



Straight Talk on the Future of Jobs in Pennsylvania (September 2020)

The Breathe Project and FracTracker Alliance have crafted the following messaging for refuting the conflated job numbers being touted by pro-fossil fuel organizations and political candidates regarding fracking and jobs in Pennsylvania that, in some cases, has inflated natural gas jobs in the state by 3500 percent.

The natural gas industry and the fracking boom have failed to deliver the job growth and prosperity that was predicted by proponents a decade ago. The total number of jobs in the natural gas industry in Pennsylvania never reached more than 30,000 over the last five years and is now less with the industry's economic decline.

FACT: The Pa. Dept. of Labor and Industry (DLI) reported that direct employment in natural gas development totaled 19,623 in 2016. This was down from 28,926 total natural gas development jobs in 2015. This includes jobs in drilling, extraction, support operations and pipeline construction and transportation. ([StateImpact](#), 2016)

Pa. DLI calculated the employment figures using data from six data classifications at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — specifically, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for cured petroleum and natural gas extraction, natural gas liquid extraction, drilling oil and gas wells, support activities for oil and gas operations, oil and gas pipeline and related structures and pipeline transportation of natural gas. ([Natural Gas Intel](#), 2016)

Inflated estimates of fracking-related jobs in Pennsylvania under previous Gov. Tom Corbett included regulators overseeing the industry as gas jobs, truck drivers, and those working in highway construction, steel mills, coal-fired power plants, sewage treatment plants, and others. Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf's administration revised the way gas industry jobs were calculated to reflect a more accurate depiction of jobs in the sector.

FACT: Food & Water Watch calculated that there were 7,633 jobs pre-boom (2001 – 2006), which rose to 25,960 oil and gas industry jobs post-boom (2016 – 2018). ([FWW](#), March 2020)

Food & Water Watch created a more accurate model using a definition that encompasses only jobs directly involved with domestic oil and gas production, specifically: oil and gas extraction; support activities for oil and gas operations; drilling oil and gas wells; oil and gas pipeline construction; and pipeline transportation.

FACT: The Food & Water Watch analysis also reports that misleadingly broad definitions in industry-supported job reports overstated the industries' scope. The industry analysis included broad swaths of manufacturing industries including "fertilizer manufacturing," convenience store workers, and gas station workers, which accounted for nearly 35 percent of all oil and gas jobs in their analysis. ([FWW](#), PwC at 5 and Table 4 at 9, 2019)

FACT: As a point of comparison, in 2019, close to 1 million state residents were working in healthcare, 222,600 in education, and over 590,000 in local and state government. ([Pennsylvania Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), July, 2020)

FACT: To forecast fracking-related job growth, the American Petroleum Institute used a model with exaggerated multipliers and faulty assumptions, such as the amount of purchases made from in-state suppliers, and it double counted jobs, leading to wildly optimistic estimates. ([Ohio River Valley Institute, August 2020](#))

FACT: In addition, many of the jobs claimed in a 2017 American Chemistry Council Appalachian petrochemical economic impact study would arise in plastics manufacturing, which raises two concerns. First, both the ACC study and subsequent reports by the U.S. Department of Energy assume that 90% of the ethylene and polyethylene produced by imagined Appalachian cracker plants would be shipped out of the region to be used in manufacturing elsewhere in the country and the world. Of the 10% that would presumably stay in the region, much or most of it would serve to replace supplies that the region's plastics manufacturers currently source from the Gulf Coast. ([Ohio River Valley Institute, August 2020](#))

The fracking and petrochemical industries create unsustainable boom and bust cycles that do not holistically improve local economies.

FACT: Economic analyses show that the oil and gas industry is a risky economic proposition due to the current global oversupply of plastics, unpredictable costs to the industry, a lower demand for plastics, and increased competition. The analyses call into question industry's plans to expand fracking and gas infrastructure in the region. ([IEEFA, August 2020](#))

FACT: Plans to build petrochemical plants in Beaver County, Pennsylvania and Belmont, Ohio, for the sole purpose of manufacturing plastic nurdles will not be as profitable as originally portrayed. ([IEEFA Report, June 2020](#))

A clean energy economy is the only way forward.

FACT: The Dept. of Energy's U.S. Energy and Employment Report (2017) and [E2 Clean Jobs Pennsylvania Report \(2020\)](#) shows that clean energy jobs in Pennsylvania employ twice as many people as the fossil fuel industry prior to the pandemic.

FACT: The 4-state region of Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania has formed a coalition of labor, policy experts and frontline community leaders called Reimagine Appalachia. This coalition is in the process of addressing the vast number of jobs in renewable and clean energy industries in a report that will be published this fall.

[Reimagine Appalachia](#) seeks major federal funding packages that will create jobs, rebuild infrastructure and addresses climate change that will ensure that no one is left behind going forward.

Sources

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PennLive. "[How many jobs has Marcellus Shale Really Created?](#)" Jan. 5, 2019.

StateImpact, "[Pa. oil and gas jobs down 32 percent since last year](#)," Dec. 23, 2016.

[The Breathe Project](#) is a coalition of citizens, environmental advocates, public health professionals and academics using the best available science and technology to improve air quality, eliminate climate pollution and make our region a healthy, prosperous place to live.

[FracTracker Alliance](#) is a 501(c)3 organization that maps, analyzes, and communicates the risks of oil, gas, and petrochemical development to advance just energy alternatives that protect public health, natural resources, and the climate.