



Communities of faith responding to climate change

Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light Policy on Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light (PA IPL) is a community of congregations, faith-based organizations, and individuals of faith responding to climate change as a moral issue. We envision a clean-energy future in which the poor and vulnerable no longer bear the heaviest burdens of our energy use, in which global warming has been halted, and we have begun to reverse the damage already done to our common home.

We do not intend for this policy to condone or excuse *existing* fossil fuel infrastructure or use. (Indeed, the board of PA IPL has gone on record committing to a fossil fuel free future, calling for a moratorium on fracking and an end to all fossil fuel use in PA by 2050) We recognize, however, that decision points about new infrastructure may set us on the path to a cleaner future, or chain us to harmful fuels of the past. New infrastructure investments act as an economic covenant with a particular future, and we must begin to covenant with the future in which we wish to live: one that is protective of the vulnerable, is sustainable and is just. To make moral decisions about our energy future, we need to be free to choose: we will not be able to afford to build a just clean-energy future if we continue to invest in our current, destructive system.

It is obvious that communities, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and federal entities are under pressure to permit a vast network of proposed gas pipelines and increased volume of railroad traffic constituted of tank cars filled with oil destined for processing plants. Whether by pipeline or rail, increasing the volume headed to processing facilities, export terminals, and power generation plants can only increase the pressure to extract more fossil fuels. Here in Pennsylvania, that pressure is particularly great for methane (natural gas) extracted via a set of processes best known in the public discourse as “fracking,” but new infrastructure continues to be built for other fossil fuels as well – and all these investments in a polluting past must stop.

We now know what some already suspected in 2011 when we released our document *Principles for Considering Drilling in the Marcellus Shale: an*

Ethical Analysis: we cannot consider methane to be a responsible “bridge fuel.” Far more methane is released during fracking than estimates anticipated, and any methane emissions, due methane’s extraordinary insulating potential — more than 80 times greater than carbon dioxide’s for the first 20 years, can further destabilize our climate. Growing the network of pipelines, compressor stations, processing facilities, power generation plants and export points will only increase the pressure to depend more heavily on this fuel here, and even abroad.

Fossil fuel infrastructure will prolong or accelerate the depletion of natural resources from communities in order to get at mineral resources. Fossil fuel infrastructure feeds a system that is already destroying the blessings we have held in common for generations: clean air, a stable and predictable climate which allows us to grow the food that feeds all people, and the clean, available, unsalted water that allows us to drink.

Thus, as people of faith and residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we call on the Commonwealth to:

- Neither build nor permit new networks for fossil fuel transport, including pipelines, port facilities, and additional road and rail routes designed primarily for fossil fuel transport
- Halt growth in fossil fuel transport through our state that puts additional pressure on existing infrastructure and creates demand for new infrastructure.
- Neither build nor permit new fossil fuel processing facilities
- Neither build nor permit new power generation plants utilizing fossil fuels.
- Neither build nor permit new pumping stations, pads or other infrastructure designed for additional drilling sites

