

Executive Summary:

Founded in 2006 by former US Vice President Al Gore, The Climate Reality Project's mission is to catalyze a global solution to the climate crisis by making urgent action a necessity across every level of society. Our dynamic communications initiatives connect climate and behavioral science with the emotional power of well-told stories, bringing climate change to individuals and communities everywhere and shaping discussions. Our signature activist program, the Climate Reality Leadership Corps, has trained and mobilized over 19,000 citizen leaders worldwide on climate science, communications, and organizing since its inception in 2006.

Recently, we've seen the petrochemical industry build facility after facility across the Ohio River Valley, polluting the air and water supplies with dangerous carcinogens and other chemicals. But even as this threat to public health and our planet grows, with every new plant and pipeline, public awareness of these dangers remains dangerously low. Unless this changes, more petrochemical infrastructure will be built throughout shale country and bring with it a cascading sequence of negative consequences.

In light of this threat, The Climate Reality Project opted to create a targeted regional campaign opposing the Ohio River Valley petrochemical buildout and chose to put me on as point. As soon as I was put on the campaign, I immediately began conducting copious amounts of background research in my process of constructing an impactful and just campaign plan built around community education and mobilization. At the same time, I began the process of hiring two dedicated, regional organizers based in the Pittsburgh area, which is the epicenter of the buildout.

As my team of dedicated regional organizers and I have faced the petrochemical buildout, I have provided leadership and guidance around our multifaceted approach, which hinges on the continuous recruitment and mobilization of our trained activists from our regional chapters. The regional chapters I've chosen for my team focus on are represented by 790 Climate Reality Leaders and 366 additional members in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky who work to raise local awareness on the issue through community meetings, media outreach, community education, coalition building, and presentations.

I have empowered my team to get creative with their approach for recruiting, engaging, and empowering the general public in areas without adequate chapter reach to take action against the petrochemical buildout. The primary focus, that I've built in to our on-the-ground organizing, is on educating and advocating for local community rights and protections in the areas where petrochemical industry operations have secured all of the necessary permits. Additionally, I've built out the campaign to call upon lessons learned from areas that historically have been taken advantage of by the petrochemical industry. While the Ohio River Valley is familiar with the impacts of other dirty fossil fuel industries', petrochemical plants are a whole different beast that brings new health and environmental risks.