



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland

Testimony on the Maryland Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan

Before the Maryland Commission on Climate Change
UMCES Appalachian Laboratory
301 Midlothian Road
Frostburg, MD 21532

The earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming planet. We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses. As a people of faith, we commit to a renewed reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of all existence. We are called to defer to a balance between our individual needs and those of all other organisms.

Entire cultures, nations, and life forms are at risk of extinction while basic human rights to adequate supplies of food, fresh water, and health as well as sustainable livelihoods for humans are being undermined. To live, we must both consume and dispose. Both our consumption and our disposal burden the interdependent web of existence. To sustain the interdependent web, we must burden it less while maintaining the essentials of our lives. Our world is calling us to gather in community and respond from our moral and spiritual wealth; together we can transform our lives into acts of moral witness, discarding our harmful habits for new behaviors and practices that will sustain life on Earth, ever vigilant against injustice.

We strongly supported the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) passed by the General Assembly in 2009 because it required the adoption of a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan for state actions to achieve a 25% reduction in GHG from 2006 levels by 2020. While these targets may not be enough to stem or reverse the consequences of climate change, they are at least a carefully considered, rational, balanced and meaningful way to assure that our state is doing what it can. It balances environmental and economic needs and deserves to be pursued with vigor. We urge the Commission to recommend a continuation of the Plan and, if possible, strengthen it by setting even more ambitious goals.

On a personal note, those of us who live in the mountains of Western Maryland do so because we love it: its space to live and to move around, to breathe its fresh air and enjoy its natural beauty. We like being close to the natural world and do not want to see it degraded and exploited in order to build corporate profits while endangering the future we leave to our children and grandchildren. Please keep us on the right and moral path towards a livable climate and a sustainable world.

Stephen C. Buckingham

Lay Community Minister and Co-chair
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July 28, 2015

THE TIME YOU ASK FOR DOESN'T EXIST

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM NEIL, CITIZEN, TO THE MARYLAND CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION

I have two minutes to comment upon your more than “150” programs, and the slow, voluntary, incremental “Maryland temperament” approach. I strongly protest being forced into this two minute “corner,” but that’s where citizens seem to be these days, boxed into corners, as Yanis Varoufakis has warned us, and the fate of Greece has demonstrated.

It is true, though, that decent democracies often work that way, by slow and careful dialogue and that is as it should be. That’s mostly the way the abolitionist movement worked for 30-years, from 1830-1860, and how FDR brought the nation to the necessary intervention against fascism in the 1940’s. And that’s the way the movement to stop global warming has been working. But we are not succeeding, and we are not going to get there in time, and there are huge consequences looming if we are “late.” Forget the 150 programs to track: look at the tiny percentage of alternative energy generated inside Maryland – or the nation – under 1% of the total.

There are three major things we need to do change this. First, the public and private investments that have poured into gas and oil fracking need instead to “deploy” to solar generation and in selected locations, to wind power - and to remaking our grid. Our nation has to be willing to invest trillions to do this, just as we were willing to spend trillions on mission impossibles in the Middle East, being poised for yet another. We can’t do both. Therefore, say no unequivocally to fracking in Maryland. And to the Donald Rumsfeld like foreign policy voices, “new Russia Cold War” included.

Second, we need a public financing program, through public banks, to match on a sounder, less complicated basis what Elon Musk has done with the too complex Wall Street derivative model at Solar City, the one used in Garrett County that no one wants to talk much about.

And third, sadly, we will probably have to undergo the climatological equivalent to Pearl Harbor to change more minds, especially those in one of our two parties, before we reach a national feeling to match that of FDR's One Hundred Days and post December 7, 1941 mobilization

That's where I am after reading Naomi Klein, Richard Smith, Pope Francis - and James Hansen's latest paper. Hansen has told us "what time it is": that we can't afford 2 degrees of climate warming. Climate Pearl Harbor arrives with rapidly rising sea levels and catastrophic weather changes much sooner, even with one degree of warming, which we already have.

The poles which have delineated our world are melting as I speak, and the disorientation is already well under way.

My message to the Commission is the same one that James Baldwin delivered to novelist William Faulkner, his pleas to the North to let the South "go slow" in the early 1960's, which I first read as a Lafayette College freshman in 1968, and I have never forgotten Baldwin's stinging reply:

"... the time Faulkner asks for does not exist - and he is not the only Southerner who knows it. There is never time in the future in which we will work out our salvation. The challenge is in the moment, the time is always now."

That's always been the type of constructive pressure our slow moving political system has required "to get there in time." Usually, it comes from *outside* the two party system. It doesn't always work neatly, as the Civil War demonstrated. Let's hope it succeeds this time. More than you think depends on "getting there" in time.

William R. Neil

Frostburg, MD 21532

Sources:

James Baldwin, Nobody Knows My Name, 1961, Chapter 7.

James Hansen et al: “Ice melt, sea level rise and superstorms: evidence from paleoclimate data, climate modeling, and modern observations that 2 degrees of global warming is highly dangerous,” July 23, 2015, Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics. <http://www.atmos-chem-phys-discuss.net/15/20059/2015/acpd-15-20059-2015.html>

Naomi Klein, “Capitalism vs the Climate,” November 9, 2011, The Nation. <http://www.thenation.com/article/capitalism-vs-climate/>

_____, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate, 2014.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si (On Care for our Common Home), June 18, 2015

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Richard Smith, Green Capitalism: The God that Failed, 2014,

<http://www.worldeconomicsassociation.org/downloads/green-capitalism-the-god-that-failed/>

Maryland Climate Commission

7/28/15 public comment:

I am a Garrett County resident and served on Gov. O'Malley's Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative and appreciate the formidable task before you, particularly in these times of rapidly evolving and welcomed research on the life cycle of climate-forcing natural gas emissions.

Just this month is a study published on methane emissions from only transmission and storage of natural gas (Zimmerle et al., 2015). These data are congruent with what we're seeing in Garrett County -- of the over 11,000 tons of methane reported to be emitted per year from the Accident compressor station and underground storage facility, at least 10,000 tons are fugitive emissions.

In the prestigious journal NATURE last year (McJeon et al. 2015) modeling of the impact of natural gas for climate change revealed the core finding that:

". . . increases in unconventional gas supply in the energy market could substantially change the global energy system over the decades ahead without producing commensurate changes in emissions or climate forcing." And that:

". . . abundant natural gas leads to greater consumption of natural gas. Coal loses the largest market share to natural gas, but natural gas also gains market share at the expense of nuclear and renewables."

Maryland must have baseline methane measures in order to determine the net effects of proposed methane-producing operations, particularly in the near term since science predicts a short-term tipping point with respect to ecological homeostasis.

It is irresponsible to be silent about speculative financial practices that are currently building out a natural gas infrastructure designed to exceed any bridging strategy as yet unarticulated.

In summary, it is an unproven & untenable hypothesis that natural gas is the bridge to sustainability.

I urge you to recommend two assessments: life cycle and baseline. Fuel switching is NOT a solution for climate change -- it will incentivize natural gas build out and de-incentivize alternative energy development. Thank you.

Ann Bristow, Ph.D., 92 Carey Run Road, Frostburg, MD 21532



Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan Tuesday, July 28, 2015 Testimony

Mark Stutzman
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Accident, a town in Garrett County was once a huge natural gas resource using traditional vertical wells. It no longer draws gas but is a natural underground storage field covering roughly 53 square miles. It holds and distributes gas to the Northeast during the winter months when demand is high. It is also home to a compressor station and over 80 well bores that are under constant maintenance. This aging facility built in the 1960s is releasing 10,000 tons of methane into the air annually with no mandatory air monitoring. This would be an obvious good starting point to reduce emissions in our state. I would recommend more extensive independent monitoring, oversight and enforcement to help Maryland reach its emissions goals. I am representing Engage Mountain Maryland and our organization would be willing to work with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan to form a citizens air monitoring program to assist in collecting useful data. These programs can be costly, but with the help of the state and a mutual goal, it would be a worthwhile endeavor.

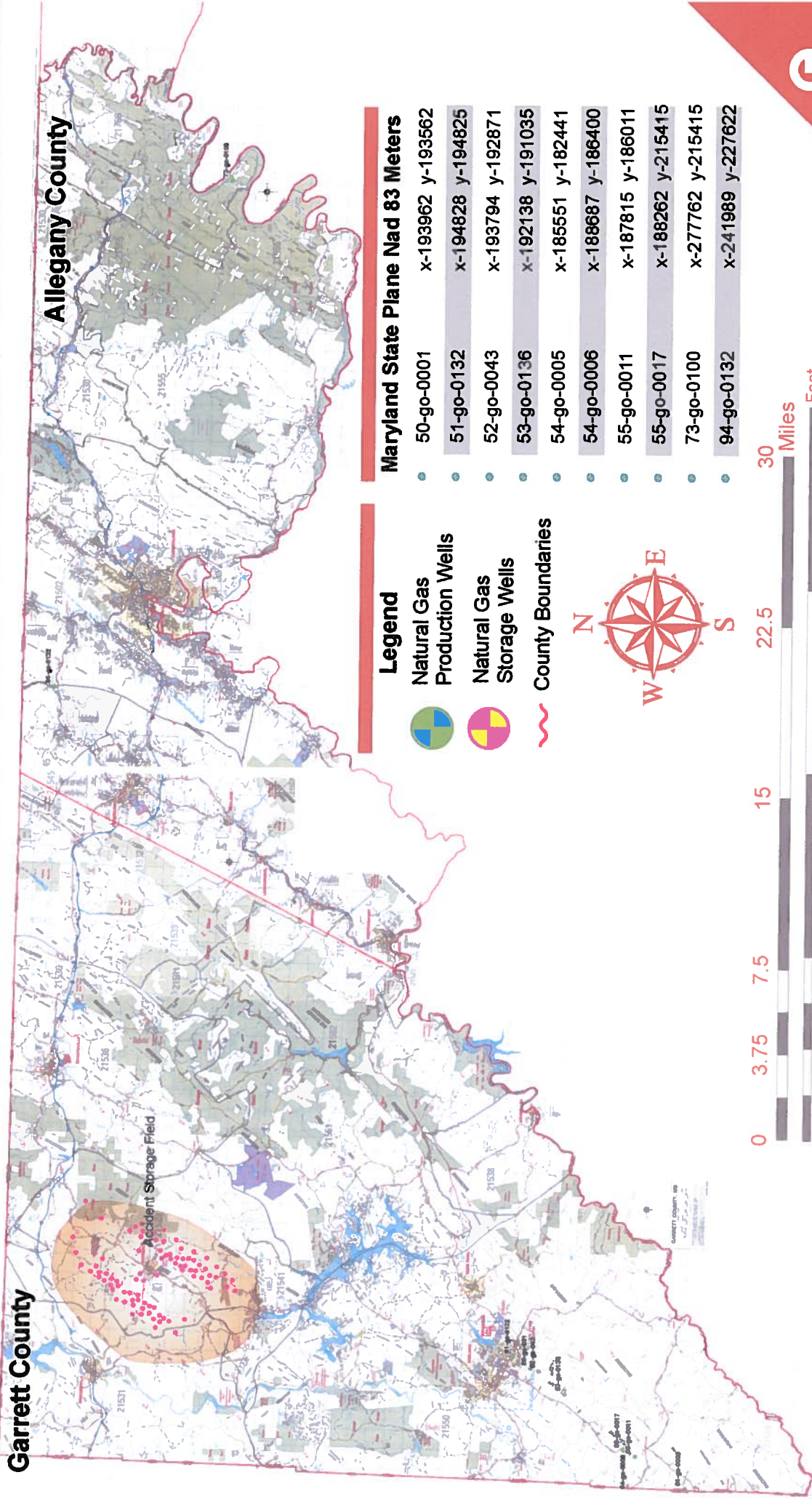
I would also like to address that Garrett County is a location sited for natural gas development that would involve high-volume hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking". Fortunately, the state adopted a moratorium on fracking until 2017. With Maryland's intent to lower emissions and reduce the burden on our environment, it would be ridiculous and counter-intuitive to allow fracking in our state. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan should make a recommendation to prohibit fracking in our state in order to achieve its goals. There are two years to identify the natural gas industry as a source of conflict to the mission that has been set forth.

I'm proud of Maryland for taking a proactive step to helping with a global concern. We all share our air and water and must each do our part to alleviate the environmental impacts we impose.

Thank you,

Mark Stutzman, VP, Eløqui, Inc.
Engage Mountain Maryland, Founding Member




NATURAL GAS WELLS IN MARYLAND



Garrett County

Allegany County

Legend

-  Natural Gas Production Wells
-  Natural Gas Storage Wells
-  County Boundaries

Maryland State Plane Nad 83 Meters

50-go-0001	x-193962	y-193562
51-go-0132	x-194828	y-194825
52-go-0043	x-193794	y-192871
53-go-0136	x-192138	y-191035
54-go-0005	x-185551	y-182441
54-go-0006	x-188687	y-186400
55-go-0011	x-187815	y-186011
55-go-0017	x-188262	y-215415
73-go-0100	x-277762	y-215415
94-go-0132	x-241989	y-227622



Accident Storage Field Boundary overlay supplied by Spectra Energy.
Map prepared for display and public education only by Engage Mountain Maryland, 2015.

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