



**EARTHWORKS**



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**750,000 ASTHMA ATTACKS NATIONWIDE ATTRIBUTABLE TO OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY, ACCORDING TO NEW ANALYSIS, MAPPING TOOL**

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**CLEAN AIR TASK FORCE, EARTHWORKS DOCUMENT  
PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS FROM OIL AND GAS;  
CALL FOR NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS  
TO CONTROL EMISSIONS**

WASHINGTON, DC, August 31, 2016 – Clean Air Task Force and Earthworks today released a new analysis and interactive map showing 750,000 asthma attacks across the country each year due to ozone smog resulting from oil and gas operations. The CATF [report](#), entitled “[Gasping for Breath](#),” describes how oil and gas production emits air pollution that contributes to ozone smog formation, especially during the warm summer months, creating a serious threat for children who suffer from asthma. With the particularly warm summer this year, many municipalities in the U.S. have already experienced numerous days of unhealthy air due to ozone smog pollution.

“This is a terribly large number of asthma attacks in children due to pollution from the oil and gas industry,” said Conrad Schneider, CATF Advocacy Director. “We call on EPA at once to issue strong guidelines for existing oil and gas equipment in areas with high levels of ozone smog and set the stage for comprehensive nationwide standards to protect the public from air pollution from oil and gas facilities.”

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In addition to asthma attacks in children, more than 500,000 days of school missed, nearly 2,000 asthma-related emergency room visits, over 600 respiratory-related hospital admissions, and over 1.5 million restricted activity days are attributable to ozone smog during the warm summer months resulting from oil and gas pollution.

The Oil and Gas Threat [Map](#), developed by Earthworks and FracTracker Alliance, displays information about the threats faced by people living across the nation from pollution from the oil and gas industry. In addition to data on asthma attacks and other health impacts associated with ozone pollution caused by oil and gas, the threat map displays data about the populations living within a half-mile “threat zone” radius from oil and gas development, where residents have a cause for concern about potential health impacts, and the counties with cancer and respiratory health risk above EPA’s level of concern. In addition to the data that the Oil and Gas Threat Map presents, users can enter their own address to see local data on asthma impacts and if they live in the threat zone or a county with elevated risks from oil and gas.

OilAndGasThreatMap.com maps the locations of the 1.2 million oil and gas facilities operating around the country, as well as the populations, schools, and hospitals within a half-mile radius of those facilities. Those who live further away from oil and gas development sites may also feel the effects of this pollution: air pollution knows no borders. While those who live near oil and gas facilities may face the largest impacts, communities across the country are likewise burdened with the negative health and climate impacts associated with oil and gas development. Some of the air pollutants that oil and gas sites release last for a relatively long time in the atmosphere before they react to form ozone smog. This means they can travel for hundreds or thousands of miles before reacting, and the ozone smog that is formed from this pollution will extend over large distances.

To illustrate this point, “Gasping for Breath” found that while Dallas (in the gas patch) ranks #1 for health impacts, New York and Washington, DC ranked second and third, with tens of thousands of attributable childhood asthma attacks every year, even though both cities are some distance from heavy oil and gas activity.

“This analysis shows that oil and gas air pollution can threaten your health across the United States, even if you live nowhere near oil and gas facilities,” said Earthworks’ Alan Septoff. He continued, “It’s one more reason the Environmental Protection Agency should require the oil and gas industry to cut methane pollution from its existing operations, including methane, VOCs, and air toxics like benzene and formaldehyde.”

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The Obama administration recently finalized national standards for new sources of methane and ozone smog-forming volatile organic compounds pollution from the oil and gas industry. “Today’s report is being published as we await EPA’s release of important guidelines that will specify pollution control technologies on the oil and gas industry that states must consider in formulating their plans to achieve national ozone standards,” said Schneider. “The environmental and public health communities have stated that they are ready to work with EPA toward proposing and finalizing strong national standards for existing sources of methane as well.”

For a link to CATF’s report “Gasping for Breath,” please click on: [http://catf.us/resources/publications/files/Gasping\\_for\\_Breath.pdf](http://catf.us/resources/publications/files/Gasping_for_Breath.pdf). To access the Earthworks map, visit [www.oilandgasthreatmap.com](http://www.oilandgasthreatmap.com).

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*Clean Air Task Force is a nonprofit environmental organization with offices across the U.S. and in China. CATF works to help safeguard against the worst impacts of climate change by catalyzing the rapid global development and deployment of low carbon energy and other climate-protecting technologies through research and analysis, public advocacy leadership, and partnership with the private sector. For more information, please visit [www.catf.us](http://www.catf.us).*

*Earthworks is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting communities and the environment from the adverse impacts of mineral and energy development while promoting sustainable solutions. Earthworks exposes the negative health, environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts of mining and energy extraction through work informed by sound science. For more information, visit [earthworksaction.org](http://earthworksaction.org)*