

Good afternoon
my name is
Lois Bower-Bjornson.

I wanted to thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to testify today.

I am the south western Pennsylvania field organizer with clean air counsel and I host frackland tours.

Some of you on the committee and some of you listening may have been on one of my tours.

If you have not I'd like to invite you to come out and get a first hand account of what it is like to live and grow up in the Shale fields of south western Pennsylvania.

I live and grew up in Washington County the most heavily fracked county in our state.

I wanted to begin my testimony today by telling you a story, the story of normalization.

I grew up along the Monongahela River in a once thriving coal town
Frederick town.

I am no stranger to industry.

As a child I swim in the river with raw sewage, and River rats. walking on the riverbank it was normal to see numerous barges loader with Coal going up and down the river.

It was common to see orange water or mine drainage.

From my grandparents hotel I would watch the Burning slate Bucket go to the dump.

All of my friends fathers worked in the mine.

We didn't think a thing of it. No one told us that something was wrong, or that any of this would harm us or those who work in the industry.

Now there's another industry the oil and gas industry, coming with the same promises normalizing things.

Do you know what it's like to be told that you are crazy, irrational, and just one of those environmental people. Or Worse being told you didn't see that it wasn't right no you must be misunderstanding?

You are the mouthpiece of Satan was one of the hate mails I received.

While working to protect a local community and their residents .

I was told by their solicitor

"that I should watch myself I could be arrested for criminal trespass"

This, comment was made after showing representatives a well pad that caused a local road to cave-in.

Yes this work is not for the faint at heart.

I am a truth teller.

I'm able to bring a voice to the people who had none and tell their stories and mine.

I moved back to the area to raise my four children so they could run & play in the country and grow up in the outdoors and be near family.

I thought I was moving back to a better cleaner place for my children than the one I grew up in.

Anyone that's a parent realizes that we want the best for our children.

There's nothing worse than feeling guilt as a parent.

I can't express to you the guilt that I feel for raising my children in an environment that was not safe for them and has the potential to cause lifelong Health consequences.

All of my children have experienced health impacts from the Oil and gas industry.

On every level there are leaks from diesel trucks, to compressor stations, to fracking pads, to pipelines, to processing plants, to cryogenic plants, impoundments, everything.

Choosing alternate schooling for my artistic children seemed to be a plus.

Only to find out that they are next to a petrochemical hub and my two youngest are now attending a new school that has a cancer crisis.

Can you imagine helping your child through a nosebleed over and over again?

Do you know what it's like to not be able to leave your windows open in the warmer evenings because you know that there will be consequences in the morning that your children will suffer.

do you know what it's like that your children know to only drink from the good faucet?

do you know what it's like for your children to check the air quality before they go outside?

do you know what it's like to follow fracking trucks to & from school, and tell your new drivers don't get next to the trucks?

Can you imagine three of your four children had lymes disease due to climate change?

Do you know what it's like when you look over the horizon and you see fracking pads that completely encompass our home?

Can you imagine just for a minute having a consistent truck parade driving past your house all day long every day hauling hazardous waste and inhaling diesel fumes seven days a week for the past 10 years?

Have you ever had to put an air monitor on your child or have them give urine samples for a study to see how many Fracking chemicals are in their body?

This is not what we signed up for this is not our idea of our piece of heaven.

Why do we keep accepting this?
Why do we keep normalizing this?

Thank you
Lois Bower-Bjornson

Sent from my iPhone