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**ADMINISTRATOR JACKSON**

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**In 100 Days Obama Scored Big for Women of Color (*Women's eNews*)**

Run Date: 04/27/09
By C. Nicole Mason
WeNews commentator
President Obama will pass his 100th day in office this week, and C. Nicole Mason says the occasion gives women of color a chance to assess the enormous gains made in a short period of time.
Editor's Note: The following is a commentary. The opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the views of Women's eNews.
(WOMENSENEWS)--On April 29, President Barack Obama will mark his 100th day in office.
For women of color, it's also the time to mark a new era of political visibility and prominence.
Since he took office, Obama has appointed or nominated eight women to his cabinet or other high-level leadership positions and more than 50 percent of these nominees have been women of color. This is not only more than any other U.S. president, it's a watershed moment in the history of women of color in this country.
Hands down, the standout appointment is Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. She is a pro-labor activist from La Puente, Calif., who has served as congresswoman for the majority Latino 32nd district representing East Los Angeles for eight years. In a time of severe economic crisis and record unemployment rates, she will bring to the policymaking table an unparalleled understanding of the issues facing low-to-moderate income working families and immigrants.
Solis in Good Company
Solis is in good company. She will be joined by veteran environmental regulator Lisa P. Jackson, who will head the Environmental Protection Agency. Raised in the lower-ninth ward of New Orleans, a neighborhood ravaged by Hurricane Katrina, Jackson has called for action on climate change and global warming.
The lineup also includes noted policy expert Melody Barnes, a former lawyer and executive vice president at the Center for American Progress. As director of domestic policy, Barnes will coordinate national policymaking in the White House and advise Obama and Valerie Jarrett, White House senior advisor and chair of the newly created White House Council on Women and Girls.
The other high-profile women of color appointed by Obama are Susan Rice, former assistant secretary of state for African Affairs under President Clinton, as ambassador to the United Nations and Cassandra Butts, a former Harvard law classmate of Obama's, as deputy White House counsel.
None of the established posts have ever been held by a woman of color. The influence that these women will have on policy and the direction of the country may be enormous.

Historically Left Out

Historically, women of color have been locked out of the halls of power. Although they experience the fastest growing rate of HIV-AIDS infection of any other group at 75 percent; have infant mortality rates 2.5 times higher than their white counterparts; and are more likely to live in poverty, recent policies such as the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 and even the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 were passed without solid input from women of color.

This new cadre of women in the White House is different. They not only bring knowledge of the economy, environment, education and housing to the table, but a keen familiarity with how issues are impacting communities across race, class, gender and geographic location. They have also been empowered by the Obama Administration to shape policy and key legislation.

In addition to the historic appointments of women of color, Obama's first 100 days were good for all women.

In the throes of a spectacular financial crisis and just six days into his presidency, Obama lifted the rule that restricted U.S. aid from helping any overseas family planning agency that used its funds to support abortion in any way. While not surprising, it did send a reassuring message about Obama's intention of overturning harmful and shortsighted policies instituted over the last eight years.

Another positive signal was the new president's decision to make the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act the first piece of legislation he signed into law. The law gives women a longer time period in which to challenge unequal pay, which can be expected to help women from coast to coast and across occupations. And in his recent Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act, over $100 billion dollars are dedicated directly or indirectly to providing support to women and families.

Less than a month shy of his 100 days, lest he forgot something, Obama created the White House Council for Women and Girls, an interagency office designed to ensure that the policies and programs implemented by different federal agencies take into account the needs of women and girls. A similar office was disbanded by George W. Bush in his first 100 days in office.

With 1,360 days still left in office, the possibility of two Supreme Court nominations over the next few years, two outstanding cabinet appointments, and women still lagging behind in earnings, representation in elected office, and many fields in science and technology, Obama still has plenty more time and opportunity to keep closing the gender gap.

C. Nicole Mason, Ph.D., is a political scientist and the executive director of the Women of Color Policy Network at the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the National Council for Research on Women.

Women's eNews welcomes your comments. E-mail us at editors@womensenews.org.

**AIR**

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**Unusual coalition pushes legislation to cut emissions (*USA TODAY*)**

BY: John Fritze
WASHINGTON -- After fighting each other for decades, environmentalists and industrial businesses are working together in Congress to clear the air -- literally -- through a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

While hundreds of groups are lobbying Congress on proposed climate change legislation, the 2-year-old U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) -- which has put rivals General Electric and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) on the same page -- is having more influence than most.

Draft legislation that Democrats hope to advance next month is quot;modeled closelyquot; on the recommendations of the group, according to a summary of the measure provided by its authors. USCAP was repeatedly touted by lawmakers in hearings on the legislation last week.

quot;It's a remarkable dynamic,quot; said Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., a member of the Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment. quot;It is not lost on members of Congress that you have this coalition that touches all points of the economy.quot;

Thirty companies and non-profit organizations belong to the coalition, including Dow Chemical, Duke Energy, the Nature Conservancy and the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. Members say a united front by disparate groups will be key to approving energy policy -- particularly in the Senate, where 60 votes likely will be needed to overcome a Republican filibuster and win passage.

quot;We have to construct a system that makes sense not just environmentally but economically,quot; said Steve Cochran, director of the climate campaign for the Environmental Defense Fund, a USCAP member. quot;Doing it 'with these companies' rather than 'to these companies' makes some sense.quot;

Under the bill, the government would impose a limit on emissions -- the proposal calls for a 20% reduction from 2005 levels by 2020. Companies that exceed their pollution limit may purchase credits, or quot;allowances,quot; from other companies that cut emissions by more than required.

Over time, the cap is reduced, and companies must decide whether to invest in technology to cut emissions, purchase more power from renewable sources or buy additional allowances. Both sides get something: environmentalists, a defined cap on emissions; companies, a smooth transition and more certainty.

quot;We are in that group shoulder to shoulder with several of the country's leading environmental groups,quot; said Pacific Gas and Electric spokesman Brian Hertzog. quot;There's a lot of similarities between what we're looking to advance and what that community is looking for.quot;

Significant questions remain, such as whether the government will initially distribute the allowances to companies for free, auction them off or do a combination of both. Also unresolved is how revenue collected by the government for the allowances would be spent. Even so, a number of USCAP recommendations are now part of the draft bill:

*Companies could buy offsets by investing in reforestation or renewable energy that could be used to meet emission targets.

*Carbon polluters could quot;bank,quot; or save allowances for use in future years.

* The Environmental Protection Agency would create a reserve of allowances that would be made available if the price of the permits rose to quot;unexpectedly high levelsquot; under the system known as cap and trade.

USCAP members argue the proposal must not result in a sudden spike in costs. The EPA estimates that an average household would pay an extra $98 to $140 annually for energy under the cap-and-trade system, but some Republicans say the price tag could be significantly higher.

quot;Ultimately, it's the end user that is going to pay for this,quot; said Rep. Michael Burgess, R-Texas, an energy subcommittee member who said the companies involved with USCAP have had a quot;mixedquot; impact on the debate. quot;Those companies will simply be passing along those higher costs.quot;

USCAP may help sway moderate members of the House panel, said John Coequyt, a global-warming legislative expert with the Sierra Club, which is not a coalition member. Coequyt, who described the environmentalists in USCAP as quot;taking one for the team,quot; predicted the effort will be more difficult in the Senate.

The Sierra Club has not taken an official position on the draft bill. Though the group supports many of its provisions, including the timeline for cutting emissions, it would prefer stricter limitations on new coal plants, spokesman Josh Dorner said.

quot;They negotiated a reasonably tough deal with the other groups in USCAP, and they brought it forward at a pretty tough time,quot; Coequyt said. quot;On the other hand, the environmental groups probably signed up for something that they

might not have been willing to sign up for if they were saying what they really felt.quot;

*Lobbying expenses rise, 1A

**EPA Proposal Targets Mercury in Cement Kilns (*Washington Post*)**

By Juliet Eilperin
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, April 21, 2009 7:51 PM

The Environmental Protection Agency proposed a new rule today that would slash mercury emissions from the nation's cement kilns, the fourth-largest domestic emitters of such pollution.

The agency estimated that, when fully implemented in 2013, the proposed rule -- which is subject to a 60-day comment period -- would cut the industry's mercury emissions by 81 percent and its sulfur dioxide emissions by 90 percent. The rule would prevent between 620 and 1,600 deaths, according to the EPA, and produce annual benefits of between $4.4 billion and $11 billion while costing the nation's 100 cement kilns between $222 million and $684 million a year.

Andy O'Hare, vice president of regulatory affairs for the Portland Cement Association, said in a statement that the group was reviewing the proposal but "continues to support regulatory approaches that allow the industry to produce the cement necessary for constructing and rebuilding the nation's infrastructure in an environmentally responsible manner."

The issue of how to control the kilns' toxic emissions has been the subject of court battles dating back to the Clinton administration. Earthjustice attorney Jim Pew, who has litigated the issue for a dozen years, called the proposal "really significant. This is one of the most polluting industries in the country."

**EPA Edict Stirs Debate About Rural Emissions (*Yankton Daily Press*)**

By Lisa Hare
lisa.hare@yankton.net
Published: Monday, April 27, 2009 1:19 AM CDT
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued its proposed finding that greenhouse gases may be an endangerment to public health. Since that report was released April 17, the atmosphere has definitely heated up in the

debate over which emissions should be regulated and how it should be done.

“This finding confirms that greenhouse gas pollution is a serious problem now and for future generations,” newly appointed EPA administrator Lisa Jackson stated in a recent press release.

In 2007, the Supreme Court ordered the EPA to determine whether carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases qualify as pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

According to an EPA news release, the proposed endangerment finding is based on rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific analysis of six gases — carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride — that have been the subject of intensive analysis by scientists around the world.

The report indicates “science clearly shows that concentrations of these gases are at unprecedented levels as a result of human emissions, and these high levels are very likely the cause of the increase in average temperatures and other changes in our climate.”

This declaration could set the stage for tighter regulations on vehicles, power plants, factories and — according to Sen. John Thune, (R-S.D.) and some farm organization leaders — cattle.

The EPA estimates that U.S. cattle emit about 5.5 million metric tons of methane per year into the atmosphere, accounting for 20 percent of U.S. methane emissions.

According to Thune, the EPA’s new declaration could set the government down a “slippery slope” toward a permit process for methane emissions of cattle and other livestock. The permit process, which is actually a cap-and-trade system, according to Thune, would amount to a “cow tax.”

A cap-and-trade system sets an emissions limit — or cap- for each emitter or company. The emitter must have an “emissions permit” for every ton of carbon dioxide it releases into the atmosphere. These permits set an enforceable cap on the amount of pollution it is allowed to emit. Over time, the limits become stricter, allowing less and less pollution, until the ultimate reduction goal is met.

The “trade” comes into play when emitters that can more easily reduce their emissions below their required limit sell their extra permits to companies that are not able to make reductions as easily.

“It would be absolutely disastrous to South Dakota and our economy,” Thune said during a recent press conference.

Based on the amount of emissions produced by large livestock facilities, producers are concerned purchasing the required permits would be cost-prohibitive to their operation.

On Friday, Sen. Mike Johanns (R-Neb.) co-sponsored legislation designed to protect the U.S. livestock industry from any future “cow tax” arising from livestock emissions.

Johanns wants the Clean Air Act amended to preclude regulation of “naturally occurring” livestock emissions.

Johanns, who served as agriculture secretary during the second term of President George W. Bush, said that for a state like Nebraska, which ranks first in the nation in commercial red meat production, this EPA proposal could have “devastating consequences.”

While Thune and some are seeing red, other farm organizations are thinking green — and not just environmentally speaking.

In a recent response to the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee questionnaire on climate change, National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson said that NFU supports a national, mandatory carbon emission cap-and-trade system.

“Because agriculture and forestry lands have the potential to sequester nearly 25 percent of all annual greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, it is critical that a flexible offset program, that ensures maximum voluntary participation by the agricultural and forestry communities, is developed,” Johnson said.

He added that offset projects would be meaningful revenue streams for producers who would experience “some increase in agricultural input costs as a result of climate legislation.”

Johnson said is important for climate change legislation to allow the USDA to develop and administer the standards and verification system for an agricultural offset program, establish carbon sequestration rates based on science, and allow early actors to be eligible to participate in a new offset program.

The Farmers Union Carbon Credit Program launched in 2006 has enrolled 4.7 million acres across the country, offsetting the annual emissions of 320,000 automobiles.

Julianne Fisher, spokeswoman for Sen. Tim Johnson, (D-S.D.) said the most recent EPA findings on greenhouse gases “in no way propose a tax on livestock emissions.”

Fisher added that the new greenhouse gas declaration does not trigger, mandate or propose any new regulation, and that Congress should be responsible for any action that could be taken under the Clean Air Act.

But Thune considers the EPA declaration a back-door approach to expanding the reach of the Clean Air Act.

“If the Obama administration wants to implement climate-change legislation, they should work with Congress to do this and not find a way to go around the legislative process and use the EPA to implement these new regulations,” he said.

Johanns agrees that the EPA finding moves the potential for a cow tax “one step closer to becoming reality.”

Thune added, “The Clean Air Act was written to curb pollution from smokestack industries, not to regulate livestock production in South Dakota or elsewhere.”

The EPA’s proposed endangerment finding now enters the public comment period, which is the next step in the deliberative process EPA must undertake before issuing final findings. The proposed finding does not include any proposed regulations, though both President Obama and Administrator Jackson have repeatedly pressed the urgency for legislation to address the emissions issue.

**California adopts low carbon fuel rules (*Business Green*)**

New legislation to force fuel suppliers to provide more biofuels, hydrogen and electric car charging stations
Danny Bradbury, BusinessGreen, 27 Apri 2009
California took another step along its journey to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles last week with the adoption of new low carbon fuel rules that should cut vehicle emissions across the state by 10 per cent over the next ten years delivering 16m tonnes of greenhouse gas emission reductions by 2020.

The state's **Air Resources Board** formally adopted Governor Schwarzenegger's Low Carbon Fuel Standard last Thursday, two years after he signed an executive order calling for the regulation. It is designed to diversify the types of fuel used in the state's transportation sector, which currently contributes around 40 per cent of its carbon emissions, as well as increase the roll out of biofuels, electric charging stations and hydrogen fueling stations.

The rules are based on a **credit** system that assigns more credits to lower-carbon fuels, and fewer credits to higher-carbon alternatives. Fuels are assessed on their carbon intensity - the amount of carbon emitted during the fuel's production and usage - and the efficiency of the vehicle in which they are used.

Under the regulation, providers, refiners, importers and blenders will be obliged to ensure that the fuels they provide meet an average declining standard of "carbon intensity", effectively forcing them to invest in low carbon fuels.

The assessments for different 'fuel pathways' have been calculated by the Board, and will be published in a lookup table that can be used by fuel producers and importers.

"The new standard means we can begin to break our century-old dependence on petroleum and provide California with greater energy security," said ARB Chairman Mary D. Nichols. "The drive to force the market toward greater use of alternative fuels will be a boon to the state's economy and public health - it reduces air pollution, creates new jobs and continues California's **leadership** in the fight against global warming."

The regulation technically comes into effect next year, but the first year will be a "break in" reporting year, according to the regulation. In addition to carbon dioxide, emissions of other greenhouse gases including nitrous oxide and methane can be included under certain circumstances.

The state is still awaiting a decision on the Environmental Protection Agency's reconsideration of its waiver denial. In March last year, the Agency denied the state the right to waive federal fuel emissions standards in favour of more stringent standards on vehicle fuel efficiency. However, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum asking the EPA to reconsider the waiver earlier this year, and it held a hearing on March 5 to discuss the issue.

Monday, April 27, 2009

**Warmer temps mean bad air quality (*Worcester Telegram*)**

Area residents urged to curtail activities
Caleigh, 2, during a New England Backpacker kayak demonstration. (T&G Staff/RICK CINCLAIR)
By Scott J. Croteau TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
scroteau@telegram.com
Ejoy the good weather now. Weather forecasts have the temperature dropping back into the low 60s by the middle of the week.

But as people head out in the warm weather over the next couple of days, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warns people to be aware of air quality. Warmer weather adds an increased risk of ground-level ozone and fine particle pollution, which, when combined, causes smog.

“Air pollution is a significant public health threat in New England,” Ira Leighton, acting regional administrator of EPA’s New England Office, said in a news release. “People need to pay close attention to air quality warnings and limit strenuous outdoor activity on air quality alert days. In addition, we can all take individual actions to reduce the air pollution that contributes to this public health risk.”

Today marks the beginning of Air Quality Awareness Week, which involves state, federal and the National Weather Service reminding the public about the need to pay attention to air quality.

Yesterday people enjoyed a sunny mid-80s day during the afternoon and today it is supposed to drop down to the mid-70s. Tomorrow will go back up to the high 80s, but that’s it, with forecasts predicting the temperature to drop back down to the 60s starting Wednesday.

Daily air quality reports are being issued by the state Department of Environmental Protection. The air quality reports can be found on the state agency’s main Web page at www.mass.gov/dep/ on the air monitoring section.

Poor air quality can affect anybody, but children and adults who are active outdoors, along with people with respiratory diseases such as asthma, can be more sensitive to poor air quality, the EPA said.

“When air quality is predicted to be unhealthy, EPA and the states will announce an air quality alert for the affected areas,” the news release said. “EPA recommends that people in these areas limit strenuous outdoor activity and EPA asks that on these days, citizens and businesses take actions that will help reduce air pollution and protect the public health.”

The EPA made the following suggestions to reduce air pollution:

•Use public transportation or walk when possible.

•Combine errands when driving, or carpool.

•Use less electricity by turning air conditioners to a higher temperature and turn unused appliances and lights off.

•Avoid using gas-powered engines such as lawn mowers, chainsaws and leaf blowers during unhealthy air days.

**Iowans Urged to “Be Air Aware” This Week (*Public News Service*)**

April 27, 2009

Des Moines, IA – This is Air Quality Awareness Week, with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Weather Service and environmental groups urging Iowans to become "Air Aware." Amy Broadmoore, air quality program director with the non-profit Iowa Environmental Council, says her organization recently brought together a range of air quality experts from across the state, including professors and government employees, to identify Iowa's primary air quality concerns.

"This group agreed that the main air quality concerns here are greenhouse gas emissions; ammonia pollution – Iowa has some of the highest atmospheric ammonia concentrations in the country - along with emissions from livestock facilities; and fine particulate matter pollution – several areas in eastern Iowa have fine particulate matter concentrations right now that are near to or exceeding the Clean Air Act's fine particulate matter standard."

Broadmoore says there are steps Iowans can take to reduce pollution and protect the state's air quality.

"One: improving energy efficiency; Iowans have been increasing their energy use at a rate that far outpaces other people in the Midwest and the United States as a whole. Two: reducing fine particulate matter emissions from industrial sources and getting rid of old Diesel engines. And three: reducing emissions of air pollutants from agriculture, by improving manure management and by using nitrogen fertilizer more judiciously."

Broadmoore says Air Quality Awareness Week is an opportunity to educate residents about what can and should be done to protect Iowa's air quality. The week of April 27th was selected so that the observance would coincide with the 2009 ozone forecasting season.

More information is at www.iaenvironment.org
David Law/Dick Layman, Public News Service – IA

**Agency Provides Free Alerts on New England Air Quality (*EP Magazine*)**

April 27, 2009
Today is the beginning of Air Quality Awareness Week, a cooperative effort among U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state environmental agencies, and the National Weather Service, to remind the public to protect their health by paying attention to local air quality.

"Air pollution is a significant public health threat in New England," said Ira Leighton, acting regional administrator of EPA's New England Office. "People

need to pay close attention to air quality warnings and limit strenuous outdoor activity on air quality alert days. In addition, we can all take individual actions to reduce the air pollution that contributes to this public health risk."

Air quality forecasts are issued daily by the New England state air agencies. Current air quality conditions and next day forecasts for New England are available at EPA's **Web site**. People can also sign up to receive "Air Quality Alerts." These free alerts, provided by the federal agency in cooperation with the New England states, automatically notify participants by e-mail or text message when high concentrations of ground-level ozone or fine particles are predicted in their area.

Warm summer temperatures aid in the formation of ground-level ozone and fine particle pollution. Last summer, the agency strengthened the ozone air quality health standard. The new ozone standard is set at 0.075 parts per million (ppm) on an 8-hour average basis. Air quality alerts are issued when ozone concentrations exceed, or are predicted to exceed, this new standard. EPA New England posts a list of exceedances of the ozone standard, by date and monitor location, on its Web site.

When air quality is predicted to be unhealthy, EPA and the states will announce an air quality alert for the affected areas. The federal agency asks that on these days, citizens and businesses take actions that will help reduce air pollution and protect the public health. Everyone can reduce air pollution through the following actions:

## ASBESTOS

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### Asbestos remains hazard in schools (*Philly Burbs*)

By: JO CIAVAGLIA
Bucks County Courier Times
At least six asbestos release accidents have occurred in local schools in the last five years.
What started as a nice gesture - a business loaning professional lights for a local high school production - turned into an environmental alarm that cost thousands of dollars after the installation damaged an asbestos ceiling.
More disturbing is that the March episode at Bristol Borough Junior Senior High School wouldn't have happened had the district's asbestos management plan not been ignored.

Materials containing asbestos, a potentially hazardous mineral that can cause serious lung illnesses if inhaled, shouldn't be disturbed without involving an asbestos expert, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"The bottom line is anytime you're dealing with asbestos materials, where you are going to be disturbing them, you definitely have to work with a certified asbestos contractor," said Donna Heron, a regional EPA spokeswoman responsible for air quality issues.

But such accidents occur more often than most people believe, one local asbestos consultant said.

In February, a contractor doing wiring work in Morrisville Middle-Senior High School drilled into a wall containing asbestos, prompting a one-day school closure, cleanup and environmental testing. Five years ago, Bristol had a "fiber release" in the same high school auditorium ceiling after water damage resulted in the asbestos sagging and flaking.

In all of the recent incidents, air quality tests found no asbestos fibers present, according to district officials. At least three other asbestos accidents have occurred in local schools in the last five years.

Schools don't have to notify the EPA when asbestos is damaged, though the federal agency is responsible for overseeing asbestos management.

Federal law requires air-quality testing following an asbestos repair or removal activity. This is done by measuring the amount of asbestos in the air in and near where the asbestos was disturbed.

The potential for long-term health effects of small exposures is considered remote, but also unclear, asbestos experts say.

Seussical scare

Most Bucks County public schools - especially ones built before the 1980s - contain some asbestos materials such as pipe insulation, floor or ceiling tiles, according to a survey of local district administrators.

For decades, asbestos was used for thermal insulation, soundproofing and fireproofing. The material consists of microscopic bundles of fibers that, when released into the air, can be inhaled. Once asbestos fibers are lodged in the lungs, they're there to stay.

With repeated exposure, inhaled fibers can accumulate and cause scarring and inflammation, which can affect breathing. That can lead to asbestos-related respiratory diseases and cancers that typically appear 15 to 30 years after the initial exposure.

Since 1986, U.S. schools have been required under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act to regularly monitor and inspect asbestos-containing materials and prepare management plans to prevent or reduce safety hazards.

The most recent incident, in Bristol, is believed to have occurred "around" March 5, after a company paid to install loaned theater lights for a production of "Seussical the Musical," according to district business manager Joe Roe. The show, which was scheduled to open that weekend, was postponed because of the asbestos scare.

The incident occurred after adult volunteers requested permission from Principal Tom Shaffer to have the loaned lights installed by a lighting company, according to Roe and the district's written account of the event. Shaffer reportedly approved the request by the volunteers. Neither the volunteers nor the installers they hired were identified by the school district.

Since the ceiling contained asbestos, Shaffer told the volunteers that the school's head maintenance man, who's responsible for the building's asbestos management plans, must be consulted before any work was done, Roe said.

But the lights were installed while the maintenance chief was out due to a family death, Roe said. When he returned to work March 6, he discovered the lights had been installed and immediately reported it to Shaffer, who initiated abatement measures, Roe said.

Besides the 7,200-square-foot auditorium ceiling, the high school also has asbestos in about 1,200 square feet of ceiling in the auditorium lobby and in floor tiles throughout the building, according to its asbestos emergency response plan.

It's unclear if parents or students were in the auditorium when the lights were installed or if the workers who installed the lights were told about the presence of asbestos. Shaffer hasn't responded to interview requests regarding the incident.

The Parents Alumni Students Theatrical Association referred questions about the incident to the play's director, Adam Goldstein. He declined to identify the lighting company paid to install the lights, but said the drilling was the result of a series of miscommunications among him, school administrators and maintenance staff.

Goldstein also declined to say exactly when the drilling took place, but indicated it was shortly before the play was to begin. "There was no asbestos exposure. There was no harm at any point to the kids. The kids were not exposed to the hazardous material," he said.

The installers drilled in three places in the auditorium ceiling, said Ron Schwebel of the Jamison-based Suburban Energy and Environmental Consultants, the district's longtime asbestos consultant. He said less than three square feet of asbestos material was disturbed, which is considered a minor release under EPA standards.

When the damage was discovered, students had the day off. Teachers who were attending a professional development day at the school were moved to nearby Warren Snyder-Girotti Elementary. Abatement cleanup crews were dispatched to secure the damaged area.

Air quality tests were conducted throughout the school. The total cost for the cleanup and air testing is anticipated below $10,000, Roe said.

An asbestos abatement crew removed the lights and fixed at least three, four- to six-inch metal plates over the drill openings, Schwebel said. The crew also cleaned the loaned lights which were used in the "Seussical" production after they were attached to a hydraulic lift, he said.

Air quality tests revealed no detectable presence of asbestos in the air, Schwebel said. Under EPA standards, a release of 0.01 asbestos fibers per cubic centimeter or less is considered insignificant, Schwebel said.

That no fibers were detected is significant because, even if workers cleaned the debris and dust, asbestos fibers are lighter than air and would remain airborne for up to three days, Schwebel said.

Lots of 'ifs'

In his career, Schwebel says he has seen a number of similar minor asbestos accidents in Pennsylvania and New Jersey schools. Typically, they happen because contractors don't ask about the school's asbestos plan, Schwebel said.

The biggest school violators are communications workers who install fiber optics, cable and telephone, according to Schwebel, who said many times these workers are overconfident about handling asbestos and get sloppy.

Complicating matters is that asbestos-related health problems can take decades to develop.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Cancer Society and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration haven't established minimum safe, non-occupational asbestos exposure levels. Available scientific studies on the health affects involve repeated, long-term and occupational exposure levels.

There are no definitive studies of health risks associated with short-term or isolated exposures in animals or humans, according Heron, the EPA spokeswoman. Standard medical toxicology textbooks don't provide treatment information following a short-term asbestos exposure.

A chest X-ray can't detect the presence of asbestos fibers, but it can detect early signs of asbestos-related lung diseases, according to the EPA.

**April 27, 2009 02:00 AM**

**CLIMATE CHANGE / GLOBAL WARMING**

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APRIL 27, 2009, 12:24 A.M. ET
Climate Change

**Obama Aims for a Global Consensus (*Wall Street Journal*)**

By STEPHEN POWER
The Obama administration takes a crack at forging consensus on how to fight climate change, when the State Department hosts the "Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate" this week in Washington.
The meeting, called for by President Barack Obama last month, seeks to reinvigorate a process that began under George W. Bush but that was seen by much of the world as lacking credibility because of Mr. Bush's refusal to support economy-wide curbs on U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions.

The clock is ticking on Mr. Obama to show he can produce results. In December, governments from around the world meet in Denmark to forge a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, a 1997 agreement that established legally binding commitments by participating nations to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.

Mr. Obama, as a presidential candidate, said his election would be remembered as "the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal." But in recent weeks, some members of his party have balked at the leading proposal in Congress to curb greenhouse-gas emissions. Friday, the longest-serving member of the House of Representatives, Rep. John Dingell (D., Mich.), called the proposal "a tax, and...a great big one."

Meanwhile, Mr. Obama's aides are trying to manage the world's expectations of what he can deliver. In an interview last week, Todd Stern, the top U.S. negotiator of international climate-change agreements, pointed to the recent economic-stimulus package, which contained tens of billions of dollars for low-carbon energy, and moves by the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse-gas emissions from automobiles, as evidence that the new administration is moving swiftly to combat climate change.

At the same time, Mr. Stern, who will be leading this week's talks, said he is telling fellow diplomats that "what the U.S. is going to do in terms of commitments to reducing greenhouse gases is going to fundamentally be framed by what Congress does." This week's talks aren't likely to produce any breakthroughs, he

said, but rather a chance for governments to engage one another in a more informal, intimate way than is possible during the larger, noisier proceedings organized by the United Nations.

"I'm not actually making promises that are unaligned with what's going on" on Capitol Hill, Mr. Stern says. Referring to Kyoto -- a pact he helped fashion as a member of the Clinton administration but that President Bill Clinton never submitted to the U.S. Senate for ratification -- Mr. Stern says, "International action unaligned with our domestic congressional action environment is a route we've tried before, and it didn't work."

**Write to** Stephen Power at stephen.power@wsj.com

**Catch 22: Regulating Climate Change During a Recession (*New University Online*)**

by Neil Thakor
Volume 42, Issue 26 | Apr 27 2009

In 2007, in the decision of Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the court ordered the agency to determine whether heat-trapping gasses harmed the environment and/or public health. The agency's findings were unanimous in determining that heat-trapping gases caused incredible harm to both the environment and to public health.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration suppressed the work of the EPA and took no action to remedy the findings. President Barack Obama, in his first days in office, promised to examine the case and act accordingly if the findings were justified. After four months in office, he came through on his promise. On April 17, the EPA declared that carbon dioxide and five other heat-trapping gases to be pollutants that endanger public health and welfare. However, now it may be too late to act.

The findings of the EPA will set in motion a process that will regulate the use of fossil fuels as well as carbon emissions for the first time in the United States. These regulations would eventually result in the U.S. becoming one of the foremost leaders in regulating carbon emissions and other pollutants. Energy companies will be forced to invest in alternative forms of energy besides crude oil. There will be an incredible push in the U.S. for cleaner energy. Sounds great, right? Wrong.

The process of transitioning to cleaner energy will be expensive —too expensive for our current economic situation. Had President George Bush not suppressed the EPA's findings and regulated carbon emissions appropriately back in 2007,

the U.S. would have been able to make the necessary strides toward cleaner energy. In fact, had the U.S. acted earlier, the new market of cleaner energy would have been developed enough to help the economy. New jobs would be created, businesses would transition to cleaner energy alternatives and the massive amounts of money invested in cleaner energy would have helped stimulate the economy. Unfortunately, one could argue it is too late to develop a market for cleaner energy.

Regulating carbon emissions or transitioning into a market of cleaner energy, without question, means higher energy bills for tax payers. The regulation would call for heavier taxes not only on the American public but also on corporations as well. At the same time, a transition to cleaner energy will actually kill jobs invested in the fossil fuel market. Environmentalists and Democrats have argued to the contrary and stated that this new market of cleaner energy has potential to, in fact, create new jobs — and they are correct. However, in order for these new jobs to be created, an enormous amount of taxpayer dollars are needed to fund this new market. With the daunting economic collapse, raised income taxes and loss of jobs, Americans do not need – and cannot handle – another economic strain.

That being said, the U.S. still has a very real problem on its hands: the incredible reliance it has on fossil fuels. Our use of fossil fuels is harmful to the environment and public health. Furthermore, the U.S. has been subject to relentless international criticisms for trailing behind other modernized nations in regulating carbon emissions. For instance, the U.S. has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

Even more disturbing, eventually the bad environment will hurt the economy as well; in simple terms, the damaged environment will eventually have a detrimental effect on many other resources in this world, including fossil fuels. For example, it is estimated that the fishing market will go dry in 2050 due to global warming. No matter how you look at it, from a social, political or economic standpoint, we need to begin to do something to solve this crisis.

The solution: a gradual process to regulate carbon emissions. State legislatures should begin regulating carbon emissions and begin gradually transitioning to cleaner energy. States such as California need to hold back on heavy regulations until its economy gets back on track. By no means does this imply California or other economically weak states should be exempted from making the transition toward cleaner air. However, for these states, now is probably not the best time to regulate.

It is a tough balancing act for the Obama administration. On one hand, it cannot afford to do the best thing for the environment by immediately regulating carbon emissions and transitioning to cleaner energy, simply because our economic crisis will not allow it. On the other hand, it cannot afford to sit back and allow the U.S. to continue to damage the environment unregulated. The Obama

administration needs to regulate carbon emissions to the extent that the American public can handle the economic strain it brings. Unfortunately for the U.S., and the environment, that won't be much.

Neil Thakor is a first-year political science major. He can be reached at nthakore@uci.edu.

April 27, 2009
Volume 87, Number 17
p. 5
Congress/

**Shaping Policy On Climate Change (*Chemical & Engineering News*)**

Auctioning versus giving away emission allowances remains unsettled
Cheryl Hogue
IN PREPARATION to move a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade bill soon—and to make Environmental Protection Agency regulation of such gases unnecessary—the House Energy & Commerce Committee heard from a panoply of interested parties last week. The 67 witnesses discussed how best to lower emissions and operate an emissions-trading program.
*EPA may regulate $CO_2$ and five other greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act.*

In a three-day marathon of hearings, the panel heard from business leaders, including representatives of the chemical and petroleum industries, who have drafted a blueprint for U.S. climate policy. Other witnesses came from automakers, electric utilities, state regulatory agencies, environmental organizations, unions, and an interfaith group. The panel also heard from the secretaries of energy and transportation, as well as the EPA administrator.

The hearings focused on a draft bill released earlier this month by Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.) and Energy & Environment Subcommittee Chairman Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) (C&EN, April 6, page 6). The draft legislation would cap the amount of industrial carbon dioxide releases permitted in the U.S. and require businesses to hold allowances for the amount they emit. Those allowances could be bought and sold in an open market.

A crucial issue debated at the hearings is what portion of the emission allowances would be auctioned and how many would be given away by the federal government in a process called allocation.

President Barack Obama has called for a 100% auction of allowances to generate revenue to help families and businesses transition to a low-carbon economy. But the President has not pushed this position. Many in Congress and industry contend that coal-fired utilities and energy-intensive industries that face tough foreign competition, such as chemical manufacturing and steelmaking, need allowances given to them, at least in the early years of the program.

The Waxman-Markey draft bill, meanwhile, is silent on the auction-versus-allocation issue, presumably to allow a more wide-ranging debate. Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas), the top Republican on the Energy & Commerce Committee, said the lack of clarity creates the opportunity for lobbyists in favor of free allowances to sway votes.

Regardless of how many allowances are auctioned or initially given away, they would sell for $13 to $17 per metric ton of $CO_2$ equivalent in 2015, according to an EPA analysis of the draft Waxman-Markey bill. It estimates the price would rise to $17 to $22 per ton in 2020.

For several weeks, House lawmakers have articulated plans to move climate legislation this year, but they now have a new incentive for action, supplied by EPA. In mid-April, the agency took the first step toward regulating greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act, a situation that Congress wants to keep from happening.

That step was an EPA proposal determining that emissions of $CO_2$ and five other greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare. The agency made the proposed determination in response to a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court ruling (C&EN, April 9, 2007, page 9).

If finalized, EPA's so-called endangerment finding would require the agency to regulate releases of $CO_2$, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

But Congress and the Obama Administration, backed by businesses, agree that the job of curbing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change is best handled by federal legislators rather than EPA.

Waxman and Markey are expected to formally introduce their climate bill this week.

**More hot air on global warming (*The Virginian-Pilot*)**

Norfolk, Virginia

The gulf  between the scientific community and certain parts of Washington was never more evident than a recent morning, when House Minority Leader John Boehner cleared his throat on a TV talk show and passed judgment on an Environmental Protection Agency announcement a couple of days earlier.

To the vast majority of scientists and many Americans - including the U.S. Supreme Court - the formal declaration by the EPA was a long-overdue statement of the obvious: Emissions of carbon dioxide and five other heat-trapping, industrial emissions are threats to public health and welfare and can be regulated under the Clean Air Act.

But Boehner, echoing the official line of the Bush administration for so many years, was derisive. He told his interviewer that "the idea that carbon dioxide is a carcinogen that is harmful to our environment is almost comical. Every time we exhale, we exhale carbon dioxide. Every cow in the world, you know, when they do what they do, you've got more carbon dioxide."

Never mind that the EPA's announcement had nothing to do with carcinogens. Never mind that the carbon dioxide emissions in question are from autos, power plants and industries, not human mouths. And never mind that the worrisome gas in cow "emissions" is methane.

Fortunately, the Obama administration and its new leadership at the EPA are taking the threat of droughts, wildfires, rising sea levels and ecosystem damage more seriously than Boehner and his predecessors.

The EPA's formal decision - two years after the Supreme Court declared that the Clean Air Act applied to greenhouse gases - sets the stage for the United States to join European nations, Japan and others in regulating carbon emissions. And it gives the United States some standing in its push for other nations, notably China, to do the same.

The Obama administration has expressed a preference for setting standards for autos, coal-fired power plants and industrial sites through legislative action, which would allow for greater flexibility than EPA-imposed regulatory steps.

The Democratic majority in Congress should heed the warnings of Republican leaders who, unlike Boehner, understand and recognize the threat of global warming and are proposing a more gradual transition to ease the burden of compliance on recession-embattled industries and consumers.

But, with the EPA's decision, the nation can now move forward with the inevitable. Congress must begin the hard work of reducing carbon emissions and, in the process, accelerating research and investment in alternative energy sources.

For the sake of the environment, national security and the economy, America needs to make a transition from its self-destructive reliance on fossil fuels. We're long past the day we can afford to listen to Boehner-caliber politicians who expend carbon dioxide arguing that such a transition isn't necessary.

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**EDITORIAL / COMMENTARY / OP ED / LETTERS**

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**Selling The Green Economy (*Washington Post*)**

By Robert J. Samuelson
Few things are more appealing in politics than something for nothing. As Congress begins considering anti-global-warming legislation, environmentalists hold out precisely that tantalizing prospect: We can conquer global warming at virtually no cost. Here's a typical claim, from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF):

quot;For about a dime a day [per person], we can solve climate change, invest in a clean energy future, and save billions in imported oil.quot;

This sounds too good to be true, because it is. About four-fifths of the world's and America's energy comes from fossil fuels -- oil, coal, natural gas -- which are also the largest source of man-made carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), the main greenhouse gas. The goal is to eliminate fossil fuels or suppress their $CO_2$. The bill now being considered in the House would mandate a 42 percent decline in greenhouse emissions by 2030 from 2005 levels and an 83 percent drop by 2050.

Re-engineering the world energy system seems an almost impossible undertaking. Just consider America's energy needs in 2030, as estimated by the Energy Information Administration (EIA). Compared with 2007, the United States is projected to have almost 25 percent more people (375 million), an economy about 70 percent larger ($20 trillion) and 27 percent more light-duty vehicles (294 million). Energy demand will be strong.

But the EIA also assumes greater conservation and use of renewables. From 2007 to 2030, solar power grows 18 times, wind six times. New cars and light trucks get 50 percent better gas mileage. Light bulbs and washing machines become more efficient. Higher energy prices discourage use; by 2030, oil is $130 a barrel in today's dollars. For all that, U.S. $CO_2$ emissions in 2030 are projected

to be 6.2 billion metric tons, 4 percent higher than in 2007. As an example, solar and wind together would still supply only about 5 percent of electricity, because they must expand from a tiny base.

To comply with the House bill, CO2 emissions would have to be about 3.5 billion tons. The claims of the Environmental Defense Fund and other environmentalists that this reduction can occur cheaply rely on economic simulations by quot;general equilibriumquot; models. An Environmental Protection Agency study put the cost as low as $98 per household a year, because high energy prices are partly offset by government rebates. With 2.5 people in the average household, that's roughly 11 cents a day per person.

The trouble is that these models embody wildly unrealistic assumptions: There are no business cycles; the economy is always at quot;full employmentquot;; strong growth is assumed, based on past growth rates; the economy automatically accommodates major changes -- if fossil fuel prices rise (as they would under anti-global-warming laws), consumers quickly use less and new supplies of quot;clean energyquot; magically materialize.

There's no problem and costs are low, because the models say so. But the real world, of course, is different. Half the nation's electricity comes from coal. The costs of quot;carbon capture and sequestrationquot; -- storing CO2 underground -- are uncertain, and if the technology can't be commercialized, coal plants will continue to emit or might need to be replaced by nuclear plants. Will Americans support a doubling or tripling of nuclear power? Could technical and construction obstacles be overcome in a timely way? Paralysis might lead to power brownouts or blackouts, which would penalize economic growth.

Countless practical difficulties would arise in trying to wean the U.S. economy from today's fossil fuels. One estimate done by economists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that meeting most transportation needs in 2050 with locally produced biofuels would require quot;500 million acres of U.S. land -- more than the total of current U.S. cropland.quot; America would have to become a net food importer.

In truth, models have a dismal record of predicting major economic upheavals or their consequences. They didn't anticipate the present economic crisis. They didn't predict the run-up in oil prices to almost $150 a barrel last year. In the 1970s, they didn't foresee runaway inflation. quot;General equilibriumquot; models can help evaluate different policy proposals by comparing them against a common baseline. But these models can't tell us how the economy will look in 10 or 20 years because so much is assumed or ignored -- growth rates; financial and geopolitical crises; major bottlenecks; crippling inflation or unemployment.

The selling of the green economy involves much economic make-believe. Environmentalists not only maximize the dangers of global warming -- from rising

sea levels to advancing tropical diseases -- they also minimize the costs of dealing with it. Actually, no one involved in this debate really knows what the consequences or costs might be. All are inferred from models of uncertain reliability. Great schemes of economic and social engineering are proposed on shaky foundations of knowledge. Candor and common sense are in scarce supply.

**More crop for the drop (*Los Angeles Times*)**

Scientists can breed drought-resistant plants; government's the problem.

By Henry I. Miller, Henry I. Miller, a physician and molecular biologist, is a fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution.
America's politicians and government officials have been slow to grasp the importance of societal resilience -- the ability to recover from or adapt to adversity. Sufficient resilience can minimize the risks of major, debilitating disruptions -- whether they be economic ones, such as the current recession, or unavoidable natural disasters.

Take the ability to cope with droughts, for example. Science, technology and intelligent planning cannot eliminate them, but they can mitigate their effects. Or at least they could, if only federal policymakers and local regulations permitted it.

Gene-splicing, sometimes called genetic modification, offers plant breeders the tools to make old crop plants do spectacular new things. In the United States and two dozen other countries, farmers are using gene-spliced crop varieties to produce higher yields, with lower inputs and reduced environmental impact.

In spite of research being hampered by resistance from activists and discouraged by governmental over-regulation, gene-spliced crop varieties are slowly but surely trickling out of the development pipeline in many parts of the world. Most of these new varieties are designed to be resistant to pests and diseases, or to be resistant to herbicides, so that farmers can more effectively control weeds while adopting more environment-friendly no-till farming practices and more benign herbicides. Other varieties possess improved nutritional quality. But the greatest boon of all, to food security and to the environment in the long term, may be the ability of new crop varieties to tolerate periods of drought and other water-related stresses.

Where water is scarce, the development of crop varieties that grow under conditions of low moisture or temporary drought could boost yields and lengthen the time that farmland is productive. Even where irrigation is feasible, plants that use water more efficiently are needed. Agriculture accounts for about 70% of the world's freshwater consumption -- and more in areas of intensive farming and

arid or semi-arid conditions, such as in California. So the introduction of plants that grow with less water would free up much of that essential resource for other uses.

Plant biologists have identified genes that regulate water use and transferred them into important crop plants. These new varieties grow with smaller amounts of water or with lower-quality water, such as recycled water or water high in natural mineral salts. In 2004, for example, Egyptian researchers showed that by transferring a single gene from barley to wheat, the plants can tolerate reduced watering for a longer period of time. This new, drought-resistant variety requires only one-eighth as much irrigation as conventional wheat, and in some deserts can be cultivated with rainfall alone.

Aside from new varieties that have lower water requirements, pest- and disease-resistant gene-spliced crop varieties also make water use more efficient indirectly. Because much of the loss to insects and diseases occurs after the plants are fully grown, the use of gene-spliced varieties that have higher post-harvest yields means that the farming (and irrigation) of fewer plants can produce the same total amount of food. We get more crop for the drop.

However, unscientific and overly burdensome regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in this country -- and by national regulators and the United Nations elsewhere -- has raised the cost of producing new plant varieties and kept potentially important crops off the market. This deeply entrenched, discriminatory and excessive regulation -- which flies in the face of scientific consensus that gene-splicing is basically an extension of earlier crop improvement methods -- adds tens of millions of dollars to the development costs of new gene-spliced crop varieties. Higher costs and the endless controversy translate to fewer products in the pipeline and fewer companies competing to make them. Less competition means higher prices.

California offers a stark lesson in how wrongheaded public policy can impair resilience. Although severe drought afflicts much of California, over the last few years four of the state's counties have banned the cultivation or sale of gene-spliced plants, including those that are drought-resistant.

If individually and collectively we are to meet economic, environmental and public health challenges, we need plenty of options and opportunities for innovation -- and the wealth to pursue them. In society, as in evolutionary biology, survival demands resilience. But in large and small ways, unimaginative, shortsighted politicians and venal activists have conspired to limit our options, constrain economic growth and make real solutions elusive.

**There goes Goldberg again (*Los Angeles Times*)**

April 27, 2009 Monday
Home Edition
Editorial pages Desk; Part A; Pg. 20

Re quot;Belch, there goes democracy,quot; Opinion, April 21

Does Jonah Goldberg expect us to be shocked -- shocked! -- that the Environmental Protection Agency can regulate our air?

He objects to an quot;undemocraticquot; Supreme Court decision, but the court was only clarifying laws passed by a more democratic organization called quot;Congressquot; that Goldberg seems to be unaware of.

He may not think that **global warming** needs immediate action, but fortunately, decisions about that are made by scientists who have devoted their careers to this issue. And yes, it was Congress that gave them that authority.

Miguel Munoz

Los Angeles

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If I understand Goldberg's thrust correctly, he's worried that the **EPA** will soon be able to autonomously regulate (and therefore tax) greenhouse gas emissions, thereby preempting and subverting the democratic process.

He may have a point. I mean, why should so-called experts be able to dictate government policy just because they're smart and well-informed?

We're Americans, and we deserve a vote, no matter how ignorant we are of the facts. Come to think of it, why stop at greenhouse gases? Let's put everything to a vote: Vioxx, DDT, seat belts, leaky breast implants and cars with exploding gas tanks.

It's time to take the power of government regulation away from all those alarmist, elitist eggheads and give it back to the people ... people like you, me and Jonah Goldberg.

Eric Gardner

Redondo Beach

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When it comes to government oversight and regulation, Goldberg has apparently forgotten how the Bush administration regulated whatever it could, including, among other things, a woman's right to choose, who could marry whom and even what people could say about its policies, claiming that it was unpatriotic to criticize the government.

Goldberg's statement that the **EPA** now has quot;the power to regulate everythingquot; is nonsense, of course, but what it will regulate will be of benefit to the world at large.

I'll take that kind of regulation any day.

Elizabeth Thompson

Coronado

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Goldberg demonstrates once again his readiness to hate any idea, provided only that it arise from the Obama administration.

With an eye toward what he looks at as a grab for power, and apparently eager to protect his own writings, he scornfully looks on the **Environmental Protection Agency's** recent announcement as an attempt to control quot;all that ... passes gas.quot;

Dear Times, you recently asked your readers to help you decide which comic strip to add to the roster. May I humbly suggest a more important poll, one that will help you decide whether you should discard Goldberg's hateful opinions?

Lou Charloff

Encino

**We've got the green light (*Boston Globe*)**

By Seth Kaplan,

WHEN IT COMES to fighting **global warming,** these are - to use a tired but accurate phrase - the best of times and the worst of times.

They are the worst of times because the increasingly clear and terrifying science tells us that we have started to pass the point of no return. Human interference in the climate has reached the point where real harm is occurring and will continue to get worse. Only the willfully blind insist that every major national academy of science and every relevant professional association of scientists is wrong and that humanity is not changing the climate.

The question, according to our best scientists, is how quickly will we slow the increase of, and then reduce, the emissions that are damaging our climate. How much harm are we going to inflict on ourselves, our children, future generations, and the entire natural world?

However, these are the best of times because this monumental challenge is finally the subject of serious debate in Washington. Pronouncements emanate from the White House about the need to enact energy legislation with a major climate component, and the administration has made clear that it will take action even if Congress will not - with authority recently reaffirmed by the US Supreme Court. Congressional debate of Representatives Edward Markey and Henry Waxman's climate bill is heating up with full support of congressional leadership. Each represents major progress toward finally addressing this most fundamental of problems.

Seizing this moment will mean doing a number of very difficult things all at the same time. Here are just a few of the most essential.

First, we must realize that deep and rapid change is needed, and commit to corresponding action. At the outset, this must take the form of a cap on greenhouse gas emissions that dictates quick and aggressive reduction of these dangerous emissions. Science tells us we need to reduce our emissions of the greenhouse gases causing **global warming** at least 80 percent by 2050. If we delay meaningful action and only reduce emissions by 5 percent over the next five years, the curve we will need to travel to meet that goal will require that in 30 years we will need to be reducing emissions by 25 percent every five years. Foisting this daunting challenge onto our children because we won't make tough choices now would be cowardly and profoundly unfair - we must not do it.

This need for speed contradicts the advice of those who counsel against quick action on the basis that fighting **global warming** is a marathon not a sprint - advice that ignores the truth that great marathoners maintain a fast and consistent pace from start to finish.

Second, we need to learn from early models like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the landmark program regulating carbon dioxide emissions from fossil-fuel-fired power plants in Northeastern states. These efforts tell us that if we do this right, we can greatly reduce the cost of a program through an increase in efficiency efforts. Reducing electricity, heating, and cooling loads (and bills) in

our homes, offices, and buildings, and our consumption of gasoline by making our transportation system more efficient, can be accelerated if we auction, instead of doling out for free, the pollution allowances that are the heart of a cap-and-trade program. Then we must invest the auction proceeds in efficiency efforts.

Efficiency in buildings can be as simple as upgrading heating and cooling systems and installing insulation and new lighting fixtures. Revamping our transportation system will mean investing in transit-friendly urban communities, building new rail systems, and investing in operating funds to pay bus and train drivers and mechanics.

Providing funding for the massive national effort that will be needed to make our society and economy far more efficient and provide green jobs, clean energy, and transportation choices can be a welcome side effect of a program that finally and courageously takes on the fundamental challenge of **global warming.**

The only question is whether we have the guts, the will, and the intelligence to seize the moment and make this vision real.

Seth Kaplan is the vice president for climate advocacy at the Conservation Law Foundation.

**Price of carbon too high to ignore (*Houston Chronicle*)**

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
New York Times
April 26, 2009, 7:46PM
It is not an exaggeration to say that the team that President Barack Obama appointed to promote his green agenda is nothing short of outstanding — a great combination of scientists and policymakers committed to building an energy economy that is efficient, clean and secure. Now there is only one vacancy left for him to fill. And it's one that only he can fill: Green President. Is he ready to do that job with the passion and fight that will be required to transform America's energy future? Hope so. Not sure yet.

Have no doubt, the president is off to a terrific start: His stimulus package will provide an incredible boost for all forms of renewable energy. The energy bill being drafted by House Democrats Henry Waxman and Ed Markey contains unprecedented incentives for energy efficiency and clean-tech innovation. And the ruling from Obama's Environmental Protection Agency saying that carbon dioxide is a pollutant that threatens public health was courageous and historic.

But while all of that is hugely important, we must not fool ourselves, as we have done for so many years: Price matters. Without a fixed, long-term, durable price on carbon, none of the Obama clean-tech initiatives will achieve the scale needed to have an impact on climate change or make America the leader it must be in the next great industrial revolution: ET, or energy technology. At this stage, I'd settle for any carbon price mechanism — cap and trade, fee-bates, carbon tax and/or gasoline tax — as long as it is real and provides a long-term incentive to shift to clean cars, appliances and buildings.

Bob Lutz, a vice chairman at General Motors, offers a useful example of why price matters. When Congress demands that Detroit make smaller, lighter, better mileage vehicles, but then refuses to put a higher price on carbon so more consumers will want to buy these smaller cars, said Lutz, it is the equivalent of ordering all American shirt makers to make only size smalls while never asking the people to go on a diet. You're not going to sell a lot of size smalls.

Have no doubt: From right-wing tea parties to coal states to manufacturers, there is going to be a no-holds-barred campaign to kill any carbon price signal. A vast army of lobbyists is already working against it. Only Obama can blunt this. Only he has the platform for framing and elevating the issue properly and taking it to the American people with the passion and clarity needed to move the country.

Here's one way to start: "My fellow Americans, I want to speak to you about a new economic law. You've heard of Moore's Law in information technology. I'd like to speak to you about the 'Law of More' in energy technology. Americans, Indians, Chinese, Africans, we all want more — more comfort in our homes, more mobility in our lives, more technologies with which to innovate. But there is only one way all 6.3 billion of us can have more and not make this an unlivable planet, and that is by living our lives and running our businesses in more sustainable ways and properly accounting for it.

"Right now we're paying a huge price — a tax — for everyone trying to achieve more in an unsustainable way. But the 'More Tax' is not imposed by the U.S. government. It is a tax imposed by the market and will continue rising indefinitely as more and more people want more and more stuff. It will steadily drive up gasoline prices, home heating prices and factory electricity prices. But because this 'More Tax' is set by the market and not the government, many opponents contend that there's nothing to be done: 'Oh, $4.50 a gallon gasoline — that's just the market at work. ' And then all that tax money out of your pocket goes to enrich oil companies and petro-dictators.

"My proposal is that today we fix a durable price on carbon-based fossil fuels, but set it to begin only in 2011, after we're out of this recession. Every home builder, air-conditioning manufacturer, gasoline refiner, carmaker will know that it's coming and will, I believe, immediately look for ways to profit from and invest in more energy-efficient systems.

“I call it the ‘Carbon Tax Cut.’ You won’t receive the dividend in the first week or month, but you will get it soon, and it will be a permanent tax cut, a gift that will keep on giving.

“So those are our choices, folks — an escalating ‘More Tax’ forever premised on immediate gratification, or a ‘Carbon Tax Cut’ forever, which is exactly what you’ll get from establishing a carbon price signal that shapes the market in favor of American interests. If you’re with me, write your member of Congress and senator today.”

*Friedman is a columnist for The New York Times and a three-time Pulitzer Prize winner.*

**The Californian Roses and raspberries (*North County Times*)**

By The Californian Opinion staff

The 'Courage of Your Convictions' award

A rose to Carrie Prejean, Miss California, for standing firm on the ground of her convictions. Faced with a choice to give a politically correct answer to a question by Miss USA Pageant judge Perez Hilton on supporting legalizing marriage for gays, the San Diegan answered that position would be against her beliefs. Setting aside the gay marriage argument itself, it is refreshing to see someone stand fast in her beliefs even in the face of public criticism and the loss of very real rewards (the beauty pageant title, in this case).

The 'Going Green on the Reservation' award

A rose to the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, near Anza for receiving an award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for becoming the nation's first fully "off grid" reservation. ◆

The tribe uses electricity generated by its own solar-and-wind-power system. It was one of eight Southern California organizations to be honored at the agency's 11th annual environmental awards ceremony in San Francisco.

Besides building a self-sufficient electricity system, the RiversideCountytribe is building a resort that will stress environmentally sensitive tourism. Its "ecotourism center" is scheduled to open in 2010.

**ENERGY**

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Posted on Mon, Apr. 27, 2009

**Real estate industry looks to 'green' homes (*Belleville News Democrat*)**

New development touts efficiency
BY WILL BUSS
News-Democrat
The two houses that sit off Illinois 19 in Wood River are a glimpse of the real estate industry's future.
The two homes will soon open to the public as models of upcoming development to be known as Rock Hill Trails. Trumpet Builders, of Festus, Mo., is building the 49-lot neighborhood with the environment and energy efficiency in mind.

Anthony Schroeder, president of the project's development company, Well Spring Development Co., said this approach is a holistic design for a sustainable community by building what it calls "high-performance homes."

The land that has sat untouched and has been in Schroeder's family for 150 years. The homes to be built there are advertised as having less impact on the land than traditional houses. Air temperature, for instance, will be regulated by way of a geothermal system that captures the earth's natural core temperatures from a well 200 to 300 feet underground that pumps liquid beneath the ground and returns back to the surface. Builders also will use spray foam insulation that expands and helps seals spaces that traditional roll-out insulation cannot cover.

The developer also will incorporate building styles that should reduce long-term environmental impact and natural landscaping to provide a good habitat for wildlife and native plant species, and filter toxins from rainwater runoff and reduce erosion. A natural storm management system dictated by the land will also provide basins among walking trails and landscaping.

"It is kind of common sense approach to reduction in resources during the building process and construction process," Schroeder said. " It's a prudent use of materials, and materials are coming from renewable resources."

As this new development comes on line, local real estate professionals are realizing the growing demand that new homes that have less impact on the environment and conserve energy. More people want to buy a "green" house.

The National Association of Home Builders launched the Green Building Initiative a few years ago to provide a new designation to help certify homes as environmentally friendly and energy efficient. Dan Tatum, president of the Realtor Association of Southwestern Illinois in Belleville, said that in November the

National Realtors Association unveiled a Green designation for its members, who must complete an 18 hours of training to becertified.

"With this increased awareness of what we might call 'green,' which seems to be an all-encompassing term, we need and want to be in a position to provide smart advice to direct (homebuyers) to resources if they're interested in getting and building a home that is environmental friendly, provides cost savings and is energy efficient," Tatum said.

Tim Dain, who is the real estate broker for Rock Hill Trails, said that all of the homes in the development are high-performance and will be rated and recognized by entities like Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy to help consumers save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices.

"From a real estate perspective, I think anyone would agree with me that I really believe the consumer really wants energy efficiency," Dain said.

Al Suguitan, who oversees real estate activity in Madison County and surrounding counties as executive director of the Greater Gateway Association of Realtors in Glen Carbon, said he also sees what is going on at Rock Hill Trails as a model of how future home construction will evolve.

"I'm encouraged that there are some builders who are willing to step forward and put together energy-efficient homes, or 'green' houses, by using new construction techniques that are very cost effective and to market them as low-energy homes," Suguitan said. "And I think that the public will embrace this type of construction."

Tatum also said that this year's federal economic stimulus plan provides further incentives to think green. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 tripled the tax credit for homeowners who make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes. Homeowners can install energy-efficient windows and doors, metal or asphalt roofs, insulation, furnaces, air conditioners and water heaters that qualify under the Energy Star program and could also be eligible for tax credits equaling 30 percent of the cost, up to a maximum of $1,500 for improvements made between Jan. 1, 2009, through Dec. 31, 2010.

"There are some really good financial incentives that are out there for buyers right now to encourage use of some Energy Star savings and some other energy efficient ideas," he said. "I think that is really terrific."

Home Builders Association of Greater Southwest Illinois has formed a green building committee and some of its members have pursued green designation.

Association executive officer Jerry Rombach said that energy conservation will become more common in home construction.

"I think in five years there won't be such a thing as green building," Rombach said. "There will just be buildings. There will no longer be energy-efficient or Energy Star appliances. Pretty much every one is built to Energy Star requirements to that degree with that specialized redesign."

Contact reporter Will Buss at wbuss@bnd.com or 239-2526.

**FUEL**

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**New study finds no significant fuel pump problems with E20 (*Morris Sun Tribune*)**

Alexandria Echo Press - 04/27/2009
Increasing the amount of ethanol blended into gasoline from 10 percent to 20 percent causes no significant change in performance of automotive fuel systems, according to research conducted by the Minnesota Center for Automotive Research at Minnesota State University, Mankato.
The study examined the impact of gasoline with a 20 percent blend of ethanol (E20) on the endurance, wear and performance of automotive fuel pumps and sending units. This study is the fourth in a series of research projects conducted to determine the effect of E20 on fuel system components.

The study looked at eight models of fuel pumps, running three identical versions of each model for 4,000 hours using one of three different fuels: gasoline, E10 and E20.

Gasoline and E10 were used in the study as a reference to identify what effects two accepted fuels would have on the pumps and sending units. The 24 pumps were selected to represent a variety of manufacturers, model years, common vehicles and designs. In addition, the study examined the effect of E20 on nine different makes and models of sending units.

The study found that the pumps showed significantly less wear when tested with E20 than with gasoline.

The study concluded that overall, E20 did not have any greater negative effects than gasoline or E10 on the fuel pumps tested. It also showed there were no

substantial differences in the performance of the sending units tested in the three different fuels.

Renewable Fuels Association President and CEO Bob Dinneen said the results add to the growing body of evidence proving the efficacy of higher level ethanol blends in vehicles on American roads today.

“The state of Minnesota continues to lead the nation in a renewable fuels revolution, passing the first mandate for the use of 20 percent ethanol blends and continuing to provide the scientific evidence to support it,” Dinneen said. “Increasing the amount of ethanol utilized in American gas tanks is essential to the goals of reduced foreign oil dependence and increased green economic activity. This report helps move the dial in that direction.”

Minnesota State University, Mankato conducted the studies as part of the process to receive a federal waiver from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This waiver is necessary for the state to proceed toward the mandated goal that ethanol comprise 20 percent of nearly all gasoline sold in Minnesota beginning in 2013.

The study was based on nationally recognized standards and protocols to ensure research quality. Support was provided by the Renewable Fuels Association, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Electronic copies of the study can be found on the Minnesota Department of Agriculture website at www.mda.state.mn.us.

## PESTICIDES

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### In Brief: County to Spray For Cankerworms (*Washington Post*)

The Prince William County Department of Public Works will spray around Bull Run Mountain within the next several weeks to mitigate the fall cankerworm populations.

The treatment area will encompass 304 acres and affect Mountain, Ridge and Mercer roads; Youngs, Gore, Summit, Nelson and Duffey drives; Oak and Hickory lanes; and Wakefield and Painter courts.

If residents see a helicopter getting ready to spray, they -- along with any pets --

should stay inside during the process and for about 45 minutes after the helicopter leaves.

An **Environmental Protection Agency**-approved insecticide is used to spray the cankerworm, which is a forest pest that attacks trees and shrubs.

For information, contact the Gypsy Moth and Mosquito Control Office at 703-792-6279 or call the cankerworm hotline at 703-792-4636.

**SLC district wins pest control award (*Salt Lake Tribune*)**

Updated: 04/26/2009 01:32:43 PM MDT
The Salt Lake City School District recently won an award that eluded every other school district in the nation. The district won the International Integrated Pest Management Award, a worldwide honor presented to five recipients and one school district on the planet. The purpose of IPM is to reduce pest problems safely.
"Using Integrated Pest Management [IPM] to reduce the risks from pests and pesticides," according to the district, "the Salt Lake City School District Facility Services Department, with assistance from the Utah Department of Agriculture & Food and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has drastically reduced student and staff exposure to dangerous pesticides and pests since 2006."
Gregg Smith, the district's director of Facility Services, said he's proud of the district's work to become better stewards of the environment.

**EPA's new pesticide testing is outdated, crude (*Environmental Health News*)**

In its search for endocrine-disrupting chemicals, the EPA should turn to scientists who think outside the box and inside the womb. The agency's testing program is "a pitiful skeleton" that will fail to detect many serious effects on human development.

By Theo Colborn
The Endocrine Disruption Exchange
April 27, 2009

The Environmental Protection Agency is ready to start testing 67 pesticide ingredients for their possible endocrine disruption effects. But the testing program the agency plans to use is only a pitiful skeleton of what it needs to be. This battery of tests, first recommended in 1998, is outdated, insensitive, crude, and

narrowly limited.

Each test and assay was designed under the surveillance of corporate lawyers who had bottom lines to protect and assorted toxicologists who were not trained in endocrinology and developmental biology. For over a decade, EPA has ignored the vast wealth of information on endocrine disruption from independent academic researchers funded by the United States and other governments in Europe and Asia. This 21st century research is based on different assumptions than the toxicological assumptions that drove the EPA test designs. And most important, because of the limited scope of its test battery, EPA is not in a position to address the pandemics of endocrine-related disorders that pose a threat to every child born today.

The big question, of course, is how could this have happened? Well, from the very beginning, institutional barriers, bureaucratic inertia, and corporate interference led to one disconnection after another.

Starting in 1996, when Congress passed the new Food Quality Protection Action with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act Amendments, it told EPA to develop a screening program using tests and other scientifically relevant information to determine whether substances have hormonal activity. In response, EPA set up the Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program, including a committee with members representing the industries to be regulated, toxicologists, and a few token representatives from non-profit organizations. The scientists who discovered endocrine disruption and the hundreds of others, most of whom were not toxicologists and had shifted their research focus to the connections between a mother and her embryo and fetus, were not invited to participate. Instead of listening to those who knew something about endocrine disruption, EPA tried to use traditional toxicology protocols, forgetting that these had failed miserably and allowed endocrine disruptors to get through the government's programs to protect public health. EPA ignored the growing knowledge about endocrine disruption and trade associations representing corporations with deep pockets denied it. Consequently, EPA struggled along under the false assumptions that 'the dose makes the poison' and that high dose testing is sufficient to detect any chemical that can interfere with endocrine control of development and function.

Since the early 1990s, independent scientists in academic laboratories around the world have published hundreds of articles demonstrating how a broad selection of chemicals can interfere with the normal development of a baby at extremely low levels of exposure – in fact, levels similar to those experienced every day by people worldwide. These studies were done with the knowledge that the embryo and fetus develop under the control of hormones at parts per billion and parts trillion, and that as the baby matures hormone concentrations are regulated by sensitive, thermostat-like, feedback control systems in the brain. These pioneering scientists discovered effects for some widely used chemicals at

concentrations thousands of times less than government “safe” levels of exposure derived through traditional toxicological tests. But their publications announcing damage in other components of the endocrine system, such as the pancreas, adrenal glands, bone, and mammary tissue, got no farther than headlines in newspapers. They had no effect on policy. While this wealth of knowledge was piling up, EPA, held back by institutional inertia, continued to attempt to validate a handful of single-focus assays to detect only a very small component of endocrine disruption. There was no connection between the assumptions of the toxicologists and those of the endocrinologists, developmental biologists, and the multi-disciplinarians doing the research needed to detect endocrine disruptors. This same disconnection was being played out in Europe where governments also continued to use outdated toxicological dogma.

One of the chemicals on EPA’s list, atrazine, is a herbicide reported in aquatic and drinking water systems across the USA. It will likely pass this battery of tests with flying colors even though it feminizes laboratory animals and frogs by turning on the enzyme that converts testosterone to estrogen. EPA is proposing an assay to detect chemicals that can block that enzyme, but it cannot detect chemicals that turn it on.

EPA’s testing program is full of voids, addressing only a segment of the organs, tissues, and systems that make up the endocrine system. It will not detect chemicals that can alter development and function of the pancreas, and its hormone, insulin, which could lead to diabetes and obesity. It also will not detect chemicals that alter how the brain is constructed and programmed that can undermine intelligence and behavior. An insecticide--like chlorpyrifos, which alters how brains develop and leads to measurable changes in behavior and function later in life--will probably not be picked up by the proposed tests.

In light of the increasing pandemics and the new administration’s willingness to seek and make 180 degree changes, the time is ripe to move forward and let the scientists who understand the complexity of the endocrine system step in. Give these scientists, who have proven that they can think outside the box and inside the womb, the opportunity and wherewithal to design a couple of comprehensive, multi-organ assays to detect the most sensitive alterations in embryonic and fetal development and function. These assays that will ultimately reduce the use of thousands of animals and make up for the time lost over the past decade. Thanks to the internet, a rich set of data about endocrine disruption research is available, and with teleconferencing, scientists no longer have to leave their labs and travel long distances to communicate in large group sessions. These scientists are on the verge of developing protocols that will look nothing like what was done in the past to address a serious global health problem.

Colborn is the founder and president of TEDX, The Endocrine Disruption

Exchange, and co-author of Our Stolen Future.

**SUPERFUND**

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Article published Apr 27, 2009

**Federal funds slated to help with mine cleanup (*Associated Press*)**

**Story also appeared: *Rutland Herald***

Staff Report
STRAFFORD — At least $5 million in new federal funding has been awarded for more cleanup of the Elizabeth Mine Superfund hazardous waste site, one of the 50 worst polluted sites around the country, according to David Deegan, a spokesman for the Environmental Protection Agency.

The funding will step up mitigation of hazardous waste and, at the same time, give a benefit to the economy, creating jobs in the area, officials with the EPA in Boston said recently. The funding could be as much as $10 million, according to the EPA.

"EPA has an answer to these challenging economic times," said Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "Under the Recovery Act, we're getting harmful pollutants and dangerous chemicals out of these communities and putting jobs and investment back in."

The money will enable EPA to begin the final phase of the so called non-time critical removal action, eliminating the acid rock drainage from the waste piles at the Elizabeth site and greatly reducing the leachate generated by the tailing impoundments.

The final phase is a three-to-four-year project, a portion of which will be funded via the Recovery Act, officials said. It will allow EPA to do this work sooner than planned, and shorten the time period in which improved water quality will be seen.

"This Recovery Act funding will be a real boost for Strafford as we are able to speed up the clean up of the Elizabeth Mine site," said Ira Leighton, acting regional administrator of EPA's New England office. "The infusion of extra cleanup money will provide real dividends to the community with a cleaner

environment and good-paying jobs."

The Superfund program is implementing new or expanded cleanup actions at 49 others sites around the country. Since it began, the program has completed construction of remedies at more than 1,060 of the 1,587 sites on its National Priorities List, officials said.

Sites were contaminated years ago by mining waste, lead smelters, landfills and other sources of chemicals, but the companies responsible are no longer around to pay for their cleanup, officials said.

At half the sites, cleanups were either stalled last year or expected to face delays this year because the EPA is running short of funds.

The stimulus money will be only a Band-Aid on the most critical sites where there is not enough Superfund money, Jason Gibbs, executive director of the Center for Health, Environmental and Justice said.

The Federal Superfund program was created in 1980 to clean up hazardous waste sites that pose unacceptable risks to human health and the environment.

Superfund sites are often found in industrial areas hardest-hit by the recession, EPA officials said. Superfund cleanups become major construction projects that employ thousands of workers nationwide. Since 1980, EPA has identified 1,596 hazardous waste sites and of those, 1,264 are left, officials said.

EPA announced that $528 million in recently approved economic stimulus funding would be used to help clean up the sites in 28 states.

Of that another $10 to $25 million will connect 180 houses in southeastern North Dakota to public drinking water. Their wells were tainted with arsenic from bait applied to control grasshoppers in the 1930s and 1940s, officials said.

And at New Bedford Harbor, Mass., three times more mud will be dredged from the harbor bottom during the next two years than would have occurred without the money, Jackson said in an announcement.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

tom.mitchell@rutlandherald.com

**Board seeks input on new members (*Bennington Banner*)**

KEITH WHITCOMB JR., Staff Writer
Posted: 04/27/2009 03:03:00 AM EDT

Monday, April 27
POWNAL — Development Review Board members expressed concern to the Select Board Thursday over appointments made to the DRB without consultation.
Confused about members

DRB Chairman Frank Lamb said he thought his board had five members and was confused when the Select Board appointed John Orzechowski, who is also a member of the Planning Commission, without speaking to the DRB first.

Lamb said it is the Select Board's right to appoint members, but he wanted the courtesy of being able to review DRB applicants before appointments are made. Lamb said the Select Board also should make an official decision about how many members the DRB seats.

After a discussion, the Select Board voted to make the DRB and the Planning Commission each seven-member boards. As part of the motion, potential board appointments will be submitted to the DRB for input.

Select Board Chairman Nelson Brownell said multiple viewpoints on a board are a good thing. He said the DRB has done a fine job, and the added that appointments were not a response to poor decisions. Brownell said the DRB was intended to be a nine-member board, and the recent appointment was made in an attempt to fill the empty seats.

Lamb said the DRB would be better served by more clerical help, not more members, and the town office, where the DRB meets, is not large enough to accommodate nine members, as well as people with project applications under review.

Select Board member Harry Percey said many boards have problems with attendance. Lamb said it is embarrassing to warn a hearing and not have a quorum, noting that more members on a board means more are needed for a quorum.

In other business, the Select Board responded to a letter from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency asking what types of projects the town would like pre-approved under an easement for the Pownal Tanning Co. Superfund site. The board voted to ask the EPA for pre-approval on the forms of development recommended in a study done by Greenman and Pendersen Inc.

As part of the work done in cleaning up pollution from the defunct tanning company, caps were placed over polluted areas in 2004.

The types of development allowed could not breach the surface and endanger the caps.

The board heard a presentation on the town audit by Brian Marlow of Marlow & Co., an accounting firm based in North Adams, Mass. Marlow said the audit showed no issues with the town's finances, nor are there problems with internal compliance.

He said the town should create an accounting system to track the fixed assets in the Pownal Waste Water Treatment Facility.

He said there is no system in place to track the depreciation of the fixed assets, such as the building, trucks, pipes and pumps, once construction is officially complete. He said the town isn't required to have such a system, but will in the future, and learning the system early is advisable.

John Bull of the Northwest Hill Road told the board that underground springs feeding his well have been blocked because of blasting work done last year in connection with sewer line construction. He said his well is only 4 feet deep, and a summer dry spell will cause him to be without water.

Board member Don Prouty said he would research which company did the blasting work and see what could be done about compensation, provided any is due.

*Contact Keith Whitcomb at kwhitcomb@benningtonbanner.com*

**TOXICS**

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Posted on Mon, Apr. 27, 2009

**It's safer to recycle, not dump, toxic electronics (*San Luis Obispo Tribune*)**

By GEORGE BRYSON
Standing in the bed of a pickup truck backed against the concrete ledge of the dump, the silhouette of an adult male teeters for a moment, a small but bulky television set held high overhead.
Then like some Pleistocene hunter, he thrusts his body forward and lets the TV fly. It clears the ledge with feet to spare and crashes on the concrete floor. Later its shattered remains will be bulldozed into a large pile, bound for the Anchorage, Alaska, landfill.

Scenes like that, municipal waste workers say, are getting repeated more often these days as residents - prompted by a national deadline to switch to digital TV technology - choose to replace their old sets with new ones.
Unlike Americans in most states, however, Alaskans have a choice of how to dispose of their old TVs. They can recycle them, or they can toss them in the dump.
In some states, like Washington, Oregon and California, it's illegal to throw bulky old computers or pre-digital TVs in a local landfill. Why? Because they're toxic. The cathode-ray tubes inside their monitors are heavily enameled with lead, which can cause irreversible neurological damage to humans.
But no such law exists in Alaska, hence the choice: To recycle or to dump. Choose the latter if you want, but here's what happens next.
OFF TO THE DUMP
TVs and electronic waste in general take up a lot of space at the 82-acre Anchorage Regional Landfill, which opened 22 years ago and is now more than a quarter full.
For that reason, let alone the toxicity issue, municipal officials encourage residents to recycle their TVs and other so-called e-waste.
"Electronic waste has been increasing exponentially," says Anchorage Solid Waste Services recycling coordinator Jeanne Carlson. "It's taking up a lot of room."
Credit the increasingly brief life span of most high-tech products these days. Nationwide, about 250 million computers were expected to grow obsolete between 2004 and 2009, according to the National Safety Council. Now TVs are catching up.
When they're thrown in a landfill, TV tubes invariably break apart and the four to eight pounds of lead that lines their backsides tends to get dissolved by snowmelt and rainwater.
When landfills are underlaid by a liner and mostly capped, as the Anchorage landfill is, water can be kept to a minimum. But it's impossible to keep the landfill entirely covered. So lead and other heavy metals, including mercury and cadmium, bleed through the soil in a solution that pools on top the landfill's plastic floor.
Does the toxic seepage (called leachate) stay in the landfill? No.
Six to seven times each weekday, workers pump the polluted water from a landfill lagoon into 6,000-gallon tanker trucks and haul it to an Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility sewage receiving station.
About 39,000 gallons arrive there each week day, said AWWU assistant general manager Brett Jokela. Almost 8.9 million gallons last year.
At the station, which is no more than a manhole, the lead in the solution enters the city sewage stream, blending with wastewater from household toilets and sinks as it begins its journey to the Asplund Wastewater Treatment Facility- on a bluff overlooking Cook Inlet.
INTO THE INLET
It's no secret that Anchorage pipes its sewage, which undergoes only primary treatment, into the ocean.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency allows the city to do so under terms of a special waiver for cities its size, partly because the treated sewage that bubbles up from the outflow pipe on the floor of Cook Inlet (in water about 35 to 40 feet deep at low tide) is well within pollution standards, Jokela said. And partly because the seawater bordering Anchorage is flushed twice a day by some of the most powerful tides in the world.

But what happens to all that television lead?

Last year about two-thirds of it settled to the bottom of the sewage treatment pond as sludge, Jokela said. The rest dissolved into a lead solution and passed through the system, entering Cook Inlet at a negligible concentration of 2.8 micrograms per liter - well within the EPA-allowed standard of 8.1 micrograms of lead per liter.

(According to Jokela, the naturally occurring lead in Cook Inlet - fed by glaciers that grind metals off mountains - is more than twice the concentration that spills from the sewage out-fall.)

Back at the treatment plant, however, a significant concentration of TV lead was still stuck in the sludge on the bottom of the settlement pond.

THE INCINERATOR

After the sludge is raked from the pond, it's run through several processes that wring out excess water. Residue is hauled to an incinerator.

Three things can happen to the lead that daily gets scooped into the big AWWU incinerator at the treatment plant, Jokela said. When it's burned some of it:

- Settles at the bottom of the incinerator as ash, which ultimately gets hauled back to the landfill.
- Rises in the form of gas - but gets captured in the incinerator's exhaust scrubber, then returned to the treatment plant as sewage.
- Escapes as gas through the incinerator exhaust and enters the atmosphere over the city.

The lead that escapes into the air over the treatment plant is well within permissible limits set by the EPA, Jokela said.

Last year the city upgraded the incinerator to improve its efficiency and reduce its emissions.

In fact, if you're worried about toxic materials from the TVs that get dumped in the landfill, go back to the landfill, Jokela said.

"I venture to say that about 99 percent of that lead is still there."

For a while anyway.

In about 25 years, the landfill is due to reach its 20-million-ton capacity - with waste stacked approximately to the height of a 15-story building. Then it will be capped forever.

But don't be so sure that what's inside the dump is going to stay in the dump, says New York journalist Elizabeth Royte, author of "Garbage Land," which documented the notorious Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island.

Even the best landfill liners in the nation ultimately leak, she says, citing studies by EPA engineers. Then everything inside them that's still toxic can leak into local streams.

Writes Royte: "The dumps of the Roman Empire more than two thousand years old are still leaching today."

**WATER**

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Article published Apr 27, 2009

**State may give water oversight back to the feds (*Barre Montpelier Times Argus*)**

By Louis Porter Vermont Press Bureau
MONTPELIER – Frustrated by continuing lawsuits and disagreements over water protection in Vermont, the state may find itself giving back to the federal government authority for regulating water pollution.

Such a move would have a major impact on businesses, farmers and homeowners in the state, since it would put the federal Environmental Protection Agency in Boston – not state officials – in charge of issuing and administering a permit for a stormwater system, or a farm or a wastewater treatment plant. Besides review and permitting being done in Boston instead of by state environmental officials in Waterbury, it could also mean different – perhaps more rigid – standards would be put in place.

The Agency of Natural Resources is unlikely to recommend to Gov. James Douglas that he give up Clean Water Act authority, and the EPA might not accept the return of the authority – and the work – if requested. But it may become necessary if the state, environmental groups and the feds cannot reach an agreement on how to manage stormwater discharges into five streams in Chittenden County, said Jonathan Wood, secretary of the state environmental agency.

"We are frustrated with this continually getting to a legal roadblock," Wood said. "Having the federal government do this, giving it back, is one option."

Such a change would have an effect on state workers: The authority to implement the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System comes with about $1.2 million and the program employs about 22 people. However, giving up that authority would not remove all of those employees from state government: About a half-dozen would still be needed to administer state water programs, and the change would free up about $350,000 in state General Fund money as well, ANR officials said in a hearing last week before the Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources Committee of the House.

The possibility of returning Clean Water Act authority came up in response to an ongoing disagreement primarily between the agency and the Conservation Law Foundation, a regional environmental advocacy organization with an office in Montpelier.

A court decision in a case brought by the environmental group requires that the agency must begin moving to require those discharging into five streams in Chittenden County to get a federal permit, first by notifying them they are not in compliance with the law. It has not been possible to reach an agreement on how that is to be done with the EPA and the Conservation Law Foundation and the deadline is only about 30 days away, although an extension may be possible, ANR officials said.

The environmental group itself has also petitioned the feds to, on their own volition, take back the authority to administer the act.

But that is not the ideal solution, said David Mears, a lawyer with Vermont Law School's Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic who is working for CLF on the petition to the federal government.

The best outcome would be for the state to change – and toughen – how it administers that authority, Mears said.

But if the state does not do that then giving Clean Water Act authority back to the feds – or having them take it – should be considered.

"Conservation Law Foundation wants the Clean Water Act program to be implemented whether it is the state or the EPA," Mears said.

Stephen Reynes, a Montpelier land use lawyer who is a former member and chairman of both the House and Senate natural resources committees and was a state environmental regulator, told lawmakers those who need permits would suffer if Vermont gave up Clean Water Act authority.

"The last thing the people of Vermont need is to have a regulatory program thrown into turmoil," he said. "Good luck getting a timely permit from Boston."

The problem is that – from layoffs to cuts in funding – the state's Agency of Natural Resources is in a tough spot, he said.

"If the environment and making permit programs work are important for Vermonters, and they are, the agency needs support," Reynes said.

Even the process for giving back the Clean Water Act authority is not entirely clear. Although not every state does administer the federal water rules within its

borders – New Hampshire does not, for instance – none has given that authority back after gaining it. Indeed, the statutes themselves are not entirely clear, a legislative lawyer told lawmakers.

One section of law says the governor asks for such authority from the federal government – indicating it would be a decision for the governor alone to send it back – while another section says "the state," indicating the Legislature might have a role.

The agency's reading of the law would argue it is clear.

"We do not think it takes legislative authority or approval," Wood said.

Monday, Apr. 27, 2009

**A close look at the cost of water (*Merced Sun Star*)**

By ASHLEY GRIMALDO
www.freeshipping.org/blog/
The human body needs 64 ounces of water per day to run efficiently. The type of water we use varies widely from Aquafina to a running faucet.
How much do you spend on H2O each month? And does your choice have a positive ecological effect? Check out the most popular thirst quenching options and maybe consider a switch for your pocketbook and the environment.
BOTTLED WATER

We are so obsessed with bottled water that we have our favorite tasting brand. Mine is Dasani, my in-laws prefer Ozarka. We like the sleek bottles that unscrew easily and fit so nicely in the trashcan. No bulky jugs or pitchers to maneuver or occupy space in the refrigerator. The problem is excessive trash caused by bottled water. Sure, an occasional bottle is not a problem. But when your sole source of refreshment comes in small plastics, trash becomes outstanding.

At an average $4.99 a package, each 16.9 oz. bottle will cost $19.49 per month (114 bottles per month). Aside from water delivery services, purchasing bottled water is, by far, the most expensive option for refreshment. If you can't bear to break your bottled water love affair, buy a Camelback or other fancy reusable bottle that you enjoy drinking from.

BRITA PITCHER FILTER

This is one of my favorite water sources, when I can remember to refill the pitcher. Initial costs are much higher at $25 for the pitcher and filter. Filters cost

$7.99 to replace and, if you truly are drinking your full water requirement, need to be changed every month (or you are simply filling the pitcher with tap water).

Over the first quarter of use, your cost including tap water is $16 per month. That amount decreases the longer you keep and use the pitcher. Your additional benefit is saving on the amount of water bottles consumed reducing overall waste. Plus you avoid carrying that blasted carton of water in the house every trip.

WATER JUG

Another option available for you is the jug of water. Purchased cheaply in orange juice style containers for as little as $.75, jugs can also be refilled at the store for a lower rate. My local grocer refills at $.43 per gallon.

Let's assume you buy 4 gallons new and have them refilled for your monthly water intake. You'll spend the cost of gas for 3-4 trips and $7.73 per month. Part of what I don't like about this method is the pain of hauling four-gallon jugs in and out of the house.

TAP WATER

Think tap water tastes differently? Indeed, it does, but that does not indicate how purified it is. Dr. Henry Kim, a supervisory chemist with the FDA, says "generally, over the years, the FDA has adopted EPA standards for tap water as standards for bottled water." This means that your fancy bottle has roughly the same amount of contaminants as the tap. Every location is different, so check with your local purification plant for more details.

Plus the fluoride found in tap water is beneficial for teeth---if your children exclusively drink bottled water you may need to provide fluoride supplements. The EPA estimates that tap water costs roughly $2 per 1000 gallons, only $.02 per month, by far the most economical choice.

Eliminate excess waste and stay hydrated through the hot summer months with water. Avoid breaking your back and the bank by selecting alternatives to water bottles---being environmentally friendly is usually the cheaper option!

**Freetown warned to clean catch basins (*SouthCoast Today*)**

April 27, 2009 6:00 AM

FREETOWN — The town has been told that its catch basins are in dire need of cleaning and it may be looking at $8,000 in fines for violation of its Stormwater Management Plan, Highway Surveyor Charles J. Macomber has told selectmen.

He said that if the catch basins are not cleaned this year, "the debris is going to back up into the pipes."

"When that happens, the cost is going to be astronomical because we have to bring in a whole different company."

The Environmental Protection Agency recommends that the basins on the side of the roads be cleaned twice a year to prevent backflow and water contamination. Because of cost, the town aims for once a year but has not be able to do so this year.

Officials say the drainage infrastructure in town is more than 60 years old.

"Last year, we had to rebuild 37 catch basins due to collapse. (On April 16) I had a street sweeper collapse a catch basin. ... He was just sweeping along and fell right through," Macomber said, adding that a car could do the same thing.

He presented a 2010 budget to the selectmen and Finance Committee, asking for a $19,000 increase over last year to pay for catch basin cleaning and 2 percent salary increases.

The town has 1,200 catch basins, all of which need cleaning, according to Macomber.

In the past, the town has hired Roland Vigeant of New Bedford to clean the basins at $7 per basin every November.

If the situation progresses to the point where the pipes have to be cleaned out, Macomber said, the cost could reach $300 per basin.

He presented a fax from Rich Niles, a consultant for Comprehensive Environmental Inc. of Milford, that says the town is in violation of Phase II of the Environmental Protection Agency's Stormwater Management Program.

According to Comprehensive Environmental's initial review and budget estimate, the town needs to do an estimated $75,000 worth of cleaning or upgrades or incur EPA fines in the range of $8,000.

The most expensive task on the list involves catch basin monitoring at $22,000.

Macomber said that when the basins were constructed, many of them directed their contents toward water sources, something that is not allowed today.

Phase II also calls for public education, pollution prevention training, review of construction requirements and various reports.

Town officials said Phase I, which involved locating all the town's catch basins, is complete.

Selectmen and Finance Committee members said they are at a loss as to how to pay for Phase II.

"Put it on the warrant and let the townspeople decide ... and then, ultimately, if the town gets fined ... that falls upon the shoulders of taxpayers," Macomber said.

The annual Town Meeting is June 1 at Apponequet Regional High School in Lakeville.

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