U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Blog Round-up

Prepared by the Office of Public Affairs

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April 29, 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 28, 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

EPA's Action Jackson moving forward: Issued today 4/28/2010 EPA Press Office press@epa.gov ...
Posted by: Eco350: 6:00 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/91hNNG

Planet Forward: Just uploaded photos from last week's event with @lisapjackson, @kate_shappard and more!
Posted by: planet_forward: 5:50 pm Full post: http://ning.it/aGsNZz

Check this video out -- Lisa P. Jackson on David Letterman HD 1080p
Posted by: pinmanworld: 3:40 pm Full post: http://youtu.be/6ho3cNhA1ok

My friend Lisa Jackson testified today before E&C panel: Clean energy helps our economy, national security & creates American jobs.
Posted by: FrankPallone: 1:54 pm Full post:

GHG Regulation & Climate Change

Planet Save: EPA Climate Change Indicators in the US report: News from the Oceans
Posted by: zshahan3: 7:40 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/blfAHZ

Stop the Unconstitutional, Jobs-killing, EPA Regulation of Carbon Dioxide
Posted by: Wmpear: 3:40 pm Full post: http://tinyurl.com/yega4b3

Could Iceland's "Big One" Cool the Planet and Reverse Global Warming?
Posted by: dailygalaxy: 6:40 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/cLHppM

Treehugger: Global Warming For Dummies - EPA Releases New Climate Change Indicators Report...

Posted by: TreeHugger: 4:30 pm Full post: http://bit.ly/bivncV

On the Graham-Reid flustercluck

Posted by: drgrist 2:25 pm Full post: http://is.gd/bMacP

ROUND-UP OF MAJOR BLOGS

AIR

Stare of the Air (Huffington Post)

Today, I was with Jane Warner, CEO of the American Lung Association in California, to announce the results of the "2010 State of the Air" report and to emphasize our responsibility to improve the air we breathe.

We're making progress here in Los Angeles, with the number of high ozone days dropping 25 percent since the release of the 2000 report. That's a major accomplishment!

But despite this good news, we're still one of America's most polluted cities To protect the future health of our kids and our City, we have our work cut out for us. The time to accept this challenge, and take collective action, is now.

First of all, we need to continue to invest in renewable energy and eliminate our dependence on coal as a main energy source. Buy transforming our City into a center of the new green economy, we'll not only create thousands of good, 21st century jobs, we'll dramatically improve our air quality and the health of all Angelenos.

We also need to improve and encourage the use of our public transportation systems. I'm working hard to push our 30/10 initiative, which would use Measure R funding to build our transit projects in ten years instead of thirty. 30/10 Initiative will create over 160,000 jobs, and take 570,000 pounds of pollutants out of the air each year!

And we're not stopping there. We're setting an international example by taking the kinds of simple, measured actions that reap big environmental benefits on a local level. A good example is our LED Street Light Replacement Program--the largest program of its kind in the world-which is replacing 140,000 street lights with clean, efficient LED lights. The program is going to eliminate more than 40,500 tons of C02.

And we're cleaning up the Port of Los Angeles, the largest single source of air pollution in the Region. Through the Clean Truck Program, we helped put more than 6,600 clean trucks on the roads around the Port, reducing port truck emissions by at least 70 percent.

The City of Angels no longer needs to be known for smog and sprawl, but it will take our collective efforts to ensure that we will all breathe cleaner air. Government action is key, but there are many, simple things people can do to help reduce air pollution: drive one less day per week, bike and walk as often as possible, avoid burning wood.

If we work together, we can and will be the greenest, cleanest big City in America.

For full report, regional analysis, fact sheets and tips, visit the American Lung Association's website.

Follow Antonio Villaraigosa on Twitter: www.twitter.com/villaraigosa

CLIMATE

Global Warming For Dummies (*Treehugger*)

EPA Releases New Climate Change Indicator Report (The Environmental Protection Agency has just launched a new Climate Change Indicators in the United States report (and slideshow) that really breaks down the science and effects of global warming. Not quite sure it will convince anyone who has already been convinced by the plethora of information, both scientific and popular, already released, but it is a very clear overview of the situation. Here are some interesting highlights to commit to memory:

by Matthew McDermott, New York, NY on 04.28.10
Business & Politics

The Environmental Protection Agency has just launched a new Climate Change Indicators in the United States report (and slideshow) that really breaks down the science and effects of global warming. Not quite sure it will convince anyone who has already been convinced by the plethora of information, both scientific and popular, already released, but it is a very clear overview of the situation. Here are some interesting highlights to commit to memory:

As you can see from this chart, worldwide greenhouse gas emissions have increased 26% from 1990 to 2005. Carbon dioxide emissions, responsible for 75% of total emissions, increasing 31%. In the United States emissions have increased 14% from 1990 to 2008--so when you hear some politician proposed reducing emissions 17% from a 2005 baseline, know that compared to the internationally used and more rigorous 1990 baseline, it's not really much of a reduction at all.

Over the past century both precipitation and temperatures have largely increased across the nation, with precipitation increasing on average by 6% for the lower 48 states. Worldwide precipitation has increased 2%. In fact, in the US incidents of heavy precipitation are increasing, with 8 of the top 10 years for one-day extreme precipitation occurring since 1990. Additionally, in the same time period, six of the top ten most intense hurricane seasons have occurred.

This image sort of speaks for itself. The extent of Arctic sea ice last year was 24% below the average from 1979-2000.

As does this one... But it's not just glaciers be affected by warmer temps. On average the length of time lakes stay from in winter has declined one to two days per decade over the past century, as has average snow cover (though the EPA acknowledges there has been much year-to-year variability with snow, as the image below indicates). The take away: It really was snowier and colder when you parents were walking to school (if not uphill both ways).

This one's pretty telling... You can see Zone 10 areas creeping northward over the past two decades or so, and Zone 3 areas nearly vanishing entirely from the lower 48 states.

Check out the full report and share with friends: Climate Change Indicators in the United States [PDF]

Climate Compromise, Not Capitulation (*Huffington Post*)

The Founding Fathers consciously designed the U.S. Senate to slow down hasty action and to defend the rights of the poorer, less populated states.

Over time, the Senate evolved into the chamber that forged the necessary compromises to keep the union intact.

Even today, Senator Henry Clay, dubbed the "Great Compromiser," is revered for authoring the Missouri Compromise and the much later Compromise of 1850. Clay kept the South from seceding, mostly by finding ways to halt change. His compromises also kept slavery legal in the South and in some newly formed states.

In the end, of course, a bloody Civil War proved inevitable, as did the end of slavery. Some issues do not lend themselves to perpetual compromise. Sometimes fundamental change is necessary.

These thoughts sprang to mind over the weekend as Senator Lindsey Graham threatened to walk away from the climate legislation he had fashioned over many months with Senators John Kerry and Joe Lieberman. This was of some import because Senator Graham was the only Republican senator to favor the legislation. His endorsement was needed to provide the magic label, "a bipartisan compromise." But, of course, it isn't one. If Graham stays on the sidelines, the bill is dead.

Although few of my friends and colleagues in the national environmental community are prepared to acknowledge it yet, this is incredibly good news. (In politics, wild overreaching by your opponent almost always is.)

In recent weeks, the rich assortment of tax incentives, federal guarantees and loans, and pure pork in the Kerry-Graham-Lieberman bill had begun to tempt so much of corporate America to the trough that they might have whipped the reluctant Republicans into passing it. It would actually have made things worse.

It would have eliminated the regulatory backstop the EPA can exercise under existing law.

It would have eliminated the ability of states, cities and regions to continue to experiment with the innovative programs that to date have been the source of all climate progress in the United States.

It would have permitted a tradeable derivatives market vastly more complicated than the mortgage scams that nearly brought down western civilization two years ago.

Worse, it would have transferred vast federal wealth to companies that -- like the American South in 1850 -- have a vested interest in ensuring change does not happen.

Senator Graham's snit provides an opportunity to actually launch a transition to a new era of green, climate neutral prosperity. Although from the popular press coverage one would never know it, there is another bipartisan climate bill in the US Senate. Drafted by two women, Senators Maria Cantwell and Susan Collins, it could be a winner.

The Cantwell-Collins bill is not unflawed but has the basic structure right. It caps carbon "upstream" at the 2,000 places--ports, pipelines, mine mouths, etc. -- where it enters the economy. It auctions carbon permits each year up to the limits of the cap -- so, unlike with KGL, we will know precisely how much carbon will be emitted to the atmosphere each year from all fossil fuels.

Cantwell-Collins returns 75 percent of the revenue collected to the public on a pro rata basis. Because the rich spend more (directly and indirectly) on energy than the poor, more than 80 percent of the public will be made richer by this progressive revenue measure.

All the money will be returned to taxpayers and invested in technologies designed to reduce carbon -- not to enrich coal companies and oil companies and pay for their lobbyists.

Finally, it prohibits the derivative trading that, under KGL, threatens to turn the nation's energy system into a giant lottery.

The major national environmental organizations, which climbed into bed prematurely with the so-called cap-and-trade approach that has failed so miserably in Europe, have stuck resolutely to Kerry-Graham-Lieberman as the only vehicle that might pass. They have compromised and compromised and compromised, one small slice at a time, until they didn't recognize when they capitulated. Kerry-Graham-Lieberman is now more popular with the Edison Electric Institute than with grassroots environmentalists.

A billion-dollar push for clear might have produced an energy revolution. (America didn't lead the information revolution by trying to placate the interests of IBM, Control Data, and AT&T, but that's what Kerry-Graham-Lieberman does for the National Coal Association, the American Petroleum Institute, and EEI.)

Let's not let ourselves get compromised into capitulation by 2,000 pages of KGL loopholes. Cantwell-Collins is 39 pages long and is a lobbyist's nightmare: anyone can understand it. This is one of those Civil War moments, except the future of the planet--not just the Union--is at stake. What we need is not Henry Clay but Abraham Lincoln.

This time, Honest Abe has arrived in the form of two brave women. Those of us outside the Beltway must put a massive effort into electing a Congress that will support them.

Denis Hayes, national coordinator of Earth Day in 1970, is an environmental activist. He was the first director of the Illinois State Energy Office and special assistant to Illinois Governor Dan Walker for natural resources in 1974-75.

EARTH DAY

April 29, 2010

Environmental Regulations: The New Frontier (*Huffington Post*)

Cross-posted from Forbes.com

Last week, on the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, I found myself in an interesting discussion with business leaders in one of our Executive Education programs at Thunderbird School of Global Management, focused on the roles of business and government in creating not only a livable and sustainable environment, but a stable and predictable society. Both are needed for businesses to flourish. And both seem to be in flux in ways that undermine businesses' ability to profit and survive.
Earth Day was first celebrated in 1970 and coincided with the founding of the Environmental Protection Agency by the Nixon Administration. The EPA's job was to lead the creation of government policies that protected nature from the impacts of industrial growth and development. Doing so meant regulating the polluting activities of business. This mandate set up a conflict between business interest and environmental goals.

Businesses saw environmental regulations as newly imposed costs on operations, which they were. Early regulations were usually written by bureaucrats with only limited information about company operations and the costs of alternative remedies. Regulators wanted the surest, not necessarily cheapest, solution. So while regulations often improved the environment they were not always the most cost effective.

Not surprisingly, business fought back, and succeeded in the "get government off the backs of business" philosophy personified by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. After a wave of environmental policy making in the 1970s and 1980s, new lawmaking slowed.

This political success paradoxically became a problem for business. Environmental challenges have not gone away. Despite some success, like acid rain and ozone protection, environmental issues continue to afflict us. And the drivers of environmental degradation - growing population, raw material extraction, energy use, etc. - continue to grow. So if government is not going to address the problem, who is? The answer, we are finding, is business itself.

The corporate sustainability and social responsibility movement is largely an alternative to government regulation of business activity. In the past, business could count on the government to tell them what was environmentally acceptable or not. Today however, business can't count on the government. It has to figure this out itself.

Doing nothing, which may have been the hope in the heyday of deregulation, is not an option. Activists, the media, customers, shareholders, Gen-Y employees and others are getting good at pressuring companies to take responsibility for environmental impacts. And the Internet's social media echo-chamber only enhances their influence on executive decision making.

So what does this mean for business leaders and the environmental movement? Business has to step up and become a responsible participant in solving environmental problems. Complaining about government regulation is old school and only undermines business credibility. The new generation of business leadership recognizes this. Just listen to a Whole Foods executive talk about their environment initiatives: "Business can make a difference in the energy and environmental situation of our country and I think they have to. Because capitalism is what built America and we expect business and entrepreneurs to step up to the plate and bring solutions to the challenges we face as a country."

When surveys ask business leaders who is leading in the area of sustainability the answer is surprising to most: Walmart. Walmart's impact on the environmental thinking and performance of its business partners is becoming legend. One VP told me, "next to Walmart the Environmental Protection Agency is nothing." That's an encouraging development, but business leadership on sustainability, while welcomed, but it's still only part of the solution. Government still has a role to play, if nothing more than to bring along the laggards. But, just as business can't count on government, they can't count them out either. It requires leadership that replaces confrontation with collective responsibility. It's a new frontier and maybe what Nixon had in mind when he created the EPA at the dawn of the environmental movement 40 years ago.

Follow Gregory Unruh on Twitter: **www.twitter.com/gregoryunruh**

April 29, 2010

Gregory Unruh

Director of the Lincoln Center for Ethics in Global Management at Thunderbird

Posted: April 29, 2010 11:54 AM

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WATER

The Huffington Post April 29, 2010

Georgianne Nienaber

Haiti relief worker, investigative journalist, and author

Posted: April 28, 2010 05:58 PM

Controlled Burn of Deepwater Horizon Spill Begin Wednesday (*Huffington Post*)

Georgianne Nienaber

A controlled burn of surface oil from the British Petroleum/Transocean's Deepwater Horizon is scheduled to begin Wednesday afternoon, April 28. The strategy is designed to minimize environmental risks by removing oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico following the April 20 explosion. The plan involves consolidating oil into a fire resistant boom approximately 500 feet

long. This oil will then be towed to a more remote area, where it will be ignited and burned "in a controlled manner," according to incident command. The plan calls for small, controlled burns of several thousand gallons of oil lasting approximately one hour each.

"No populated areas are expected to be affected by the controlled burn operations and there are no anticipated impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles. In order to ensure safety, the Environmental Protection Agency will continuously monitor air quality and burning will be halted if safety standards cannot be maintained," according to the command website and official remarks.

U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Mary Landry, Minerals Management Service Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Lars Herbst and representatives from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, British Petroleum, Transocean and the State of Louisiana met with media by phone and in Roberts, LA to discuss the Deepwater Horizon Well explosion on Wednesday afternoon.

Landry told media, "I have not been sugarcoating this. It is premature to say it is a catastrophe, but I will say it is serious."

The latest forecast maps indicate that some of the oil will likely reach land if the current pattern of SE winds continue. This would impact the Mississippi Delta area. A situation map produced after a flyover at 7 pm Tuesday shows the spill within 23 miles of the lower Delta, between Morgan City and New Orleans.

To date 100,000 feet of boom containment is in place along threatened shorelines, officials say. 25,000 gallons of dispersal agent has been applied to the slick and incident teams have collected 4,000 barrels of an oil/water mixture. Gulf Minerals Management Director Lars Herbst says that an undersea collection chamber will take 2-4 weeks to complete, but that drilling of a relief well will begin on Friday. As far as controlling and stopping the leak, Herbst said he does not expect it to happen "anytime soon."

There is already some debate as to the size and volume of the leak. The Coast Guard originally estimated that the well was leaking 336,000 gallons (8,000 barrels) of oil per day, but have since revised the estimate downward to 42,000 gallons (1,000 barrels). Basing estimates on available satellite data and projections charts from the Minerals Management Office, some remote sensing experts believe the actual leak may be closer to the original estimates.

No matter the exact numbers, this is a serious spill, as Landry says. On Sunday, Aaron Viles, Campaign Director of the Gulf Restoration Network flew over the spill and did not like what he saw. Most distressing was the sight of a sperm whale within the sheen area. This was confirmed at today's press conference where environmental officials said at least seven whales were seen in the impact area.

"It's critical that NOAA, the Coast Guard and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with their state partners in Mississippi and Louisiana significantly scale up their efforts to monitor, asses, and mitigate the spill impacts on marine wildlife, both in the short and very long term. BP is

footing the bill, but we need to make sure the federal and state agencies are demanding and receiving the resources they need to protect the Gulf," Viles says.

Reacting to plans to lower a containment dome, Viles is skeptical.

We have a report that the first efforts by the remote operated sub to close the blowout preventer valve have failed, but that efforts continue. If the valve fails to function, we are left with two more steps to contain, and then stop the spill. First, positioning an underwater dome over the spill site, to allow BP to vacuum up the oil more effectively, while more drilling rigs are brought into the area to drill relief wells to pump in mud and concrete and seal the well. The dome hasn't ever been used at these depths though, and the timelines for the relief well option aren't attractive. The Australian spill last year took over two months to staunch, while a similar accident in the Mexican portion of the Gulf took approximately ten months to stop.

As of Tuesday morning, the oil slick was reported to be 80 miles across and 48 miles long, and is visible from space.

The *New York Times* reports that a year ago, BP Gulf Production vice-president Richard Morrison suggested that voluntary safety standards were sufficient. "We are not supportive of the extensive, prescriptive regulations," Morrison said.

Walter Williams, long-time advocate of the Gulf wetlands and creator of the Mr. Bill character for Saturday Night Live, had a more colorful and exasperated take on the potential for environmental disaster.

"Earth spits up hundreds of millions of years worth of dinosaurs onto our shore," Williams wrote in an email after flying the spill.

For up-to-date information from New Orleans, visit the NOLA News Ladder.