



350Pittsburgh
Thomas Merton Center
5129 Penn Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
world.350.org/pittsburgh
350pittsburgh@gmail.com

May 14, 2019

Dear Educator,

Once upon a time, Snow White ate a poisoned apple. After a long sleep she woke up and everything was okay. How long can your students wait for everything to be okay? There is a classic genre of stories for children that are scary in order to warn them of a danger -- often a danger in disguise. We have a hidden danger in Pittsburgh today. The American Lung Association has [again this year](#) given Pittsburgh air quality a grade of F, and a [recent study](#) reported a 22% asthma rate in their sample of Allegheny County students. Are your Little Red Riding Hoods saying "Grandma, what dark skies you have"? This is not okay.

As [this Grist article](#) on the F grade says:

What gives? Let's say it together now: climate change! The 2015 to 2017 period was the warmest on record. Warmer air encourages the formation of more smog. And then there's the particle pollution brought on by more frequent droughts and wildfires. Poor air quality, even during short-term exposure, can have severe health implications, especially for the young and elderly. Studies have shown that breathing polluted air leads to stunted lung growth in children and exacerbates asthma.

One key step we can take on the road to a solution is to stop disguising the dangers. This is why we are so disturbed that the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust continues to brand its Children's Theater Festival with the EQT label. Like a candy house in the woods, the vibrant theater conceals the harmful effects of its sponsors. **EQT ranks 8th on [PennEnvironment's list of companies violating rules meant to protect the environment and public health](#).** We understand there is a significant tradition in place; EQT has been supporting the Children's Theater for a long time, since before Superstorm Sandy, before Katrina, and before hydraulic fracturing spread across Pennsylvania. But times are changing. They are changing fast, and it's time to catch up. Similar to the transition around tobacco, it is no longer appropriate to associate the petrochemical industry with kids' programs.

We are asking protectors of kids to make known to the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust that it is past time for them to relinquish their ties with EQT. Please consider either not attending the Children's Theater Festival this year and letting PCT know why, or attending and declining to take a program booklet, or taking a program and mailing the cover back to PCT with a letter, or simply giving them a call to express your concern. Our kids need clean air and clean water. We hope you can join us in supporting this effort so that all of our kids can live happily ever after.

Sincerely yours,

the undersigned Pittsburgh organizations

350Pittsburgh
 Allegheny County Clean Air Now
 Breathe Project
 Center for Coalfield Justice
 Earthworks
 EcoJustice Working Group, Thomas Merton Center
 Free the Planet
 Green Party of Allegheny County
 Group Against Smog and Pollution
 Izaak Walton League of America, Allegheny County
 PennEnvironment
 Protect PT(Penn-Trafford)
 Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter
 Sustainability Pioneers



350Pittsburgh



Allegheny County
Clean Air Now



Breathe Project



Center for
Coalfield Justice



Earthworks



EcoJustice Working
Group, Thomas Merton
Center



Free the Planet



Group Against Smog
and Pollution



Green Party
Of
Allegheny County



Izaak Walton League of America
Allegheny County Chapter

Izaak Walton League
Of America,
Allegheny County



PennEnvironment



ProtectPT
(Penn Trafford)



Sierra Club,
Pennsylvania Chapter



Sustainability
Pioneers

Linked References

<https://www.ehn.org/pittsburghs-air-quality-continues-to-decline-new-report-finds-2635280543.html>
<https://www.ehn.org/pittsburghs-asthma-epidemic-and-the-fight-to-stop-it-2575098934.html>
<https://grist.org/article/the-u-s-is-going-to-want-to-hide-its-air-quality-report-card-from-its-parents>
<https://pennenvironment.org/reports/pae/fracking-failures>