Seeing is believing—
and even what you can’t see can hurt you

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.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are linked to a range of health problems, including headaches, nausea, nosebleeds, dizziness, and even cancer. These directly threaten the nearly 13 million US residents who live within a half-mile radius of more than one million active oil and gas facilities.

Community Empowerment Project (CEP) works to:

- Document and publicize pollution from oil and gas facilities.
- Prompt regulatory investigations of the need for operators to fix leaks and control their pollution.
- Support and raise the voices of frontline residents in pressuring industry and government to eliminate pollution.
- Advance state and federal policies to protect health and the climate.
- Expose shortcomings in the ability and political will of states to prevent the oil and gas industry from harming the climate and health, and to hold operators accountable.
- Support a just and equitable managed decline away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy.

Pollution from the oil and gas industry is putting people and the climate at risk – and governments are failing in their responsibility to prevent that from happening. Air pollution from oil and gas operations is invisible, making it easy for companies and regulators to dismiss public concerns. Earthworks started the Community Empowerment Project (CEP) in 2014 to expose and address these problems.

cep.earthworks.org
Learn more, see other communities’ Optical Gas Imaging videos, and request a visit to your community
How Optical Gas Imaging Works

Earthworks’ trained and certified thermographers record pollution with Optical Gas Imaging (OGI) technology, the same approach used by industry and regulators.

Earthworks uses a GF 320 OGI camera manufactured by FLIR and developed by engineers and the oil and gas industry to visualize otherwise invisible gases. The camera is calibrated to a narrow range where hydrocarbon gases absorb infrared energy. This makes the gases opaque so the camera can record them for us to see.

Documenting Pollution Across the U.S. and Internationally

To date, CEP has recorded air pollution in 18 states, as well as Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and the United Kingdom. Most of our work has been in California, Colorado, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Seeing Is Believing

The oil and gas industry and its proponents have long misled the public by denying and downplaying the pollution operations cause. Industry claims it can sufficiently reduce pollution – but widespread evidence shows that it hasn’t, and doesn’t seem capable of doing so.

CEP’S
activities to June 2020

- 1400+ Oil and gas facilities visited
- 1200+ Videos
- 120+ Personal stories told
- 200+ Community trips
- 70+ Grassroots groups supported
- 10+ Regulations influenced

Nearly 13 million U.S. residents live within a half-mile radius of one or more of the 1.3 million active oil and gas facilities nationwide.

I had a real eye-opening experience.
...we actually saw the leaks coming from gas wells and a huge amount of emissions coming from the refineries...if a well is leaking, why isn't it fixed?"

— Sug McNall, Aztec, NM

CEP
• Makes oil and gas pollution visible
• Empowers communities living with pollution
• Pushes public officials to protect health and the climate

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Learn more, see other communities’ Optical Gas Imaging videos, and request a visit to your community. For mapping of air quality, health and facilities near you, visit oilandgasthreatmap.com