

DIMOCK AND THE EPA

THE FACTS

In 2011, in response to allegations of groundwater impacts in Dimock, Pa., the state Department of Environmental Protection investigated whether oil and gas activity was responsible. DEP determined in November 2011 that the operator, Cabot Oil & Gas, had fulfilled its obligations under a consent decree, and the U.S. EPA agreed in late 2011 that the well water posed no immediate health threats. After reversing course with no new data, the U.S. EPA investigated and confirmed its earlier assessment. Activists have accused the EPA of “abandoning” its investigation, despite the fact that the agency released four separate sets of data, all of which confirmed that no additional action is necessary.

FACT: In November 2011, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) declared that Cabot Oil & Gas had fulfilled all obligations required under a consent decree, and therefore no longer needed to deliver water to affected Dimock residents, beginning November 30. The DEP determined that the 18 wells included in the consent order had been cleaned up both with and without treatment.

FACT: In early December 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agreed with DEP’s findings, and sent an email to Dimock residents stating, “**The data does not indicate that the well water presents an immediate health threat to users.**”

FACT: In late December 2011, EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson received an [open letter](#) from [Gasland director](#) Josh Fox, urging the EPA to intervene in Dimock because, “State regulators have failed.” No new testing data were provided.

FACT: In January 2012, despite having no new data, the EPA stretched its regulatory authority under the [Superfund law](#) and began its own water sampling of 60 homes in the Dimock area, based on what the EPA then termed potential “health concerns.”

FACT: On March 15, 2012, the EPA released its [first round](#) of water testing from 11 homes in Dimock, which “**did not show levels of contamination that could present a health concern.**”

FACT: On April 6, 2012, the EPA released [more water sampling data](#) from Dimock, indicating that the water **does not pose a threat to resident’s health.** All contaminants found are also naturally occurring.

FACT: On April 20, 2012, EPA released yet another round of water [testing data](#) from Dimock. EPA concludes: “**This set of sampling did not show levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action.**”

FACT: The EPA released its final findings from Dimock on July 25, 2012, concluding:

- “Overall during the sampling in Dimock, EPA found hazardous substances, specifically arsenic, barium or manganese, **all of which are also naturally occurring substances**, in well water at five homes at levels that could present a health concern. In all cases the residents have now or will have their own treatment systems that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap. **EPA has provided the residents with all of their sampling results and has no further plans to conduct additional drinking water sampling in Dimock.**”