

Dear Neighbors,

Damascus Citizens for Sustainability has heard hundreds of stories of the harms caused by natural gas exploration and production (NGE&P) exposures over the last five years. As an organization concerned with educating the public about the realities of unconventional gas drilling, advocating for the long-term perspective and getting help for people who are being harmed, we saw a need to collect the details of these stories in a rigorous, systematic form that would provide a basis for objective analysis. We are hopeful also that we can start to find help for impacted people.

We have designed a **Health and Community Impacts Survey** to collect those details and to trigger Public Health Assessments (PHAs) by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). No state or federal agency is keeping track of impacts in any comprehensive fashion - impacts to people, to communities, to water, air, or any other impacts! Only citizen groups are attempting to fill this void by assembling lists primarily from media reports, like "[The List of the Harmed](#)." With this Survey we wish to correct many things, among them, the situation of people being ignored and of having their experiences dismissed as "anecdotal" because they have not been officially reported.

### **Get a federal agency working for you**

ATSDR is a federal public health agency, a division of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) in the Department of Health & Human Services that focuses on the human health impacts of exposure to hazardous substances. Its work falls into four categories: protecting the public from hazardous exposures; building the toxic substances knowledge base; educating healthcare providers and the public about toxic chemicals; and maintaining health registries. It can also assist impacted people.

PHAs are one of the instruments ATSDR uses to attain these goals; there is also the Health Consultation (HC). According to the agency, "public health assessment[s can] . . . determine whether a community is exposed to environmental contaminants . . . that could harm human health. If the evaluation concludes that people are exposed to environmental contaminants released from the site, ATSDR then evaluates whether the exposure is harmful or potentially harmful, and whether it should be stopped or reduced." [Health Consultations](#) can "contribute to . . . site cleanup, giving residents acceptable drinking water, relocating exposed people" and other helpful actions.

As a result of PHAs and Health Consultations in the past, people have been helped, laws have been changed, regulations strengthened and public policy affected. Now, through the survey, you will be petitioning the ATSDR to initiate a PHA and a Community Assistance Panel (CAP) in your area. The CAP is a way for the community to participate directly in ATSDR's evaluation and make sure community concerns are addressed in any ATSDR report.\*

### **Trigger a Public Health Assessment in your community**

For you to initiate a PHA in your community, ATSDR needs a written Petition Letter detailing the specific requests you're making of the agency, and environmental and human health data from the geographic area you're concerned about. A Health Consultation may also result from your Petition.

Our NGE&P Health and Community Impacts Survey fulfills both requirements by including the Petition Letter and asking questions that will reveal the impacts natural gas drilling has had on your health, environment and community.

Please complete the survey if:

- You, your household or members of your community are living with the sites, activities and impacts of natural gas drilling, hydraulic fracturing, materials handling, gas processing, gas transport, pipelines, waste handling and disposal (gas, liquid, cuttings), workers, trucking, seismic testing, gas storage, or other activities;
- You are a concerned citizen, public official, health professional, community leader, industry worker or other, with information about NGE&P impacts on your area or elsewhere.

### **Help create a knowledge base and influence public policy**

When you submit your survey, you are not only documenting what has happened to you and your community, providing the basis for a database, created and maintained by DCS, that will be of immense value to the scientific and health community; but you are also petitioning ATSDR for a Public Health Assessment and forcing the creation of an official federal registry of specific impact events. Such a mechanism can change public policy, since it will expand policymakers' currently limited knowledge about the cumulative impacts and health effects of NGE&P sites and activities.

Please complete and submit the Health and Community Impacts Survey and encourage other households in your area to participate. See our contact information and all links to the Survey and associated documents on the [Survey Homepage](#).

We thank you for participating in this very important undertaking!

Sincerely and with hope to make a better future,  
B. Arrindell  
Director  
Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS)

(Important Note: If you or a member of your household is involved in a legal action related to NGE&P or has signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), do not complete or submit this survey without consulting your attorney.)

\* [“ABOUT ATSDR” PAGE](#)

DCS is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, grassroots, conservation and advocacy organization which, for over four years, has been an NGE&P public educator, conducted scientific and legal research, and initiated public interest legal action. DCS has had influence in both the U.S. and abroad. Our concern is the preservation of our communities and our future.

[DCS will not share your personal information](#) or survey responses with anyone unless we have your express permission to do so. You can read all about ATSDR's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy at their website.

Referenced links:

Survey Website Homepage [www.DamascusCitizensATSDR.org](http://www.DamascusCitizensATSDR.org)

“About ATSDR” Page [www.damascuscitizensatsdr.org/about-atsdr/](http://www.damascuscitizensatsdr.org/about-atsdr/)

“The List of the Harmed” [pennsylvaniaallianceforcleanwaterandair.wordpress.com/the-list/](http://pennsylvaniaallianceforcleanwaterandair.wordpress.com/the-list/)

Health Consultation [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/com/consult.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/com/consult.html)

Confidentiality Agreement [http://www.damascuscitizensatsdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/survey\\_Confidentiality.pdf](http://www.damascuscitizensatsdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/survey_Confidentiality.pdf)