



RIVERTOWNCOALITION

FOR CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER

P.O. Box 205
SELINGROVE, PA 17870

RIVERTOWNCOALITION@GMAIL.COM

Dear Members of the SEDA-COG Board and Staff Members,

We began this series of letters because our mission in the Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Clean Water is to “educate about things concerning the environment.” Since the SEDA-COG area is where our members reside we hoped to be of assistance to letting you know some of the many issues at stake in supporting the gas utilization and expansion represented in the RGUI. Recognizing that you are busy people with multiple responsibilities, it is likely difficult for you to make time for the research that these letters represent.

In the first letter we pointed you toward some of the research projects that have been done on issues connected with fracking that is gathered in the *Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction)* compiled by the Physicians for Social Responsibility and its availability at www.psr.org. In our second letter we highlighted some of the research in that document that related directly to Pennsylvania and the health impacts on the people in the counties you serve.

In the third letter we explained the disastrous impact of fracking on water supplies from extraction from our public supply of fresh water, through the chemical contamination and pollution that permanently removes the water from our human use, through the serious geological problems connected with the disposal of the fracking fluid.

In the fourth letter we laid out a case for why regulations have not and likely will not ever put the needs of the people in Pennsylvania over the desires of the industry that has such a firm hand in the regulation process. We cited the power which industry has to influence politics and subsequent regulations with an explanation of the influence of Vice President Cheney on what has become known as the “Halliburton Loophole” and all of the exemptions the gas and oil industry have from the legislation that was designed to protect the people of our country.

In the fifth letter we offered an alternative view of how this project could be used for a Regional Energy Utilization Initiative that would include multiple energy providers in the area. We suggested the benefits of a move to renewable energy that would be an economic stimulus of its own for our area without all the serious health and environmental impacts of gas extraction.

In our sixth letter we expanded our view from the local situation to the effects of fossil fuels on the global climate as well as our moral duty to act responsibly for the good of mankind. And in our most recent letter we addressed a specific problem with the RGUI as proposed for the radon and methane gasses that will be affecting the health of the producers and users of your projects. We have tried to provide accurate research and statistics for our information so that it would be of maximum use for your consideration.

If you doubt our expertise on these topics, we would like you to refer you to a House Committee hearing to examine if the state should incentivize natural gas that will be held in **Harrisburg at 10 am on Monday March 21**. The hearing is organized by Rep. Greg Vitali, Democratic Chairman of the House Environmental Committee, and Policy Committee Chairman Michael Sturla. It will take place in the Minority Caucus Room, 418 Main Capitol. The confirmed speakers include:

- Rob Altenburg, Director, PennFuture Energy Center
- Michael Griffin, Associated Research Professor, Engineering and Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University (also Executive Director, Center for Climate and Energy Decision Making)
- Don Brown, Scholar in Residence, Widener University Commonwealth Law School
- Robert Howarth, the David R. Atkinson Professor of Ecology and Environmental Biology, Cornell University
- Dave Althoff Jr., Manager, PA DEP office of Pollution Prevention and Energy Assistance
- A representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

The hearing will be streamed live at www.pahouse.com/live if you are not able to attend in person. We hope you will take part and give these speakers your attention.

In this final letter of our series, we would like to let you know why we as individuals have become interested enough in the fracking situation to spend considerable time, talent and treasure to learn for ourselves what is happening and to care enough to want to influence others. These are the board members who have been signatories to these letters.

Respectfully,

The Board of the Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air and Clean Water

Carol Parowski~ My husband and I came to Pennsylvania to retire in this beautiful state and the inviting countryside. Being a city girl most of my life, it is a blessing and source of joy. I have never been an outdoors person or an activist. However the injustice to individual rights and the destruction of the earth that is inherent in the extreme gas extraction industry has made it impossible to just stand by. This whole process is contrary to every moral belief I hold.

Shirley Rowe~ I have always lived next to the Susquehanna River and enjoyed all that the river has to offer. When I learned it was an endangered river, I was saddened and thought – why? By not being good stewards of our environment and the loss of clean water we have put ourselves in a dangerous situation. As a child and young person I spent my summers on the water, boating, swimming and fishing. I did this without the thought of any harm to my health. Children today do not know the pleasures of a clean stream for these simple pleasures. I would like to be able to pick up a stone from the bottom of the river and see the natural color, not one that is black and covered with pollutants. This is why I took up the cause to help in any way I can to prevent the death of the river and other abuses of our environment. ~

Mark Heuer~ I am concerned about focusing on natural gas for the energy future of local citizens. As we see currently, natural gas is very volatile in terms of price. Right now, we are in a "bust" cycle, resulting in massive layoffs. When you look at past experience, natural gas will have another "boom" cycle in which the price of natural gas will go up and result in much higher prices for local citizens who might be locked in to using natural gas with the proposed plan. Many of our citizens do not have the financial resources to adjust to the rapid price increases natural gas will present in the future when the glut ends. Finally, natural gas does not represent the future, while renewable energy does. Renewable energy does not have the volatility of natural gas. It allows our citizens to plan with their tight family budgets. So why invest in an expensive infrastructure for a fuel that is volatile and has negative social and environmental impacts?

Peg Lauer~ My family has lived in the Susquehanna River Valley for generations. A friend sent the following quote: "The Iroquois Nation encouraged transcending the present at times of major decisions by "traveling" out seven generations, then looking back. A decision making sense seven generations out was sound. We hardly look past the day end bell of Wall Street." Will gas development and all of its associated hazards make sense seven generations out?

Lana Gulden~ Studies have shown decreased birth weight in babies born to mothers near fracking operations. As the grandmother of a preemie I'm aware of the extra resources expended to enhance my granddaughter's development. There were weeks in the neo-natal unit, oxygen at home, physical therapists, occupational therapist, and speech therapists. It's not fair to the public to absorb these extra expenses. It's not fair for the life and health of a newborn to be compromised by where her mother lives.

Rev. Mary Peterhaensel~ It started when I was two years old and my Dad showed me the intricacies of nature. He inspired me with "Someday it will be your job to take care of this." Now I'm part of the whole Creation Care Movement. However fracking is the worst thing ever to happen especially for our water. We have no place to go if we mess this up. How many cracks can you put into an egg before it breaks? That's what fracking does to the earth's crust.