

# Community Health Survey Shows Shale Gas Threatens Human Health Groups, Town of DISH urge Texas regul

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EARTHWORKS \* Texas Oil & Gas Accountability Project \* Town of DISH, Texas, 12/17 -- Today, public interest groups and the Town of DISH released the final results of a health survey of area residents focused on the impacts of Barnett Shale gas infrastructure. The results show that more than half of surveyed maladies can be attributed to toxics first revealed in September in a DISH-commissioned study of area air quality. Based on the results, EARTHWORKS, the Texas Oil & Gas Accountability Project and the Town of DISH are calling on state regulators to immediately perform an in-depth health investigation, implement continuous 24-hour emissions monitoring, and establish a same-day community odor and symptom tracking system.

"We need action immediately," said Calvin Tillman, DISH mayor. "I get odor complaints from residents almost everyday, and we now know that these odors and emissions are harmful to health."

After years of state inaction, the community-based health survey conducted by Earthworks and the Texas Oil & Gas Accountability Project compiled information on residents medical background, proximity to shale gas infrastructure, experience of odor events, and associated health symptoms. The report reveals that area residents are experiencing odor events as often as two times per day and associate the majority of these odors with shale gas infrastructure.

"What is most revealing is that the community is reporting health symptoms that overlap significantly with the known health effects of chemicals already detected," says Wilma Subra, of Earthworks and author of the survey. "We are seeing not only respiratory ailments and headaches, but brain disorders, pre-cancerous lesions and impairment of motor skills."

Earthworks launched the health survey in September when Wolf Eagle Environmental and the Town of DISH released air-sampling results showing neurotoxins and carcinogens exceeding the state regulatory limits.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is due to release a final air-sampling report later this month, and the Texas Department of Health Services announced that an area health investigation was scheduled for 2010. The Department of Health Services health investigation will be among the first state health analysis of oil and gas health impacts.

"The people of the Barnett Shale cannot afford to wait until spring for appropriate action in DISH," says Jennifer Goldman of Earthworks. "The state has ignored multiple requests for action on this issue. Only immediate action will reassure affected residents throughout the Barnett Shale that their concerns will be addressed. Kicking the can down the road will no longer suffice."

"I moved from DISH because of the health impacts," says Megan Collins, who now lives in Fort Worth. "But you can't keep moving. A month after I moved to Fort Worth a rig went up 2,000 feet from my house. I smelled odors and started to experience a relapse of symptoms. There's really no where to go when you look at where the gas is and all the wells they want to drill."

"DISH is the canary in the proverbial coal mine," says Don Young, founder of Fort Worth CANDO and Texas OGAP steering committee member. "We are seeing the same emissions issues in Fort Worth and throughout the Barnett Shale. We are definitely looking to the State to show us the same type of leadership that Mayor Tillman and the Town Commissioners in DISH have. The State has got to help us get in front of these impacts."

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