

Plastics & Petrochemicals: Massive Global Threat



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Plastic is everywhere!
What are we supposed to do?

We're ingesting a credit card a week?

An analysis by Dalberg Advisors Consulting firm in conjunction with the University of Newcastle Australia, commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund, found that the average person ingests about 5 grams of plastics every week. That's the equivalent of a credit card worth of microplastics!



Photo credit: Scientias

This same study shows that 100 million metric tons of plastic waste ends up as pollution of nature every year. Over 75% of all plastic ever produced is waste! This increases our chances of consumption.

Scientists and health experts are just beginning to understand what this level of ingestion is doing to our bodies!

Where does all this plastic go, anyway?

“By one measure,” according to reporting in *The New York Times*, “the total amount [of plastic] ever produced is now greater than the weight of all land and marine animals combined. Only 9 percent has ever been recycled, the United Nations Environment Program estimates.”

“Scientists say plastics cause harm throughout their life cycle, releasing toxic as well as planet-warming greenhouse gases during production, landfill and incineration. Plastics, which are manufactured from fossil fuels, caused 4.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2015, one recent study estimated, more than all of the world's airplanes combined.”

It has been estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastics by volume in our oceans than marine life!



What the FRACK!



Photo credit: Scientias

The reason our policymakers have been promoting an Appalachian Storage Hub (a vast network of underground storage caverns, pipelines, compressor stations, cracker plants, and plastics processing facilities) in the Ohio River Valley is because of the glut of natural gas byproducts from fracking in the Marcellus and Utica shale deposits.

The Eighth Edition of the Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking and Associated Gas and Oil Infrastructure, released in April 2022, is an amazing resource! It is a "fully referenced compilation of evidence outlining the risks and harms of fracking." It is a public, open-access document that is housed on the website of Concerned Health Professionals of New York (www.concernedhealthny.org) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (www.psr.org).

What about the jobs, tax \$, and investment?

Some facts on the economics of the oil & gas industry (aka the plastics and petrochemicals industry) from the Ohio River Valley Institute:

- While the labor share – the amount of GDP (gross domestic product) paid out to employees in wages, salaries, and benefits – of all industries in the Ohio River Valley region (Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia) is above 50%, for the oil and gas industry it is between 7% and 19%.
- While total oil and gas GDP grew by \$18.5 billion for the three Ohio River Valley states from 2010 to 2017, total compensation (wages and benefits) only grew by \$1 billion.
- There are several reasons why the significant growth in oil and gas GDP has not corresponded with major benefits for local residents, including the use of out-of-state workers, royalty ownership patterns, the high level of out-of-state ownership amongst oil and gas operators, spending on goods (e.g. machinery and equipment) and services from outside the region, low taxes, and the small employment multiplier from oil and gas development.

This industry doesn't pay!

While it will be difficult and take time to engineer alternatives to many plastics, 40% of the plastics market is comprised of what are called single-use, disposable plastics. That entire 40% of the market for plastics could be eliminated tomorrow!

Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle are all very important, and many of us work hard to do this in our everyday lives. But these are not long-term solutions. We have got to get to the source of the problem—the industry producing virgin plastics!

The Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, authored by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), "...is the most comprehensive bill ever introduced in Congress to address the plastic pollution crisis. It would reduce single-use plastics, improve recycling rates and information and hold producers responsible for their waste, and protect frontline and fenceline communities..."

-Center for Biological Diversity

**Help MOVCA tell the industry
*NO MORE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS!***



Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to educating, mobilizing, and coalition-building to address the global climate crisis in the Mid-Ohio River Valley and beyond.

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