

To the Climate Convergence hearing,

October 2, 2023

Since our start in 2008 waking up the east coast about fracking, Damascus Citizens had focused its efforts on protecting the air and the waters of the Delaware River Basin (the DRB), including NYC's Watershed, but rapidly moved far beyond the Delaware basin. After a 10 year moratorium, and much work by many, we in the DRB had a huge victory, February, 2021, when the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) banned frack drilling in the Delaware River Basin. However, all this time gas continued to be imported into and used in the DRB still putting communities where drilling and other processes happen at risk. DCS wanted to know what those risks entailed so in 2012 we rolled out our Health and Community Impacts Survey, continuing for a number of years documenting damages, impacts, helping scientists and other entities study the impacts...some people we are still in touch with after a decade, others gave us their information, then signed non-disclosure agreements, took settlements and disappeared - many who we talked to are sick, some have died...

I want to draw your attention to the exemptions held by the fossil fuel industry - oil, gas, coal and infrastructure - pipelines, compressors, etc...even exemptions with regard to workers in the fossil fuel industry removed from OSHA protections<sup>1</sup> - as researched by Mike Soraghan, EE News

All these exemptions must be recognized as additional subsidies, beyond the easily recognized dollar value ones, including tax breaks, direct grants, etc. No one has calculated the dollar values of environmental and health damages the exemptions are worth to the industry, exemptions they worked for over 25 years to acquire<sup>2</sup>. By removing their liability for damages they knew they would cause (**documentation - TheSkyisPink<sup>3</sup> and the Compendium<sup>4</sup>**) the industry has run rough-shod over mostly rural and poorer communities - lying to them to get the legal go-heads they needed and then ignoring any later complaints. Industry admits that wealthy communities are avoided and poor ones targeted often using military-tobacco industry developed psyops<sup>5</sup>. Only very effective communicators willing to totally put themselves into the public eye have gotten buy-outs - yes, to move away, but losing all they had on their land, losing their community and often still losing their health. In PA these non-

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/2015/10/07/drillings-safety-exemptions-and-how-they-got-there/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/2020/09/05/dcs-still-fighting-for-a-full-ban-on-fracking-in-the-delaware-river-basin/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/?s=theskyispink>

<sup>4</sup> <https://concernedhealthny.org>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.desmog.com/2013/05/21/gasland-2-grassroots-premiere-highlights-industry-psyops-fracking-fights/>

disclosures also hide damages to the environment, from future area residents, to public health and those downstream by hiding water and other contamination.

**As in all fights with the fossil fuel industry, the exemptions make things harder, often almost impossible to get re-dress, much less to get help in the immediate time of conflict with an oil or gas company and state agencies who are not helpful as many here today are testifying to.**

Over the years besides documenting health impacts, doing methane measurements, we have spent much of our energy educating in a general way about the human, environmental and climate impacts of oil and specifically gas, development and use, often using information developed by the the industry itself. Please see our website<sup>6</sup> and our fold-out posters<sup>7</sup> that have these and many more details and are available on-line and even better in hard copy! Just contact DCS for some, they may be helpful.

I hope that this conference by pointing out the painful human toll will get some long overdue legislative changes - perhaps at least removing some of the industry's exemptions. We must limit and eventually end the use of fossil fuels, make a shift to a more energy efficient society in order to protect the global climate, and all who live here.

Documentation for all above is in the references in the footnoted links.

Thank you.



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Director

Damascus Citizens for Sustainability

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/dcs-posters/>