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The Honorable Josh Shapiro
Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Shapiro,

I am writing on behalf of FracTracker Alliance to express deep concern and dismay regarding the recent announcement of the partnership between your office and CNX, a company involved in shale gas production. As a concerned Pennsylvania resident and advocate for environmental responsibility, the details surrounding this partnership raise numerous questions and concerns.

The collaboration with CNX, especially with a focus on voluntary reporting, is a perplexing move. It is difficult to perceive this as a step toward progress, particularly when mandatory reporting should be a fundamental requirement set by Pennsylvania regulators. Praising CNX for opting into what should be a regulatory mandate is a cause for skepticism rather than celebration.

The timing of this announcement, coming shortly after the resignation of PA DEP Secretary Negrin, raises doubts about the state's capacity to effectively manage such a partnership. Additionally, the statement made by CNX lauding the hydrogen hub funding announcement and stressing the need for a clear 45V hydrogen production tax seems incongruent with the essence of accountable and responsible environmental practices.

Your assertion that this partnership embodies the "most responsible, sustainable way" of extracting and processing natural gas in Pennsylvania contradicts the sentiments of esteemed environmental and community advocates. Center for Coalfield Justice, for example, has described this move as a "slap in the face." It's crucial to highlight that this partnership neither provides answers to public health concerns nor instills accountability. The extensive research available, exemplified by recent publications like *The Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking*, already sheds light on the



associated risks and health outcomes including cancer, asthma, heart problems, preterm birth, low birth rate, birth defects, respiratory diseases, skin rashes, and mental health impacts.

Rather than drilling two new wells to conduct a study of the public health and environmental impacts of fracking, your office should make use of the ample data and reporting that is already occurring. Perpetuating fossil fuel extraction is not an environmentally friendly practice.

Furthermore, as an organization actively involved in promoting community-led air monitoring initiatives around shale gas development, we find the pathway for regulatory compliance unclear. FracTracker was recently awarded nearly \$1 million from the US EPA to expand preexisting community-led air monitoring initiatives in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. Instead of providing unwarranted advantages to a fossil fuel company, I strongly urge that your administration engages with groups working towards cleaner air through scientific means, data analysis, and technology. It's imperative to understand and integrate the current air monitoring networks and collaborate with the numerous community advocates striving for a healthier environment.

The concerns about cumulative impacts of pre-existing polluting infrastructure, the necessity for more stringent regulations based on community-led air monitoring data, and unresolved issues related to CNX violations after the 43rd statewide Grand Jury report remain unaddressed. The partnership's limited policy changes, the absence of clarity around the Halliburton Loophole, and the apparent inadequacy of setbacks raise serious doubts about the intended positive impact of this alliance.

FracTracker feels that increasing the setback for unconventional drilling from homes from 500 feet to 600 feet for this company is barely an improvement worth mentioning. After all, your office and the 43rd Statewide Grand Jury proposed a distance of 2,500 feet to protect Pennsylvanians from the harms of the industry just a few short years ago. Incidentally, the larger distance is also the state's presumed liability distance for ground water contamination from unconventional gas development that was established in Act 13 of 2012.

With over 400 violations accrued by CNX since the 43rd statewide Grand Jury report, it is baffling that the partnership appears to prioritize voluntary self-reporting. This stance negates the well-documented violations and the urgency for stricter regulatory oversight. In 2021, as Attorney General, you charged CNX with environmental crimes, to which they pleaded no contest. What is the explanation for placing your trust in the same company that you rightfully sought to hold accountable for environmental crimes?

The need for greater transparency in methodology, technology, and overall data quality cannot be overlooked. This partnership, with only a minuscule sample size of two CNX wells, fails to



address the larger context of the state's numerous oil and gas wells and the associated issues concerning data transparency.

Governor Shapiro, as an advocate for environmental health and safety, I implore you to reconsider this partnership with CNX. The well-being of our communities and the environment should supersede any political or corporate interests. This decision, which seemingly disregards the concerns and extensive research of environmental advocates, does not align with the expectations of those you represent.

FracTracker requests that your office provide a comprehensive clarification regarding the intentions and goals of this partnership, as well as the technical details and methodology surrounding the planned monitoring. Moreover, I am open to discussing how community-led monitoring initiatives can be best utilized to curb emissions and hold operators accountable. Given our organization's expertise and the significant grant awarded by the EPA, we stand ready to contribute constructively to this dialogue.

Please take into consideration the gravity of the concerns raised and the potential ramifications of this alliance. I am eager to engage in meaningful dialogue to ensure that environmental protection remains a top priority for the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Smith", written in a cursive style.

Shannon Smith
Executive Director
FracTracker Alliance