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Pennsylvanians Against Fracking Says Wolf Severance Tax Plan Is Bad for Education, Bad for PA

Harrisburg, Pa: Pennsylvanians Against Fracking calls Governor Tom Wolf's plan for a severance tax bad for education and bad for Pennsylvania. The severance tax Wolf is promoting on his "Schools that Teach" tour is an unsustainable quick fix that ties education to a boom-bust industry and institutionalizes drilling in a state it has already profoundly harmed.

"Let's be clear. The last thing Pennsylvania needs is a severance tax on fracking. A severance tax will just encourage more fracking at a time when we should be stopping it altogether. The money the impact fee has generated has not come close to addressing all of the issues in already-impacted communities. More drilling means more impacts Pennsylvania's communities can ill-afford," said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth, a steering committee member of Pennsylvanians Against Fracking.

Wolf's plan is a reiteration of the one promoted by former Governor Rendell. Several things have changed, however, in the intervening years. More than 425 peer-reviewed studies now link fracking to water contamination, air pollution, illnesses, and climate change. A performance audit of the Department of Environmental Protection conducted by Pennsylvania's Auditor General has shown that the agency was not equipped to provide whatever protections it could to Pennsylvanians. The Department of Health was similarly ill-equipped and actually discouraged its staffers from engaging with people reporting fracking-related health complaints.

Worst of all, impacts occurring in real time in communities across the state provide all the evidence we need that fracking isn't worth it.

"The fact that DEP has verified 243 cases of contamination of private water wells by oil and gas operations should be enough evidence to convince the Governor and his environmental agency to stop the bleeding. It's simply wrong to sacrifice communities and families suffering these impacts so the state can balance its budget," said Tracy Carluccio of Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a Pennsylvanians Against Fracking steering committee member.

"The Governor continues to ignore the science on fracking. He appears to be ignoring market conditions now too. The current slowdown in production may signal that the boom is going bust, something that calls into question Wolf's claims that he can raise enough revenue for even a quick fix for education," says Feridun.

Pennsylvanians Against Fracking is a statewide coalition of organizations, institutions, and businesses calling for a halt to fracking in the Commonwealth.

Learn more about Pennsylvanians Against Fracking at paagainstfracking.org.

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