in nine countries on five continents over four years. The movie is purposeful, timely, thought-provoking and ultimately hopeful - inviting us to re-imagine the vast challenge of climate change. Please invite your family, friends and local elected officials to come out and enjoy the extraordinary detail, rich cinematography and powerful message of *This Changes Everything*. This is not a film that tries to scare you into action; it aims to empower and promises to leave you refreshed and inspired, reflecting on the ties between us and the kind of lives we really want.

Continuing with our theme of decisions that carry enormous weight and make a tremendous impact (aka "change everything"), Ralph Kisberg, one of RDA's founding members, takes you inside last week's PA House Democratic Policy Committee hearing on incentivizing (aka using your tax dollars to promote a private enterprise) natural gas in PA. Oh, if only a majority of our elected officials would for once be willing to hear what the unbiased experts have to say about the fossil fuel highway that a majority of industry-blinded PA lawmakers see as the only viable road for our state to take.

Changing everything on the county level, our second feature story takes a close look at the irrationality and recklessness of the costly and comprehensive SEDA-COG plan to invest taxpayer dollars to promote increased and continued dependence on methane gas as a source of domestic fuel and commercial electric generation. We invite you to add your voice to the outcry as we reach out to misguided officials, inviting them to step back, look at the big picture and change the course of PA's future before it's too late.

Last Saturday's *Keep It Wild* hike on Old Logger's Path in the Loyalsock State Forest reminded us of the exceptional and unique beauty of the treasured Clarence Moore lands. RDA Director Robbie Cross wraps up the newsfeed with details of the hike.

Finally, don't miss the newsletter sidebar. Each week, you'll find upcoming events as well as

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Events

----- RDA Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, April 13, 5:30 pm, [Cloud Nine Restaurant](#), Montoursville, PA

Our first Working Group meeting in the new location inside the Williamsport/ Lycoming County Airport was a success. Thank you to all who participated & we hope you will join us again this month.

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

important state, national and international news and opportunities to make your voice heard.

See you at the Community Arts Center on Thursday!

Sincerely,

Barb Jarmoska
RDA Board Member, Editor

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

This Changes Everything **Coming this Thursday!**

FREE SCREENING
Community Arts Center • Williamsport, Pa
Thursday April 7th • 7:30 PM

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

A provocative and empowering film that will leave you refreshed and inspired.

AN AVI LEWIS FILM

RDA Sponsored by RDA - www.rdaPA.org
Responsible Drilling Alliance www.responsible-drilling.org/lieczc.org

KEEP IT WILD

Please help RDA promote this important event. Pick up the phone or send an email and invite your family, friends and elected officials. If you're on Facebook, please click over to the event page and send an invite to your Facebook friends:

and see that the RDA Working Group is all about. Attendance at a meeting is not an obligation to join the group.



Democracy Awakening

Saturday, April 16th
1 - 2 pm
Post Office Steps
Lewisburg, PA

Many people around the country are concerned about the state of democracy in the US today. They are meeting and demonstrating in Washington, DC, April 16-18 to let elected officials know of their concerns. They are also calling on others across the country to join them.

You are invited to join a local gathering in Lewisburg, PA, to collaborate with others on:

1. Overturning Citizens United
2. Supreme Court Justice
3. Restoring Voting Rights Act.

[Click here for more information.](#)

In Other News

Groups Stitch Together Massive Anti-Pipeline Quilt

Lancaster County is well known for its hand made quilts. It's also becoming known as one of the most vocal places of opposition for the Atlantic Sunrise natural gas pipeline project.

Activists held a rally to show off their latest act of protest - a 50-foot-long quilt, which represents the width of the permanent right-of-way for the pipeline. They held it up in front of a preserved farm in western Lancaster County, along a proposed path of the project.

Opening the Barn Door Wider Public Hearing on PA Natural Gas Incentives

by Ralph Kisberg, founding and Working Group Member

"Should Pennsylvania Incentivize Natural Gas?" was the title of a hearing held last week by the PA House Democratic Policy Committee. The hearing was a good effort by a minority of the minority party to address a crucial and fundamental question that should have been thoroughly debated about ten years ago.

The proceedings began with a panel on existing state policies that incentivize methane production, its in-state use and potential related manufacturing (along with associated pollution). It featured the Manager of the Office of Pollution Prevention and Energy Assistance and the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Strategic Industry Initiative. The "Pennsylvania Paradox," that of careening down a path that is out of step with much of the rest of the world, as described by RDA's Barb Jarmoska in our [December 21st newsletter](#), was fully on display.

The first speaker presented statistical evidence on the "emissions benefits" from all the incentivizing we have done so far. There was no mention of the methane venting and leakage associated with all the "cleaner-burning indigenous fuels" that the Commonwealth has been trying to encourage via a percentage of the meager impact fee's funds that are set aside for vehicle purchases and natural gas (NG) fueling infrastructure.

The second presenter assured us she has a "laser beam focus on the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors...working to broaden the benefits of the extraction, processing, and transmission of this resource." It is just plain depressing to have such a highly-educated Governor pushing the "expansion of existing companies...the attraction of new facilities that are large consumers of natural gas for energy and/or natural gas liquids and their derivatives as raw materials in their manufacturing processes." Her claims were made as if there are no consequences from all the emissions these facilities and consumers will be permitted to release into the air we breathe once the capital investment is made.

In fairness, there was a nod in the direction of "balance": "we understand that we must balance natural gas and renewable energy production to ensure we have a diverse energy economy and a sustainable future." Noble words, but at the rate PA is going and the direction the Governor wants it to go, we'll have to fill the whole state up with windmills, solar panels and batteries of batteries to offset the amount of NG and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions coming out of the Commonwealth for the foreseeable future.

The second panel was on "Whether Some Natural Gas Incentives Are Better Than Others." The first speaker informed us that last year his organization, Penn Future, identified "over \$3.2 billion dollars in fossil fuel subsidies provided by Pennsylvania during fiscal year 2012-2013." He explained how "providing a tax exemption for energy purchases and not energy efficiency favors energy consumption over conservation." He pointed out how PA's property tax policy favors development of NG: Oil and gas reserves and operating wells are exempt. (Note: Do you think these are exempt from property tax in Texas? They are not. Do you think coal reserves and mines are exempt in PA? They are not.) The Penn Future presenter ended by saying, "We believe Pennsylvania can build a vibrant and growing economy on clean and renewable energy. We ask our Legislature to help lead us to that future."

The second speaker, Carnegie Mellon professor of engineering and public policy W. Michael Griffin, began by simply stating: "First, natural gas is NOT a bridge fuel to a renewable energy system, it is simply a bridge to nowhere." He explained that, "the availability of low priced abundant natural gas displaces more than just coal-fired electricity production and substantially increases economic activity in general. The combined effect is that there is no discernible reduction in fossil fuel GHG emissions out to 2050."



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

Another FERC Lawsuit

On March 21, the Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline (STOP), a group of Massachusetts property owners directly impacted by Tennessee Gas' Connecticut Expansion Project, took the first step toward bringing a citizen suit against the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in federal district court for violating the Clean Water Act in connection with approval of the project by filing a required Notice of Intent setting forth the violations and giving the FERC 60 days to address them. In addition to filing a Notice of Intent against FERC, STOP has taken similar action against Tennessee Gas.

[Click here to read more.](#)

New Study Finds Fracking Would Exacerbate Local Air Pollution

According to a new report from the Newcastle University, the process of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) would increase local air pollution levels by up to 30%. The study, [which was published in the journal Environment International](#), also predicted that the industry could cause permanent damage to rural roadways and cause nearby residents distress in the form of excessive noise pollution. The disadvantages uncovered by the study mainly stemmed from the increased traffic on rural roads.

This would be caused by the necessity for tankers to transport water to and from drilling sites, with individual sites sometimes requiring hundreds of separate journeys in a condensed period of time.

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

Dropping that for a moment, Griffin went on to explain the major benefit of NG for electrical power production: "...a complete switch (presumably by the entire USA) to NG from coal can result in a reduction of monetized health and environmental damages of between \$20B and \$50B annually. The majority of this reduction is in the PJM ISO electrical grid [which includes all of] PA!" Griffin also said, "We should expect similar health benefits (but not as large) can be expected for natural gas replacement of diesel fuel because of the particulate emissions associated with diesel combustion."

Griffin then cited two recent studies showing that "vehicles using NG fuels have slightly higher GHG emissions based on a delivery of the intended service, the distance traveled, or freight movement per ton." He concluded, "There is really no GHG emissions advantage for NG use." He claimed the only advantage of NG over diesel fuels lies in health-related impacts of using compressed natural gas (CNG) fuel for "transit buses, return to base delivery trucks, garbage trucks, and school buses ... (in) heavily populated cities and suburbs." Griffin concluded with his advice to lawmakers, "A program targeted with these vehicles to aid in switching from diesel to natural gas will likely have monetized health impacts larger than the associated economic benefits. Thus if one must incentivize, do so where it can do the most good."

The third panelist from "The Center for Climate Strategies" in D.C. was, as you might imagine, highly wonky. His testimony also emphasized health related benefits: "Expanded NG production can be used to expand renewable and efficient energy through the provision of indigenous, low cost feed stocks for advanced chemicals and materials inputs to renewable and efficient technology development and production with the net effect of reducing public risk associated with pollutants... An industrial strategy that overtly links NG with renewable and efficient energy is an important option for Pennsylvania given its production, domestic consumption and export potential."

Maybe that kind of thinking resonates with our MIT-educated Governor, but try selling that one to the majority of the PA legislature who reflexively reach for their concealed carry pistols at the slightest mention of "renewable energy" and who would find great humor in the suggestion of "using PA's NG advantage to expand the competitiveness of renewable and efficient energy, not as competition against it." Or his suggestion of "establishing or improving the full costing of negative externalities associated with NG production effects to incentivize market adjustments toward low footprint production, and through mechanisms that enable reinvestment of price adders to help renewable and efficient technology expansion."

The last panel focused on "NG Incentives and Our Carbon Budget." First was Donald Brown, Scholar in Residence and Professor of Law at Widener University. Brown started off with what surely would have been met with great disdain had any number of legislators from the majority party showed up. He titled his presentation: "How to Set National GHG Emissions Reduction Target After the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement." The professor was quite passionate about the issue. He brought up what he called the justice question: "What levels of GHG's will be permitted... given that the higher the levels - the greater the harm to those countries and millions of poor people that have done little [in the way of GHG emissions], [and are facing] an existential threat?" It is a worthy question, and one I expect you will also hear asked by Naomi Klein in the upcoming RDA film screening on April 7th.

He also brought up the question of equity. This is basically, "Who gets to use up what atmospheric space is left to safely add GHG emissions given historical contributions so far and the needs of poor countries that want to grow economically? He pointed out the result of business as usual: "If a nation emits more than its fair share of the remaining carbon budget, it will require other nations to reduce their GHG emissions to levels smaller than their fair share of the remaining budget, or guarantee dangerous climate change." He ended with the question, "What should the USA's and PA's GHG target emissions reduction target be?" His answer: "Carbon neutral as soon as possible, but no later than 2040...to limit warming to 1.5 degrees." One has to wonder what the MIT folks would have to say about Professor Brown's questions.

Next up was Cornell Professor Robert Howarth, whose work on the GHG footprint of shale gas should be well known to anyone who has followed the controversy over time. He pointed out that "methane emissions from shale gas have had a major impact on the GHG inventory of the US." He explained why his analysis differs from that of the EPA: "1) the EPA

----- New Rules Aim To Protect Workers from Silica Inhalation

The Department of Labor is issuing a long-awaited and controversial rule aimed at better protecting workers from inhaling silica dust.

The new rule dramatically reduces the allowed exposure limits for workers in a slew of industries, from construction to manufacturing to fracking.

About 2.3 million people in the US are exposed to fine grains of silica on the job; inhaling the dust is one of the oldest known workplace hazards. Silica, which is basically sand, scars the lungs, causing diseases like silicosis and cancer.

[Click here to read more or listen to the full story from NPR.](#)

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.

McIntyre Township:
SWEPI, LP
[RED RUN MTN 736 1H](#)
[RED RUN MTN 736 2H](#)
[RED RUN MTN 736 4H](#)
[RED RUN MTN 736 5H](#)

Petitions

----- Save PA State Species from Climate Change

Pennsylvania's climate is already beginning to change, and the impacts could be disastrous for our state habitat and wildlife. If temperatures continue to rise to what scientists expect, our state bird, tree and fish may disappear from Pennsylvania altogether. But if we cut climate pollution from dirty power plants, we can reduce or prevent the worst impacts of climate change, including this travesty. Please take rapid action on climate change by implementing the Clean Power Plan as soon as possible.

continues to underestimate the extent of methane emissions as noted by a growing number of critics including the inspector general of the US EPA"; and "2) the EPA continues to use outdated science to compare the influence of methane and carbon dioxide."

Professor Howarth pointed out how in Paris, "The 195 nations of the world came together... [and] acknowledged the increasing risk of climate catastrophe should the planet warm above 1.5 degrees C", and explained how, "...the planet responds very quickly to reductions in methane emissions..." and that "...the oil and gas industry is the largest source of methane emissions in the US and shale gas development has greatly increased these emissions."

Howarth concluded: "... I strongly recommend that society move as quickly as possible away from using shale gas as a fuel. We have alternatives: embrace wind, solar, and highly efficient 21st Century technologies for using electricity for transportation and heating. I urge that the House Democratic Policy Committee show leadership and help move the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to this alternative energy future."

The last panelist of the day was RDA Board member and attorney Mark Szybist, speaking in his capacity as a Senior Program Advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council. Mark's present work focuses on Pennsylvania's implementation of the federal Clean Power Plan (CPP). He specifically addressed the question of "whether the Commonwealth should incentivize new NG power plants by exempting those plants from its State Plan to implement the CPP." His answer was: "No. PA should cover new plants in order not to incentivize them." [Click here to read Mark's testimony in its entirety.](#)

Speak Out for PA's Energy Future

by Brooke Woodside, RDA Member, Managing Editor

The ball is rolling, and Pennsylvania's [Regional Gas Utilization Initiative Study](#) is underway. This is the second stage in the state government's planning for PA's energy future. If the gas industry and elected officials whose campaigns it funded get their way, PA's elected and appointed officials could be making a decision that truly changes everything, at least for the next two to three generations. The time to raise the outcry that methane gas is a bridge fuel to nowhere is NOW.

The first stage included a study by the Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force, which provided [recommendations to the Governor in February](#). The second stage is a plan for county officials to work with SEDA-COG to identify and prioritize potential locations in Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder and Union counties to determine if, how and where natural gas utility services can be expanded to industries, businesses and homes. The final priority locations will be chosen by local stakeholders, with a target of at least one potential project per partner county.

The inarguable truth about this initiative is this: the more money PA invests in natural gas, the less we invest in renewable energy technologies that will benefit the health and well-being of our residents well into the future. Natural gas is a bridge to nowhere that poses threats to PA citizens and the world at large. Incentivizing methane gas changes everything for the foreseeable future; the proclaimed bridge is actually a wall.

An interfaith group of religious organizations held a [rally at the state Capitol](#) at the same time as the House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing described above. Those present called on Governor Tom Wolf to halt natural gas development, asking for what they call a "moral-torium" on unconventional gas development and related infrastructure.

So I pose this question: Do the citizens of PA really want to invest their tax dollars in a methane gas future?

If you would like to see PA take a different course of action, I encourage you to reach out to your elected officials & make your voice heard. You can email SEDA-COG's Don Kiel, Senior Principal Program Analyst, at dkiel@seda-cog.org and demand a change of course toward renewable/sustainable energy - one that moves PA away from rather than toward increased dependence on fossil fuels.

[Click here to sign this petition from Penn Environment.](#)

Protect the West from Oil & Gas Pollution

America is now the world's largest natural gas producer - and a significant portion of that oil & gas production relies on federal and tribal lands, especially in the Western US. But due to outdated rules, a significant amount - \$330 million worth - of our federal gas resources are being wasted every year, enough natural gas to power a city the size of Chicago for a year.

Methane, the main component of natural gas, is a powerful climate pollutant packing 84 times the power of carbon dioxide in the short term.

The Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has proposed a rule putting strict limits on this pollution - and we have a limited amount of time to show our support.

[Add your voice to the Environmental Defense Fund's Petition today.](#)

Help Stop Waste and Pollution on Our Public Lands

Every year, while fracking our public lands, the oil and gas industry wastes hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of natural gas, harming our health and speeding up climate change.

Luckily, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has proposed updating its 30-year-old regulations governing methane and natural gas waste by adding commonsense measures to reduce waste and rein in air and climate pollution on public and tribal lands. The measures would restrict venting and flaring and require companies to find and fix leaks.

Speak up now: Tell the BLM you support the proposed rule, and urge the agency to close loopholes that may weaken it.

The BLM needs to hear from you. Tell the agency today that you support its efforts to reduce

The [Rivertown Coalition](#) executed a letter-writing campaign to the SEDA-COG Board and senior staff, providing information for them to consider before moving forward with full-blown gas incentivization. The Rivertown folks suggested the project be renamed the Regional Energy Utilization Project, a plan that takes into account the health and well being of everyone in the area and on earth as well as economic opportunities in rural areas. Click on the link to the Coalition for sample letters and information that will be of use as you craft your own letters to decision makers.

Keep it Wild - Old Logger's Path

by Robbie Cross, RDA Vice President

Traveling through Rock Run Valley and over the bridge to Yellow Dog Road is a pleasant prelude to hiking the OLP - giving one a sense of the magnificence and depth of the Loyalsock State Forest. About a dozen hikers and almost that many dogs (hyperbole) ventured onto the trail mid-morning Saturday, March 26, as the weather was approaching perfection for hikers: about 50 degrees at the start, reaching upward to nearly 60 at hike's end; the sky was deep blue.



Hikers enjoy the vistas along the Old Logger's Path on RDA's recent *Keep it Wild* hike.

The hike began along the upper edge of Rock Run Valley, stopping occasionally to take in exceptional views of McIntyre Mountain and the ridges west of Ralston. At about the two mile mark, we crossed Doe Run, almost a miniature Rock Run, as it tumbled down the mountain into the valley. Then we followed its sibling, Buck Run, gradually ascending into the highlands of Sullivan Mountain, finally reaching an overlook providing impressive views of Pleasant Stream Valley and Potash Mountain beyond.

To complete the circuit we left the OLP to follow a series of old dirt roads that here and there skirted bogs, one of which offered a bountiful collection of the amazing carnivorous Pitcher Plants. They were not yet in bloom, so a return trip might be required.

We were an animated and diverse group, a good gender mix ranging from young teenagers to several of us many decades older. Both humans and dogs thoroughly enjoyed the trek through one of Pennsylvania's most spectacular natural environments. I suspect that running through our thoughts at the end of the day was a question: Can we protect this remarkable

waste - and encourage it to improve the rule by eliminating current loopholes.

[Click here to take this Action through Earthjustice.](#)

Stop Arch Coal from Bulldozing Wild Forests

Until April 12, the Forest Service is taking comments on coal lease modifications that would pave the way for bankrupt Arch Coal - the second-largest coal company in the United States - to build more roads, well pads and methane vents in Colorado's roadless forest.

The 5,000-acre Sunset Roadless Area in western Colorado's Gunnison National Forest is a place worth protecting. It provides crucial winter habitat for big game herds, denning areas for the rare Canada lynx and watersheds that support populations of imperiled Colorado River cutthroat trout.

It makes no sense to bulldoze this area for dirty coal, especially now when America needs to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and keep some fossil fuels in the ground to avoid the worst impacts of climate change for ourselves, our children and future generations.

Tell the Forest Service it shouldn't allow Arch Coal to reap profits while adding huge amounts of climate pollution to our atmosphere, all at the expense of wild, roadless forests and threatened wildlife!

[Click here to submit a comment via Earthjustice.](#)

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.

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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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