

By Lisa DeVille

On November 14, 2018 I gave the Environmental Protection Agency Regions 8 in Denver, CO public comment on why I support the EPA New Source Performance Standards. Including that it is important to me that the EPA New Source Performance Standards be implemented.

My name is Lisa DeVille, I am the President of Fort Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights (Fort Berthold POWER). I live with my husband, five children and three grandchildren. We have lived our whole lives in Mandaree. Mandaree and the Fort Berthold are special to me because this where I was raised and where I choose to raise my family. My family and my ancestors are buried here along the shores of Lake Sakakawea. Being Native American, this is the only land that we have left that is our own.

We are connected to the Earth. We are taught in the story of our creation that we are created from the Earth; that the Earth is our Mother, so we must protect it.

Natural gas is burned off at an alarming rate in Fort Berthold. We are losing a precious natural resource that is being burned within less than a mile from our homes. I am very concerned about the physical effects of oil and gas flaring and venting. My children and grandchildren breathe in this air. How is this going to affect our health? We need the rules in place NOW to prevent further illness.

Members of Fort Berthold POWER and I have worked to secure the protections on air quality like the EPA's New Source Performance Standard. We've been living with oil and gas for nearly a decade and we did not know that there would be so much environmental destruction with fracking. There are over 1,000 oil and gas well pads on the Fort Berthold Reservation. I have Master's in Business Administration and Management, and I also have a degree in environmental science. I am trained in using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. I have worked with Professor Tanya Driver at the Nueta, Hidatsa, Sahnish College to create a map of the oil and gas wells on the Fort Berthold Reservation.

In November 2015, my husband Walter and I traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend meetings at the EPA, BLM, the Office of Management and Budget, and a morning briefing for delegates to hear about our oil and gas issues. I presented images of infrared cameras that make visible the harmful methane emissions.

For the past 10 years I have witnessed the increase of oil and gas industrialization along with the environmental impacts. We are very much affected by the pollution from flares. Every direction you look there are gas flares that sound like a roaring jet plane that rumbles the ground like a train passing by. At night the sky is lit up like it is still day. I can feel the earth rumble at night time when everything is quiet. So, do other members of my family.

In August of 2017, both my husband, Walter and I got ill from respiratory infections. We first went to IHS where we received medication but did not get any better for several weeks. We then went to the McKenzie County Clinic, where a physician told us that we had the same symptoms as oil field workers who had come to the clinic. Walter was given a steroid shot, but I took medication again. It took about 8 weeks for Walter and me to fully heal from the infection. I am very concerned about the air pollution from oil and gas near my home, because I worry that it will impact my health and my family's health.

I have learned that methane is the second largest contributor to human caused global warming after carbon dioxide. It has a global warming potential that is 86 times greater than carbon dioxide. In addition to methane, natural gas leaked and vented from oil and gas development also contains volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants such as benzene, a known carcinogen. Long term exposure to these emissions result in health impacts such as: asthma, cancer, neurological damage, pulmonary reduction, coronary problems.

endocrine disruptive, and headaches. The impact can be devastating if we're breathing in carcinogenic materials that is a result of the oil and gas production.

Creating and strictly enforcing environmental laws and policies to regulate oil and gas development is very important. Otherwise, we risk the unrepairable consequences of the environmental damage. We need monitoring, research, testing, and studies that show the environmental and human health impacts of exposure. Our health and the health of our children and mother Earth should not continue to be sacrificed.

Fort Berthold POWER members, including myself, worked with Earthworks to study the flaring and emissions coming off well locations using the infrared imaging. Specifically, my husband Walter and I collaborated with Dakota Resource Council and Earthworks to examine the Buffalo wellpad on the Fort Berthold Reservation using an infrared camera (FLIR). In 2016, Walter and I participated in a fly-in to Washington, D.C., where we presented the Buffalo wellpad case study to executive branch staff. During July 2017, we collaborated again with Dakota Resource Council and Earthworks to examine existing wellpads on the Fort Berthold Reservation using an infrared camera. The trained thermographer confirmed through independent 3rd party testing that these cameras can see the following gases at the minimum detected leak rate: Pentene, benzene, butane, ethane, ethanol, ethylbenzene, ethylene, heptane, hexane, isoprene, methane, methanol, octane, propane, toluene, xylene, and so on.

Federal protections against wasteful processes that pollute our air and create noisy and ugly flares, like the EPA New Source Performance Standards, are especially important because the industry has much too much influence over our tribal government. We have seen that our TBC put profit before people. We have oil and gas industry propaganda in the school system, so our kids are learning that fracking and all harmful practices are safe.

I support the EPA New Source Performance Standards because every year the oil and gas industry releases millions of tons of methane into the air. Between 2009 and 2014, oil and gas producers on public and tribal lands vented, flared and leaked about 375 billion cubic feet of natural gas. That's enough to supply over 5 million homes for one year. Our air is being polluted and our state and tribal tax dollars are being burned or vented into the atmosphere. In North Dakota, oil development has overwhelmingly outpaced gas capture due to lack of infrastructure, a major oversight that has left Reservations and public lands open to unnecessary flaring; and the oil industry has been given a free pass to willfully waste a valuable, finite resource.

It is important to me that the EPA New Source Performance Standards be implemented, because if companies comply, it would curb the intentional release of methane into the atmosphere and ensure that royalties are paid to fuel our state's economy as well as ensure cleaner air quality. This harms me and the other Fort Berthold members who must live side by side with oil and gas. We choose to live on our ancestral lands, but we cannot choose to not breathe polluted air.