Pennsylvania's gas industry is producing more, but delivering less.

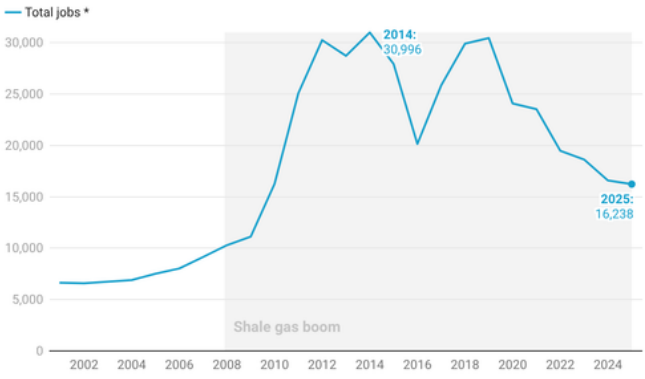
Pennsylvania is one of the nation's largest natural gas producers. But as production has grown, the industry's contribution to jobs and broadly shared economic prosperity has continued to shrink.

16,238 jobs. Less than 1% of Pennsylvania employment.

In 2025, natural gas production and transportation supported 16,238 jobs in Pennsylvania, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

That's 16,238 jobs out of more than 6 million jobs statewide — just over one-quarter of 1% of Pennsylvania employment.

Pennsylvania is producing more gas — with fewer workers.



** Total jobs include oil and gas extraction, drilling, pipelines, transportation, and support activities.*

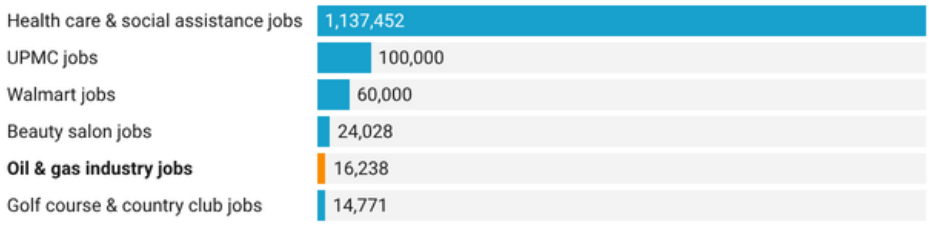
Chart: Ohio River Valley Institute • Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages • Created with Datawrapper

Natural gas employment peaked at **nearly 31,000 workers in 2014.** By 2025, that number had fallen to just over 16,000 — **a decline of nearly half.**

Over roughly the same period, Pennsylvania natural gas production continued to climb.

Advances in drilling and other efficiencies allow companies to extract more gas with fewer workers. That may improve productivity and profitability for producers, but it also undercuts one of the industry's central economic development arguments: **more gas production no longer translates into more jobs.**

Other Pennsylvania industries employ far more people — and are growing.



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The contrast is particularly stark when natural gas employment is compared with more labor-intensive industries, like the health care and social assistance sector.

While economic development debates often focus on attracting large industrial projects, Pennsylvania's employment growth increasingly comes from sectors that require substantially more workers.

A growing GDP contribution doesn't equate to more prosperity.

Natural gas extraction can generate significant economic output, but that doesn't mean workers and communities benefit. Industries such as data centers and associated power plants are also highly capital-intensive and relatively labor-light once construction is complete. Expanding natural gas demand to serve these industries may increase gas production, electricity generation, and GDP **without producing comparable growth in permanent employment.**

The better measure of economic development is what it actually leaves behind: lasting family-sustaining jobs, rising incomes, thriving local businesses, strong public revenues, and communities where people can build a future.

Ohio River Valley Institute