# FOSSIL FREE MEDIA

## Health and Fossil Fuels

From production to combustion, fossil fuels are a threat to public health.

## Context

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting people around the world, public health is at the forefront of many peoples' minds. But many people aren't familiar with the many different ways that our ongoing addiction to fossil fuels is a risk to our personal and public health. These talking points can help you convey some of the most important points about health and fossil fuels.

## Fossil Fuels Make Us Sick

- **The pollution that comes from burning coal, oil and gas is a serious risk to public health.**

- **From extraction to combustion, fossil fuels put our health at risk.**

- **We know these dirty fuels pollute our air and water. The toxic pollution we're adding to the atmosphere is not going away. The pollution is steadily building up to dangerous levels.**

- **Burning fossil fuels creates pollution that can lead to early death, heart attacks, respiratory diseases, strokes, asthma, and other negative health impacts.**

- **Burning fossil fuels also leads to climate change, which means more dangerously hot days, worse pollution, more natural disasters, the spread of dangerous diseases.**

- Our kids are the most at risk. The burning of fossil fuels, whether it's from a tailpipe or a power plant, leads to increased air pollution, which damages young lungs.

- Fossil fuel pollution also leads to premature births. A 2016 NYU study found that the additional health costs associated with premature births from fossil fuel emissions totaled nearly $5 billion.

- It's worst for communities who live near polluting facilities. Living near a coal plant increases the risks of respiratory disease and lung cancer, cardiovascular disease, poorer child health, and higher infant mortality.

- The oil and gas industry dumps 9 million tons of methane and toxic pollutants like benzene into our air each year.

- 90 million Americans live within 30 miles of at least one oil and gas refinery.

- If we stop pollution from fossil fuels, we stop climate change and improve our health.

- Scientists say that ending our use of fossil fuels would save millions of lives a year around the world.

- We need to move away from dirty fuels that make us sick.

## Fossil Fuels Cause Air Pollution, One of The Greatest Threats to Public Health

- The air pollution from burning fossil fuels is one of our greatest threats to public health.

- Air pollution kills more people than cigarettes.

- Have you noticed how many kids seem to carry inhalers these days? Everyday we continue to burn fossil fuels we're putting our children at risk.

- According to the American Lung Association, over 50% of Americans are breathing toxic air.

- An estimated 4.5 million people died in 2018 due to exposure to air pollution from fossil fuels.

- The impacts of fossil fuels on public health are only expected to get worse. By 2025, studies show that the expected increase in ozone levels resulting from oil and gas pollution could result in:
  - 750,000 summertime asthma attacks in children under the age of 18
  - 2,000 asthma-related emergency room visits
  - 500,000 days of school missed nationally because of high ozone levels
  - 1.5 million days when adults are forced to rest or reduce activity because of ozone

- A 2013 study by MIT found that air pollution from power generation causes and estimated 52,000 premature deaths a year.

## Fossil Fuels Make Coronavirus Worse

- A Harvard study concluded that if you live in a polluted area, you're more likely to die from COVID-19.

- The Harvard study concluded that people who live in more polluted areas are 8 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than people in less polluted areas.

- If you live near a refinery or a coal plant, you're more likely to have asthma. And if you have asthma, you're more likely to die from COVID-19. It's that simple.

- Areas with higher levels of air pollution will see more hospitalizations and deaths from the coronavirus.

- One of the reasons that African Americans in the United States are dying at higher rates because of COVID-19 is because they live in more polluted communities because of environmental racism.

## Fracking and Gas Are A Health Disaster

- Fracking is a disaster for public health.

- Fracking companies use hundreds of dangerous chemicals to get natural gas out of the ground. Those chemicals, a number of which are known to cause cancer, get into our air and water, poisoning children and families.

- Living near a fracking well can lead to low birth weights for babies. A study of over 1.1 million births in Pennsylvania concluded that living within 2 miles of fracking while pregnant resulted in negative health effects for women's babies.

- Fracking sites release a toxic stew of air pollution that includes chemicals that can cause severe headaches, asthma symptoms, childhood leukemia, cardiac problems, and birth defects.

- 1,000 chemicals used in a fracking area are harmful to human health -- including some that cause cancer.

- There's no disclosure of what chemicals frackers use, putting us even more at risk.

- Fracking has been linked to preterm births, high-risk pregnancies, asthma, migraine headaches, fatigue, nasal and sinus symptoms, and skin disorders.

- Some of the most concerning facts about fracking have to do with low birth weights and negative birth outcomes.

- Fracking wells are more likely to be placed near communities of color, exacerbating the health impacts for these groups.

- Oil and gas wells produce nearly a trillion gallons of toxic waste a year.

- The waste product from oil and gas wells, known as brine, is often highly radioactive. Samples of brine waste have been found to have over 100x the safe amount of radium levels. This puts communities and workers, especially brine waste truckers, at serious risk.

- More than 500,000 Americans live within 650 feet of natural gas wells, which are poorly regulated and can leak or explode.

## Gas Stoves Are A Health Risk In the Home

- Gas stoves are a public health risk.

- Gas stoves are exposing tens of millions of people to levels of air pollution in their homes that would be illegal outdoors.

- Levels of air pollutants in the home can be two to five -- and occasionally more than 100 times -- higher than outdoors.

## Trump's Pollution Rollbacks Cost Lives

- **Trump cares more about lining the pockets of big polluters than he does about public health.**

- **Trump's handouts to the fossil fuel industry are putting our health at risk.**

- **The Trump Administration has weakened pollution standards for cars and trucks, which by the administration's own estimates will lead to an increase in premature deaths from air pollution.**

- **Trump's own EPA estimated that the rollback of the Clean Power Plan would lead to 1,400 additional premature deaths a year.**

- **The Trump administration's environmental rollbacks could lead to at least 80,000 extra deaths per decade and cause respiratory problems for more than one million people.**

- **The Trump Administration weakened mercury pollution rules that save more than 10,000 lives and prevent as many as 130,000 asthma attacks a year.**

- **Mercury pollution damages children's brains before they are born, leading to lifetime health impacts and costs.**

- **The Trump Administration refused to tighten soot pollution standards that could have saved as many as 12,150 lives a year.**

- **Rolling back the Clean Power Plan which set pollution limits on power plants, an action the Trump EPA noted would result in up to 1400 additional premature deaths each year connected to air pollution**