

## Appalachian Storage Hub/Petrochemical Complex

### Summary of Main Concerns

The Appalachian Storage Hub complex (ASH), also known as the Appalachian Storage and Trading Hub, is a proposed mega-infrastructure project, which could encompass hundreds of miles of industrial facilities and pipelines along the Ohio River.

If built, this petrochemical complex would include five or more petrochemical “cracker” plants and regulating stations. There is already one large ethane cracker plant being built by Shell along a three mile stretch of the Ohio River, near Pittsburgh. There is another one well into a permitting process in Ohio, located across the Ohio River from Moundsville, WV. The industry has plans to construct one in the Parkersburg, WV area, as well as two methane processing plants in the Kanawha River Valley, near Charleston, WV.

Various natural gas liquids would be stored in unlined underground storage facilities near waterways in the Ohio River watershed, and transported via up to 15 possible pipelines. These would be liquefied natural gas product pipelines and the regulatory structure for such transport processes is more obscure, and less amenable to public input, than for “dry gas” or methane pipelines, despite the fact that LNG products are far more volatile than methane gas. So far as we can tell, there are no mandates for automatic shut off valves or other public safety devices.

The petrochemical complex would roughly follow the entire course of the Upper and Lower Ohio River Valleys. Currently, it is uncertain whether most of the infrastructure would be located on the Ohio side or the West Virginia side of the river. It would cost billions of dollars to construct. Tax payer dollars are already funding studies and brownfield redevelopment projects to support this buildout.

This petrochemical buildout would greatly expand unconventional oil and gas drilling (fracking) in WV, OH and PA – resulting in increased chances for spills and waste disposal issues, as well as climate change enhancing methane emissions. These processes will create more plastic feedstock, and plastic pollution.

Here are some specific concerns we have:

- As has occurred in the Gulf area: Leaks from underground storage caverns could lead to sinkholes, water contamination or explosions.
- This project would lead to increased petrochemical industrialization of Ohio River Valley. The experience of people in Cancer Alley of the Gulf Coast region informs us that the grave health risks outweigh the economic benefits.
- Risk of contamination of water intakes for the three to five million people who depend upon the Ohio River as their sole source of tap water.
- Many communities in the Ohio River Valley region are already economically challenged; many people in these communities can't afford to move or have poisoned water and increased health problems from air or water contamination.

For more information on the Appalachian Storage Hub and to read articles about it:

<https://ohvec.org/appalachian-storage-hub-petrochemical-complex/>