

An Introduction to the Special Issue on Energy and the Environment

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Pennsylvania has had a long and prominent history in the area of energy extraction. From the dawn of the American oil industry in Titusville during the mid-nineteenth century to the contemporary expansion of hydraulic fracturing throughout the Commonwealth, Pennsylvania has regularly been at the center of energy innovation in the United States. But as oil, coal, and gas have been important drivers of the state's economy for centuries, the extraction of fossil fuels has left a legacy of environmental damage throughout the Keystone State. From acidic mine drainage into Pennsylvania's streams to spills of chemicals from gas extraction efforts into the Commonwealth's rivers, environmental degradation has often accompanied the economic benefits associated with the abundance of energy sources that lie beneath the state.

The confluence of abundant energy resources and environmental damage from energy extraction has regularly been the focus of political entities in the state and has resulted in an array of policies that have sought to both promote and regulate energy production in the state. The recent expansion of hydraulic fracturing—or fracking, as it is commonly known—highlights these simultaneous policy efforts. Policies such as 2012's Act 13 have allowed for widespread use of fracking activities throughout the Commonwealth while simultaneously establishing regulatory frameworks for minimizing the

environmental and health risks associated with hydraulic fracturing. Act 13's design has received significant public attention and considerable media scrutiny but fairly limited scholarly coverage. Other areas of Pennsylvania energy policy, such as the state's unique renewable energy standards and its decision not to join with neighboring states in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), have also received modest attention from scholars.

This special issue of *COMMONWEALTH* begins to fill this relative paucity of state-focused research by providing readers with a greatly enhanced understanding of the complex issues that define energy and environmental policy in contemporary Pennsylvania. This dive into energy and environmental policy in the Keystone State begins with a number of engaging pieces on the most prominent issue of the era—hydraulic fracturing. First, Rachel L. Hampton and Barry G. Rabe, of the University of Michigan, provide an in-depth analysis of Pennsylvania's unique policy response to the arrival of fracking in the state over the past decade. In particular, Hampton and Rabe provide valuable insight into why Pennsylvania has opted to forgo the types of energy extraction taxes that other states have made key components of their fiscal policy structures.

Philip J. Harold and Tony Kerzmann, of Robert Morris University, continue the examination of fracking in the Commonwealth with a thorough overview of public attitudes and preferences regarding this major addition to life in Pennsylvania. They find that state residents have responded to the expansion of fracking with increased awareness and highly divided levels of support for this means of natural gas extraction. Building on this examination of public opinion toward fracking, Erick Lachapelle, of the University of Montreal, contributes an engaging piece that compares perceptions of fracking among residents of Pennsylvania and New York. Lachapelle's study finds alignment between the policy preferences of Pennsylvanians and New Yorkers and their states' extremely varied policy approaches regarding hydraulic fracturing.

While the expansion of fracking in Pennsylvania has certainly been the most prominent aspect of energy policy in the state over the past decade, renewable energy development has also been a feature of policy development in Harrisburg. But contrary to the state efforts to manage the meteoric growth of fracking, policy makers have explored (albeit with modest success) avenues to enhance the growth of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. Sarah Banas Mills, of the University of Michigan, examines the recent drought of wind energy development in Pennsylvania during a period in which wind power has grown substantially across the United States. Mills's analysis suggests that local land-use regulations may be more responsible than

failures of state-level renewable energy policy for the lack of new wind power facilities in the Keystone State.

As Mills provides evidence that concentration of land-use powers at the local level in Pennsylvania is a key factor for the recent decline in expansion of wind power facilities in the state, market forces emerge as possibly a bigger driver behind the relatively slow growth of solar power in the Commonwealth. Somayeh Youssefi, of the University of Maryland, and Patrick L. Gurian, of Drexel University, provide a powerful case that Pennsylvania's efforts to incentivize the generation of solar energy have been limited by market factors that have made the state's tax credits insufficient to increase development. Youssefi and Gurian offer elegant policy modifications that could remedy the struggles to grow solar energy options in the state within the broader constraints of a regional energy market.

Finally, this special edition of *COMMONWEALTH* concludes with invaluable perspective on environmental governance in Pennsylvania during a period of tremendous partisan conflict. John Arway, director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, provides insight into the challenges of protecting the Keystone State's spectacular array of waterways and aquatic wildlife amid the partisan strife that has consumed the state capitol over the past decade. Arway's experiences in his challenging position and his call for more cooperation between "technocrats, bureaucrats, and politicians on both sides of the aisle" provide a well-suited conclusion to the broader themes explored in this issue.

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