

## **Public Statement on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Oil and Gas Rule**

### ***Background:***

On May 23, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) published a draft rule in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) that will cut methane and air pollution from existing oil and gas operations. This publication of the rule kicks off a 66-day public comment period, and DEP will hold three virtual public hearings where Pennsylvanians can make their voices heard.

Oil and gas sources are the single-largest industrial source of methane. The primary component of natural gas, methane is a potent greenhouse gas that is responsible for 25 percent of the climate change we are already experiencing today. An alarming new [analysis](#) found that Pennsylvania's oil and gas industry vents and leaks more than 1.1 million tons of methane each year, over 16 times more than what industry self-reports to the state. Oil and gas operations also release air pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to the formation of ozone or smog that can exacerbate lung diseases such as asthma or emphysema and lead to the development of heart disease. Methane and VOCs leak at every stage of the gas supply chain, from production and processing to transportation and storage.

### ***EHP Statement on the Draft DEP Rule:***

Unchecked methane is detrimental to public health. It contributes heavily to climate change, which in turn results in more dangerous floods, fires, heatwaves, smog, and insect-borne diseases, such as West Nile Virus and Lyme disease. Specific to human health, methane releases typically include toxic compounds, such as benzene and formaldehyde, that raise the risk of heart problems, birth defects, and cancers. The extraction and transportation of methane produces fine particles that induce or worsen asthma and other respiratory issues. Exposure to this pollution may also put people at higher risk of developing more severe symptoms from infectious lung diseases, like COVID-19. We applaud Governor Wolf's efforts to cut methane emitted from existing oil and gas facilities and urge the PA DEP to adopt strong methane-reduction rules.

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