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My husband Todd and I both suffer from asthma. When we met, we knew we were a match because each was the only other person we had ever encountered who had been strapped to an ironing board and turned upside down as a child (to aid breathing). Fortunately, we have health insurance and can afford drugs when we need them.

We lived in Harlan County, KY for eight years, and because of all the coal particulates, I would wind up in the emergency room at least once a year while we lived there. And Todd stopped breathing once while shoveling coal into the furnace that heated our house. I have not had one breathing-related ER visit since we left 16 years ago, as we do not now live in a coal-intensive area. However, we're certainly aware of how the air quality affects people in the coalfields—especially children, among whom asthma and respiratory problems are epidemic.

In addition to coal, natural gas is also a concern. The emissions from the natural gas wells are unregulated under the current regulatory scheme and the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are making people sick here, just as they do in other fracking areas. Coal extraction and dust blanket many communities in black soot that is omnipresent.

Gas drilling air emissions **MUST** be regulated! The health impacts are stunning—everything from nosebleeds to neuropathy. Also, there is no such thing as clean coal—the extraction is always filthy and takes a terrible toll on the communities where it is done. Everything we can do to get away from fossil fuel use would help immensely. Also, I want the Environmental Protection Agency to know that our states cannot be trusted to regulate these industries! Local politics puts tremendous pressure on the state regulators to give a wink and a nod. The federal government is our only hope for protection!