



The Great Frack Attack: The War on Natural Gas

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Introduction

The development and growth of the Marcellus Shale natural gas industry is a major boom for Pennsylvania's economy. The industry has directly and indirectly created tens of thousands of new jobs, with tens of thousands more to come if natural gas is allowed to continue in a safe and responsible manner; paid out billions in royalty and lease payment to landowners; and contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to state and local government tax coffers. Yet the development of this economic opportunity has become extremely controversial, with many politicians and advocates calling for new taxes and fees on gas drillers and even an outright ban on all drilling in the commonwealth.

This policy brief identifies some of the top foes or obstructionists of an industry that has brought tens of thousands of jobs to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Much attention has been paid to the efforts of gas companies to influence the political debate through campaign contributions and lobbying efforts. But anti-drilling activists—while claiming gas companies use their vast financial resources to weaken regulatory structures and silence poorly funded environmental groups—influence politicians through their own lobbying efforts and by spreading myths about drilling. Among the myths alleged about “Big Gas” is that drillers are flocking to Pennsylvania's rich Marcellus Shale reserves, engaging in dangerous and highly polluting drilling activities, and shirking responsibility for damages while successfully avoiding paying taxes.

These intentional distortions of reality have both misinformed the public understanding in Pennsylvania and the policy debate in Harrisburg. So who is behind the attack on natural gas? Why are they doing it? And how much are they spending on their efforts to hinder or prevent the extraction of natural gas in Pennsylvania?

This policy brief identifies some of the top foes or obstructionists of an industry that has brought tens of thousands of jobs to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Wealthy Liberals

While some media contribute to the hysteria by passing along the propaganda and exaggerated claims of environmentalist groups, some “journalistic enterprises” were created specifically for disbursing their biased message.

That's what Herb Sandler did with the nonprofit ProPublica in 2007. Together with his wife Marion, the couple sold their subprime mortgage firm Golden West

Financial Corp to Wachovia Corp. for \$24.2 billion in 2006. Shortly after the sale, the Charlotte-based bank was on the brink of failure when Wells Fargo Bank rescued the weakened Wachovia in 2008 for \$14.8 billion.

Meanwhile, the Sandler took their cash, created their own philanthropic foundation, and began “strengthening the Progressive infrastructure,”¹ donating millions of dollars to support leftist groups like the Center for American Progress, National Council of La Raza, Center for Responsible Lending, Pew Charitable Trusts, American Civil Liberties Union, Natural Resources Defense Council, EarthJustice, Center for Biological Diversity and Free Press.

In 2007, Herb Sandler helped launch the investigative reporting nonprofit ProPublica, infusing it with \$1.25 million and becoming its board chairman. In 2008, he followed with another \$8 million. More than 92 percent of ProPublica’s revenues in its first two years came from Sandler. The statement of ProPublica’s primary exempt purpose, from its IRS Form 990 tax returns, says:

This mission to fight “exploitation” and “unsavory practices” includes attacks on the natural gas industry—especially its process of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”).

The Organization’s work focuses exclusively on truly important stories, stories with “moral force.” The Organization does this by producing journalism that shines a light on exploitation of the weak by the strong and on the failures of those with power to vindicate the trust placed in them.

According to ProPublica’s Web site:

In the best traditions of American journalism in the public service, we seek to stimulate positive change. We uncover unsavory practices in order to stimulate reform. We do this in an entirely non-partisan and non-ideological manner, adhering to the strictest standards of journalistic impartiality. We won’t lobby. We won’t ally with politicians or advocacy groups. We look hard at the critical functions of business and of government, the two biggest centers of power, in areas ranging from product safety to securities fraud, from flaws in our system of criminal justice to practices that undermine fair elections. But we also focus on such institutions as unions, universities, hospitals, foundations and on the media when they constitute the strong exploiting or oppressing the weak, or when they are abusing the public trust.

ProPublica’s mission to fight “exploitation” and “unsavory practices” includes attacks on the natural gas industry—especially its process of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) of rock formations to access gas—as ProPublica has shown in its 100-plus article series titled “Buried Secrets: Gas Drilling’s Environmental Threat.”² The list of titles read like a series of press releases from the other enviro-activist groups, such as Earthjustice or Center for Biological Diversity, that Sandler bankrolls.

A majority of ProPublica’s natural gas articles were written by reporter Abraham Lustgarten. In 2009, his reporting came under the scrutiny of the Independence Institute’s Dave Kopel, who found several errors and exaggerations that reflected poorly on the industry (the same can be said for much of the ProPublica series). In one example Kopel cited:³

The Colorado experience of zero cases of water contamination from hydraulic fracturing is consistent with the 2002 study from the Interstate Oil and Gas Com-

pact Commission (a consortium of state regulatory agencies). The Commission surveyed regulatory agencies in 28 states (including Colorado and the other four states where ProPublica claimed that there were more than 1,000 “documented” cases of contamination). The response covered the entire history of hydraulic fracturing in those states. Every single one of those 28 states reported that there had never been groundwater harm due to fracturing.

The ProPublica article did not report the evidence from that government study, but brusquely dismissed it as “an anecdotal survey done a decade ago.” Actually, the 2002 study has no anecdotes, and with a dataset of almost a million wells, it cannot plausibly be considered “anecdotal.”

Kopel’s observations about Lustgarten’s overall reporting were confirmed by a state regulator interviewed by the ProPublica reporter. Wyoming groundwater regulator Mark Thiesse, told Kopel in an email,⁴ “I spent several hours on the phone and around a dozen follow up emails to try and help him write a factual article. Unfortunately he seemed to have his own agenda.”

More than 100 articles dedicated to the misrepresentation of the dangers of natural gas drilling is not a “journalistically responsible” effort, as ProPublica claims. It’s become an effort to totally undermine a job-creating industry whose hydrofracturing has been practiced safely for decades.

Heinz Endowments

Within Pennsylvania, the philanthropic giant behind opposition to Marcellus Shale drilling is the Heinz Endowments. The foundation led by billionaire heiress Teresa Heinz, wife of Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, has increased scrutiny of natural gas via grants, from none two years ago to 10 in 2010. Grants from Heinz Endowments to universities and nonprofits for the study of gas drilling “impacts,” outreach, organizing, legal issues, and oversight totaled more than \$680,000 last year alone.

The purpose for the heightened interest by Heinz Endowments is clear: to put the gas industry on notice. According to a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review report, the Endowments are “providing grants worth about \$2 million [apparently multiyear commitments] for local universities to study the industry by first setting baselines for the environment in areas where the drilling has not started,” said Caren Glotfelty, director of the Heinz Endowments’ Environment Program.⁵

“We see the ramping up of the drilling and development of these natural gas wells in the region without a very adequate regulatory framework,” she said. “There are just a lot of impacts that people aren’t aware of.” Various universities and nonprofits have sought Heinz money to advance the foundation’s political objectives. According to the Heinz Endowments’ Web site, Cornell University received \$150,000 “to analyze economic impact of Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling on affected areas of Pennsylvania and New York.” Carnegie Mellon University received \$200,000 “to collect and manage baseline aquatic resources data to evaluate the impact of shale gas development” and “to characterize the air pollution impacts of Marcellus Shale development.”⁶

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Similarly, Heinz Endowments donated \$59,000 to the Clean Water Fund “to connect state networks of community efforts with policy development and to characterize pollution impacts of Marcellus Shale development.” Considering the predisposition of Heinz and their support of environmental extremism in the past, one can imagine the characterization of pollution impacts is not in the natural gas industry’s favor.

A \$25,000 gift to PennEnvironment “for outreach and organizing on Marcellus Shale gas issues,” should put aside any doubt that Heinz is building a framework for opposition to natural gas exploration and drilling.

And Heinz Endowments is also proactive in its enlistment of allies to exaggerate the environmental threats of natural gas extraction. In November 2009, the University of Pittsburgh announced:⁷

Carnegie Mellon University received \$200,000 “to characterize the air pollution impacts of Marcellus Shale development.”

The Center for Healthy Environments and Communities (CHEC) at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) has been contracted by The Heinz Endowments to conduct an analysis of the major threats to the environment and health of people who live and work in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Pittsburgh Regional Environmental Threat Analysis (PRETA) will identify these threats throughout the region’s 10 counties.

“Environmental health encompasses all aspects of the natural and built environment that may affect human health,” said Conrad D. Volz, DrPH, MPH, PRETA principal investigator, director of CHEC, and assistant professor of environmental and occupational health, GSPH. “Given southwestern Pennsylvania’s industrial legacy and diverse topography, this kind of analysis is vitally important to the health of residents across the region.”

Study investigators plan to identify and interview key informants from southwestern Pennsylvania about their perspectives of the most important local environmental threats.

Heinz Endowments helped CHEC initiate a special Marcellus project called “Fractracker.org,” which it describes as “a new web-based tool for tracking and visualizing data related to gas extraction.” Attached to the datasets is a blog that regularly posts anti-drilling research and political news, such as PennEnvironment’s recent Marcellus Shale report, the New York Attorney General’s lawsuit demanding a thorough impact study of fracking, and an article from lawyers of the Community Environmental Defense Council explaining how to ban nonconventional drilling at the local level.

It’s not surprising that Heinz would choose Volz to run their project, since he won an “environmental hero” award in January from the Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP).⁸ Besides funding the analysis of “threats,” the Center betrayed its bias in a press release:⁹

Serious economic, environmental and public health concerns have been raised concerning gas extraction at the Marcellus Shale, a sedimentary rock formation that may contain trillions of cubic feet of methane gas, as well as other explosive

gases and vapors. Some of these issues include road infrastructure degradation, explosions and blowouts, effects on agriculture, hunting and fishing, water contamination from the disposal of waste fluids into surface waters and human exposure to volatile organic compounds.

Volz is no stranger to hyperbole, having been captured on video¹⁰ numerous times wildly warning (even using profanity) of public health threats posed by hydraulic fracturing and other activities. One March 2011 CHEC report accused the natural gas industry of dumping carcinogenic agents into drinking water. Volz had to quickly issue a revised report and make numerous corrections. According to science watchdog Steve Milloy, proprietor of JunkScience.com, even in his reworked report Volz and his research team made several glaring errors, with repeated applications of water quality criteria to standards that were not relevant to his study subject.¹¹ Perhaps not coincidentally, Volz announced on April 9, 2011, that he would leave the University of Pittsburgh. He cited his inability to speak publicly on environmental issues as the reason for his departure.

Volz's PRETA project produced an 86-page graduate student thesis paper filled with one-sided and outright dishonest information about alleged environmental "threats," "contamination," and "pollution" attributed to shale gas extraction. Included among the falsehoods were the claim that Colorado residents' "flammable" tap water was linked to hydraulic fracturing, a lie popularized in the one-sided documentary *Gasland*.

International WOW

Other departments at the University of Pittsburgh have embraced the error-laden film *Gasland*. In June 2010, the Environmental Studies Program sponsored a showing at its Bradford campus followed by a question-and-answer session with *Gasland* director Josh Fox, Ben Price of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, and environmental attorney Paul Burroughs.

Even more significant is The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' recognition¹² of Fox's film with an Oscar nomination for Best Documentary (it lost). Created by Fox's International WOW company, *Gasland*—by accounts of both industry leaders and even environmental watchdogs—at best stretches the definition of the category (Merriam-Webster defines "documentary" as "factual, objective"). For example, America's Natural Gas Alliance reported:¹³

In the film's signature moment Mike Markham, a landowner, ignites his tap water. The film leaves the viewer with the false impression that the flaming tap water is a result of natural gas drilling. However, according to the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, which tested Markham's water in 2008, there were "no indications of oil & gas related impacts to water well." Instead the investigation¹⁴ found that the methane was "biogenic" in nature, meaning it was naturally occurring and that his water well was drilled into a natural gas pocket.

This is one of several examples where the film veers from the facts. A second depiction of a flaming faucet in the home of Renee McClure also misleads viewers about the connection between natural gas development and methane

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in water wells. McClure's well was sampled by the state of Colorado and it, too, showed only naturally occurring methane.¹⁵

Lest there be any doubt about the industry's defense of itself, the natural gas industry also received assistance from two unexpected sources as it tried to debunk *Gasland*.

The first came last year, by a willing participant (albeit briefly) in Fox's film—former Pennsylvania Secretary of Environmental Protection John Hanger. Previously the president of environmental activist group Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture), Hanger was interviewed by Fox in *Gasland* for about five minutes before the director challenged the secretary to drink a bottle of water he said was contaminated by a Marcellus Shale gas well. Hanger, described by the Philadelphia Inquirer as “a liberal who spent years in the mainstream environmental movement,” later called Fox a “propagandist” and characterized *Gasland* as “fundamentally dishonest” and “a deliberately false presentation for dramatic effect.”¹⁶

The other unforeseen defender of natural gas was the Environmental Defense Fund. Although not a critic of *Gasland* per se, senior policy adviser Scott Anderson—in a video interview with Energy and Environment¹⁷—dismissed the film's premise that hydraulic fracturing is a reckless, dangerous process:

E&E: “Do you believe that [hydraulic fracturing] can be used safely?”

Anderson: “Yes I do. I think in the vast majority of cases, if wells are constructed right and operated right, that hydraulic fracturing will not cause a problem.”...

E&E: “How difficult is it for states to regulate this practice? And should it be done on a state-by-state bases, a region-by-region bases or nationally?”

Anderson: “The states actually have a lot of knowledge and experience in regulating well construction and operation. We think that states have every reason to be able to tackle this issue and do it well. We also think that if states fail in that and the federal government has to takeover, the states will have no one but themselves to blame.”...

E&E: “Without this practice of hydraulic fracturing, what would our natural gas supplies look like?”

Anderson: “Our natural gas supplies would plummet precipitously without hydraulic fracturing. About 90 percent of gas wells in the United States are hydraulically fractured, and the shale gas that everyone talks about as being a large part of the future of natural gas production is absolutely dependent on fracturing in each case.”

E&E: “So you would say that this is a necessary part of our energy future?”

Anderson: “Yes. At the Environmental Defense Fund we don't pick fuels, we are realist, we recognize that fossil fuels will be around for a while, a long

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while most likely. We recognize that natural gas has some environmental advantages compared to other fossil fuels, so we do believe that natural gas will be around, and has a significant role to play....”

Industry group Energy in Depth has also published a lengthy rebuttal¹⁸ to the false claims made in *Gasland*, and even the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission—under one of the nation’s most environmental activist governors, Bill Ritter—issued a fact sheet¹⁹ that “correct(ed) several errors” in the film.

National Groups Feeding Pennsylvania Affiliates

The well-funded activist organizations attacking the natural gas industry are numerous. The Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise has archived a list of foundations and groups and built them into a social network diagram²⁰ at its Web site, undueinfluence.org, which includes lists of grants made by large donors to anti-oil and -gas nonprofits. Donors to what was originally called the “No Dirty Oil and Gas” (NoDOG) effort (now called “No Dirty Energy”) include the Ford Foundation, New-Land Foundation, Energy Foundation, Turner Foundation, Bullitt Foundation, and Wilburforce Foundation, among many others.

One activist multi-millionaire worth special attention is Paul Brainerd, who through his money and influence pressed two green groups—the Mineral Policy Center and the Oil and Gas Accountability Project—to merge into one group called EarthWorks. OGAP had conducted aggressive anti-oil and -gas campaigns, which EarthWorks has continued. As the Marcellus Shale development has drawn interest, so too have environmental groups increased activity in New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. In April, EarthWorks announced the hiring of Nadia Steinzor—a former consultant to progressive organizations and who served with the group Zero Population Growth—as its Marcellus Regional Organizer.²¹ EarthWorks promoted *Gasland* and its various myths about the dangers of fracking; successfully pushed for a drilling moratorium in New York; and calls for the passage of the federal FRAC Act, which would make redundant regulatory requirements already carried out by the state.

EarthWorks is allied with PennEnvironment, a member of Earthworks OGAP. PennEnvironment opposes fracking in Pennsylvania, but recognizes an outright ban is not achievable. However, it has supported a moratorium, and organizes citizens to push for stronger state regulations and taxation of drilling in the Marcellus Shale region.²² PennEnvironment conducts statewide meetings with citizens to discuss the dangers of fracking and to foment public opinion favorable to taxing the gas companies,²³ and sponsors viewings of *Gasland*.²⁴ PennEnvironment is a member organization of the Marcellus Shale Protest (motto: “No fracking way”), a group engaged in “advocating for legislation to ban shale gas drilling throughout the region.”²⁵

According to its 2009 annual report PennEnvironment made fracking its top priority that year:

It seems unimaginable that Pennsylvanians would invite companies to come into the state and then allow them to poison our wells, contaminate our wa-

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terways and destroy our wild forests. Yet in 2009, energy companies expanded their use of a dangerous new form of drilling to exploit gas reserves on millions of acres of Pennsylvania land, with alarming results for our drinking water, local wildlife and our forests. PennEnvironment made this unprecedented threat a top priority in 2009.²⁶

In October 2010, PennEnvironment criticized Pennsylvania Senate Republicans for refusing to vote on a severance tax on gas companies drilling in the state, which has included provisions to share the revenue with environmental organizations.²⁷ Meanwhile, PennEnvironment’s field director, Adam Garber, fretted to the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* that his group does not have \$100 million to give to Pennsylvania legislators as the gas companies do. Yet with its allies, PennEnvironment has plenty of resources.²⁸ The group is a state subsidiary of Environment America which is a creature of the Fund for the Public Interest. The Fund for the Public Interest, or “The Fund,” is also the financing arm for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group and their state affiliates nationwide. Some of The Fund’s more notable grantees include the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the George Soros-backed Center for American Progress, and Media Matters for America. The Fund boasts that its alumni now work in over 400 left-wing organizations such as ACORN, AFL-CIO, and Service Employees International Union (SEIU).²⁹

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PennEnvironment, along with border state groups Environment Maryland and Environment New Jersey, all have the same cookie-cutter Web sites with similar color schemes and layouts, and they all receive money from The Fund. According to their latest available IRS 990 tax returns, PennEnvironment received \$376,335 from The Fund for citizen lobbying and education and outreach operations.³⁰ Environment America gave PennEnvironment \$414,673 for general support and global warming advocacy, according to former’s 2009 tax return.³¹ The related Environment America Policy and Research Center also gave PennEnvironment \$127,600 for “environmental protection,” according to that group’s latest IRS 990 form.³²

In its annual reports, PennEnvironment creates the illusion that the majority of its funding comes from member donations. While they do list some of the foundations from which they receive support (including William Penn Foundation and the Energy Foundation),³³ PennEnvironment does not list the money they receive from The Fund, Environment America, or The Environment America Policy and Research Center in any of those annual reports.

The Fund does see a monetary return on its investments in the state PIRGS and environmental groups, as they pay The Fund for its canvass and outreach services. In 2008, PennEnvironment paid The Fund \$721,762 for “outreach/canvass” services. The Fund gained some measure of infamy as the sponsor of Craig’s List ads in several cities during the summer of 2009 advertising canvassing and outreach jobs to “Help Pass Obama’s Healthcare Reform.”³⁴

Another active organizational proponent of taxation and regulation of hydraulic fracturing is the Keystone Research Center’s Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center (PBPC). In general, PBPC advocates for higher taxes, more regulations and specifically for a severance tax on gas companies operating in Pennsylvania.³⁵

Started in 2005, PBPC bills itself as non-partisan think tank dedicated to helping “working families.” PBPC is a project of the Keystone Research Center (KRC), which is governed by a board of directors made up of officials from government sector unions like the Pennsylvania State Education Association, American Federation of State and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), United Food and Commercial Workers, and SEIU.³⁶ KRC/PBPC regularly publishes studies favorable to labor unions on issues like prevailing wages, the government-run liquor stores, and state project labor agreements (PLAs).³⁷

Local Activism Tries to Thwart Development

Activism against natural gas has even drilled down to the local level. Damascus Citizens for Sustainability is a grassroots group, formed in 2008, that is “dedicated to protecting the Upper Delaware River Basin and beyond from the ravages of deep-shale gas extraction and the threat posed by the natural gas industry.” Josh Fox dedicated *Gasland* to DCS and even allowed special screenings of the film to help raise money for the group.³⁸ DCS circulated petitions in Pennsylvania and New York to enact a two-year moratorium on drilling until an environmental impact study could be completed to assess “all of the ramifications of this intensive industrial activity.”³⁹

Many local efforts to oppose hydraulic fracturing in Western Pennsylvania are promoted via the Marcellus Protest project, established by the radical Center for Coalfield Justice. Marcellus Protest was created “to stop the destruction of our environment and communities caused by Marcellus Shale gas drilling as well as to support other directly affected communities.”⁴⁰ On Nov. 3, 2010 the group launched a protest in Pittsburgh against the gas industry (proclaiming “a revolution”) which included punk music artist Justin Sane who performed his song “Gasland Terror,” which (by CCJ’s own description) “equated the gas industry with terrorists.”⁴¹

Local governments are being targeted by groups like the Community Environment Legal Defense Fund. CELDF characterizes drilling communities as “resource colonies of the energy corporations” and works to pass ordinances banning natural gas drilling to defend natural community and ecosystem rights.⁴² These ordinances have little legal standing and are often overturned. These laws amount to temporary obstacles, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill when they are challenged in court.⁴³ CELDF has been instrumental in the passages of drilling bans in communities like Pittsburgh and Baldwin.

PennFuture

No report on aggressive environmentalist antics would be complete without noting the anti-gas presence of Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future, or PennFuture. Last year, Commonwealth Foundation exposed⁴⁴ the Harrisburg-based group’s hypocritical accusations against natural gas companies for their lobbying and political campaign expenditures, when PennFuture for years failed to disclose to the IRS its lobbying and grassroots activities on behalf of the alternative energy industry.

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PennFuture has pleaded that they cannot keep up financially with the gas indus-

try, but the evidence tells another story. PennFuture received nearly \$1 million from alternative energy companies over a five-year period while it lobbied heavily for tax breaks and subsidies for wind and solar projects. In addition to those funds, PennFuture benefited from more than \$9.5 million in grants from wealthy eco-activist foundations such as the Heinz Endowments, the William Penn Foundation, and Pew Charitable Trusts.

For the fiscal year that ended in June 2010, the group was able to once again enrich its coffers from the environmental foundations. According to its IRS Form 990,⁴⁵ PennFuture received: \$100,000 from the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment; \$372,250 from the Energy Foundation; \$544,000 from the William Penn Foundation; \$600,000 from Pew Charitable Trust; and \$975,000 from the Heinz Endowments (identified as the “Howard Heinz Foundation” on the tax return). Overall, PennFuture enjoyed more than \$3.5 million in revenues last fiscal year.

As noted earlier, it is no surprise that Heinz Endowments joined forces with PennFuture, considering its many other recent grants. But it may be that with the nearly \$2 million commitment that Heinz made to the group in 2009, that it is looking to PennFuture as its most tenacious attack dog against natural gas.

The first goal in PennFuture’s “10-point plan to set world-class standards for drilling” is to “pass a substantial drilling tax.” Among the reasons given for this substantive (others would argue “punitive”) levy are to “provide significant money...to help fund Growing Greener,” which is a political slush fund that has been used to finance millions of dollars in loans and grants for PennFuture’s wind and solar projects.⁴⁶ The fund has also paid for non-essentials such as a recreational water park in Ebensburg.⁴⁷

The measures that the commonwealth has taken to oversee gas drillers have not been good enough for PennFuture. By the environmental group’s own admission, “In 2009, the Department of Environmental Protection raised the fees drillers must pay to apply for a permit by at least 1,000 percent and generated more than \$10 million to more than double permitting and enforcement staff in its Bureau of Oil and Gas.” Yet that still is not good enough for PennFuture, which continues to demand a drilling tax, a ban on further leasing of state forestland for drilling, and “world class drilling standards,” which remain undefined.

Donations from Heinz Endowments and others greatly enhanced PennFuture’s capacity to deliver misinformation about the gas industry, such as the “fact sheet” the group issued in July 2010 that elevated their call for a severance tax.⁴⁸ The report cites “the incredible damage to wildlife and water—not to mention the people—from BP’s tragic accident in the Gulf of Mexico,” as though that oil drilling disaster had anything to do with natural gas in Pennsylvania. PennFuture’s “facts” also noted the *Gasland* depiction of families setting their tap water on fire, which was proven to be unrelated to natural gas drilling.

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Conclusion

To listen to environmental groups and liberal activists, one might think the fossil-fuel industry—especially natural gas in Pennsylvania—controls the levers of power in Harrisburg and Washington with their vast financial resources. While they certainly have the resources to try to prevent government from over-taxing and over-regulating an already heavily taxed and regulated industry, it is not at the expense of their opponents.

As illustrated by this policy brief, opponents of natural gas exploration and its processes do not lack for money or mouthpieces. The gas industry has multi-millionaires such as the Slanders and Heinzs attacking it; a journalistic organization in ProPublica that has exceeded 100 articles dedicated to ginning up anti-drilling paranoia; dozens of well-heeled environmental groups that exaggerate or outright deceive the public about the impacts of gas drilling; and an Oscar-nominated film producer spreading disinformation across the country.

Meanwhile, the gas industry continues to explore and innovate, safely using the hydraulic fracturing processes that have enabled Pennsylvania to access important natural resources, creating jobs and keeping energy prices low. It is not a business without risks, but its enemies would be recognized as having greater integrity if they stopped demonizing with a broad brush, told the entire truth, and worked collaboratively with natural gas to attain their environmental goals.

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