Response to USEPA Region 3 Press Release of May 11, 2012:

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I have reviewed the test results for 59 homeowners' water wells in and around Dimock, Pennsylvania which were released by USEPs Region 3 officials, available at: http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/states/pa.html. These are my observations:

One-third of the wells (20/59) are contaminated with methane at levels of concern to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), with methane concentrations up to 69 parts per million: well within concentration ranges which can be ignited and/or detonated. These levels are of special concern where any hot water is used, since heating methane-contaminated water drives most of the methane into the air, which when inhaled can induce symptoms of oxygen deprivation in people or animals with cardiac, respiratory or central nervous system impairments. According to the ATSDR, these symptoms may include "nausea, headache, dizziness, confusion, fatigue, and weakness" (*ATSDR Record of Activity/Technical Assist UJD #: IBD7 Date: 12/28/2011*).

In half of the water wells (32/59), oil and grease were detected but not quantified, and 2-methoxyethanol was similarly found in over a third of the wells (22/59). Sodium (Na) above the EPA's Drinking Water Advisory Level was found in a quarter (15/59) of the wells. Further, arsenic (As) above the EPA's cancer prevention limit were found in ten wells, barium (Ba) levels above the ATSDR's comparison values were found in 3 wells, high lithium (Li) levels were found in 2 wells, and manganese (Mn) above the EPA's MCL was found in one water well.

Overall, these observations suggest that many of these homeowners' water wells are significantly contaminated with a variety of pollutants in concentrations which are of concern to public health professionals. In fact, EPA officials requested the ATSDR to study the drinking water situation in Dimock, PA, but now make no reference to that health risk report (*ATSDR Record of Activity/Technical Assist UJD #: IBD7 Date: 12/28/2011*). Neither do they make any recommendations in concert with its conclusions. In spite of this glaring discrepancy, officials state: "Throughout EPA's work in Dimock, the Agency has used the best available scientific data to provide clarity to Dimock residents and address their concerns about the safety of their drinking water."

This scientist disagrees.