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Emissions, Schools and Setbacks

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Water and Natural Resources Committee (WNRC)**

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OGI: Optical Gas Imaging

- OGI uses infrared cameras that detect hydrocarbon gases, including:
 - methane,
 - benzene, and other
 - volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- We use the same camera models trusted by industry experts and government regulators.
- Earthworks has been doing this work since 1988!
 - 10 certified thermographers nationwide
 - 700+ OGI videos of oil and gas pollution, including hundreds in NM.

What you see with the naked eye.



The pollution OGI reveals.



How OGI Evidence Is Used

Legal doesn't mean safe.

Current rules allow unsafe levels of pollution to reach local children and workers.

Legal Pollution: The examples you are about to see are happening within our existing regulatory framework.

Loopholes & Failures: Many of the emissions we find fall into exceptions and gaps in our current rules.



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Hilcorp Facility By DZ Community School

- Less than 900 feet from a K-8 school serving Navajo students
- Filed multiple complaints in the past 2 years





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Optical gas imaging video by ITC certified
thermographer using FLIR GF320 camera

**These kind of
emissions
can continue
indefinitely.**



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Ocotillo Elementary School in Carlsbad

**Hilcorp facility only 450 yards
away, downwind from the
predominant wind direction.**

Well Pad





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Optical gas imaging video by ITC certified thermographer using FLIR GF320 camera

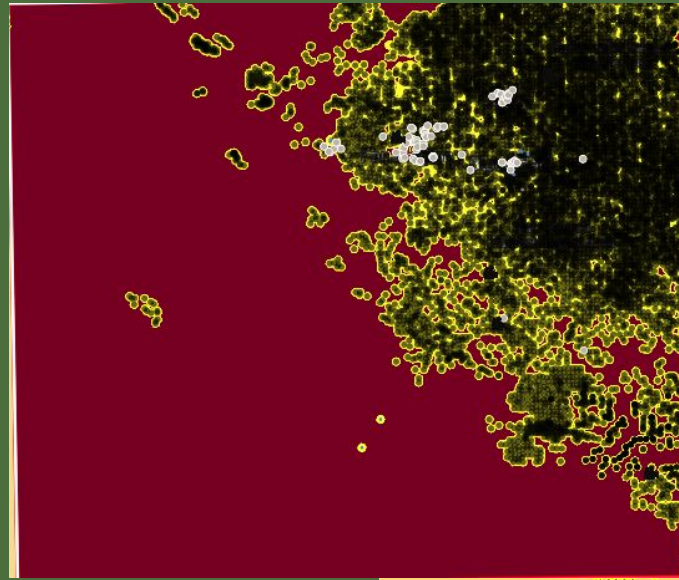
This is not an outlier, it's representative of what we find, over and over, at facilities near schools.



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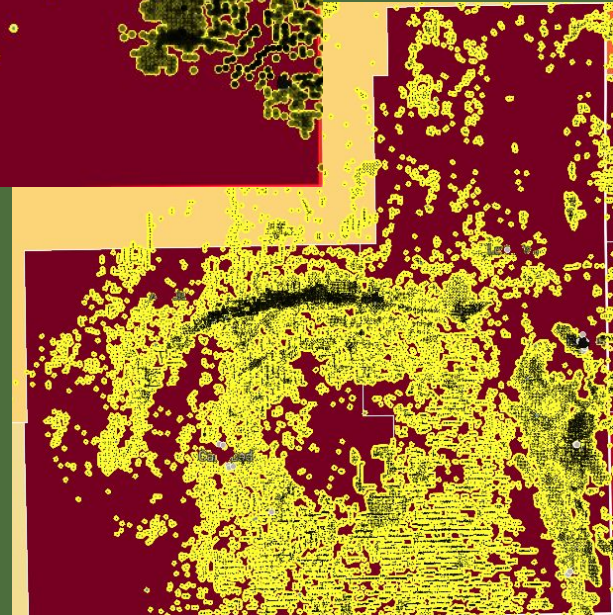
Setbacks

There are **119 schools** within a half mile of oil and gas infrastructure in New Mexico.



San Juan County

Eddy and Lea Counties



Air Monitors: A Tool, Not a Solution

- Monitors are not a substitute for setbacks
- Don't always translate into enforcement action

How they help:

- Give people's ability to take precautions with their health
- Public, accessible data about air pollutions raises awareness
- Relevant for both oil/gas pollution and wildfire smoke (increasingly common)





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Richelle Montoya, the Navajo Nation Vice President, views pollution through one of our OGI cameras.

Source: Earthworks, 2025

Thank You!

Stay in touch at [Earthworks.org](https://www.earthworks.org)

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