



## **MEDIA RESPONSE**

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### **Breathe Project Members Respond to County Leaders on Petrochemical Expansion in the Ohio River Valley**

The Breathe Project stands with Mayor Bill Peduto's commitment to Pittsburgh and the Ohio River Valley in denouncing the expansion of petrochemical plants, pipelines, processing facilities and ancillary industries in our region. The views and actions of county leaders in the region will not protect people and the environment from the health risks posed by the creation of a massive petrochemical hub.

"Mayor Peduto's statement was fundamentally calling for a regional dialog on priorities for future economic investment— a dialog that has not been present," says Matt Mehalik of the Breathe Project. "Today's statement once again reinforces the notion that officials who have already signed on to a future of petrochemicals are not interested in having a public dialog on economic opportunities that do not harm worker and community health."

This dialogue must take place immediately.

Petrochemical industry expansion is contradictory to the principles of addressing climate change, improving air quality, protecting water and pursuing a sustainable and resilient community approach to regional development. Turning any region into a massive petrochemical hub is a huge step in the wrong direction on climate change. This is a critical moment in our global history when we should be investing in clean energy and sustainable jobs – not fracking and plastics.

"We would rather see such support go to jobs and projects that promote health, extend lives and support frontline communities," Mehalik adds. "We know that through innovation, we can create jobs, grow the economy, clean up our communities and protect our health. We support leaders who committed to doing this."

"A recent analysis by the Breathe Project using EPA Cobra software shows that the addition of three cracker plants in the Ohio Valley will increase healthcare costs to the tune of \$3.6 – \$8.1 billion over 30 years, and this only accounts for the added particulate matter to the atmosphere and none of the hazardous air pollutants," says Terrie Baumgardner of Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Project (BCMAC). If you add to that the social cost of carbon from the emissions of these three plants (\$8.5 billion), the cost to society climbs to \$12.1 – \$16.6 billion. This is a substantial drain on the region's economy."

"Concerned Ohio River Residents (CORR), a local environmental organization opposed to the petrochemical build-out in the Appalachian region, is backing Pittsburgh Mayor Peduto's stance on

these issues,” adds Bev Reed, CORR organizer. “Plastic proliferation is already causing a world-wide crisis to our ecosystems and we do not need another plastics plant in the Pittsburgh region, nor do we need the proposed PTT Global Chemical cracker plant in Belmont County, Ohio. The Ohio Valley deserves better than this. CORR will continue to advocate for a healthier Ohio River Valley.”

The construction of the Shell Petrochemical Plant will erase 30 years’ worth of regional air quality improvements. This plant would emit 522 tons per year of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that will put our health at risk. The plant would be the second highest hazardous air polluter in the state would be the largest source of VOCs in Southwestern Pennsylvania ([2015 Toxic Release Inventory](#)).