

Dear Ranking Member Johnson,

My name is Steve Lipsky, and I, along with my wife Shyla and our three children, have been living a nightmare for the past 4 years, ever since our water well became contaminated with methane from nearby drilling operations. I have recently been made aware of a House Science, Space and Technology Committee hearing that is being held on February 5th, 2014 entitled "Examining the Science of EPA Overreach: A Case Study in Texas." One of the cases of "overreach" that may be discussed is the case of our water contamination from natural gas drilling by Range Resources and EPA's role in helping to protect our family.

When we first drilled our water well in 2005 there was no drilling in the area, and our water was clean and drinkable. Range Resources began drilling in the area in 2009 and in late 2009 we noticed that our water was bubbling. In July 2010, our well stopped pumping water and the well service company determined our water well was so full of methane the pump was "gas locking." The service company lit our water on fire. We were alarmed, and in August 2010, we called the Texas Railroad Commission but they never took any action.

EPA invoked its power to protect our drinking water in December 2010, prompting Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe to request an Inspector General's investigation into EPA's actions in 2011. Late last year, the EPA Inspector General released its report concluding the EPA was justified in intervening to protect our drinking water, despite assertions to the contrary from Range Resources. EPA withdrew its legal complaint against Range Resources in 2012 despite having a report from an independent scientist showing that a gas well drilled by Range likely polluted nearby water supplies.

Despite this independent evidence, and the evidence gathered by the EPA that proves that the methane in our water well has the same chemical makeup as the methane in the well drilled by Range Resources, our water continues to be polluted, flammable and too unsafe to drink. Testing by Range Resources found methane in our water at 2.3 mg/L while independent testing by Duke University found methane at 44 mg/L and over 50 mg/L. We currently purchase water that is delivered to our home.

We are not alone. Several of our neighbors have water that bubbled and became flammable shortly after Range's drilling operations. There are hundreds of stories of families like ours in drilling areas across the country who are counting on the EPA to help them when the state regulators ignore their pleas for assistance. When state regulators fail to address serious water quality issues, we need the EPA to investigate.

I hope that you will consider this information as the hearing progresses on Tuesday. I am happy to discuss this issue with any member of the Committee or Committee staff if that would be helpful to you.

Thank you,
Steve Lipsky
Weatherford, Texas