

Today, the Grant Township Supervisors issued a public statement, firing back at the federal court and PGE, writing, ***“We changed our system of government to save ourselves because no one else would or could.”*** Read their full statement below.

GRANT TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
100 East Run Road Marion Center, PA 15759

Letter from Grant Township to:

Federal Court, Pennsylvania General Energy, and Those Who Will Stand for What's Right

Last week, federal Magistrate Judge Susan Baxter sanctioned two attorneys representing Grant Township for \$52,000. Those attorneys – Thomas Linzey and Elizabeth Dunne – with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), have defended our community's right to stop a toxic frack wastewater injection well for over three years. That well would receive 30,000 barrels of frack wastewater per month for 10 years – a toxic brew containing radioactive materials and other contaminants such as toluene and benzene, to be dumped into our Township.

Judge Baxter's ruling is astonishing, but not surprising. Our Township has been sold out and ignored by every level of government to date. We've received no relief from state or federal legislators, the courts, and even our own PA Department of Environmental Protection has sued us as we've tried to protect our environment.

Although Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) – the company that wants to dump the waste – and its attorneys may wish that Grant Township is being led by its nose by CELDF, the truth is, Grant Township evolved, and evolved quickly. The Township is literally fighting for the life of its citizens in this case. PGE's proposed injection well threatens to subject every resident of Grant Township to a slow poisoning, and threatens thousands more who depend on Grant Township's watershed for clean water.

During this fight, not one judge hearing the arguments in this case has ever asked any one of us, “why is your township subjecting itself to all this?” It's assumed that we aren't bright enough to possibly understand what we're in this for, and why we have risked everything to protect our community.

We understand that more regulations won't help us. We understand that our legislators will continue to blame our problems on inadequate, underfunded, understaffed state agencies. We understand that an injection well for frack waste is a very bad idea, not only for the people who live here, but for the natural environment.

We understand that the real problem isn't the injection well, but the system of law that keeps trying to shut us down, and keeps telling us that we don't have the right to protect our community from a company with a history of permit violations from dumping toxic frack waste where we live.

We understand that the system of law that we live under doesn't recognize the right of the people who live here to stop those projects which will harm us. It doesn't recognize that we have a democratic right to say "no", which is why we've worked with CELDF to advance arguments that we have a constitutional right to govern our own community, and that companies like PGE shouldn't have more rights to decide what happens here than we do.

We changed our system of government to save ourselves because no one else would or could. The people of the Township voted to adopt a new municipal charter which, again, bans the injection well as a violation of our basic civil rights.

What else do we have to do – light ourselves on fire?

While Judge Baxter and PGE's lawyers, may wish that Grant Township's government is a pawn, they are wrong. Our local government exists to keep the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens the priority. There's no ladder-climbing, no plush benefits or pensions to offer up to anyone working for Grant Township. We are elected public servants who work with CELDF to make sure that we – those of us who live here – do what's right for the people of Grant Township. We continue to work with CELDF, and very proudly so. CELDF has been on the front lines fighting the oil and gas industry for many years, and continues to stand with us during our fight. It's Grant Township's hope that our attorneys will wear this slap as a badge of courage, just as any front line veteran would wear a scar.

This is bigger than just Grant Township, and we want others to join this fight by standing up to protect their communities. We're not going anywhere.

~ Grant Township Board of Supervisors

CONTACT:

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