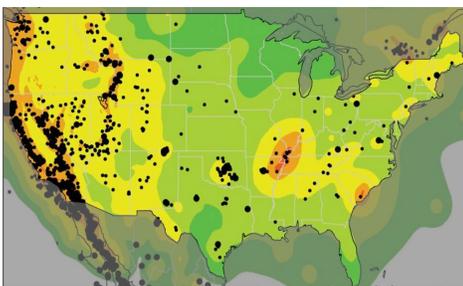


SEPTEMBER 2014

The Ground is Shifting

OKLAHOMA: As reported in *The Atlantic*, the US Geologic Survey (USGS) has warned Oklahoma to prepare for an “increased hazard” of significant earthquakes. Cautious to acknowledge the limitations of its data, USGS carefully points to wastewater disposal from fracking as “a contributing factor” behind an unprecedented rise in earthquake activity. Similar disturbances were cited in Arkansas, Colorado, Ohio and Texas.

Subsequently, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported its own finding that current regulations are inadequate to protect drinking water from earthquakes, such as might follow wastewater injection. Responsibility for such regulation



The US Geological Survey (USGS) maps regions of ‘earthquake hazard’ by color and actual earthquakes by size of dots.

varies from state to state. In Ohio, the Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR) oversees injection wells; but the (US) EPA has oversight in Pennsylvania. One result of this variability is that much of Pennsylvania’s fracking waste is trucked to Ohio,

where injection permits are approved more quickly. ODNR actively advocates injection, seeing it as better than dumping.

Ohio has also found that fracking itself, not only wastewater

(See *EARTHQUAKES*, page 2)

HARRISBURG: We aren’t the “lunatic fringe” any longer.

At first, fracking was hailed as the long-awaited “game changer” for our region’s economy.

Only a few fanatics or fools, it was said,

were dissenting from the general euphoria. Now, reality begins to weigh-in, and skepticism about drilling is gaining legitimacy.

This year, Pennsylvania’s Auditor General reported on-the-record what had always been obvious: The oversight of fracking by the Pa. DEP was “inadequate” — regardless of the glib claims of Gov. Corbett’s appointee, Michael Krancer. DEP responded, belatedly, with its first-ever report on water contamination due to fracking (though still based upon incomplete and corrupted data). Then the state’s Attorney General agreed to investigate, as possibly criminal, the Pa. Dept. of Health’s admitted burying of citizens’ complaints about fracking-related symptoms.

Academic research, and the work of career scientists in regulatory agencies, is now substantiating the first-hand experience of gas-field residents. Fracking waste-products have been shown to be pervasive in air and water, with direct consequences for human health.

(See *OPINION*, page 2)

Fitzgerald is MC for Consol’s Airport ‘Love-In’

PITTSBURGH (Aug. 25): Admission was by invitation only; attendees were vetted at off-site parking, then taken away by van to the party venue (at a Consol well pad). While friendly media were on-hand to record the festivities, ordinary citizens were nowhere to be seen, or heard. Such was the official ‘public’ kickoff of fracking at Pittsburgh International Airport.

Gov. Tom Corbett reaffirmed his goal of making Pennsylvania “... energy supplier to America and the rest of the world.”

Then, as host for the event, County Exec. Rich Fitzgerald upped the ante with his own vision of the County as “the energy capital of America.” Consol sent CEO Nick Deluliis, who confirmed that the gas from its wells is headed for export.

Much has been made of the financial windfall that the Airport Authority has been promised; and nostalgia runs high

for the terminal’s early years as a hub for US Airways. Mr. Fitzgerald—but not the air travel industry—even argues that gas royalties will restore Pittsburgh’s service levels by subsidizing landing fees.

What’s never mentioned, of course, is that the reason for today’s silent gates and mothballed concourses is an earlier generation of elected officials who sold the public on earlier corporate promises. We haven’t learned; we’re just doubling-down on the same old bet.

Marcellus Protest is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): www.thomasmertoncenter.org

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(EARTHQUAKES, continued from page 1)

disposal, can be linked to earthquakes. As a result, ODNR has begun to monitor seismic in the vicinity of new gas wells.

But, like the Allegheny County Health Department (as it “gets ready for climate change”), many state and federal experts seem resigned to trotting along behind, quantifying the damage as it occurs, rather than sprinting ahead to intercept it. The closing section of USGS’s report exemplifies the passivity in which legislators have trained most would-be protectors of public health and safety:

“You don’t want [wastewater] in a river. It’s 7000 feet below ground level. It’s gone.”
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, addressing deep injection of fracking waste

“The current regulatory framework for disposal wells ... does not address earthquake safety. As the use of injection for ... wastewater increases, the importance of knowing the associated risks also grows.

To meet these challenges, the USGS hopes to increase research efforts to understand the causes and effects of

injection-related earthquakes.”

Hope...?! Efforts to understand...?! Why aren’t we requiring such understanding first — before the harm is done?

How You Can Help...

As you know, Marcellus Protest is an all-volunteer, grassroots group with no paid staff. All that we do, we do on our own time. But we do have out-of-pocket costs, and we’ll be launching some more ambitious efforts soon. We welcome your tax-deductible financial support, at www.marcellusprotest.org/donate.

(OPINION, continued from page 1)

The naïve hope for “responsible drilling” is gone, and industry tactics are increasingly brutal and obvious. The Center for Sustainable Shale Development (CSSD), is not yet declared dead, but is nevertheless comatose; it has attracted no new supporters and issued no work products since its overblown public launch eighteen months ago. The Center’s prime funder, the Heinz Foundations, has not only withdrawn its backing of CSSD, but gone on to aid in supporting grassroots activists.

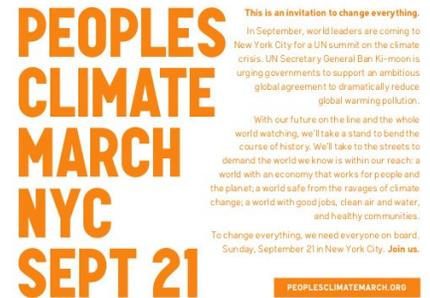
Our witness (and, unfortunately, the well-documented devastation and even death

that fracking has brought here) is helping to energize ‘fracktivism’ around the world. In the United Kingdom, Poland, Australia and elsewhere, citizens have spoken out, petitioned, and taken to direct action to keep fracking out of their communities. After 400 days of farmers’ resistance, Chevron has silently left their development site in Żurawłów (Poland). Protesters near Blackpool (England) are staging their own “Tour de Frack” like the one held here in 2012.

We can’t declare success, of course, but the twin myths of inevitability and benign prosperity are on the wane.

Although too many elected officials are still being co-opted, the price-tag for buying elections is going up, and taxpayers are filing lawsuits. Even if they aren’t ready to join with us, most people are now realizing that the frackers’ happy-talk wasn’t the whole story.

An extended version of this article, with full source citations, will appear on our website. Your comments are welcomed: news@marcellusprotest.org.



A Range of Resources

Please check out our ‘Resources’ page at www.marcellusprotest.org/resources, and follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](https://www.facebook.com/MarcellusProtest)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus_SWPA](https://twitter.com/Marcellus_SWPA)). Here is a sampling of our recent recommendations:

[Vox Populi](#) (‘A Public Sphere for the Discussion of Contemporary Politics’) is an online publication of thoughtful perspectives on many current issues, of which one section focuses on the impacts of fracking. Published by Michael Simms of Pittsburgh.

[“Protect Our Parks, Pass It On!”](#) documents a performance staged by Jennifer Myers at the University of Iowa. She describes it as “a project to share testimonies from the Protect Our Parks campaign based in Pittsburgh, PA through the simple act of having them read and performed by people living in other places.”

Upcoming Events in September:

September 21 (Manhattan, New York City) all day: Peoples Climate March, leading up to the United Nations summit meeting on the climate crisis. The Thomas Merton Center and Sierra Club are arranging [bus transportation](#) from Pittsburgh. Marchers will step off from Columbus Circle at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday. Check peoplesclimate.org/march for latest updates.

(Updated details and a more extensive list of events at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.)

Updated information on these topics (with links to original sources), along with our calendar of upcoming events, and other resources, can be found at www.marcellusprotest.org.