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Opposition Statement on Proposed Nacero Gas-to-Liquids Refinery in Luzerne County Pennsylvania

A proposed gas-to-gasoline industrial plant in Luzerne County touted as being environmentally friendly is anything but, say a group of local, state, and national environmental organizations who have joined forces to oppose the project. The groups released the following statement alongside a Clean Air Council [fact sheet](#) about Nacero's proposal:

Nacero, the Texas-based company behind the \$6 billion refinery, markets its business as being environmentally conscious, but there is no evidence to support its claims, especially at the local level. When considering air permit documents obtained by Clean Air Council for Nacero's similarly proposed Texas facility, Nacero's proposed Luzerne County refinery would be the third-worst climate pollution emitter in the state and among the top emitters of other harmful pollutants. The current proposal places this big source of pollution in a residential neighborhood near an elementary school.

Although Nacero says that its business is based on proven technology, little is known about the process. Since it was formed in 2015, Nacero has not built any of the nine plants it set out to build. Only one plant employing the technology exists in the world and that plant opened in 2019.

While the facility was only announced in press reports starting in October 2021, we are now learning that this facility has been advancing behind the scenes with the active support of Senator John Yudichak, Representative Aaron Kaufer, members of the Wolf administration and other state legislators. As environmental and community leaders from the region and the state, we view the lack of transparency about this project by government officials to date as a threat to undermining the public engagement process for future approvals for the project. As we see with fracking and pipelines, when the public is cut out of the process from the earliest stages, it is usually a sign that the review process is simply an after-the-fact rubber stamp on decisions the government has already promised--either explicitly or implicitly.

The company plans to market two gasoline products, which it will call "Nacero Blue" and "Nacero Green." Nacero Blue relies on fracked gas inputs. Nacero Green is described as being made from gases from agricultural sites, landfills, and waste treatment facilities. Both products--which are chemically identical--would require more dangerous pipeline infrastructure to move the gas to the plant. Nacero is relying on carbon capture "when feasible" to prop up its claims, but feasibility of carbon capture is not a reality. Calling it "renewable natural gas" is nothing more than greenwashing the burning of gases (primarily methane) that will hurt our climate and release harmful pollutants into the air.

The climate impacts of this proposed refinery cannot be minimized by the company's greenwashing. This new refinery would require increased drilling and fracking, which in turn leads to heightened negative impacts on residents' health and safety. These negative impacts include increased toxic waste from drilling, water contamination, harmful air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and negative economic impacts such as reduced property values.

Although the refinery project's supporters are claiming that thousands of jobs would be created, the vast majority of those jobs would be temporary construction jobs and Nacero has not committed to hiring local workers to fill temporary or permanent positions. The company boasted in the press that 450-500 permanent jobs would be created, yet its website says that only 300 permanent jobs would be created. Again, the lack of truth and transparency around this project is concerning.

This is only the latest in a series of false climate solutions being proposed by the fossil fuel industry in an effort to keep doing business as usual despite warnings from the world's top scientists on climate change, as well as local, regional, national, and international agencies. The environmental community is concerned that the proposed Nacero refinery in Luzerne County will be the first in a new wave of proposals for fracked gas-related projects marketed as "good for the climate," but that instead will pollute local communities while emitting significant amounts of greenhouse gases and expanding the fracked gas industry.

Our organizations support solutions that address the climate crisis while creating safe, long-term, good-paying jobs for Pennsylvanian workers which protect the health and safety of our communities and environment. Unfortunately, Nacero's proposal does none of these things.

The organizations that contributed to this statement include Action Together NEPA, Berks Gas Truth, Better Path Coalition, Breathe Project, Clean Air Council, Climate Reality Project: Pennsylvania Chapters Coalition, Concerned Health Professionals of PA, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, FracTracker Alliance, Green Amendments For the Generations, League of Women Voters Pennsylvania, PennFuture, Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wyoming Valley, and Watchdogs of Southeastern, PA (WaSEPA).

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