



WATER DEFENSE

THE FACTS ON NATURAL GAS

An Energy Policy Based on Natural Gas Would Leave Us Running on Empty

- **The Well's Run Dry:** In the United States, all of the proven gas reserves together would only last 11 years—and that's at current rates of consumption. Proponents of gas want to switch all our coal power plants, cars and trucks to natural gas, which would dramatically increase demand.
- **Snake Oil Salesmen Defrauding Investors and the American public:** Financial regulators at the Securities and Exchange commission have launched investigations into whether gas companies have actually committed fraud and deceived their investors by purposefully overstating the size of their reserves. Industry insiders, speaking to *The New York Times*, have called shale gas a “ponzi scheme” and a bubble. One anonymous whistleblower said that the natural gas industry is “having an Enron moment.”
- **Fracking Our Communities to Power China's Economy:** Natural gas producers have openly described their plan to build a network of pipelines and Liquefied Natural Gas terminals to ship American gas overseas to Europe and Asia, where prices are two or even three times higher.
- **Higher Energy Prices for Consumers:** The Energy Information Administration (EIA) confirmed that increased dependence on natural gas, along with planned exports of natural gas, will lead to a 40% rise in energy costs for consumers.
- **Taxpayers Lose With Pork-Barrel Earmarks for Big Gas:** The natural gas lobby is right now pushing a bill through Congress that would give oil and gas corporations huge tax breaks to convert trucks and vehicles to natural gas. *The Wall Street Journal* found that the cost to taxpayers could be as high as \$100 billion, and called the bill a “Boone-Doggie” that will still leave fuel prices in the hands of OPEC. And the NAT GAS Act is just the beginning. It would cost us \$700 billion dollars to switch all of our current coal-fired power plants to run on natural gas—a hefty price tag for a fuel that will run out in just a few years.

Natural Gas is a Job-Killer, Not a Job-Creator

- **Jobs Claims Vastly Overstated:** A study from the nonpartisan Keystone Research Center found that the gas industry overstated job creation in Pennsylvania by a whopping 2,470 percent! Industry trade groups claimed that gas industry created 140,000 jobs, but the Keystone study found that just 5,669 were created—without taking into account losses in other industries like agriculture and tourism.
- **Gas Drilling Employs Out-Of-State Workers:** Most of the few jobs that are “created” are for transient workers who are shipped in and then move away again when the gas runs dry.
- **In the End, More Jobs Lost Than Created:** Research from Cornell University found that, due to losses in industries like agriculture and tourism, communities with gas drilling were worse off in the long run and actually lost jobs. Gas drilling creates a boom and bust cycle that steamrolls over local economies. The area is left worse off than it was before the boom, especially when you consider the lasting toxic legacy, increased health costs, destroyed property values—the integrity of the land and the way of life is lost forever.
- **Communities Lose, Industry Profits:** Other negative effects of gas drilling include destroyed home values, burdened municipal services, increased crime and demand for emergency services, and increased costs to taxpayers.

Natural Gas Drilling is not safe—period.

Not one more family should be sacrificed for natural gas industry profits.

- **Natural Gas Drilling Poisons Water:** Duke University found that fracking contaminated groundwater a majority of the time, in the only peer-reviewed scientific study to ever look at the issue. Fracking for natural gas has been linked to over 1,000 confirmed cases of groundwater contamination nationwide. The process uses a slew of cancer-causing toxins including benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene. These chemicals remain in the ground, creating the risk that they, along with methane gas, will migrate into our waterways through fissures and cracks. Additionally, gas wells often rupture or experience highly-pressurized blowback, threatening to contaminate surface water.
- **Natural Gas Drilling Poisons Air and Increases the Risk of Cancer:** Because of gas wells, rural Sublette County, Wyoming (population 9,000) has ozone levels as high as Los Angeles. The **CDC** found breast cancer rates exploded within the six counties with the heaviest air emissions from fracking operations--while in every other county in Texas breast cancer rates dropped. The gas production

from the Barnett Shale in the five counties near Dallas-Fort Worth is responsible for more smog-forming compounds than motor vehicles are. The toxic smog created from gas drilling contains large amounts of ultrafine particles, soot, ozone, and the carcinogen benzo-a-pyrene. In adults, these pollutants are linked to bladder, lung, and breast cancer, stroke, diabetes, and premature death. In children, they are linked to premature birth, asthma, cognitive deficits, and stunted lung development.

- **And water on fire is only the beginning:** The **NY Times** discovered this industry is spewing radioactive material across PA and into NY, including into our drinking water supplies.
- **There Is No Safe Way To Dispose Of Radioactive Wastewater:** The gas industry still can't figure out what to do with the huge quantities of toxic, radioactive wastewater produced during the drilling process. The NY Times discovered that their bright idea has been to dump it into our rivers and streams. And now they're sending it to Ohio and injecting it into the ground where it's causing earthquakes. In other cases, wastewater is left in giant open pits, where heavy rains cause runoff and water contamination.
- **This Industry Can't Turn A Profit Without Breaking The Law:** The gas industry is exempted from many of our most basic public health and environmental laws, including the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Superfund Act, and the Hazardous waste act. These companies have admitted to us they cannot profitably operate without breaking the basic laws that keep us safe. And the few laws they are subject to, they have broken. For example, it's illegal for gas companies to inject diesel fuel into gas wells, but a Congressional investigation found they used 32 million gallons of diesel in 19 states. The gas industry lied to Congress and the American people about it, and now are lobbying to change the definition of diesel so they can continue to use it.
- **Every Credible Study Proves That Drilling Is Dangerous:** For example, Duke University showed groundwater is getting contaminated a majority of the time. The average methane rate in contaminated groundwater was 17 times the federal limit in drinking water. Many of these people's homes are at risk from explosion at any moment.
- **Regulation Is Ineffective:** There is no proof that regulations stop any of these problems. It's the industry's responsibility to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that natural gas drilling can be safe. So far, however, their safety record is abhorrent. Would we trust an airline to get us safely from place to place when half of its planes fall out of the sky? Ultimately, it's about accountability: not one more family should be allowed to suffer for gas industry profits.

It's Time to Leapfrog Over the "Bridge to Nowhere" and Create the Renewable Energy Economy

- **Natural Gas' Carbon Dioxide Footprint Is Too Large:** The IEA found that, if there is a global shift to natural gas, carbon dioxide emissions from gas power plants and vehicles would cause a 6 degree fahrenheit global temperature rise - and climate catastrophe. The IEA study uses highly optimistic assumptions about the decline in global coal production and the safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, suggesting that a 'golden age of gas' would actually cause more warming than the IEA believes.
- **Methane Leakage Makes Natural Gas Worse Than Coal:** A Cornell study found that natural gas warms the planet as much, if not more, than coal because of methane leakage from gas wells and other gas infrastructure. A NOAA study confirmed that methane leakage rates were at least as bad as the Cornell study's model assumed, providing solid evidence that a shift to natural gas would mean game over for the climate.
- **The Bottom Line: Real Energy Independence Means Renewables:** Researchers from Stanford University found that we could get to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 if we had the political will. Why would we spend hundreds of billions of dollars to make ourselves dependent on another non-renewable fuel? When the costs and benefits are tallied up, it's clear that natural gas is a bridge to nowhere energy strategy, and the future is in renewables.

Thanks for this material to Water Defense, a New York fractivist group. Please visit them at www.waterdefense.org/content/facts-natural-gas and their new video series trailer at www.waterdefense.org/content/natural-gas-exposed-3

Local fractivists' contact info: