

There are implications for State of Pennsylvania Groups that have Oversight of Fracking Operations. Reading this report is a priority! You can see a copy of the entire report by clicking on one of the boxes below.



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

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43rd Statewide Grand Jury Finds Pennsylvania Failed To Protect Citizens During Fracking Boom

Report calls for new laws to protect water supplies and manage air pollution.

AG Shapiro calls for “cleanup” at the Department of Environmental Protection.

LIVESTREAM AVAILABLE HERE: <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/stream>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Thursday, June 25, 2020

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced the findings and recommendations of Pennsylvania’s 43rd Statewide Investigating Grand Jury report on the unconventional oil and gas industry. The Grand Jury’s two-year investigation uncovered systematic failure by government agencies in overseeing the fracking industry and fulfilling their responsibility to protect Pennsylvanians from the inherent risks of industry operations.

In addition to exposing failures on the part of Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Health, the Grand Jury made eight recommendations to create a more comprehensive legal framework that would better protect Pennsylvanians from the realities of industry operations.

“This report is about preventing the failures of our past from continuing into our future,” said Attorney General Shapiro in a press conference Thursday. “It’s about the big fights we must take on to protect Pennsylvanians — to ensure that their voices are not drowned out by those with bigger wallets

and better connections. There remains a profound gap between our Constitutional mandate for clean air and pure water, and the realities facing Pennsylvanians who live in the shadow of fracking giants and their investors.”

This report follows the findings of the Grand Jury’s previous criminal presentments against two fracking companies — Range Resources and Cabot Oil & Gas — for their repeated and systematic violation of Pennsylvania environmental law. Range has since pleaded no contest to environmental crimes committed in Washington County, Pennsylvania. These cases were referred to the Office of Attorney General by local District Attorneys.

The report details the initial failure of the Department of Environmental Protection to adequately respond to the unconventional oil and gas industry and also points out that missteps continue to this day. These failures harmed Pennsylvanians living in close proximity to this industry. The grand jurors found that, while the Wolf administration has forced through some improvements at the agency, there continues to be room for meaningful change to occur.

The Grand Jury also heard from many Pennsylvania residents who suffered severe health consequences and lived near unconventional drilling sites. Residents testified that their well water was “black sludge,” “cloudy,” and using the contaminated water caused “problems with breathing whenever we were in the shower.” Pennsylvania farmers testified that their livestock, which used the same water source as the families, would sometimes become violently ill, infertile, and die. Other residents spoke of problems with their air, which became so polluted from stray gas or other chemicals used during industry operations that they could not leave windows open or let their children play outside. Parents testified that their children would repeatedly wake up at night with severe nosebleeds caused by increased levels of gas in the air around the fracking sites.

In response to the failures of government oversight and in order to ensure that the regulators have the tools necessary to hold this industry accountable, the Grand Jury’s report details eight recommendations. These recommendations would better protect Pennsylvanians from the risk posed by fracking operations and confront the culture of inadequate oversight in the unconventional gas industry and government agencies that oversee their activities:

- 1. Expanding no-drill zones in Pennsylvania from the required 500 feet to 2,500 feet;**
- 2. Requiring fracking companies to publicly disclose all chemicals used in drilling and hydraulic fracturing before they are used on-site;**

3. Requiring the regulation of gathering lines, used to transport unconventional gas hundreds of miles;
4. Adding up all sources of air pollution in a given area to accurately assess air quality;
5. Requiring safer transport of the contaminated waste created from fracking sites;
6. Conducting a comprehensive health response to the effects of living near unconventional drilling sites;
7. Limiting the ability of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection employees to be employed in the private sector immediately after leaving the Department;
8. Allowing the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General original criminal jurisdiction over unconventional oil and gas companies.

“Our government has a duty to set, and enforce, ground rules that protect public health and safety. We are the referees, we are here to prevent big corporations and the powerful industries from harming our communities or running over the rights of citizens,” said Attorney General Shapiro. “When it comes to fracking, Pennsylvania failed. Now it’s time to face the facts, and do what we can to protect the people of this commonwealth by encouraging the Department of Environmental Protection to partner with us and by passing the Grand Jurors’ common-sense reforms.”

A copy of the report can be found [here](#).

Fact sheets and press kit available [here](#).

Patricia Popple 715-723-6398 sunnyday5@charter.net

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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CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE: CCC-WIS.COM and for additional information, [click here](#) for panoramic aerial views of frac sand mines, processing plants, and trans-load facilities. FracTracker.org is also an excellent source of information.