



Natural gas

PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT MUST COME FIRST

Natural gas operations raise serious public health and environmental questions. Even while hydraulic fracturing and other innovations are driving down coal use and have the potential to reduce air and climate pollution, these benefits can only be realized through strong regulation of the natural gas supply chain. No one should be forced to trade their children's health or quality of life for cheap energy.

Concerns about natural gas

Natural gas is an important and increasing share of our nation's energy portfolio because it is abundant and inexpensive. But there is widespread concern about air, climate and ground-water pollution; fragmentation of forests and farmland; and careless gas drilling operations near homes and schools. Many people simply do not believe that the resource can be developed safely. And industry has not done nearly enough to respond to the public's concerns.

Minimizing risk

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) helped win early victories requiring the disclosure of hydraulic fracturing chemicals in Arkansas, Colorado, Montana, Texas and Wyoming. But many more protections are needed before natural gas can become a trusted alternative to coal and oil, and a reliable on-demand backup for renewable energy. EDF is pushing for rapid regulatory reform to ensure public health, the environment and climate are protected.

Energy panel urges industry reform

In 2011, U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu appointed EDF president Fred Krupp to a seven-member panel charged with recommending new standards for the gas industry. The group's report called for more oversight, strong regulation of air and water pollution and disclosure of fracking chemicals. EDF is working to implement the recommendations and other reforms.



Gas drilling operation in Pennsylvania. The Marcellus Shale, which lies beneath NY, OH, PA and WV, is thought to be the largest gas reserve in the U.S.

Amy Sussman/Corbis

ENERGY

Reducing methane leakage

Methane, the principal component in natural gas, is a powerful greenhouse gas. Although natural gas burns cleaner than coal, the venting and leakage of methane can eat into the potential climate advantage of using it. EDF has spearheaded efforts to get stronger federal regulation of the oil and gas industry to reduce air pollutants, including methane. We are also working to drive reform at the state level. On a parallel path, we have joined industry and academic partners on a comprehensive scientific study to collect accurate data about the rate that methane is escaping from the natural gas supply chain. Understanding the magnitude of the problem will help us drive methane emissions down to rates below 1%.

EDF strategy

EDF is taking a leading role to ensure that natural gas development does not harm the environment or the health of the people who live in communities where drilling occurs. We are working in the 14 states that hold 85% of the on-shore natural gas reserves in the continental U.S to enact regulations that:

- ✓ mandate disclosure of hydraulic fracturing chemicals and improve transparency
- ✓ modernize rules for well construction and operation, as well as improve enforcement
- ✓ reduce risks from waste and water management
- ✓ lessen harm to local and regional air quality
- ✓ minimize impacts on landscapes and communities

EDF's goal is to reduce methane leakage nationwide below 1%

Environmental Defense Fund natural gas experts



Mark Brownstein is Associate Vice President and General Counsel of EDF's natural gas program. Mark previously worked for a leading U.S. electric and gas utility in a variety of senior business strategy and environmental management roles.



Scott Anderson is the program's Policy Director, working to reduce the environmental footprint of natural gas operations and promoting safe and transparent industry practices. Prior to joining EDF as senior policy advisor, Scott served as general counsel to an oil and gas industry trade group in Texas.



Matt Watson is National Director of State Programs for EDF's natural gas program, leading a team of state policy advocates. He also coordinates our partnerships with state-based organizations and advocates.



Ramon Alvarez is an EDF senior scientist with a PhD in physical chemistry. He focuses on reducing air pollution, with a current emphasis on emissions from natural gas and oil production.

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