

Over 12 Million Americans Live in the Oil and Gas Threat Zone

Friday, 17 June 2016 00:00 By [Alan Septoff](#), [Earthworks](#) | Report

“This week, Clean Air Task Force and Earthworks unveiled a suite of tools designed to inform and mobilize Americans about the health risks from toxic air pollution from the oil and gas industry. For the first time, Americans across the country -- from Washington County, PA, to Weld County, CO to Kern County, CA -- can access striking new community-level data on major health risks posed by oil and gas operations.

The oil and gas industry is the country's largest and fastest-growing source of methane pollution. And its facilities emit numerous other hazardous and toxic air pollutants along with methane -- including benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and ethylbenzene. That toxic pollution presents significant cancer and respiratory health risks, underscoring the need for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to clean up existing sources of toxic air pollution without delay.”

Continue for the full article at: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/36467-over-12-million-americans-live-in-the-oil-and-gas-threat-zone>

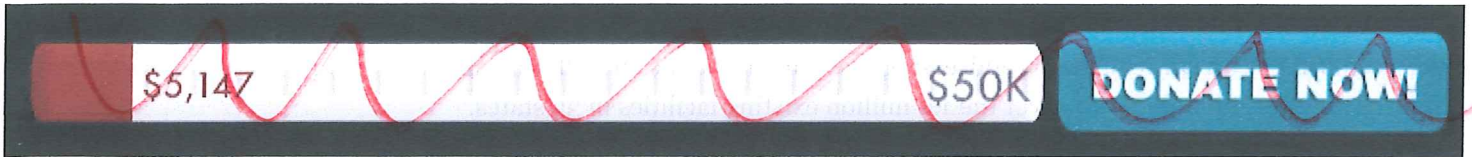
Dear Margaret Curran,

If the Clear River Energy Center (CREC) is built, it will negate actions designated in the Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014 to address and remediate our climate warming trajectory. The forest canopy in our northwestern corner of the state contributes significantly to the natural cleansing and cooling ability of the air we breathe. These forested areas capture carbon we are trying desperately to reduce to prevent continued warming temperatures. Further, emissions from CREC would include

PUBLIC UTILITY  
2016 JUN 23 PM 00:00  
RECEIVED







(/component/banners/click/2)

# Over 12 Million Americans Live in the Oil and Gas Threat Zone

Friday, 17 June 2016 00:00

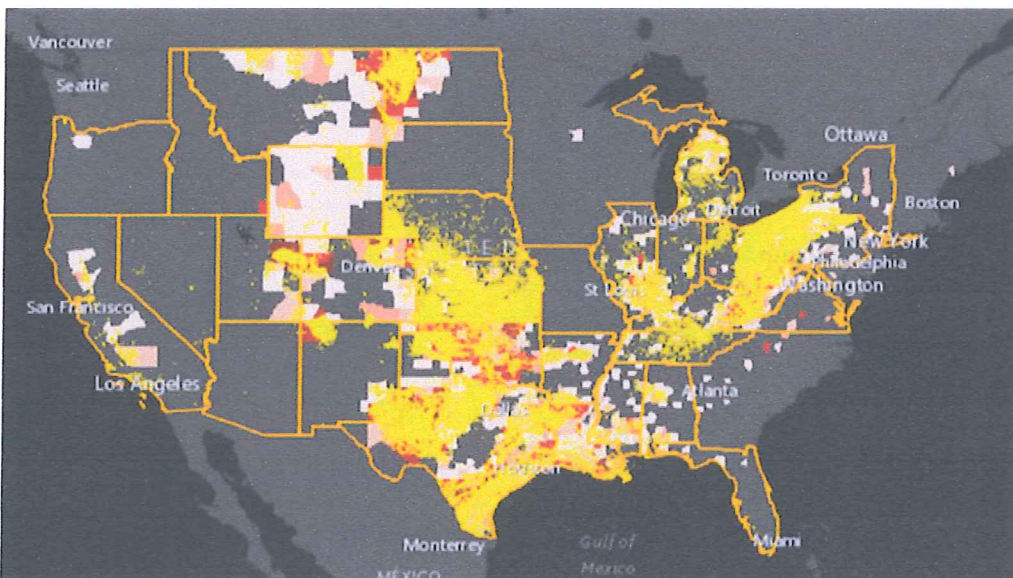
By Alan Septoff (/author/itemlist/user/52312), Earthworks ([https://www.earthworksaction.org/earthblog/detail/12\\_million\\_americans\\_live\\_in\\_the\\_oil\\_gas\\_threat\\_zone#.V2LXkeYrKjS](https://www.earthworksaction.org/earthblog/detail/12_million_americans_live_in_the_oil_gas_threat_zone#.V2LXkeYrKjS)) | Report

Tweet

font size

Print (/news/item/36467-over-12-million-americans-live-in-the-oil-and-gas-threat-zone?tmpl=component&print=1)

Like



(Image: [oilandgasthreatmap.com](http://oilandgasthreatmap.com) (<http://oilandgasthreatmap.com/>))

This week, Clean Air Task Force and Earthworks unveiled a suite of tools designed to inform and mobilize Americans about the health risks from toxic air pollution from the oil and gas industry. For the first time, Americans across the country -- from Washington County, PA, to Weld County, CO to Kern County, CA -- can access striking new community-level data on major health risks posed by oil and gas operations.

The oil and gas industry is the country's largest and fastest-growing source of methane pollution. And its facilities emit numerous other hazardous and toxic air pollutants along with methane -- including benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and ethylbenzene. That toxic pollution presents significant cancer and respiratory health risks, underscoring the need for the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to clean up existing sources of toxic air pollution without delay.

Over The EPA recently signed New Source Performance Standards that for the first time will regulate methane pollution from new and modified oil and gas. r-12-million-american...

facilities, preventing some of the sector's future toxic air pollution from being released. EPA's current regulations addressing the industry's toxic air pollution are limited and the NSPS does not cover the 1.2 million existing facilities in 33 states. CATF's report (<http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/view/221>), entitled Fossil Fumes, and Earthworks' Oil & Gas Threat Map (<http://oilandgasthreatmap.com/>) focus specifically on toxic pollutants from those facilities, and their resulting health impacts.

### **Earthworks Oil & Gas Threat Map**

The Oil & Gas Threat Map (<http://oilandgasthreatmap.com/>) maps the nation's 1.2 million active oil and gas wells, compressors and processors. Using the latest peer-reviewed research into the health impacts attributed to oil and gas air pollution, the map conservatively draws a 1/2 mile health threat radius around each facility.

Within that total area are:

- 12.4 million people;
- 11,543 schools and 639 medical facilities; and
- 184,578 square miles, an area larger than California.

For each of the 1,459 counties in the United States that host active oil and gas facilities, the interactive map reports:

- instances of elevated cancer and respiratory risk;
- total affected population (with separate counts for Latino & African-Americans); and
- total affected schools and medical facilities.

The searchable map also allows users to:

- look up any street address to see if it lies within the health threat radius;
- view infrared videos which makes visible the normally invisible pollution at hundreds of the mapped facilities; and
- view 50+ interviews with citizens impacted by this pollution.

Taken as a whole, The Oil & Gas Threat Map shows that oil and gas air pollution isn't someone else's problem, it's everyone's problem. Our homes and schools are at risk while most state regulators do nothing. Although completely solving this problem ultimately requires ditching fossil fuels, communities living near oil and gas



(1)

- Almost 25% of all Pennsylvanians live within the half-mile threat radius.

*The Oil & Gas Threat Map and Fossil Fumes* show more than 12 million Americans need protection from oil and gas industry air pollution as soon as possible. Industry talks about voluntarily reducing their pollution, but refuses to make binding commitments. Some states like Colorado have stepped up, but other states like Texas have vowed never to regulate greenhouse gases and associated toxics. It is only the EPA that can act to protect all Americans, their health, and the climate from this pollution.

*Fossil Fumes* underscores the need for strong policies not only to help the U.S. reach its greenhouse gas emissions targets under the Paris climate agreement, but also to protect the health of our citizens from toxic air emissions from the oil and gas industry. EPA has begun this process by addressing new and modified sources and must now ramp up its efforts under the Clean Air Act to aggressively regulate existing oil and gas industry sources, which contribute the largest share of this pollution.

*This piece was reprinted by Truthout with permission or license. It may not be reproduced in any form without permission or license from the source.*

#### RELATED STORIES

[Health Is Where the Home Is \(/opinion/item/34405-health-is-where-the-home-is\)](/opinion/item/34405-health-is-where-the-home-is)

By Susan Sered, *Susan Sered's Blog* (<http://susan.sered.name/blog/health-is-where-the-home-is/>) | Op-Ed

[Oil Train Regulations Fail to Address Known Risks \(/news/item/34586-oil-train-regulations-fail-to-address-known-risks\)](/news/item/34586-oil-train-regulations-fail-to-address-known-risks)

By Justin Mikulka, *DeSmogBlog* (<http://www.desmogblog.com/2016/01/17/there-will-be-blood-oil-train-regulations-fail-address-known-risks>) | News Analysis

[Oil Industry Caused 2005 Swarm of California Earthquakes \(/news/item/34759-oil-industry-caused-2005-swarm-of-california-earthquakes\)](/news/item/34759-oil-industry-caused-2005-swarm-of-california-earthquakes)

By Sharon Kelly, *DeSmogBlog* (<http://www.desmogblog.com/2016/02/08/oil-industry-caused-2005-swarm-california-earthquakes-newly-published-study>) | Report

#### Show Comments

[back to top \(/news/item/36467-over-12-million-americans-live-in-the-oil-and-gas-threat-zone#startOfPageId36467\)](/news/item/36467-over-12-million-americans-live-in-the-oil-and-gas-threat-zone#startOfPageId36467)

READ MORE



Operations need the EPA to cut methane and toxic air pollution from these operations as soon as possible.

### Clean Air Task Force "Fossil Fumes" Report

Fossil Fumes (<http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/view/221>), CATF's companion report to Earthworks' Oil & Gas Threat Map, is based on EPA's recent National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) analysis updated to reflect the latest emissions data from EPA's National Emissions Inventory (NEI), and the conclusions are striking.

The report finds that:

- 238 counties in 21 states face a cancer risk that exceeds EPA's one-in-a-million threshold level of concern;
- Combined, these counties have a population of over 9 million people and are mainly located in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Colorado.
- Of these counties, 43 face a cancer risk that exceeds one in 250,000, and two counties in West Texas (Gaines and Yoakum) face a cancer risk that exceeds one in 100,000;
- 32 counties, primarily in Texas and West Virginia, also face a respiratory health risk from toxic air emissions that exceeds EPA's level of concern (with a hazard index greater than one);

The Fossil Fumes report and Earthworks' Interactive Threat Map allow concerned citizens to learn the cancer and respiratory risks they face from toxic air pollution from the oil and gas industry. Armed with this information, citizens and communities can demand protective safeguards requiring industry to clean up its act and reduce these serious risks to public health.

The Oil & Gas Threat Map and Fossil Fumes will help nurses, their patients, and affected communities to better understand the health risks posed by oil and gas facilities. The best available science shows that methane and toxic chemicals emitted by these facilities threaten our most vulnerable citizens, which is why EPA must act quickly to address this pollution.

Other key findings of the Map and Report at the statewide level include:

- Los Angeles County, CA is home to the most impacted 'vulnerable' populations: there are more impacted schools and hospitals in Los Angeles than any other county in America (226 schools and 60 hospitals)
- There are particularly widespread impacts in Texas, with 15 counties with over 75% of their populations living within 1/2 mile risk radius and 32% of Texas