



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH PROJECT**  
DEFENDING PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE 2012

# YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

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Our Growing Team

## Note from Executive Director Alison L. Steele

EHP's Pittsburgh headquarters sits on top of the second-largest fossil gas reserve on the planet. For more than a decade we've known that gas development in our region contributes mightily to public health risks: from pollution exposures at the local level to climate change at the global level. Keeping that gas in the ground can go a long way toward securing better health outcomes for people locally and globally. At the very least, government entities must use their inherent powers to be more transparent about relevant public health risks, to work with frontline communities to address their concerns, and to better regulate the pollution this extractive industry emits.

However, in the coming years, we can expect to see more, not less, gas development to support the planned fleet of petrochemical and methane-fueled hydrogen production facilities in the Ohio River Valley and beyond. At the same time, with an expected decrease in government oversight and regulation of the industry's activities, EHP's work to defend public health in the face of oil and gas pollution will be more critical than ever.

This year EHP continued to lead the conversation about health impacts of shale gas development by launching the latest cohort of our HealthWatch community engagement program in New York State, updating our continuing education materials for health care professionals nationwide, connecting with decision makers on more health-protective policies, and mapping pollution dispersion from existing and planned petrochemical facilities in the region.

In addition to the hard work we performed here at home, I had the honor of representing EHP this year in an international climate change program that took me to Hawaii, Fiji, and Japan to see first-hand the adverse impacts of climate change and the challenges associated with facilitating a just transition to renewable energy. I noticed some striking similarities with home in far-flung communities across the globe: where frontline residents feel unheard and unsupported by the government agencies tasked with protecting them, and where legacy industry activities are strongly tied to personal identity, hindering conversations about innovation.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we recognize the many challenges in our path – some old and some new – but we are also feeling more determined than ever. With your help, we will be collaborating more effectively with our allies, while also better communicating public health risks and solutions to those who do not yet understand the urgency of the situation. On behalf of the team at EHP, thank you for coming on this journey with us to fight for stronger public health protections.



**Alison L. Steele**  
Executive Director

# Program Update

## Health Professional Toolkit

EHP is pleased to offer physicians and other health professionals the opportunity to receive continuing education credit after reviewing our Health Professional Toolkit.

The goal of the toolkit is to provide health professionals with up-to-date information and research on the impact of shale gas development on patients' and clients' health. In using the toolkit, health professionals will be able to understand the existing research that links shale gas development to health impacts, recognize the potential impacts that shale gas development is having on patients' and clients' physical or mental health, and provide resources and recommendations for impacted patients and clients.



**Access the  
Toolkit at**

[environmentalhealthproject.org/toolkit](https://environmentalhealthproject.org/toolkit)



# Program Update

## HealthWatch

This year, EHP launched two Environmental HealthWatch engagements in New York State communities. In partnership with community groups in each area, EHP is training residents to install low-cost air monitors and interpret the collected data to proactively protect public health near facilities of concern.

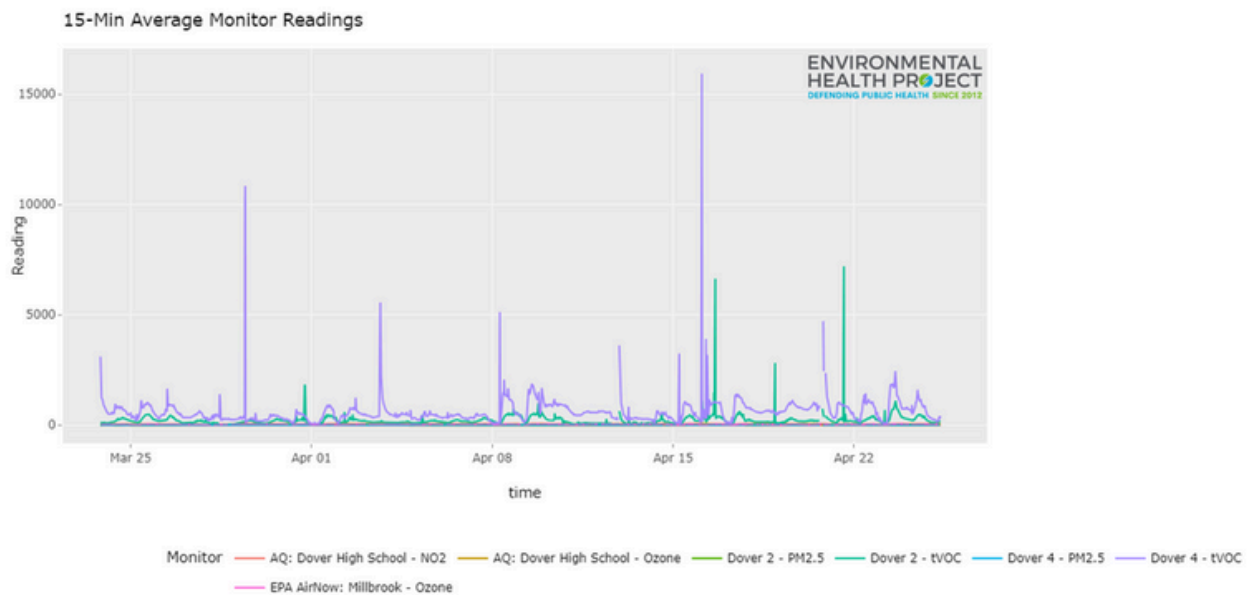
Monitoring and analysis will occur around the Seneca Meadows landfill and methane gas energy facility in Seneca Falls, NY, and the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Compressor in Clymer, NY.



# Program Update

## Support for EPA Grant Funded Air Monitoring

EHP is working to support several partner organizations by providing data analysis to interpret and help communicate information collected by new air quality monitors deployed through EPA grants. EHP will use the AirView analysis app for continuous monitors and help communities interpret the results of any sampling conducted. EHP's AirView app provides access to real-time analysis of air monitoring data to communities affected by the shale gas industry.



Sample data visualization from the AirView app.

# Program Update

## AirSense Community Air Monitoring Project

EHP is working in partnership with Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community (BCMAC) to ensure that people who live, work, learn, and visit Beaver County have access to real-time air quality information. The AirSense Community Air Monitoring Project focuses on air monitoring, community education, and biomonitoring. This information will help community members know when to take immediate actions to mitigate health risks associated with air pollution events in the area.

EHP's role in this project includes assistance with air monitoring logistics and data analysis for the information collected by five Aeroqual monitors that have been placed in the community. EHP is also developing educational resources to help community members understand how they can protect their health from the effects of air pollution.



Experts provide instruction on Aeroqual monitors before installation.

# Program Update

## Ligonier Air Quality Project

EHP recently wrapped up three years of continuous air monitoring conducted in partnership with the Citizens to Preserve Ligonier Valley (CPLV). EHP collected data from 13 sensors placed between Wilpen and Donegal in the Ligonier Valley and presented trends and potential areas for concern to residents at a meeting in August.



Top: Aaron Makatura, Annie MacDougall, and Alison L. Steele  
Bottom: Aaron Makatura looks on as Annie MacDougall addresses residents at a meeting in August 2024.



# Field Update

## Meeting with Impacted Communities

From Dimock to Waynesburg and many points in between, EHP has been meeting with community groups and frontline residents to share research, resources, and strategies for protecting health in the face of shale gas development.



EHP's Project Coordinator for Appalachia Aaron Makatura presents EHP resources at a MADFACTS meeting in Greene County, PA.

# Field Update

## Press Conferences and Meetings with Policy Makers

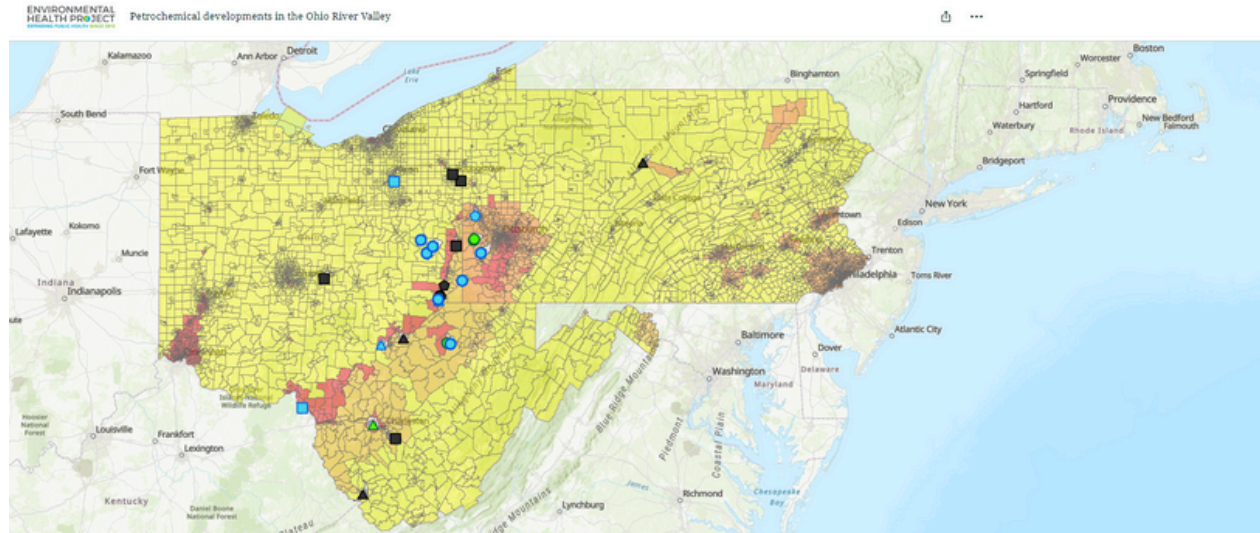
When policy makers have fact based research, they make better decisions. That's why EHP has participated in three press conferences with partner organizations to raise concerns about the health harms of shale gas development. We've also visited 11 legislators and dropped off literature at 46 offices.



Photos (clockwise from top left): Alison L. Steele speaks at a November 13, 2024, press conference at the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda calling on state leaders to safeguard Pennsylvanians from fossil fuel and plastic industry buildout; EHP and partners meet with PA State Senator Katie Muth; EHP's partners gather around PA State Representative Chris Rabb's desk; EHP and partners outside the office of PA State Representative Emily Kinkead.

# Mapping the Petrochemical Buildout

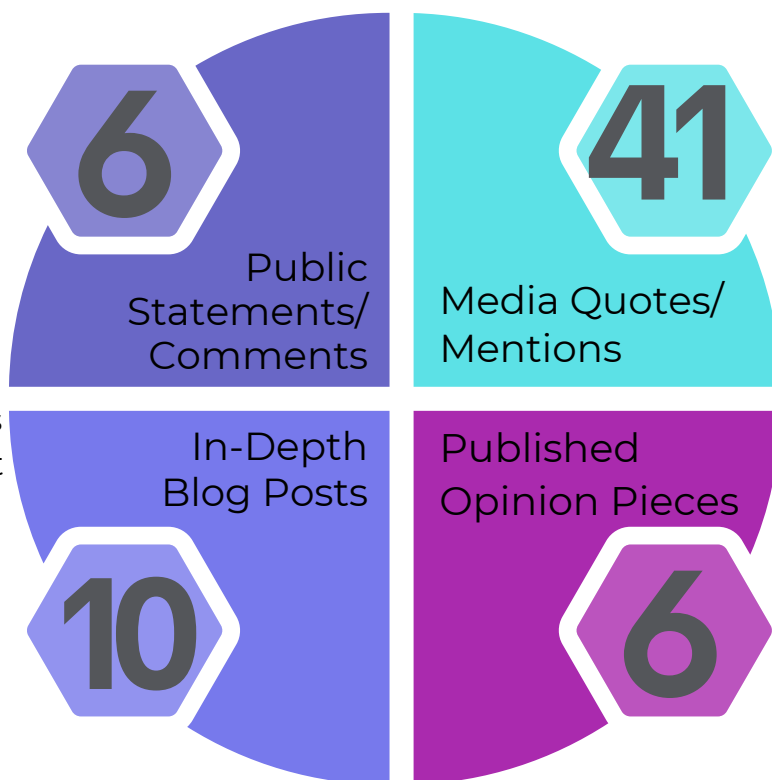
In Summer 2024, EHP participated in the Environmental Health Fellowship Program made possible with the support of the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The program aimed to strengthen the region's capacity to address issues impacting the environment, health, equity, and sustainable outcomes by providing opportunities to bring high-quality environmental and public health students to the Greater Pittsburgh community.



EHP was proud to host Raina Levin, a Boston University School of Public Health student concentrating in Environmental Health. Raina's project focused on petrochemicals, or chemicals made from petroleum or methane gas, a rapidly growing industry in the Ohio River Valley. Raina created a story map as a resource to explore the health impacts of petrochemical development in the region. [Click here to explore the map.](#)

# Communicating the Health Risks of Shale Gas Development

Communication is essential to make research studies, air emissions data, and shale gas industry jargon accessible for frontline residents so that they can make informed decisions about risks to their health. Likewise, healthcare providers and policymakers benefit from having shale gas health impacts centered in conversations about patient care and policy. By maintaining constant contact with core constituencies, EHP is raising awareness and defending public health.



## Webinars

### SHELL ETHANE CRACKER

On Thursday, January 25, the Ohio River Valley Institute (ORVI) and EHP hosted a webinar on ORVI's report, "Pennsylvania's Bad Bet: Why Shell Didn't Save Appalachia With Plastics."



### CUTTING THROUGH THE HAZE

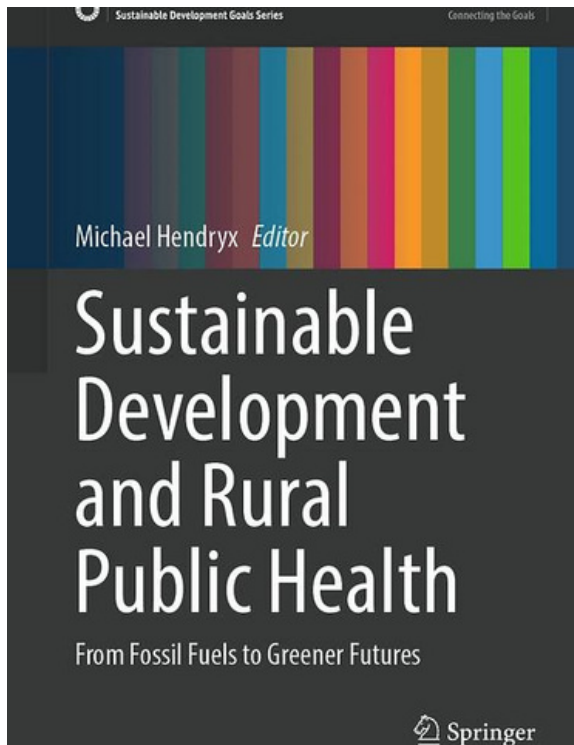
On Thursday, April 11, Grassroots Environmental Education and the Environmental Health Project hosted an informative and interactive event to discuss the health impacts of local pollution from fossil fuel infrastructure and other facilities. This was the second event in the Cutting Through the Haze series.

### PITT STUDIES

On Thursday, September 19, EHP and partners hosted a webinar titled, "A Year Later: Have Leaders Addressed Health Concerns from the Pitt Studies?" to address the health impacts of the shale gas industry.



# Book Chapter: Shale Gas Extraction in Pennsylvania



*Sustainable Development and Rural Public Health: From Fossil Fuels to Greener Futures*, edited by Michael Hendryx, offers strategies and solutions for rural communities dependent on fossil fuel economies to enable them to transition to sustainable development.

In Pennsylvania, the advent of shale gas development (also called unconventional gas development, hydraulic fracturing, or fracking) has created prosperity for some and adverse health consequences for many in primarily rural areas of the state.

In the chapter *Shale Gas Extraction in Pennsylvania*, EHP details the health impacts of the shale gas boom and provides suggestions for policy improvements that can be made to better defend the health of residents in Pennsylvania and anywhere polluting industries operate. Read the abstract and learn more about the book [here](#).

Note: Portions of this chapter originally appeared in a white paper titled [Pennsylvania's Shale Gas Boom: How Policy Decisions Failed to Protect Public Health and What We Can Do to Correct It](#) (Environmental Health Project 2022).

# EHP Executive Director Alison L. Steele Participates in 2024 Indo-Pacific Leadership Lab

This year, our Executive Director Alison L. Steele participated in the 2024 Indo-Pacific Leadership Lab as a member of the inaugural cohort of an international leadership-development initiative. The focus was “Climate Change and Adaptation.”



Over the course of one year, 16 fellows from 12 countries met virtually to study theories and practices related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The program also hosted three week-long, in-person convenings for conducting and synthesizing field research in Hawaii, Fiji, and Japan.

After each session, fellows were tasked with applying lessons learned at their respective organizations and discussing outcomes within the cohort to identify best practices across sectors.

“

We know that in order to develop long-lasting, equitable solutions, we need more people at the table: to challenge our biases, to broaden our perspectives, and to co-create solutions that will work for everyone. — Alison L. Steele

”

*Welcome!*  
**to Our Team**



**SANJANA PARMAR, MS**  
Environmental Data Analyst



**ANGELA GOLDBERG, MA**  
Development Coordinator

Cover Photos (clockwise from top left): Aaron Makatura and Talor Musil hold signs at a press conference urging increased no-drill zones in Pennsylvania; a bottle of water drawn from a drinking water well in Dimock, PA; the capitol building in Harrisburg, PA; Alison L. Steele speaking at the 2024 Indo-Pacific Leadership Lab

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

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