OKLAHOMA: As reported in The Atlantic, the US Geologic Survey (USGS) has warned Oklahoma to prepare for an "increased hazard" of significant earthquakes. Cautious to acknowledge the limitations of its data, USGS carefully points to wastewater disposal from fracking as "a contributing factor" behind an unprecedented rise in earthquake activity. Similar disturbances were cited in Arkansas, Colorado, Ohio and Texas. Subsequently, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported its own finding that current regulations are inadequate to protect drinking water from earthquakes, such as might follow wastewater injection. Responsibility for such regulation varies from state to state. In Ohio, the Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR) oversees injection wells; but the (US) EPA has oversight in Pennsylvania. One result of this variability is that much of Pennsylvania’s fracking waste is trucked to Ohio, where injection permits are approved more quickly. ODNR actively advocates injection, seeing it as better than dumping. Ohio has also found that fracking itself, not only wastewater for the terminal’s early years as a hub for US Airways. Mr. Fitzgerald—but not the air travel industry—even argues that gas royalties will restore Pittsburgh’s service levels by subsidizing landing fees.

What’s never mentioned, of course, is that the reason for today’s silent gates and mothballed concourses is an earlier generation of elected officials who sold the public on earlier corporate promises.

We haven’t learned; we’re just doubling-down on the same old bet.

Marcellus Protest is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): www.thomasmertoncenter.org

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disposal, can be linked to earthquakes. As a result, ODNR has begun to monitor seismic in the vicinity of new gas wells.

But, like the Allegheny County Health Department (as it “gets ready for climate change”), many state and federal experts seem resigned to trotting along behind, quantifying the damage as it occurs, rather than sprinting ahead to intercept it. The closing section of USGS’s report exemplifies the passivity in which legislators have trained most would-be protectors of public health and safety:

“You don’t want [wastewater] in a river. It’s 7000 feet below ground level. It’s gone.”
— Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, addressing deep injection of fracking waste injection-related earthquakes.

Hope ...?! Efforts to understand...?! Why aren’t we requiring such understanding first — before the harm is done?

A Range of Resources

Please check out our ‘Resources’ page at www.marcellusprotest.org/resources, and follow us on Facebook (MarcellusProtest) and Twitter (@Marcellus_SWPA). Here is a sampling of our recent recommendations:

Vox Populi (‘A Public Sphere for the Discussion of Contemporary Politics’) is an online publication of thoughtful perspectives on many current issues, of which one section focuses on the impacts of fracking. Published by Michael Simms of Pittsburgh.

“Protect Our Parks, Pass It On!” documents a performance staged by Jennifer Myers at the University of Iowa. She describes it as “a project to share testimonies from the Protect Our Parks campaign based in Pittsburgh, PA through the simple act of having them read and performed by people living in other places.”

How You Can Help...

As you know, Marcellus Protest is an all-volunteer, grassroots group with no paid staff. All that we do, we do on our own time. But we do have out-of-pocket costs, and we’ll be launching some more ambitious efforts soon. We welcome your tax-deductible financial support, at www.marcellusprotest.org/donate.

Upcoming Events in September:

September 21 (Manhattan, New York City) all day: Peoples Climate March, leading up to the United Nations summit on the climate crisis. The Thomas Merton Center and Sierra Club are arranging bus transportation from Pittsburgh. Marchers will step off from Columbus Circle at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday. Check peoplesclimate.org/march for latest updates.

(Updated details and a more extensive list of events at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.)

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