

People's Hearing Harrisburg
Better Path Coalition
Pennsylvania Climate Convergence

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Introduction:

Hello Harrisburg! Hello Activists and protectors of Penn's Woods!

September 21, 2010, more than a decade ago, I stood here in Harrisburg sharing my experience of living in the shale field of Dimock, Susquehanna County.

Honestly, I never imagined over a decade later we would be dealing with the same issues and the new ones that are a result of "normal operations" in the shale field and its auxiliary industries. I recently watched , rewatched the video of that day here in Harrisburg, on the steps. Some of you were there!

Numbers but who's counting?:

In the 15 years since drilling and fracturing began, we have watched Susquehanna County transform into the number #1 shale gas producer in the Commonwealth and #22 or #21 in the nation. Susquehanna County is also number one in existence of brownfields caused by the oil and gas industry- 144 sites and growing every day! Brownfield? "real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant." 144 and growing.

Number #1 in homes that receive replacement drinking water?? DEP can't tell me, I've asked, repeatedly and was told they don't really keep track! You can drive around and locate the "sheds" or follow the delivery trucks but Dep can't or won't say. How many families have moved? No one is counting....or no one is telling? What you CAN look up is the number of existing gas wells and number of permitted or yet to be drilled gas wells. The little township of Dimock currently has 159 active wells, and 208 with approved permits. Springville Township, adjacent to us, has 220 active wells and 287 approved well permits. Numbers....

Past and Present:

It would take more than a few minutes to take you through events that have occurred in our neighborhood since my last time here. I wish I could give you some good news.

Almost a year has passed since the announcement and press conference with some of the affected residents of Dimock and the then Attorney General, now Governor Shapiro. I can't describe how happy, euphoric we were to finally have the promise of a water line. I can't go into much with the particular gas company that was held accountable because, well you know, they remain powerful and in control of our fate and many others.

I can say this, we had no idea of the deal cut behind closed doors and were shocked, crestfallen and personally, myself,

physically, heartbroken to learn we traded the drilling ban for a water line that should have been built over a decade ago. True, the drilling pad or pads, must be outside, just outside the perimeter of the no drill zone but a multitude of laterals will work their way beneath us. Numerous existing wells will be plugged throughout the valley and surrounding hills. Am I worried something could go wrong?

We now wait for that waterline, proposed completion by 2027. Proposed new gas drilling can begin BEFORE the water line is bringing water to homes. Is it unreasonable to think the water line would come first??

I may not be able to speak freely about some things but I am a citizen of the Commonwealth and can and will speak about a bridge and a creek....

The Bridge to Nowhere or What Bridge?

We were conned by the fossil fuel industry, the gas industry and their gas disciples-that "natural" gas was the BRIDGE FUEL we needed to get us to a future with more renewable energy. BRIDGE? The bridge is endless! I use to worry about what will be at the other side of this bridge but now I realize there never was an end or even a reduction of fossil fuel dependency in sight. The industry with unwavering support from Harrisburg doesn't even pretend to be moving away from burning fossil fuels.

When I hear the supporters of the gas industry say you can't just flip a switch I think, you are right, but you have to have a

switch! Finding that switch in PA is like me without my glasses or contacts in another power outage on a stormy night! You can't make the switch to renewable, safer energy without understanding the urgency the necessity of reducing the burning of fossil fuels. Pennsylvanian legislators are not leading us to a better place. They have made their deals to continue turning Pennsylvania into the number one fossil fuel producer and even an exporter of LNG...they blew up the bridge...

No bridge folks...its an expressway, the highway to hell and there are no off ramps but lots of toll booths that you and I, the citizens are paying and will continue to pay into the future as well as our kids. Marcellus Express, Marcellus Madness.....with a promise of 30 more years of gas operations or maybe longer depending on technology to reach it all.

Cricks Count:

I think I've established that there isn't any bridge but there is a creek, Burdick Creek and hundreds of other creeks-cricks that flow across the Commonwealth. They do exist and they are being threatened, damaged and marginalized by the gas industry and a complicit DEP. CRICKS COUNT! Our cricks are the source of water for the industry as well as the ultimate discharge point for treated or untreated waste water. They also bear the burden of run off, spills and industry construction. A shout out to our maligned wetlands!

Burdick Creek runs through my property, actually the lower part of our yard. It is WORTH PROTECTING. One of its

tributaries has been permitted, questionably permitted, to be the discharge-24/7 point for treated frack water. We've been promised it will be water good enough to drink. So I say then bottle it, label it for the company and distribute it to legislative offices and industry CEO's. Ironically, there is a water withdrawal site after the treated water has passed through 2 farms, one beef, one dairy and a dozen properties. A DEP supervisor confessed the water should never hit the ground but should be captured with a close looped system and recycled for fracking. Injection wells are a huge issue and are being fought by some brave and dedicated citizens but I fear the creeks are an easy target for disposal. Believe me, its been an unsupported effort to save Burdick Creek except for the help of one lone Senator- Senator Katie Muth. Not my district's senator, my senator and representatives here in Harrisburg do not support any exposure of the downside of drilling, they choose to believe none exist.

The fate of our crick and others will be determined like so much of the rest of Pennsylvania's fate by the people. Carbon capture hubs, injection wells, LNG ports, waste treatment facilities, brownfields, compressor stations, are the now and future of Penn's Woods unless the citizens speak out and do the work. You, we, will continue to pay for the fossil fuel industry's mistakes. Arrogance and negligence are a deadly combination. Remember, we pay the tolls....

People, friends, I've been a front row witness for 15 years. I've tried to get the realities of living in the middle of 2 dozen gas

wells out to elected officials, DEP, EPA, ordinary folks-who need to know the cons of what is being projected as the cash cow, or golden goose for all PA. It's not easy when you realize too many don't want to know. They discount health studies, testimonies, even evidence collected by scientists and the agencies created to protect our environment. "Nothing to see here"....

Air blows, water flows and nothing grows on contaminated soil. We are in this together and together we can move forward and maybe just be a leader to a safer environment for our kids and grandkids.

THANK YOU!!