

Comment by Karen Feridun, Co-Founder, Better Path Coalition and No False Climate Solutions PA

The Better Path Coalition and No False Climate Solutions PA are preparing to deliver a statement to Governor Shapiro next month that has already been signed by more than 1,300 people and organizations. The statement is a response to a frequent talking point in Shapiro's current rotation that claims that Pennsylvania is AI ready.

Our statement points out that while it may be true for Shapiro, the natural gas industry, the Building Trades, state legislators, and some tech billionaire bros, it is not true for his constituents who are, once again, subject to an attempt to get a boom going in Pennsylvania.

In the past few years, we have pivoted from a petrochemical boom to a hydrogen boom to a data center boom. The through line that connects all of them is fracking, the OG boom that not only created the need to come up with new markets for natural gas, but that also set a precedent for hasty implementation of a largely unknown set of technologies.

Governor Rendell, on whose watch the first PA well was fracked, [admitted as much](#) in 2016. "I made a mistake in the rush to get the economic part of fracking delivered to Pennsylvania," he said.

Two decades later, it is Governor Shapiro who is rushing to get the economic part of data centers and AI delivered. His friends in the Abundance movement may be cheering his Getting Stuff Done agenda, but he is getting that stuff done at our peril. The environmental, climate, health, safety, quality of life, and even economic impacts of data centers have not been adequately studied, but the evidence we have from places that have already experienced the incursion tells a concerning story. And nobody really has a clue about how AI will impact us except that it will take away jobs. But none of that will deter Shapiro.

Imagine where Pennsylvania would be if he decided to apply his talent for Getting Stuff Done to the climate crisis rather than to those things that only exacerbate it.

On July 19, 2023, I [posted](#) that he had not mentioned climate change since before being elected governor. Two hours after that post, he tweeted about climate change. That sparked a campaign of ours that led him to respond by doing an [interview](#) with someone who was formerly something called Miss Earth. He told her, "I don't believe that governments will be able to make the kind of change necessary speaking in the short period of time we really need to address the climate crisis without folks on the outside

influencing the process.” That’s what we’ve been doing all along and what we plan to continue doing on December 10th. You’re invited to [add your name](#) to our statement.