

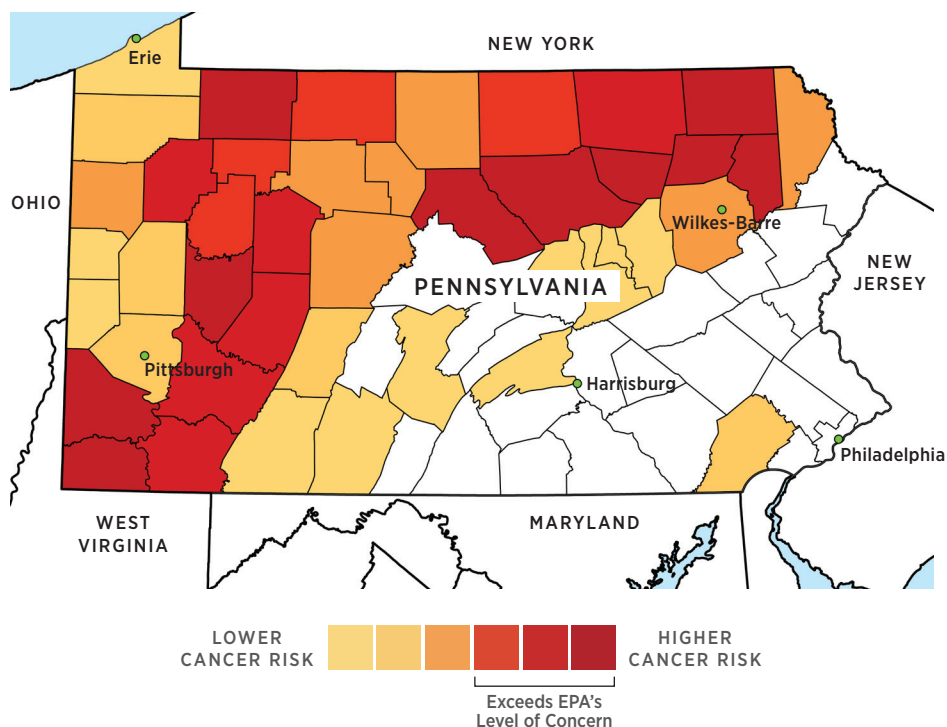
Health Risks in Pennsylvania from Oil and Gas Air Pollution

In the United States the oil and gas industry dumps millions of tons of air pollutants into our air each year. This mix of pollutants includes methane, a very potent climate pollutant, as well as enormous amounts of air toxics and pollutants that cause ozone smog pollution. Toxic air pollutants cause cancer and other diseases, while ozone smog can cause a variety of health problems, such as asthma attacks and worsened effects of bronchitis and emphysema.

With 17% of the nation's natural gas production and more than 8% of the nation's oil and gas wells, compressors and processing plants located in the state, Pennsylvanians bear much of the health risks caused by oil and natural gas industry air pollution. And now, based on data from the EPA, we have evidence that oil and gas pollution in Pennsylvania is getting worse as oil and gas production continues to expand in the state.

- According to EPA's data for 2014, over 9,100 tons of hazardous toxic air pollution—benzene, formaldehyde, toluene, and other compounds—were emitted by oil and gas companies in Pennsylvania, more than 4x more than the toxic air pollution from this sector in 2011. Between 2014 and 2017, Pennsylvania gas production increased by 29 percent, so this pollution has likely continued to increase as well.

FIGURE 1
Cancer Risk from Oil and Gas Toxic Air Emissions



- In 2011, 8 counties in Pennsylvania faced cancer risk that exceeded EPA's level of concern threshold due to oil and gas air pollution. But by 2014, the number of counties had risen to 20 (see Figure 1).
- In 2014, more than 1,640,000 people lived in counties with cancer risk exceeding EPA's level of concern, up from 630,000 in 2011.
- More than 1.5 million people in Pennsylvania live within a half-mile of active oil and gas operations. Toxic air pollution emissions can directly affect the health of individuals living near sources.
- Children are especially vulnerable to air pollution exposure and over 1,100 schools in Pennsylvania with over 300,000 students are located within a half-mile of oil and gas operations.

The bottom line: air pollution from the oil and gas industry affects young and old and those living near and far from industry activities. Pennsylvania must act to reduce these impacts by issuing air pollution standards that control emissions of harmful air pollution from the industry to the greatest extent possible.