



March 15, 2016

My name is Amanda John, Pennsylvania & Delaware Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association. On behalf of our more than one million members and supporters of which over 45,000 are Pennsylvanians, I would like to express our support for Governor Wolf's plans to introduce a Pennsylvania Methane Reduction Strategy that would reduce the impacts of methane emissions from the state's natural gas development on national parks and historic sites.

For nearly a century, NPCA has been the independent, nonpartisan voice working to strengthen and protect our national park system. Part of our commitment to the public trust is to ensure that America's natural, historical, and cultural heritage is preserved and protected, and all generations of visitors enjoy a quality experience. However, under existing state and national standards, venting, flaring and leaking of natural gas results in millions of tons of pollution released into the air each year, threatening national park air quality and speeding climate change.

When it comes to capturing heat, methane is nearly 80 times as potent as carbon dioxide over a twenty-year period. The rapid increase in leaked methane since Pennsylvania's natural gas surge in 2008 will spur changes to our landscapes, and our national parks. What's more, when methane is leaked, so too are air pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can form into smog. Yet, roughly 115,000 metric tons of methane is lost through venting, flaring, and leakage in Pennsylvania each year, the equivalent of 575 thousand cars and, as DEP estimates, a loss of more than \$8 million in methane.

The impacts to the 18 National Parks, 7 National Heritage Areas, 27 National Natural Landmarks, and 167 National Historic Landmarks in Pennsylvania and further reaches of the airshed, like at Shenandoah National Park, a Class I air quality area under the Clean Air Act, is evident. People will not want to vacation at or visit a park with worse air pollution than Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania's national parks support robust economies, generating more than \$396 million in economic activity and supporting over 7,000 jobs. We should not threaten local economies built on national parks and historic sites to support wasteful industrial practices.

The common sense solutions included in the strategy announced on January 19th to reduce methane emissions from new and existing natural gas operations would improve upon existing insufficient national standards, rightfully establish Pennsylvania as a national leader on the issue, and protect the parks and other protected aspects of our nation's heritage. To protect the legacy of our national park system, we must ensure that America's parks are handed to the next generation increased, not impaired in value, and that special places that belong to the public, are not harmed by development activities to achieve short-term gain.

NPCA applauds the DEP and the Wolf Administration for announcing its intentions to establish a high standard for methane pollution reduction that bests all other states and, until last week, the federal government, and continuing to take actions to protect the national parks of Pennsylvania.

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