

Berks Gas Truth ~ Delaware Riverkeeper Network

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Yale Study Exposes Fracking Industry's Cancerous Impacts on Pennsylvania Children

Leading Advocates Demand Pennsylvania's Governor and Leaders Do Better

Pennsylvania & National: A new Yale School of Public Health study has found that Pennsylvania children between the ages of 2 and 7 are two to three times as likely to be diagnosed with leukemia if they live near unconventional oil and gas activities. The research, published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, focuses on drinking water as a pathway to exposure.

The authors undertook a comprehensive and well-rounded investigation of children who develop Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) in order to confirm its stark findings that oil and gas development dramatically increases rates of cancer in kids. The study confirmed that the increased cancer risk cannot be attributed to income, pesticide exposure, race or other pathways. The authors' analysis took into account a latency period of a year, suggesting that some of the children were exposed in utero.

"In 2019, we called on Governor Wolf to halt fracking activities and take the time to study the impacts of shale gas development on young people after the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* published an investigative series on a spike in rare cancers in four rural counties. Three years later, we're still waiting for the results of the studies he eventually ordered without slowing fracking even for a moment. This new study shows us that children born since 2019 statewide are among the young cancer victims who might have been spared if Governor Wolf had acted," said **Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.**

"Pennsylvania's politicians – led by Governor Wolf – are sacrificing our children to the oil and gas industry. There is no other way to view these study results and the history of fracking in Pennsylvania," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.** "I'm tired of Governor Wolf quoting his constitutional obligation to protect the rights of all Pennsylvanians, amongst them its children and future generations, to pure water, clean air and healthy environments while at the same time he supports the fracking industry, including helping them expand their operations by posturing

Pennsylvania to become a leader in devastating technologies like carbon capture utilization and storage or hydrogen development.”

The study’s authors noted that while 90% of afflicted children survive their leukemia, they face heightened risk of developing a second primary cancer later in life, as well as the potential for heart disease, cognitive dysfunction, increased depression and/or anxiety. The study also noted that while nationwide the incidence of cancer is in decline, the incidence of ALL in children has been increasing.

“It is clear that not only are we devastating the health of these children when they are young, the oil and gas industry and their political supporters are inflicting harm that will follow them throughout the entirety of their lives. This is a moral outrage. Governor Wolf and the next governor of Pennsylvania, as well as political leaders nationwide, all the way to the president’s office, have to do better and halt the ongoing expansion of oil and gas development. We have better technologies that can create the energy we need and protect our children,” **added van Rossum.**

Among the study’s conclusions is that the existing Pennsylvania setback of 500 feet between fracking operations and residential structures does not provide needed protection from the multiple pathways of exposure inflicted by the fracking industry including the release of contaminants via water and air. While a 2020 Grand Jury investigation advanced by the PA Attorney General’s office recommended setbacks in the range of 2,500 feet, that is a mere fraction of the 6,500 foot distance at which cancerous impacts on children was identified in the Yale study.

“Attorney General Shapiro’s recommendations were not proportional to the damning evidence the Grand Jury provided in its assessment that the government had failed to protect Pennsylvanians from fracking. Setbacks are not a rational solution to such a serious problem. You can’t make fracking safe. The pathways of devastating harm for health and the environment are too many and massive. It is time for all of Pennsylvania’s leaders, including those seeking the Governor’s office, to follow the science, stop the expansion of fracking and instead advance truly clean and renewable energy options,” **added Feridun.**

The Yale Study will add to the wealth of scientific research documenting the devastating impacts of the fossil fuel industry and fracking on human health, communities and the environment.

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