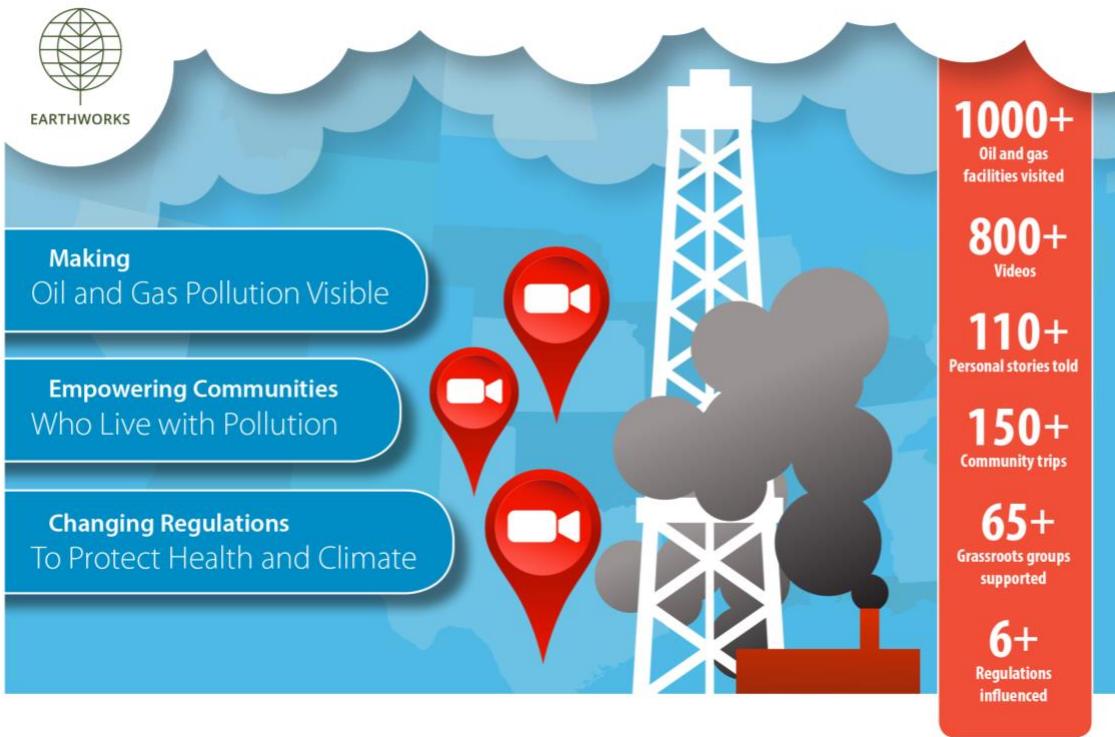


# Community Empowerment Project Impact



In 2014, Earthworks started the Community Empowerment Project (CEP) because **people and the climate are at risk.**

Methane is 86 times more damaging to our climate than carbon dioxide over a 20-year time frame--longer than the time that scientists say we have to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change.

Oil and gas operations also release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that cause a range of health problems, including carcinogens like benzene and toluene. This directly threatens the nearly 13 million US residents who live within a half mile radius of more than one million active oil and gas facilities.

## The goals of CEP are to:

- Make visible otherwise invisible pollution from oil and gas facilities so that frontline residents and community organizations have evidence of the problems they face.
- Shine a spotlight on the need for regulators, legislators, and companies to reduce that pollution.
- Help advance state and federal policies to protect health and the climate.

- Promote a managed decline away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy.

**The Technology:** Earthworks' trained and certified thermographers document pollution with Optical Gas Imaging (OGI) technology, the same approach used by industry and regulators.

Earthworks' OGI camera, a FLIR GF320, is designed to provide video evidence of air pollution from oil and gas operations. The GF320 can make visible 20 VOCs and methane.

**Our evidence:** To date, we have documented air pollution from **more than 1,000** different oil and gas facilities in **18** states, as well as Canada, Mexico, Argentina, and the United Kingdom, with the most work done in CA, CO, NM, OH, PA, and TX.

**How we use our evidence:** Earthworks uses OGI evidence to file formal complaints with regulators, influence state and federal policy debates, and verify industry pledges to reduce pollution. We make repeat visits to the most problematic facilities and to date have filed **nearly 300** formal complaints with state regulators.

These complaints have led to investigations of numerous facilities, in turn resulting in fixed leaks, violation notices, and facilities being required to upgrade their permits and install pollution control equipment.

Earthworks' videos and other documentation demonstrate how polluting the oil and gas industry is and the need for strong action. Such information is important as states like CA and CO work to implement methane safeguards, and others like PA and NM consider adopting them. It also supports efforts to retain federal rules to reduce oil and gas methane pollution.

**Seeing is believing**--and believing is necessary to achieve protections for the public and the climate.

For too long, the oil and gas industry and its proponents have misled the public by denying and downplaying the pollution it causes and calling natural gas a "clean" energy source. For too long, the industry has claimed it can sufficiently contain pollution, but in reality it hasn't.

Through CEP, we're developing and publicizing credible evidence of these trends--and helping counter them through safeguards for people and the planet.

#### **Testimonials from Frontline Communities:**

*I couldn't deny what my eyes were seeing. Everything about my life changed. That's why I volunteer and talk with all my neighbors about the dangers of living here.*

- A community clean air advocate in Kern County, California, describing his first visit with Earthworks and the OGI camera.

*I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart! You guys came in and took great footage and I learned so much. Pete and Nadia, I have the info on the well that had the rag tied around the pipe. I'm really looking forward to hopefully working with you guys again. What you all do is so special and I'm thankful to know you guys.*

- Kyle Roth, Erie CO

*I had a real eye-opening experience with Sharon, Texas Sharon, who was on this film. She works with a FLIR camera and she goes around all over*

*the West and we actually saw the leaks coming from gas wells and the huge amounts of emissions coming from the refineries. And I'm told that the gas companies have access to FLIR cameras so I can't figure out why, if a well is leaking, why isn't it fixed?*

- Shirley "Sug" McNall, a Navajo tribal member discussing UNEARTHED: The Real Story of Oil and Gas in New Mexico.

**For more information:** You can learn more about the Community Empowerment Project, see hundreds of OGI videos, and request a visit to your community at [cep.earthworks.org](http://cep.earthworks.org).

For information on the health and air quality impacts of the oil and gas industry and to see facilities near your home, visit [oilandgasthreatmap.com](http://oilandgasthreatmap.com).



Above: Two of Earthworks' certified thermographers, Pete Dronkers and Sharon Wilson.



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