

While the mid-west does not have much in the way of hydraulic fracturing wells, we can note that some of the irregularities pointed out in this research from Pennsylvania, are similar to those in the frac sand industry. Take a look at this revealing article that shows how journalists uncovered the truth by capturing undocumented reports. Thanks, Melissa, Josh, Tony, John, SIERRA SHAMER, PUBLIC HERALD, and Ron for this BREAKING NEWS!



*.....keeping
watch on the
industry*

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**To see the graphs, please go to the full story at
this site:**

**[http://publicherald.org/hidden-data-suggests-
fracking-created-widespread-systemic-impact-in-
Pennsylvania/](http://publicherald.org/hidden-data-suggests-fracking-created-widespread-systemic-impact-in-Pennsylvania/)**

BREAKING NEWS....

Trends Show Impacts Are Getting Worse

**by Melissa A. Troutman, Sierra Shamer and
Joshua B. Pribanic for Public Herald / Jan 23,
2017**

**After a three-year investigation in Pennsylvania,
Public Herald has uncovered evidence of**

widespread and systemic impacts related to “fracking,” a controversial oil and gas technology. Ending over a decade of suppression by the state, this evidence is now available to the public for the first time.

In Pennsylvania, the power over fracking rests in the hands of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). When residents observe a problem, they call the Department to report it. That call gets recorded as a “complaint” as required by Chapter 58 § 3218 of the state’s oil and gas act.

In 2011, Public Herald’s first file request to DEP for complaints never produced a single document, and we learned that complaints were being held as ‘confidential.’ When asked why, an attorney from DEP’s Southwest Regional Office explained that Deputy Secretary Scott Perry didn’t want complaints to ‘cause alarm.’ ”

After pushing through DEP’s resistance to disclose these records, our team was able to conduct its first file review for complaints in the spring of 2013. Three years later, after more than 50 file reviews, Public Herald has scanned records for 6,819 complaint cases.

Today, due to this work, anyone can access these cases via the Pennsylvania Oil & Gas

Complaint Map.

The Pennsylvania Oil & Gas Complaint Map by Public Herald & FracTracker Alliance shows the density of citizen complaints reported to the Department of Environmental Protection from 2004 – 2016. The widespread dispersal of complaints matches the shape of the Marcellus Shale formation. Clicking a township reveals a database of complaints where viewers can download files.

This map shows how citizen complaints are dispersed across counties where shale gas drilling has occurred. We shared our dataset with several scientists, including Dr. Anthony Ingraffea, an oil and gas engineering expert from Cornell University whose work on fracking is published in multiple peer-reviewed papers. “It’s not like all the bad stuff is happening up in the northeast. Pennsylvania is pretty widespread, and what the data shows, quite clearly, is that impact has been systemic.”

At the end of our reviews, we submitted a final Right-to-Know request for the DEP database of all citizen complaints. On December 30, 2016, DEP responded in an email with a new list revealing a statewide total of 9,442 complaints

from 2004 through November 29, 2016.

The total number of complaints in the databases ended up being thousands more than anyone on our team had anticipated.

When we compared the annual number of complaints in Pennsylvania to unconventional shale gas development – a.k.a. “fracking” — it revealed a strong relationship.

If you include conventional wells as a variable, the rise of impacts clearly increases with the rise of fracking development.

The Rise of Fracking & Systemic Impact

In the graph above (see story), Dr. Ingraffea identified the years 2004 and 2005 as “baseline” or “what things were like in Pennsylvania before shale gas fracking really got started.”

During that time, Ingraffea calculated that there was one complaint for every ten conventional wells drilled – then things clearly changed.

“When transitioning to unconventional wells [there] is typically one complaint per well. Even though the industry has had over a decade to learn its lessons and figure out how to get things right, in the last few years the number [has increased to] two complaints for every well

drilled.”

This increase in complaints per unconventional well is unexpected, given the recent decrease in drilling activity throughout the state. For Ingraffea, the data illustrates that the situation is getting worse by the year.

“If you drill a shale gas well in Pennsylvania today...the data says you are more likely to get a complaint now than in 2010.”

In fact, when Governor Tom Wolf took office in 2015, after campaigning on the promise to make fracking “safe,” the number of complaints exceeded the number of new shale gas wells for the first time since 2009.

Dr. John Stolz of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh is another scientist at the forefront of this issue who has conducted independent water investigations of areas impacted by fracking since 2006.

After reviewing this new data, Dr. Stolz. said, “Just looking at the raw numbers, you can say that unconventional wells, for whatever reason, generate more complaints per well. That’s something the DEP should be concerned about.”

Complete story with charts:

<http://publicherald.org/hidden-data-suggests-fracking-created-widespread-systemic-impact-in-pennsylvania/>

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Welcome to the Frac Sand Sentinel, a newsletter highlighting resource links, news media accounts, blog posts, correspondence, observations and opinions gathered regarding local actions on, and impacts of, the developing frac sand mining and processing industries.

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