U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Blog Round-up

Prepared by the Office of Public Affairs

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April 16, 2010

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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With the internet, blogs, Twitter, forums - people are talking about EPA 24/7
Here's a sampling of what was said on April 15, 2010:

NOTE: To read the entire blog entry, click on underlined URL. To learn more about the blogger, click on the name/link in first line. Notes and headings are from OPA.

Lisa Jackson

Now I'm wondering what @lisapjackson with the EPA will have to say about this story...
Posted by: elzapo: 7:15 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/aAKHWH
(Note: Rainforest Action Network: The end of mountaintop removal is this year)

Lisa Jackson, Kate Sheppard, Andy Revkin, oh my! We have a great event coming up, i hope you can make it!
Posted by: susannamurley: 5:15 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/cvIzSu

Mystery guest revealed! Lisa Jackson (US @EPA) will be joining us on 4/20. Register now! @lisapjackson
Posted by: planet_forward: 4:25 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/9vtBwQ
(Note: Be at GW's School of Media and Public Affairs for insider's guide to America's next great legislative challenge. Leaders from all sides of global environmental debate will hash out what's next for US climate change legislation post-Copenhagen and pre-midterm elections.)

Amazing afternoon with administrator Jackson at epa and home star passes out of energy and commerce with great improvements. A great day!
Posted by: jessytolkan: 2:33 pm Full post:
(Note: Huffington Post writer)

At the EPA speaking on a panel with Lisa Jackson, Gwen Ifill, and 1st epa admin. celebrating 40yrs of the EPA
Posted by: jessytolkan: 12:25 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/9vtBwQ
(Note: Huffington Post writer)

EPA Administrator **Jackson** speaks at clean water conference
Posted by: WaterTechOnline: 1:28 pm Full post:
http://www.watertechonline.com/news.asp?N_ID=73892

Earth Day

EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) celebrates the 40th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22
Posted by: pccpl: 6:45 pm Full post: http://goo.gl/fb/45xaL
(Note: Pittsburgh Public Library)

EPA Celebrates the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day – April 22, 2010
Posted by: dopplick: 6:45 pm Full post: http://**epa**.gov/earthday/

Do you want to participate in an Earth Day community service event next week? For details:
Posted by: BallGround: 12:45 pm Full post: http://www.**epa**.gov/earthday/events.htm
(Cherokee County, GA)

Energy Star and Home Star

Home Star energy efficiency program clears key House committee
Posted by: _Sierra_Club: 7:15 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/b4Kc8D

Statement from The President on House Energy and Commerce Committee Passage of "Home Star" Legislation: "Today's b...
Posted by: airforce1: 7:15 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/aGrpDq

In bipartisan vote, Energy and Commerce Committee passes Welch Home Star bill:
Posted by: Sourcews_World: 7:05 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/d06sVL

USA Today: US announces tighter scrutiny for Energy Star products
Posted by: thinkenergy: 10:04 am Full post: http://url4.eu/2fHDM
(Note: Prior to using the Energy Star label, the U.S. stamp of approval for energy efficiency, companies will now have to submit complete lab reports and results about their products to the EPA, according to the announcement Wednesday. The EPA will no longer rely on an automated approval process.)

ROUND-UP OF MAJOR BLOGS

AIR

Which Veggie Burgers Were Made With a Neurotoxin? (*Treehugger*)

By Kiera Butler | Mon Apr. 12, 2010 2:30 AM PDT
UPDATE: Veggie burger rumors are flying! Some readers and other news organizations have alleged that the study I wrote [1] about on Monday was funded by the pro-meat, anti-soy group

the Weston A. Price Foundation [2]. But this morning, I spoke with Cornucopia Institute [3] director Mark Kastel, who said that the Weston A. Price Foundation did not contribute any funding to the "Behind the Bean" (pdf [4]) study. More here [5].
UPDATE: Readers' questions about veggie burgers and hexane answered here [6].

This is about the time of year when I start keeping packages of veggie burgers in the freezer, just in case of an impromptu barbecue. In the past, I haven't had much fake meat brand loyalty: I've found that once I smother my hunk of textured vegetable protein in barbeque sauce, all soy patties are pretty much created equal. But after reading a recent investigation [7] by the Cornucopia Institute, I'm going to be a lot more picky: The food and agriculture nonprofit found that most non-organic veggie burgers currently on the market are made with the chemical hexane [8], an EPA-registered air pollutant and neurotoxin.

In order to meet the demands of health-conscious consumers, manufacturers of soy-based fake meat like to make their products have as little fat as possible. The cheapest way to do this is by submerging soybeans in a bath of hexane to separate the oil from the protein. Says Cornucopia Institute senior researcher Charlotte Vallaeys, "If a non-organic product contains a soy protein isolate, soy protein concentrate, or texturized vegetable protein, you can be pretty sure it was made using soy beans that were made with hexane."

If you've heard about hexane before, it was likely in the context of gasoline—the air pollutant is also a byproduct of gas refining. But in 2007, grain processors were responsible for two-thirds of our national hexane emissions. Hexane is hazardous [9] in the factory, too: Workers [10] who have been exposed to it have developed both skin and nervous system disorders. Troubling, then, that the FDA does not monitor or regulate hexane residue in foods. More worrisome still: According to the report, "Nearly every major ingredient in conventional soy-based infant formula is hexane extracted."

The Cornucopia Institute found that a number of popular veggie burgers were made with hexane. The list (pdf [11], page 37, and below) is longer than you might think:

Amy's Kitchen
Boca Burger, conventional
Franklin Farms
Garden Burger
It’s All Good Lightlife
Morningstar Farms
President’s Choice
Taste Above
Trader Joe's
Yves Veggie Cuisine
Hexane-free products:
Boca Burgers "Made with organic soy"
Helen's Kitchen

Morningstar "Made with organic"
Superburgers by Turtle Island
Tofurky
Wildwood

Also worth noting: Products labeled "organic" aren't allowed to contain any hexane-derived ingredients, but that rule doesn't apply to foods that are labeled "made with organic ingredients." For more on soy sourcing, plus a list of popular "made with organic ingredients"-labeled protein bars that are made with hexane, read the Cornucopia Institute's full study, "Behind the Bean [7]."

CLIMATE CHANGE

A Walk Through the Week's Climate News (*Grist*)

The Climate Post: Why isn't the Keeling Curve more famous?
by Eric Roston
15 Apr 2010 12:05 PM
First Things First: IBM will ask its 28,000 suppliers to monitor and disclose their energy use, heat-trapping gas emissions, waste, and recycling. Spread across 90 countries, the suppliers are compelled to install software designed to help firms understand their impact–if they want to continue working with the computing and services giant. "Ultimately, if a supplier cannot be compliant with requirements on the environment and sustainability, we'll stop doing business with them," said IBM's John Paterson.

In Washington, the policy community anticipates in the next week or so the first public draft of a new Senate climate and energy bill. The bill will not surface on Earth Day, April 22, according to Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.). "We don't want to mix messages here," he said, "I'm all for protecting the Earth but this is about energy independence."

***Capping It All off*:** The *New York Times* declared "cap-and-trade" dead several weeks ago, only to quietly run a sort of non-correction correction last weekend. The draft Senate bill is expected to create a market in which regulated companies can buy and sell permits to emit heat-trapping gases.

Leaks from the Senate suggest that the bill, written by Senators John Kerry (D-Mass.), Graham, and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), would impose limits on the industrial pollution of heat-trapping gases and allow regulated companies to buy and sell emissions permits. The utility sector would initiate the program in 2012, followed by heavy industry in 2016. The Senate bill will treat transportation fuels differently, requiring a "fee" levied after

products are refined, and before drivers pump it into their vehicles. This sector-by-sector approach to climate policy has been greeted with some openness from a few Republican lawmakers, including Senators Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Scott Brown (R-Mass.). Would new support offset a loss of support among Democrats angered by President Barack Obama's recent announcement to expand offshore oil exploration?

When the troika introduces the bill, responsibility for moving it into the Senate goes to Majority Leaders Harry Reid. "His challenge could not be tougher," writes Darren Samuelsohn in *ClimateWire*. Reid will try to navigate the bill to the Senate floor at the same time he's juggling a new Supreme Court nomination, financial reform, and a rough re-election campaign. Graham and Kerry modestly disagreed on the possible implications for the climate bill of the Supreme Court confirmation process.

The Senate bill will reportedly also contain a provision that eliminates both the Environmental Protection Agency's new greenhouse gas regulations, and state and regional climate programs. That would halt development of programs including the Western Climate Initiative. The WCI this week previewed a new analysis that projects an average price of about $33 to emit a ton of carbon dioxide in 2020. States could continue programs that improve energy efficiency or set renewable energy standards.

***Down-to-Earth Business*:** Is most discernable "movement" in the environmental arena to be found this year in the private sector? Reuters finds supporting evidence. The still-tough economic climate encourages firms to cut waste and inefficiency, and sustainability offers a common approach. Strained consumer budgets discourage spending on premium "clean" products. (The consumers who are interested in shelling out a little bit more for a greener product might note that the EPA and Department of Energy's Energy Star label just became stricter.) The trend calls to mind a catch-phrase of Gregory Unruh, a corporate sustainability expert affiliated with the Thunderbird School of Global Management: "Embed it and forget it." He writes in his new book, *Earth, Inc.*: "We'll reach the sustainability destination when we embed the principles that account for the biosphere's sustainability to business practice in profitable ways" [pdf introduction].

Energy efficiency is the fastest path to sustainability for many companies, and by extension the least intrusive way for policymakers to push climate-and-energy goals forward. This week Nicholas Institute Senior Policy Associate Etan Gumerman co-authored an ambitious, widely received study with Professor Marilyn Brown of Georgia Tech that concludes smart policy should bring vast energy and financial savings. The modeling study shows that a suite of nine policies could result in $41 million in energy bill savings, the creation of 320,000 new jobs, and a water savings of 8.6 billion gallons in 2020. "We looked at how these policies might interact, not just single programs," Gumerman said. "The interplay between policies compounds the savings. And it's all cost-effective. On average, each dollar invested in energy efficiency over the next 20 years will reap $2.25 in benefits." The study was picked up by numerous major and trade media outlets across the country, and is available here.

Universities are stepping up their training of America's future workforce. Engineering students increasingly seek programs that specialize in sustainability, drawn by renewed interest in industry and pushed by current and expected new government policies. *US News and World Report* writes, "Today's engineering students are reacting to having grown up in environmentally 'perilous times.'" [Duke's Pratt School of Engineering includes an environmental engineering initiative as one of its four academic pillars.]

***In the Clear*:** A panel dismissed charges of scientific fraud and other accusations levied against researchers affiliated with the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia. Ron Oxburgh, an earth scientist, former defense adviser, and former Shell chairman, and colleagues pinged the climatologists for not consulting closely with top statisticians when they conduct their statistics-driven analysis of temperature records and proxy records. A statistician on the review panel said it was unlikely statistical errors undermine the basic science.

***Cat Exits Open Bag*:** The *Guardian* publishes a memo detailing U.S. communications strategy in international climate talks. The document was found "on a European hotel computer and passed to the *Guardian*," which doesn't offer much of a clue for pinpointing who might have left it there. At the top of the list: "Reinforce the perception that the US is constructively engaged in UN negotiations in an effort to produce a global regime to combat climate change."

***Genie Exits Bottle*:** Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, are making previously obscure monthly data dumps from NOAA and NASA into regular conversation pieces among observers to the climate arena. The March numbers came out this week and zipped across blogs and news sites:

The combined global land and ocean average surface temperature for March 2010 was the warmest on record at 13.5 deg C (56.3 deg F), which is 0.77 deg C (1.39 deg F) above the 20th century average of 12.7 deg C (54.9 deg F). This was also the 34th consecutive March with global land and ocean temperatures above the 20th century average.

It's worth asking, particularly as Earth Day queues up next week, will climate data eventually make it big as an economic indicator?

A volcanic eruption in Iceland has grounded aircraft in the U.K. and Europe, but early reports suggest it's too small to have a noticeable short-term cooling effect globally. Sulfate aerosols released in volcanic explosions tend to have a cooling effect on the atmosphere. One controversial idea to manage climate change is to mimic eruptions by spraying aerosols into the high atmosphere from aircraft. For more on this and other "geoengineering" ideas, see (both!) of two great new books on the topic, *Hack the Planet*, by Eli Kintisch of *Science*, and *How to Cool the Planet,* by Jeff Goodell of *Rolling Stone*. I happily "blurbed" the former, and reviewed the latter recently in *BusinessWeek*.

***Why Isn't the Keeling Curve More Famous?*:** For a couple of weeks, I've had a tiny bee in my bonnet along these lines and I finally figured out why. It's this sentence in the *Washington Post* review of Ian McEwan's new novel, *Solar* (I mentioned this in this space two weeks ago). Here:

The subject, though, is hot. *Whether or not carbon dioxide is accumulating in the atmosphere*, there's no denying that novelists are warming up to the subject. [Emphasis added]

Initially I was just hung up on how someone hoping to come across as an informed person, or who is supposed to be an informed person, could string together these words with a straight face. The larger problem is that this is just one signal–anecdotally reinforced elsewhere–that many smart, educated, successful people don't know that carbon dioxide is increasing in the atmosphere.

If Earth Day has any singular goal at all, and I've never been convinced, it should be this: Make the Keeling curve more famous. Deutsch Bank recently bought a huge billboard across the street from Madison Square Garden in New York City. It has a running tally of the tons of carbon dioxide humans have put into the atmosphere, in the spirit of the famous National Debt Clock. But what would happen if instead it were the Keeling Curve? With other Keeling Curves in Times Square, at the New York Stock Exchange, in Parisian art installations, projected on clouds on Earth Day like the Bat signal. What do the neuroeconomists and behaviorists say about this? Is there a Keeling Curve app yet for the iPad?

What do you think?

Eric Roston is Senior Associate at the Nicholas Institute and author of The Carbon Age: How Life's Core Element Has Become Civilization's Greatest Threat*. Prologue available at* Grist*. Chapter about Ginkgo biloba and climate change available at* Conservation.

ENERGY

Posted: April 15, 2010 01:47 PM

Rubber Stamping is Out Energy Star to Close a Giant Loophole (*Treehugger*)

by Michael Graham Richard, Ottawa, Canada on 04.15.10
Business & Politics
Trust Needs to be Earned
No doubt in reaction to the Government Accountability Office's public report about how easy it

is to get fake products and companies approved by Energy Star (they got certification for a gas-powered alarm clock and many other fake products), Energy Star has decided to close some loopholes and tighten things up a bit. But will it be enough?
So What's New?
Self-certification is out (about time), but we're not yet at the point where every product will be tested by Energy Star people directly. It understandable because that would be a big bottleneck...
Instead: "Effective immediately, manufacturers wishing to qualify their products as Energy Star must submit complete lab reports and results for review and approval by EPA prior to labeling."
The agency is also ditching an automated approval process.
This should make Consumer Reports happy. They've been criticizing Energy Star on that point for years.
This could indirectly improve the energy efficiency of products by providing a real incentive for efficient products (instead of those that merely claim to be but have never been properly tested).

MINING

E2 Round-up: Mines delay sanctions through appeals, Cape Wind fight winding down, Lautenberg proposes rewrite of chemical laws, and more (*The Hill*)

By Jim Snyder - 04/15/10 08:37 AM ET

*** Mine appeals delayed sanctions**

From the *Wall Street Journal*: “Four dozen coal mines, including the Massey Energy Co. mine in West Virginia where 29 miners were killed this month, escaped tougher enforcement for months while safety citations were being appealed, according to Rep. George Miller (D., Calif.).”

"Mine operators who game the system to avoid tough scrutiny by federal safety officials must be held accountable," Miller said, according to the *Journal*.

The industry says it supports efforts by Miller, who is the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, to reduce a backlog of appeals at the Mine Safety and Health Administration. National Mining Association spokeswoman Carol Raulston called the backlog an “untenable situation.”

She said the board that reviews appeals doesn't have a full complement of members, and that several years ago the MSHA ended an informal consultation process which often resolved appeals more quickly, according to the *Journal*.

*** Cape Wind fight may be finally winding down**

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar is expected to rule this month on Cape Wind, a proposal to invest more than $1 billion placing 130 wind-powered turbines in Nantucket Sound. A federal advisory council recommended on April 2 that Salazar reject the project because of the "destructive" effects on historic sites.

Bloomberg lays out the interests involved the decade-long dispute: "Leaders of 3,200 Wampanoag Indians with roots in Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard say Cape Wind's turbine blades, reaching 440 feet into the air, would desecrate the view of the sunrise that's essential to their prayer ceremonies. A month before Democrat Kennedy died on Aug. 25, he wrote to Obama imploring him to halt action on the wind farm, which would be visible from the senator's home."

Former Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham sees a classic case of Nimbyism and a threat to the administration's goals for renewable energy development.

"When we talk about what's made America's energy policies so challenging to devise it's in no small measure this whole not-in-my-backyard sentiment," Abraham said in an interview with *Bloomberg*.

*** Auditors fault oil and gas royalty program**

From the *Los Angeles Times*' Greenspace blog: "The federal government's efforts to ensure accurate measurement of oil and gas being extracted from federal lands is 'ineffective and inefficient,' raising questions about whether petroleum companies are paying proper royalties, a government audit has found."

Government Accountability Office faulted the Interior Department for not updating some of its measurement standards in two decades, for falling behind current technologies, and for failing to meet inspection and calibration goals aimed at maintaining accurate measurements.

The government received $6.5 billion in royalties last year.

*** Sen. Lautenberg to unveil rewrite of nation's chemical laws**

The *Washington Post* has an early look at how Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) plans to overhaul the nation's chemical laws.

Lautenberg's plan would require manufacturers to prove the safety of chemicals before they enter the marketplace. "That would be a significant departure from current laws, which allow chemicals to be used unless the federal government can prove they cause harm to health or the environment," the *Post* reports.

More from the *Post*: "Under current laws, the government has little or no information about the risks of most chemicals in use. The government cannot act unless a chemical poses a health threat, but the EPA cannot force companies to provide data that show risks."

TOXICS

Congress Targets Broken Federal Toxics Law (*Huffington Post*)

The effort to protect Americans from chemical dangers took a historic step forward today as Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Environmental Health, introduced legislation to overhaul the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) of 1976. The current law is riddled with so many loopholes that in more than 30 years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been able to regulate only five of the 83,000 chemicals in use in consumer goods.

In the House, meanwhile, a key committee rolled out its "discussion draft" of a parallel proposal. Reps. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) , chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman and Commerce, and Bobby Rush (D-Ill.), chairman of the Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, will begin hammering out a final version that could go to a floor vote later this year.

Sen. Lautenberg's Safe Chemicals Act will bring order to a chemical industry whose products have largely escaped regulation for the past three decades. With virtually no rules governing the safety of chemicals, American babies are born pre-polluted, their bodies laced with as many as 300 industrial compounds, pollutants, plastics, pesticides and other substances that threaten public health.

Lautenberg puts this problem in the crosshairs by making protection of children and other vulnerable populations the cornerstone of American environmental health policy. The measure would set standards of public health protection far higher that the new European toxic chemicals regime and is light years ahead of any statute that has been proposed or enacted at the state level.

The bill would also peel away the shroud of secrecy that allows only industry and select EPA employees to see "confidential" data on chemicals. As a result, two-thirds of all synthetics brought to market in the past 30 years have been secret chemicals, their identities concealed from the public and independent scientists. Even first responders and state health authorities have no access to these chemical identities and safety data about them.

In another major reform, Lautenberg's bill would shift the burden of ensuring that chemicals are safe, requiring chemical manufacturers to prove the safety of their products to stay on the market. As things stand now, the public must accept industry's claims that a chemical is benign. If the EPA questions a substance's safety, the agency - meaning the public - bears the burden of proving that there are risks. The bill would also give the EPA the authority to make it stick; if a company declines to produce even a single study the agency wants, the EPA administrator could stop production and use of the chemical.

The Safe Chemicals Act would also require EPA to produce a priority list of 300 existing chemicals for regulatory review and would establish an interagency panel to decide which chemicals go on that list. Putting the wrong chemicals on the list will undermine public protections for many years. As the bill moves forward, EWG we will keep a close eye on how priorities are set and what tests are required to prove safety.

Lautenberg, Waxman and other members of Congress sponsored a toxic chemicals policy reform proposal known as the Kid-Safe Chemicals Act in 2005 and again in 2008, but these measures did not have the broad support that has coalesced behind the current initiative.

Today, the search for environmental causes of disease is a front-burner issue for scientists, medical professionals, policy-makers and health advocates. President Obama, EPA administrator Lisa Jackson, key members of both houses of Congress, the environmental and health communities, countless citizens and the chemical industry itself agree that a new national policy must be crafted to fit the complex realities of the 21st century.