

Methane from gas drilling is a public health worry

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As a mother of three, I worry about my kids all the time. But no family should have to worry about the air children breathe. Still, in our former home in southwestern Pennsylvania, where there are 350 active oil and gas wells spewing unregulated levels of toxic pollution, including some less than 500 feet from playgrounds, I worried each day.

In September, the Environmental Protection Agency hosted a public hearing in Pittsburgh about its proposed methane pollution protections on new oil and gas wells. These proposed standards will help make the communities that we love safer.

Eliminating methane and other emissions from the oil and gas industry is a grave public health issue. The industry leaks hundreds of thousands of tons of methane into the air each year. Methane, along with other harmful pollutants, can react with the emissions from other sources in the air to form smog, which triggers asthma attacks. Some of these toxic gases cause other serious health problems like cancer.

It should be incumbent upon our leaders, including Gov. Tom Wolf, to set sensible protections that reduce this pollution and bring a new level of accountability to an industry that up until now has had none. We can't choose the air we breathe, but we can choose to make it cleaner.

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