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DEFENDING PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE 2012

PRESS RELEASE

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5 Years Later: A Progress Report on PA's 43rd Grand Jury Report on Fracking (Webinar)

- ***Shapiro Administration has a long way to go to satisfy recommendations and protect communities from health harms***

PENNSYLVANIA, June 25, 2025 – This month marks the fifth anniversary of the [43rd Statewide Grand Jury Report](#) on the shale gas industry. Led by Gov. Shapiro (then Attorney General), this investigation found that Pennsylvania failed to properly protect residents from harm during the shale gas boom.

In a webinar presentation today, [Protect PT](#), the [Center for Coalfield Justice](#), the [Environmental Health Project](#), the [Sierra Club](#), and [Earthworks](#) reviewed the Grand Jury's eight recommendations for how Pennsylvania can do better and assess our government's progress in enacting these goals. Environmental health experts examined progress made on these recommendations, asked essential questions, and took a look at what comes next for our state.

"We had hope when the Grand Jury Report came out," said **Gillian Graber**, executive director of Protect PT. "It was validation of everything that we knew was happening in communities in Southwestern Pennsylvania. But five years later, what has really changed? Governor Shapiro made deals with CNX instead of working for the people in our communities."

The Shapiro Administration claims to have addressed each of the eight recommendations made in the Grand Jury Report. But a closer analysis reveals major shortcomings and concerning inaction when it comes to actually defending the health of residents.

“As EHP outlined in a [white paper](#) released early this year, the Shapiro Administration has yet to address key recommendations made in the Grand Jury Report that can better protect health,” said **Aaron Makatura**, Appalachia project coordinator for the Environmental Health Project. “We urge the administration to take immediate action to address toxic emissions from shale gas development and to work with communities to keep them safe.”

One of the most important recommendations in the Grand Jury Report was to create greater setback distances between fracking operations and places where people live, work, play, and go to school. Residents are deeply concerned that no meaningful progress has been made to increase setbacks.

“Communities elected Governor Shapiro with the hope he would follow his own recommendations from five years ago to protect public health,” said **Melissa Ostroff**, Pennsylvania policy and field advocate at Earthworks. “Residents should not have to wait any longer for basic protections like increased setback distances from polluting infrastructure. We’ve seen time and again that pollution from fracking travels far beyond fence-lines and has an enormous impact on the lives of Pennsylvanians living nearby.”

The Grand Jury Report also recommended the safer transport of waste from fracking activities, especially when dealing with the large amounts of toxic water and soil waste generated by fracking operations. Truck and rail transport, as well as any pipelines that may carry toxic and radioactive waste, must be made safe for industry workers and residents who live nearby.

Another major recommendation of the Grand Jury Report was that all the sources of pollution emissions must be considered when siting fracking operations and determining community safety. Only when cumulative emissions are considered can we get a clear impression of the harms that residents may face.

The webinar speakers appealed to the Shapiro Administration to recognize the [settled science](#) and dozens of [epidemiological studies](#) that show higher risks of health harms for individuals and families living near fracking operations. Residents in areas of fracking appeal to the administration to come to their communities to witness the health impacts firsthand and to do something about it at once.

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