

To whom it may concern,

My name is Fitzhugh Shaw and I'm a 15 year resident of North Braddock. In 2009, I moved to the Monongahela Valley from Manhattan. I had a 2 year old daughter with me, and I married her mother in the backyard of our old mill home that we bought for \$1. The Mon Valley has given me opportunities for a life that I wouldn't have been able to live anywhere else. It has raised me, and I want to return the favor.

This is why I'm writing to urge you to pass House Bill 109.

Last year, I lost a neighbor to chronic asthma. He was only 62. He had lived in North Braddock for over 30 years, and developed the conditions that killed him during the time that he lived here. Tragically, stories like my friend's are all too common in our boroughs. Incidences of cancer, heart disease, asthma, COPD, and diabetes are all far higher than both state *and* national averages, correlated with often illegal levels of airborne PM 2.5, benzene, lead, and hydrogen sulfide. Compounding these health and environmental injustices are deep food and transportation insecurities—the former over 90% and the latter over 60%. We no longer have public schools in our neighborhoods; we no longer have grocery stores in our neighborhoods. North Braddock experiences blight levels of around 40%. Do these sound like places where you might imagine a thriving future for yourself and your children? Truly our governments and US Steel have allowed this region to be a sacrifice zone to profit.

For 10 years now, I've been involved with urban agriculture in the city of Pittsburgh, starting small farms throughout the city to bring health, happiness, and good food to those communities who might not otherwise have access to farm fresh produce. For 3 of these years, my farm work has taken place in my own community, where I've been so fortunate to make build deeper relationships with my neighbors—sharing food, and breaking bread. And all of this work, that I love so much, that brings joy to so many, in the shadow of one of the regions worst legacy polluters. My work is about telling stories, and planting seeds, but yours is too, and at a much bigger scale. What seeds do you want to plant? What stories do you want to tell?

The story of the Mon Valley is one of resiliency, of hard work, hard labor, and survival. But it has the chance to be a story about new beginnings and a new way forward for

the people of Southwest Pennsylvania. The harmful effects of the Edgar Thompson Steel Works no longer need to define this community or its future. It's time for the legislators of this state to choose to protect its people. Please prioritize our lives, our liberty, and our happiness. We do not deserve to suffer from the burdens placed upon us by US Steel. This is an opportunity for you to protect your constituents—to contribute to a new, vibrant, story for the people of our region—to build a more beautiful legacy for Pennsylvania.

Again, I urge you to support House Bill 109. The people of the Mon Valley are watching, knowing that you will do the right thing.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Fitzhugh Shaw  
707 Hickory St.  
Braddock, PA 15104