



RESOLVE

Community Engagement and Social License to Operate in Unconventional Oil & Gas Development

Much has been written about community engagement and social license to operate in oil and gas development. Most of these documents prescribe best practices that the oil and gas industry should adopt in their community engagement activities. The American Petroleum Institute (API), for example, published Community Engagement Guidelines in 2014 and promotes their use to API members.

In addition, thoughtful publications have been written to help citizens and local government address concerns over environmental and public health impacts associated with various stages of oil and gas development. RESOLVE's Community Health and Shale Development Guidebook, for example, is a resource for public health practitioners, community members and industry representatives as they engage in conversations to address the impacts and manage the benefits of development.

There is no known research, however on what community engagement practices are actually being used by the oil and gas industry and local government, how the practices are perceived, what outcomes have resulted, and whether they are transferrable to other places. To fill this gap, Todd Bryan, Strategic Partner with RESOLVE, has partnered with the Center for Energy and Climate Economics at Resources for the Future (RFF) to study community engagement and Social License to Operate in Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The two-year project is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the George and Cynthia Mitchell Foundation.

The research team will identify and develop case studies that rely on in-depth interviews with company representatives and industry groups, local and state officials, citizens, and civic organizations. The study will integrate research on the Social License to Operate in the extractive industries, community engagement practices and protocols widely used in the planning profession, and tools for overcoming conflict over controversial environmental and land use issues. The research team will also identify the contextual dimensions of the regions to determine whether community engagement practices are context-dependent.

The purpose of the research is to help industry and communities engage more effectively to address community concerns and interests associated with oil and gas development. The research team is agnostic on the question of *whether* oil and gas development should occur in the states and regions that are the focus of the study. In all cases, oil and gas development is a permitted activity by state regulatory agencies and local governments that exercise land use authority.

Contact:

Todd Bryan, Ph.D.
Strategic Partner

RESOLVE

303-440-8190

tbryan@resolv-advisor.org