

GSPIA's Energy and Environment Blog Format and Style Guide

Purpose

The GSPIA Energy and Environment blog provides commentary and analysis that furthers understanding of E&E issues of public interest. The blog gives authors space to make an argument, explore data, or explain a current event in more depth than a news article but with less rigor and detail than an academic article.

Organization

Each post should have a point. All content should contribute to developing the point. The brevity of posts does not allow for digressions.

Avoid standard introductory and concluding paragraphs; do not “tell them what you’re going to tell them, and then tell them what you’ve told them.” Instead, use the first one or two paragraphs to motivate the topic and provide context. Use the last paragraph or sentence to put a fine point on your argument, state the key takeaway, or pose a question.

Audience & Writing Style

Write for a broad audience, for professors and pipe fitters. Treat your reader as smart, engaged, and busy— someone who will get your point if explained well but who will get up and leave if you waste her attention with confusing and wordy statements. If the topic is especially complex, simplify it as best as possible and direct enthusiastic readers to background material.

Avoid introductory phrases such as “in this post I will explain...”. Adopt a tone closer to a newspaper article than an academic journal. For examples, see our recent posts or posts at the [Energy Blog at Hass](#) or the [LSE's American Politics and Policy](#) blog.

Avoid jargon, other technical language, and acronyms that make readers feel like they do not hold a membership to your club.

Content

Content should be concrete. Combined with the brevity of a post, this means that topics should be narrow. Write about The Causes and Consequences of Rising Crop Yields in Botswana, not about Sustainable Development in Africa.

Although posts will vary in perspective in tone, all of them should be well reasoned, with assertions supported by—and logically connected to—facts.

Focus on policies, not parties or political figures. A post that is motivated by a statement by a political figure is fine; a post about a political figure is not.

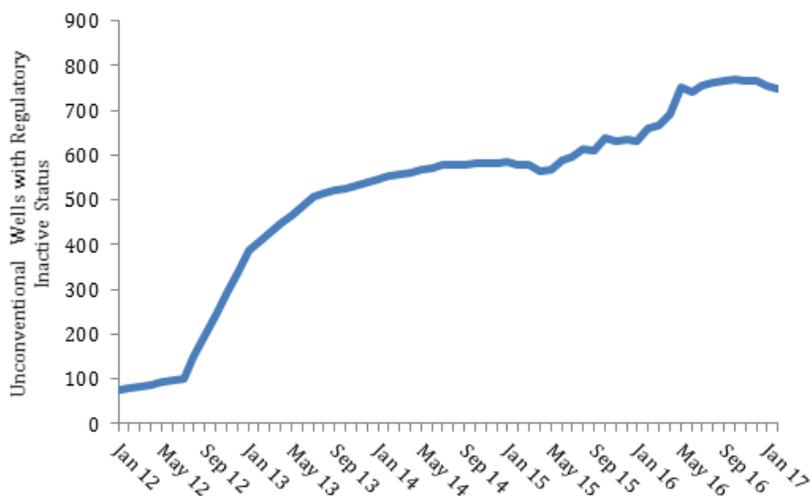
Writing Resources

Contributors may find the services offered by Pitt's [Writing Center](#) helpful in preparing their posts, especially contributors for whom English is not their native language.

Formatting & Mechanics

- **Title**—Include a brief title that summarizes the main argument or question of your post and will attract readers' attention. Below is the actual title of this [post](#) as well as two alternatives that could have been used:
 - Is Lake Erie Poised to Become a Hotspot for Wind Power Generation?
 - Wind Power Generation in Lake Erie Faces Strong Headwinds
 - The Potential for Large-Scale Wind Power in Lake Erie
- **Length**—The rule is 500 to 1,000 words, with some exceptions.
- **Headings**—Headings are generally not necessary because the posts are short. Use them sparingly, perhaps to emphasize a key question or a sharp shift in the text.
- **References**—Use links rather than citations when citing a fact, figure, or study. Links should direct the reader to the source material or a more detailed article. Please choose a key word or phrase and attach a hyperlink to the appropriate material. You do not need to reference all facts and figures in your post. If you have previously mentioned a source of information, for example the Energy Information Administration, you need not provide a link for each fact taken from that source.
- **Tables & Figures**—Including tables and figures is good but not required. When including a table or figure, provide a descriptive title, clear labels, and the source of the data. Use the examples from this [post](#) as a guide for tables and figures. The blog editors can work with you to ensure their proper format.

The Growing Number of Regulatory Inactive Unconventional Wells



Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection. Elaboration by the authors

Bonding Requirements for Unconventional Natural Gas Wells in Pennsylvania

| Number of Wells Bonded by the Company | <26 | 26-50 | 51-150 | >150 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Flat Fee | None | \$140,000 | \$290,000 | \$430,000 |
| Bond per Additional Well | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| Maximum Payment | \$140,000 | \$290,000 | \$430,000 | \$600,000 |

Source: PA Const. Title 58, §3225.

- **Biography**—Include a two to four-lines about yourself that we can include at the end of your post. Include your academic or professional position and perhaps, key experiences and interests as they relate to the E&E blog. See recent posts for examples.
- **Submissions**—Submissions should be sent to **MRH105@pitt.edu** as a '.doc' file or other word document format. Include charts in graphs in their original format. Font and text size are not important. Editors will convert your submission into the blog's standard format.