

“MAMA SUMMIT” CALLS FOR CLEAN AIR PROTECTIONS

By Matt Hess, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | March 22, 2017

Moms Clean Air Force hosted a “mama summit” this afternoon in the East Wing Rotunda to urge lawmakers to support safeguards that would protect citizens against air pollution caused by the natural gas industry.

Christine Dolle, Pennsylvania Field Consultant for Moms Clean Air Force, urged lawmakers to reject [SB 175](#). “The legislation would terminate Pennsylvania’s ability to protect its own citizens from the harmful air pollution created by the many thousands of existing gas wells across the state,” she stated. “There are no federal rules in place to protect citizens from the harmful pollution being spewed by these existing wells, placing the responsibility squarely on Pennsylvania to act to protect its citizens, including its most vulnerable – our children.”

Patrice Tomcik said she is a mother of two young boys in Butler County. “As a mother living in southwestern Pennsylvania I am concerned for the health of my children, who attend school approximately half a mile from a natural gas well pad,” she stated. “Asking oil and gas companies to take basic, cost-effective measures to reduce air pollution isn’t some drastic government overreach, it is simple common sense. In fact cleaning up the mess you make is the same lesson I teach my kids. My children – our children – deserve the most protective pollution controls available. Every day that these safeguards are delayed is another day our family’s health is at risk.”

Rep. Donna Bullock (D-Philadelphia) emphasized that Pennsylvania’s constitution gives citizens the right to clean air and water. “As elected officials we took an oath to uphold that constitution, to defend our constitution and we cannot ignore that responsibility. We cannot allow the oil and gas industry to continue to pollute our air,” she stated.

Rep. Bullock noted that more than 30,000 childhood asthma attacks are caused by ozone smog from the oil and gas industry. “We simply cannot ignore the impacts of the natural gas and oil industry anymore,” she stated. “What can we do? We can uphold the governor’s plan to reduce methane. We can fix this, we reduce the methane pollution with commonsense rules that won’t hurt the industry.”

Rep. Leanne Krueger-Braneky (D-Delaware) said the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) does not have enough inspectors to meet the demands the natural gas industry is placing on Pennsylvania’s environment. “There are over 100,000 existing gas and oil wells and 48,000 miles of transmission lines containing methane and other harmful pollutants with very little oversight,” she stated. “Under Gov. Wolf’s plan DEP would address the methane pollution problem through simple, commonsense protections like requiring drillers to regularly find and fix the leaky equipment that cause these emissions and effectively capturing methane.”

Rep. Krueger-Braneky noted that more than 30 businesses offer methane mitigation. “Instead of continuing to subsidize gas companies we should support this emerging industry through good public policy,” she stated. “In 2014 the industry lost \$20 million worth of gas due to leaks. We can capture that, save money, and protect our health at the same time.”

Gretchen Dahlkemper, National Field Director for Moms Clean Air Force, urged legislators to reject SB 175 and support Gov. Wolf’s clean air plan. “State legislators should resist any attempts to cede control over Pennsylvania’s ability to keep its air clean and protect the health of its residents,” she stated. “Every county in Pennsylvania, from my hometown in Erie to where I’m raising my children in southwestern Philadelphia, is impacted by ozone smog pollution from oil and gas operations that can cause childhood asthma attacks.”

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