

April 30, 2025

Remarks of Alison L. Steele at “100 Days 100 Harms” Press Conference

Good morning. My name is Alison Steele, executive director of the Environmental Health Project and Pennsylvania native. At EHP, we believe that people should be able to live free of pollution from the oil and gas industry, but unfortunately actions the Trump administration has taken or attempted in just its first 100 days – namely deregulating the fossil fuel industry and defunding clean energy initiatives – will mean greater harms to the people of our state, our nation, and our world.

Pennsylvania already has extremely lax regulations and poor enforcement of fossil fuel activity: my organization, EHP, has been tracking shale gas policy and adverse health outcomes near industry activities for over a decade, and there are dozens of peer-reviewed studies and hundreds more investigations that point to health harms, such as respiratory and heart diseases, hospitalizations, negative birth impacts, mental health issues, and cancers.

We’ve also seen negative economic impacts in areas hosting shale gas infrastructure: evidence of population decline as people move out of highly fracked counties. And for the people left behind? We’re not talking enough about the negative economic impacts of people missing days of school and work and covering increasing medical expenses as they get sicker.

These negative impacts from our continued dependence on fossil fuels are felt beyond frontline communities, too: methane is over 80 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide in the short term, and it leaks from gas wells and pipelines, contributing to increased storms, wildfires, heatwaves, poor air quality, vector-borne diseases, and property damage – here and around the world.

We cannot continue – let alone increase – our dependence on fossil fuels. We need a rapid and just transition to renewable energy in order to reduce the health harms from fossil fuel development and to bolster a vibrant economy powered by clean energy jobs. These shifts were already in the works, but they are now hitting roadblocks put in place by the Trump administration.

At a time when we are seeing a need for more energy production, Trump's administration is actively gutting funding for projects that could help us meet that need. For instance, the administration announced it would terminate \$20 billion in climate grants from the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund – money already appropriated by Congress that would support some 2,000 clean energy projects (and the jobs to go with them) across Appalachia and other rural regions historically dependent on the fossil fuel industry. These are not the actions of someone who cares about the wellbeing of our region or our residents.

Stronger regulations on fossil fuels and stronger support for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects will improve public health – reducing adverse health outcomes from pollution and bolstering our economy with a growing, clean-energy industry – but not if the Trump administration continues to act against the public's interest. We need his administration to stop the attacks on common-sense (and economically beneficial) programs like the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and instead invest in clean jobs and public health – and we need that to happen before another day goes by. There is no time left to lose.

Thank you.

Alison L. Steele, Executive Director
Environmental Health Project

About the Environmental Health Project

The [Environmental Health Project](#) (EHP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit public health organization that defends public health in the face of shale gas development. EHP provides frontline communities with timely monitoring, interpretation, and guidance while engaging diverse stakeholders: health professionals, researchers, community organizers, policy makers, and others.