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The Truth about Gasland

Natural gas is a clean, abundant and domestic energy source that holds vast potential to promote cleaner air, grow local economies and enhance energy security in the United States and, increasingly, around the world. The natural gas community is committed to the safe and responsible development of this energy source, and we welcome questions about the film Gasland because it gives us the opportunity to set the record straight in a fact-based way.

In the film's signature moment Mike Markham, a landowner, ignites his tap water. The film leaves the viewer with the false impression that the flaming tap water is a result of natural gas drilling. However, according to the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, which tested Markham's water in 2008, there were “no indications of oil & gas related impacts to water well.” Instead the investigation found that the methane was “biogenic” in nature, meaning it was naturally occurring and that his water well was drilled into a natural gas pocket.

This is one of several examples where the film veers from the facts. A second depiction of a flaming faucet in the home of Renee McClure also misleads viewers about the connection between natural gas development and methane in water wells. McClure's well was sampled by the state of Colorado and it, too, showed only naturally occurring methane.

The film's claims are so egregious that the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission was compelled to set the record straight. The COGCC information sheet corrects the film's misleading depictions and addresses false allegations of methane migration in Weld County.

Later in the film, natural gas is again falsely accused when the film flashes the words “35 mile fish kill Dunkard Creek Washington County PA.” The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency investigated this incident and tied the fish kills to coal mine run-off. Here is the official report.

In an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer, John Hanger, the secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection said the film is “fundamentally dishonest” and “a deliberately false presentation for dramatic effect.”

Contrary to the film's misleading claims, natural gas production is subject to federal, state and local regulations that cover everything from initial permits to well construction to water disposal. In rare cases where incidents occur, companies work with the appropriate regulatory authority to promptly identify and correct the issue, and implement measures to ensure it does not recur.

The natural gas community is committed to the safe and responsible development of this abundant resource, and we firmly believe that no community should have to choose between its economic and environmental interests. The process of hydraulic fracturing has been routinely and safely used in communities throughout the nation for decades-bringing economic prosperity to local communities and significant environmental benefits. From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the Ground Water Protection Council to the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission the process has been examined and found to be safe. We appreciate the opportunity to share this information with interested stakeholders, and we are committed to answering the public's questions in a factual and science-based way

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***America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA)** represents 31 of the nation's leading independent natural gas exploration and production companies. ANGA members are dedicated to increasing the appreciation of the environmental, economic and national security benefits of clean, abundant, American natural gas. Learn more about ANGA at www.anga.us*