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**AIR**

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## Asthma Education Identifies Common Triggers (*EP Magazine*)

May 26, 2009

Asthma is a serious, sometimes life-threatening respiratory disease that affects the quality of life for millions of Americans. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's goal is to reduce exposure to indoor asthma triggers and improve the quality of life for 6.5 million people by 2012.

In response to the growing asthma problem, EPA created a national, multifaceted asthma education and outreach program to share information about environmental factors -- indoors and outdoors -- that trigger asthma. Asthma can be controlled through medical treatment and management of environmental triggers.

Additionally, EPA supports efforts to understand the links between environmental factors and asthma. People with asthma are the only segment of the population who have been identified to be the most acutely responsive to ozone exposure. Ozone can irritate the already sensitive airway of someone with asthma. When ozone levels are high, more asthmatics have asthma episodes that require a doctor's attention or the use of additional medication. One reason this happens is that ozone makes people more sensitive to allergens, which are the most common triggers for asthma episodes. Also, asthmatics are more severely affected by reduced lung function and irritation to the respiratory system caused by ozone.

Some of the more common indoor asthma triggers include:

- Secondhand smoke is a mixture of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke exhaled by the smoker.
- Dust mites are too small to be seen, but can be found in almost every home, in mattresses and bedding materials, carpets, upholstered furniture, stuffed toys and curtains.
- Mold can grow indoors when mold spores land on wet or damp surfaces. In the home, mold is most commonly found in the bathrooms, kitchens and basements.
- Cockroach body parts, secretions and droppings, and the urine, droppings and saliva of pests, such as rodents, are often found in areas where food and water are present.
- Pets' skin flakes, urine and saliva can be found in homes where pets are allowed inside.

- Nitrogen dioxide is an odorless gas that can be a byproduct of indoor fuel-burning appliances, such as wood stoves, gas or oil furnaces, fireplaces, gas stoves and unvented kerosene or gas space heaters.

Agencies, organizations and individuals are encouraged to work with EPA, nonprofit advocacy agencies and other asthma-related agencies to improve their own knowledge of asthma triggers and how they can be reduced or eliminated.

**BROWNFIELDS**
**==========**

**Sandusky wins $200K federal grant to clean Sandusky Cabinets property (*Sandusky Register*)**

By JASON SINGER
Tuesday, May 26, 2009 1:27 AM EDT
The coal tar plume isn't the only downtown brownfield the city has its eye on.
City commissioner Dan Kaman, chairman of the Brownfields Committee, has announced that Sandusky won a $200,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant to clean up the Sandusky Cabinets property.
The city will use the money to remove piping and three underground storage tanks from the land at 513 E. Washington St. and 430 E. Market St. The city will also use it to remediate 900 cubic yards of petroleum-impacted soil.

Officials hope cleaning the site will lead to redeveloping the property.

"We are very excited," Kaman said in a news release. "The Cabinets site is one of our primary development opportunities, and this petroleum clean-up grant could help to jump-start our future here."

Officials discussed Sandusky Cabinets last year as a possible location for the city's ice rink and multipurpose facility.

But Scott Schell, the city's economic development specialist, said after his recent discussions with JRV Management -- the company authoring the ice rink feasibility study -- the property may not be ideal for that purpose.

He said he won't rule it out, however, until he sees the feasibility study, which could come out as early as this week.

"Depending on the size and type of the facility, the property might not be big enough," Schell said Wednesday. "But we'll just wait and see what the study says."

Ruth Haag, one of the city's local brownfields consultants, said the city would normally have to match the U.S. EPA grant with $40,000 of its own, but that $40,000 match has been waived as part of the national stimulus program.

One drawback to the grant: It doesn't provide money to raze the factory. Schell said he will look into "a Clean Ohio grant of some sort" to demolish the buildings on both properties.

Last October, Schell described the property as prime real estate. He noted that the Sandusky Cabinets property is two blocks from the water and boasts a great view of the bay.

If they can clean the property and raze the buildings, he said, it could be a real boon to the city.

Even without money to raze the buildings, however, Kaman said the grant is a step in the right direction.

"It won't be enough (to make the property marketable), but it's a good start," he said.

**CLIMATE CHANGE / GLOBAL WARMING**
**==========**

**Maryland Caps, Trades and Offsets: Can Climate Plan Work? (*Washington Post*)**

May 26, 2009 Tuesday
Suburban Edition
A-SECTION; Pg. A12
Maryland Caps, Trades and Offsets: Can Climate Plan Work?;
Lawmakers, Scientists and Industry Debate House Measure
BYLINE: David A. Fahrenthold; Washington Post Staff Writer
It sounds like alchemy, an act of bureaucratic magic. Under the climate-change bill just approved by a House committee, the U.S. government would literally make a commodity -- as tradable as a Pontiac or a pork belly -- out of thin air.

The bill would require polluters to obtain "allowances" -- permits allowing them to emit a given amount of a greenhouse gas such as carbon dioxide or methane. Today, these gases are invisible, free and floating all around us. This bill would put a price on them.

That would accomplish an economist's version of a triple back flip. It would divide a

problem of the global commons into pieces and make those who use gas or electricity pay for their share of the emissions that result.

But a closer look through the bill's 940-plus pages shows that selling chunks of air still might not be its most radical idea. The proposal would also create official carbon "offsets" -- in some cases, a government-certified hypothetical calculation of an amount of gases that would have been emitted but were not. Those, too, could be bought by polluters.

As the legislation moves toward the House floor, Democrats are calling it a "jobs bill" -- because of new business activity they say the system would stimulate -- and Republicans are labeling it a "light-switch tax," because energy costs would go up. But neither characterization does justice to its ambitions, or its unknowns. The proposal is far more complex than anything tried before in this country, and a close parallel in Europe turned out to be seriously flawed.

"I've been through lots of meetings where Americans say, 'Well, we're going to do it right.' Well, no, you're not," said Mark Smith, an economics professor at Colorado College who has studied the European example. "You're creating an entirely new market, by the government, and there's a tremendous amount of political pressure being expressed in the design of this market."

But Smith, like many environmental groups, said these worries are not a reason to kill the plan. "Does that mean we should do nothing? I say no."

The bill has now passed two important Washington mileposts, one official and one symbolic.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee endorsed it Thursday night. And members of Congress showed that they now think **climate change** is important enough to horse-trade over.

To satisfy Democrats from states with coal mines or heavy industry that would be hit hard, committee leaders dropped their target for emissions reductions by 2020, from 20 percent to 17 percent. And they agreed that, instead of all credits being sold to the highest bidder, 85 percent would be given away.

This had the effect of simultaneously outraging both Greenpeace -- "If you give all the pollution credits away, it doesn't actually serve the market principle of making carbon have a cost," spokesman Michael Crocker said -- and House Republicans. The bill's complexity led one Republican to cite the adage that a camel is a horse designed by a congressional committee.

It may prove to be an elephant before long: The rest of the House and the Senate are waiting for their crack at it.

But for now, many environmental groups say they support the bill, because it still creates a "cap-and-trade" system. This requires polluters to amass credits equal to their emissions and then allows them -- and others, including Wall Street trading firms -- to sell them on an open market if they cut their emissions, giving them a surplus of credits.

"We have decided we're going to regulate the commons, which is the sky, or the air," said Liz Martin Perera of the liberal-leaning Union of Concerned Scientists.

And this is the best way, she said: "It is able to harness the power of the market, to find the cheapest reductions first. If it's going to be cheaper for me to reduce [emissions] than you, then I'm just going to go ahead and reduce and sell you my permit."

The United States already has a working cap-and-trade system, used since 1995 to cut back the gases blamed for acid rain. The **Environmental Protection Agency** says the trading system has reduced the overall cost of cutting acid-rain-causing pollutants to one-third of what was projected.

But comparing the two problems is like comparing a horn section and an orchestra.

Acid-rain pollutants can be sucked out of a smokestack by adding "scrubbers." But nothing like that is commercially available for carbon dioxide -- polluters might have to replace the coal they burn with a different fuel, or replace the coal-burning plants with solar "farms" and windmills.

Also, greenhouse gases come from far more sources: power plants, factories, car tailpipes, and both ends of a well-fed dairy cow (though the bill doesn't tackle that one: cows could still burp free of charge).

"I know cap and trade will work" in the abstract, said Gary Hart, an analyst for London-based Icap Energy, who traded acid-rain credits for Southern Co., the utility giant. But Hart said this program is so much bigger that "I can't say with, you know, 1,000 percent certainty, that this is going to work."

Another potential problem is that the bill requires the EPA to begin seeing the future.

It uses carbon offsets to expand the pool of available credits: Instead of buying an allowance to cover their pollution, a factory could buy an offset to negate it. An offset would be a certificate showing that, for example, emissions have been avoided, or taken up by newly planted trees, or captured and pumped underground.

But this is the tricky part: how can one be sure an emission was avoided?

"That's essentially unobserved, and fundamentally unobservable," said Robert Stavins, a professor of business and government at Harvard University. "I mean, who knows what you would have done?"

Because so much about this system is untested or unknown, experts disagree about how much cost will be passed on from utilities and oil refineries to average families. The EPA thinks it will fall between $98 and $140 per year, causing barely a stutter in the U.S. economy as a whole.

The Union of Concerned Scientists thinks the system will actually make money for families, since more efficient technologies will save on energy costs. But the conservative Heritage Foundation thinks it will cost big: $4,300 per family in a few decades.

And an even bigger question: Even if cap-and-trade works as a bureaucracy, will it work as a climate savior?

The European Union imposed a similar system in 2005, but experts say it was gamed. Countries claimed higher emissions than they really had at the beginning, so their mandated "cutbacks" often really weren't.

But Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), one of the architects of the current bill, said he was confident that the measure will both reduce emissions here -- and send a signal to other countries at an international climate conference in Copenhagen in December.

"If we expect the Chinese and Indians and others to embrace an international system for reducing these gases, we must be the leader," Markey said.

With the new bill, he said, "we will no longer be preaching temperance from a barstool."

Posted May 26, 2009

**Goodlatte: Climate bill will hurt families (*Northern Virginia Daily*)**

By Garren Shipley -- gshipley@nvdaily.com
Federal efforts to forestall climate change will end up costing Virginia families dearly, according to one local congressman.
The American Clean Energy and Security Act cleared a key committee last week and is headed to the floor of the House of Representatives.

Supporters say the bill will promote renewable energy and reduce global warming.

But "the simple truth behind the ... energy plan is that it raises taxes, kills jobs and will lead to more government intrusion," said Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-6th, in an e-mail to reporters Friday.

As drawn, the most significant part of the 900-plus-page bill would put a limit on how much carbon dioxide could be emitted each year.

Most industries would be required to purchase the right to emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the air -- a total cost of about $366 billion per year which would likely be passed on to consumers.

States would also be required to come up with plans to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals or face financial penalties.

"This new national energy tax will be paid by anyone who turns on a light switch or plugs in an appliance," Goodlatte said. "It is estimated that the [proposed] legislation will raise electricity rates 90 percent after adjusting for inflation, gas prices 74 percent and natural gas prices 55 percent."

Carbon caps would put an average family on the hook for about $3,100 in higher energy costs each year, he added.

But Democrats counter that the GOP number doesn't take the benefits of the changes into account. When those and certain tax rebates and other factors are considered, the real number is closer to $124 for a family of four.

Only one member of Congress from Virginia -- Rep. Rick Boucher, D-9th -- has had a chance to vote on the bill.

Negotiations to keep the economic impact of the bill low did bear fruit, he said.

"Our agreement will provide to electric utilities 90 percent of the emission allowances they will need without charge," he said. "The provision of free allowances will help to keep electricity rates affordable."

Boucher, who represents the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, defended the bill as making the best of an inevitably bad situation.

Carbon caps are likely coming, one way or another, he said.

"Virtually all interested parties, from the coal industry and electric utilities to the environmental community would prefer that Congress adopt the regulations rather than have them be adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency," he said.

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

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**The Way to Cut Carbon Emissions (*Washington Post*)**

Regarding the May 18 editorial "Cold Reality":

By advocating a carbon tax in lieu of an effective cap-and-trade program, The Post obscured essential facts about **climate change** legislation. First, a carbon tax fails the environmental effectiveness test. Some companies would undoubtedly pay the tax rather than lower emissions, and the cost of the tax could be passed on to consumers.

Second, it fails the political test. With the country looking to emerge from its economic struggles, it is unlikely that any legislation involving a new tax will be passed.

Third, a carbon tax fails the simplicity test. Supporters have argued that a carbon tax is simple and would be easy to implement. The U.S. tax code stretches for thousands of pages and includes endless exemptions and loopholes. A carbon tax would be no different.

A cap-and-trade system would ensure that emissions reductions are achieved and would mobilize the financing needed to modernize our energy infrastructure. It would unleash the creativity of the private sector to find emissions-control strategies with the biggest bang for the buck. This in turn would benefit Main Street businesses and consumers.

In the 1990s, in response to acid rain, a bipartisan majority in Congress adopted a cap-and-trade system for sulfur dioxide. The result: more dramatic sulfur-dioxide reductions, at a lower cost to the economy and consumers, than expected. It proved cap and trade to be environmentally, economically and politically effective.

DIRK FORRISTER

Washington

The writer, who led the White House **Climate Change** Task Force under President Bill Clinton, works for an asset management firm that invests in environmental markets.

Bisphenol A

**Opinion shifting against chemical (*Columbus Dispatch*)**

Tuesday, May 26, 2009 3:16 AM
By Spencer Hunt
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Lawmakers in 20 states and Congress are working to ban a toxic chemical used in a number of products, including plastic baby bottles and in metal food cans.

Officials in Chicago, Minnesota and Canada already have banned bisphenol A in baby bottles and sippy cups.

Although health studies have linked the chemical to cancer, neurological damage and developmental problems, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration insists it's safe.

"Current levels of exposure to BPA through food packaging do not pose an immediate health risk to the general population, including infants and babies," FDA spokesman Michael Herndon wrote in an e-mail statement.

The FDA's stance is frustrating and expected, say health and environmental advocates.

Eric Fitch, who teaches environmental politics at Marietta College, said the government has long ignored evidence of chemical health threats.

"It's a question of who pays," Fitch said. "Even after we identify something that's going to hurt someone, it's then very difficult to track back upstream and say, 'Hey, you produced this, you need to pay damages and clean this up.' "

PCBs are a good example.

Although federal officials banned PCBs in 1979, research that dated to the 1940s eventually linked the compounds to cancer.

More recently, C8, a chemical DuPont uses to make Teflon, has come under fire. A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency science panel declared the chemical a "likely carcinogen," but the government has yet to act.

The company, which has settled a class-action lawsuit filed by a group whose drinking water was tainted with C8, has agreed to phase out its use by 2015.

And now there is bisphenol A, a key ingredient in manufacturing polycarbonate plastic. The chemical is in everything from water bottles and DVDs to eyeglass lenses and food-can liners.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 93 percent of U.S. residents have it in their blood.

Health studies have linked bisphenol A to diabetes, developmental problems, nerve damage and an increased risk for prostate and breast cancers in lab animals.

Industry officials with the American Chemistry Council say the average exposure to the chemical falls well below the FDA's 50 parts-per-billion daily safety limit for food. A typical can liner leaks about 5 parts per billion, the council says.

Advocates say the limit is too high and that people ingest bisphenol A from multiple sources.

"We're taking it in as fast as we can excrete it," said Sara Janssen, a scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The National Conference of State Legislatures is tracking 57 bills in Congress and in 20 states, including Michigan and Pennsylvania, to restrict or ban products that contain bisphenol A.

There are no such plans in Ohio.

A number of businesses, including Nalgene Inc., the Rochester, N.Y.-based makers of reusable sport water bottles, say they are dropping bisphenol A from their products. Six baby bottle manufacturers, including Playtex and Gerber, announced in March that they were doing the same.

Abbott Nutrition, which has operations in Columbus, announced in May 2008 it would stop using BPA to line cans of baby formula.

But spokeswoman Tracey Noe said last week that the chemical is still being used while the company looks for an alternative.

"Each time that our formulas have been tested for BPA, the results are either undetectable or far below the safety limits established by regulatory agencies," Noe said.

Herndon said the FDA will continue to monitor the chemical.

"The FDA is already moving forward with planned research to address the potential low-dose effects of bisphenol A, and will carefully evaluate the findings of these studies." he said in the statement.

shunt@dispatch.com

Tuesday's letters:

**Hitting the gas (*Santa Rosa Press Democrat*)**

WHAT OTHERS SAY
Published: Tuesday, May 26, 2009 at 3:00 a.m.
To listen to the global-warming deniers, the Obama administration's announcement Tuesday that it plans to restrict greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles will hurt the economy, force consumers to buy cars they don't want and endanger the lives of motorists. The opposite is closer to the truth.
Until the banking crisis overtook the issue, the nation's top economic concern was high gasoline prices. The financial meltdown caused oil prices to plummet, but that will change when the economy recovers. Improving fuel efficiency will dramatically reduce U.S. demand, which accounts for one-quarter of the world's oil demand. That will put far more downward pressure on prices, and do it more quickly, than opening more domestic land to drilling possibly could.

President Obama announced that the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency will work together to improve the average fuel economy of vehicles sold in the United States to 35.5 miles per gallon by 2016. This should render moot a separate effort by California and 13 other states to regulate tailpipe emissions and assure a unified national standard for new vehicles. That ultimately will benefit automakers.

The safety argument is based on studies that have shown past regulation of fuel efficiency increased the number of deaths in auto accidents by encouraging smaller and lighter vehicles. That's mainly because people in lighter cars are in greater danger when they're in accidents involving heavier ones; if everybody drove smaller cars, we'd all be safer.

Future cars will have more efficient engines, transmissions and tires, none of which will affect size, and they probably will be built from lighter and stronger materials that will enhance safety. These elements will add to a new car's cost — about $1,300 more per vehicle by 2016, according to the Obama administration — but consumers will more than make up the difference in fuel savings.

The crackdown on vehicles comes as Congress is debating a groundbreaking bill to regulate greenhouse gases in nearly every sector of the U.S. economy, and Obama has put lawmakers and industry on notice: If they don't act, the administration is willing to do the job.

The EPA is empowered to regulate these gases under the Clean Air Act, and the kind of command-and-control measures it would implement probably would be far more costly to polluters than the cap-and-trade scheme being negotiated in Congress.

Cutting a deal that heads off such intervention is in everybody's interest.

**Secondhand smoke (*Spartanburg Herald Journal*)**

Published: Tuesday, May 26, 2009 at 3:15 a.m.
Last Modified: Friday, May 22, 2009 at 5:23 p.m.
I would like to thank all of the restaurants and venues that are smoke-free in the greater Spartanburg area. They are to be commended for truly caring about the health and welfare of their customers as well as employees.

In my opinion, when one individual's freedom to smoke infringes on another individual's right to breath healthy air, the freedom to smoke should be prohibited in public places.

According to an Environmental Protection Agency report on the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Web site, approximately 80 percent of diners are nonsmokers, and many smokers prefer not to smoke when they eat. Also, even the best exhaust systems do very little to remove the 4,000 chemicals found in environmental tobacco smoke. And more people are realizing that a partitioned off smoking section is not eliminating the secondhand smoke health risk.

I know many friends and family members with medical problems such as cancer, asthma, allergies and bronchitis who seek out nonsmoking establishments. Unfortunately, there is a limited number of restaurants in Spartanburg that are completely smoke-free.

Because of my recent battle with throat cancer, I do not wish to go into any business that allows smoking. This can be extremely frustrating when craving something like a good burger, pizza or wings. Of course, dining out within the Greenville city limits and now in neighboring North Carolina is an option, but I firmly believe in buying local whenever possible.

A compromise that the city of Spartanburg should seriously consider is to ban smoking in establishments that allow patrons under the age of 21. In most situations, children do not have a choice about where they eat, and this type of law would also allow bars to permit smoking.

Secondhand smoke is a public health issue that needs to be addressed now.

Drex Cheek
Spartanburg

Their view:

**Watch for a rising anti-government tide (*Silver City Sun News*)**

By Newt Gingrich/Special to The Washington Post
Posted: 05/26/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT
Americans should look carefully at the anti-politician, anti-government mood exhibited in California last week. Just as Proposition 13 and the anti-tax movement of 1978 were the forerunners of the Reagan presidential victory, so the results of last Tuesday's vote are a harbinger of things to come.

The repudiation of the California establishment in the series of initiative defeats could hardly have been more decisive. Five taxing and spending measures were rejected by 62.6 to 66.4 percent of the voters. That is a consistent majority of enormous potential. An even larger majority, 73.9 percent, approved the proposition limiting elected officials' salaries when there is a deficit.

This vote is the second great signal that the American people are getting fed up with corrupt politicians, arrogant bureaucrats, greedy interests and incompetent, destructive government.

The elites ridiculed or ignored the first harbinger of rebellion, the recent tea parties. While it will be harder to ignore this massive anti-tax, anti-spending vote, they will attempt to do just that.

Voters in our largest state spoke unambiguously, but politicians and lobbyists in Sacramento are ignoring or rejecting the voters' will, just as they are in Albany, N.Y., and Trenton, N.J. The states with huge government machines have basically moved beyond the control of the people. They have become castles of corruption, favoritism and wastefulness. These state governments are run by lobbyists for the various unions through bureaucracies seeking to impose the values of a militant left. Elections have become so rigged by big money and clever incumbents that the process of self-government is threatened.

Sacramento politicians will now reject the voters' call for lower taxes and less spending and embrace the union-lobbyist-bureaucrat machine that is running California into the ground, crippling its economy and cheating residents. This model of high-tax, big-spending inefficiency has already driven thousands of successful Californians out of the state (taking with them an estimated $11 billion in annual tax revenue). The exodus will continue.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is a smart, tough, charismatic leader who has been forced to submit to policies he knows are ruining California on behalf of interests he knows are cheating the state. His failure to tame the union-lobbyist-bureaucrat machine that owns the legislature is a symptom of just how powerful it is.

Albany is even more corrupt and dysfunctional. The special interests that own the legislators in both parties have been exploiting New York for two generations. They

have impoverished the Upstate region to the point where it is a vast zone of no jobs and no opportunities. Their predatory tax and bureaucratic union behavior is beginning to cripple New York City. More and more successful New Yorkers are leaving the state. In the face of multiple crises, Gov. David Paterson has shown himself incapable of carrying out reform.

In other words, the political machines in California and New York are wrecking the states' economies and driving out successful residents. But the machines don't care because all they want to do is own the wreckage.

This system of ruining communities on behalf of interest groups first appeared in Detroit. Bad government, bad politicians and bad policies drove a city that had, in 1950, the highest per capita income of any large American city to No. 62 in per capita income as of 2007. The population has declined from 1.8 million to fewer than 950,000. Recently, 1,800 homes were sold for under $10,000 each. The human cost of bad politics and bad government in Detroit is staggering.

Now President Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid want to impose on the nation this style of politics in which interest groups, politicians and bureaucracies dominate. Look at their record: a $787 billion stimulus no elected official had read, 8,000 earmarks, an Environmental Protection Agency plan to control the economy through carbon regulations, the government threatening retaliation against those who would protect their property rights against theft in the Chrysler bailout — again and again, this team is moving toward a government that owns the country rather than a government that is owned by the people.

Watch Sacramento politicians and interest groups work to overrule the people of California. Watch Albany politicians and interest groups continue to undermine the economy of New York. Watch the arrogance of the elites in Washington as they impose their costs and special deals on the American people.

Then look again at the 62 percent-plus majority in California in favor of smaller government and lower taxes.

In the great tradition of political movements rising against arrogant, corrupt elites, there will soon be a party of people rooting out the party of government. This party may be Republican; it may be Democratic; in some states it may be a third party. The politicians have been warned.

Newt Gingrich, a Republican, was speaker of the House of Representatives from 1995 to 1999. He is chairman of the Gingrich Group, a communications and consulting firm, and general chairman of American Solutions for Winning the Future.

Pearlstein Harbor

**Washington Post columnist Steven Pearlstein gets climate bill wrong (*Grist Magazine)***

Posted 12:01 AM on 26 May 2009
by David Roberts
In a laudable attempt to draw more elite media attention to the Waxman-Markey bill—which, like all things "environmental," has not exactly been a preoccupation of the political cable/blog/op-ed axis—Washington Post business writer Steven Pearlstein makes a hash of a few important facts.

Pearlstein says the Waxman-Markey bill will create "create dozens of new government agencies with broad powers to set standards, dole out rebates and tax subsidies, and pick winning and losing technologies." By my math, "dozens" means 24 or more, but I can't even come up with a handful. EPA will monitor CO2 and issue permits. FERC will regulate the carbon trading market. The Department of Energy will establish efficiency standards, do new research, and expand smart grid and electrical vehicle support programs. These aren't new agencies.

There is a new Carbon Storage Research Corporation [S114(b)] run by EPRI. There's an Offsets Integrity Advisory Board [S731] to consult on quality and standards for offsets. There might at some point be a clean energy and/or infrastructure investment bank to help finance new green projects. But most of the regulating is being done by existing departments and agencies.

Pearlstein's hyperbole is par for the course these days. Lots of people have taken to exaggerating the complexity and opacity of the bill based primarily on its page length (one wonders how many have read it, or even a summary). Waxman-Markey does a great many things (thus the many pages), but most of them are described fairly clearly and constitute reasonable evolution of existing regulatory authority. This isn't to say there aren't complexities—important questions remain to be answered about coal plant performance standards and EPA authority, for example—but the bill is not the impenetrable Rube Goldberg mechanism so many in the press caricature.

Pearlstein is mixed up about the choices in climate policy as well. Apparently Paul Portney, former president of Resources for the Future, told him there are three options in reducing emissions: a carbon tax, a cap-and-trade system, and other regulations, standards, and investments (so-called "complementary policies"). Not sure if Portney said exactly that, but if he did, he's mixed up too. That's like saying your sandwich choices are chunky peanut butter, creamy peanut butter, or jelly.

Then Portney/Pearlstein adds to the confusion by saying Waxman-Markey uses a mix of all three policies, but that's not right either. The carbon title of the bill is a cap-and-trade system, full stop. It's a declining cap and tradable permits. Features that might

have made it slightly more tax-like, e.g. 100 percent auction of permits, were rejected. There's no tax in the mix.

The cap-and-trade system is, in fact, packaged in a large bill with a whole range of complementary policies. But why should expect (or want) otherwise? Climate policy cannot live by carbon pricing alone. [See, from the Carnegie Mellon Electricity Industry Center: "Cap and Trade is Not Enough: Improving US Climate Policy" (PDF), or Holmes Hummel, "The Essential Role of Complementary Policies in Climate Policy Design" (PPT).]

The climate policy stool has three legs: a price on carbon, complementary regulations and standards, and public investment. It would be unwise to pick one at the expense of the others just to make a bill tidier or fewer pages in length. If anything, the third leg—investment—needs to be bulked up in the bill.

All that said, Pearlstein is absolutely to be commended for recognizing that:

Something very important has been happening this week—more important, if you can believe it, than what Nancy Pelosi knew about waterboarding or why Kris Allen scored his upset victory on "American Idol."

So damn true. Let's hope Pearlstein can get a few more of his colleagues interested. One of the things that would have made the bill better is a lot more sunlight, and that only comes with relentless (and accurate) press exposure. After all, he's dead on about this:

Given the bill's scope and complexity, just getting it out of committee is a monumental achievement on the part of its principal authors, Democrats Henry Waxman of California and Ed Markey of Massachusetts. To do so, they had to make numerous compromises and concessions to powerful special interests and regional voting blocs that would be most affected by the transition to a system in which companies and consumers are forced to pay, indirectly, for the environmental damage they cause. Waxman and Markey are wily and experienced politicians, so it is a fair assumption that the bill their committee passed last night in a 33-25 vote is pretty close to what the U.S. political system is now willing to accept.

Producing a better bill than Waxman-Markey would require a few changes in the political landscape, one of which is a political media that takes the bill and the issues it addresses seriously.

David Roberts is staff writer for *Grist*.

**ENERGY**
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**Energy Star sets standards for computer servers (*Energy Efficiency News*)**

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finally unveiled new Energy Star energy efficiency standards for computer servers.

The measures, which only cover some servers, require products to use efficient power supplies that generate less waste heat, demonstrate improved power quality and include advanced power management features.

Servers carrying the Energy Star label will also have to be able to measure their real-time power use, processor utilization, and air temperature. Manufacturers will also have to supply purchasers with an information sheet detailing the server's energy performance and efficiency.

According to the EPA, servers meeting the Energy Star requirements will be 30% more energy efficient that standard servers. If all servers in the US met the standard, it would save $800 million a year in energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equivalent to more than one million cars.

The new specifications are effective immediately and the EPA is inviting server suppliers to sign up to the Energy Star programme.

The EPA has also announced new requirements for commercial griddles and ovens to improve their efficiency by 10-20%.
Commercial griddles and ovens that qualify for the Energy Star label will have to meet minimum cooking efficiency and maximum idle energy rates.

Using Energy Star labelled griddles could save businesses $175-190 per year, depending on whether gas or electric, while a more energy efficient electric oven could save $190 a year and an improved gas over as much as $360.

For further information:
www.epa.gov/
www.energystar.gov/datacenters
yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/3829e1ce26d173e7852575ba004d9518!OpenDocument

**HGTV Home Earns Indoor AirPlus, Energy Star Labels (*EP Magazine*)**

May 26, 2009

The Home and Garden Television (HGTV) Green Home 2009 has earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor AirPlus and Energy Star labels.

Indoor AirPlus-qualified homes include all the features consumers would normally want in a new home, plus moisture control, radon control, pest barriers, improved heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, low-emitting materials and independent verification.

The home is located in Port St. Lucie, Fla., and its Energy Star and AirPlus labels mean the home will have the latest technology for a healthier living environment.

As with all Indoor AirPlus-labeled homes, the HGTV Green Home includes more than 30 home design and construction features to help protect homeowners from a host of health problems associated with poor indoor air quality, including eye irritation, allergies, headaches, and respiratory problems such as asthma.

The Indoor AirPlus Program is a partnership among EPA, builders, standards verification organizations, utilities, and public health and indoor environmental organizations to improve indoor air in new homes. To earn the Indoor AirPlus label, a home must meet strict EPA guidelines ensuring good indoor air quality as well as Energy Star guidelines that typically make them 20 to 30 percent more efficient than standard homes.

**FUEL**
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EYES ON THE ROAD
MAY 26, 2009

**Kiss That Guzzler Goodbye (*Wall Street Journal)***

By JOSEPH B. WHITE
Can auto makers boost the overall fuel economy of American cars and trucks by 40% in seven years without forcing everyone into a Smart ForTwo? They've done it before and should be able to do it again, but it could be a bumpy transition.
Between 1975 and 1987, the average fuel efficiency of American cars and trucks improved by nearly 68%, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. This was a remarkable achievement, but it came at considerable pain and discomfort both to auto makers and consumers. Cars such as the compact Cadillac Cimarron -- a rebadged Chevy Cavalier -- didn't do much to boost General Motors Corp.'s overall fuel economy, but did plenty to damage Cadillac's brand image.

Even Japanese car makers, which benefited tremendously from America's energy consciousness and the resulting mileage mandates, have little nostalgia for the tiny, modestly powered cars of that era.

Now, President Barack Obama's plan for auto makers to boost the average fuel efficiency of their fleets to 35.5 miles per gallon by 2016 sets up auto makers and U.S. drivers to replay the 1970s and 1980s experience -- with some critical differences.

Based on the way new federal fuel-economy standards will likely work, and on the industry's history in dealing with new efficiency mandates, people who like big sport-utility vehicles or pickups may want to pounce on them over the next several months, while they're still cheap and plentiful.

Fans of small, fuel-efficient cars or hybrids might find irresistible buying opportunities in the current market, too, if they're willing to make do with today's technology. Another potential upside: Riding out the next six or seven years in a 2009 model buys time for car makers to work out the kinks in their new-generation, high-mileage cars.

Since gas prices fell below $3 a gallon, demand for very small cars and hybrids has cratered. AutoNation Inc., the nation's biggest dealer chain, has enough Chevrolet Aveo subcompacts on hand to last 560 days at current sales rates. In July 2008, when gas prices were peaking above $4 a gallon, AutoNation had a relatively lean 33 days' supply of Aveos on their lots.

AutoNation's inventories of the Honda Fit, a car that meets the 2016 mileage target right now, have surged to an unhealthy 147 days' supply, compared with just 17 days' supply last July. Dealers who wanted premiums for hybrids and small cars a year ago now are offering discounts.

This is one reason why AutoNation Chief Executive Mike Jackson is a tireless advocate of coupling higher mileage standards to higher federal gasoline taxes, a position many industry executives share.

But SUV and pickup fans don't need to fear that the 2016 federal mileage rules will send these vehicles the way of the woolly mammoth. In fact, the new framework for fuel-economy standards could be relatively easier on large vehicles than on very small cars.

Under the new system, all vehicles won't need to average 35.5 miles per gallon. They will need to meet or exceed a target adjusted to their size, or "footprint." So, for example, a Chevy Tahoe, which has a footprint of 55 square feet, is required to get about 23 to 24 miles per gallon in 2011 and improve from there, under government rules already adopted for that model year. A smaller truck, such as a Toyota Highlander, is supposed to achieve about 26 miles per gallon in 2011 and then improve from that base over time.

What's more, there's more room for weight reduction with larger vehicles. "Weight can be found in a lot of creative places," says Tom Stricker, director of technical and regulatory affairs at Toyota Motor Corp.'s Washington office. Mr. Stricker says the details of how the president's 35.5-mile-per-gallon plan will affect different sizes of vehicles are still to be determined, and he and his counterparts at rival auto companies are getting ready to "roll our sleeves up" to hammer them out over the next several months.

Still, costs for larger vehicles will likely rise. Sandy Stojkovski, director of product systems for Ricardo Inc., a consulting firm that has worked with the government on its fuel-economy policy, says it could cost $5,000 to $12,000 per vehicle to achieve the required improvements in fuel efficiency for medium and large trucks, depending on the technology car makers choose. The Obama administration has put the estimate of increased cost per vehicle at a more optimistic $1,300.

Inventory of small fuel-efficient cars, such as the Honda Fit, has swelled compared to last summer.

Mr. Obama's auto policy is founded on two big bets. The first is that oil prices will go up a lot by 2016, spurring demand for cars that are smaller, more efficient, more electric and probably more expensive, pound for pound.

The second wager is that auto makers will repeat history, in a good way. After initially struggling to meet tougher mileage benchmarks in the 1970s and 1980s, car makers used innovative designs and technology to create 2008 model vehicles that not only were nearly 60% more fuel-efficient than the 1975 average, but were 32% faster from 0 to 60 miles per hour, and met a wider array of functional needs.

Mr. Obama says more-aggressive fuel-economy targets will cut America's consumption of oil. But despite the gains in vehicle efficiency, Americans burned 39% more gasoline in 2007 than they did in 1975, according to Energy Department figures, because more people hit the roads and drove more miles.

Don't share the president's optimism? Then consider buying one of today's models soon. There are plenty of them around.

Write to Joseph B. White at joseph.white@wsj.com

**More Time Available to Comment on E15 (*Farm Futures*)**

Expanding the ethanol standard gets more time for review.
(5/26/2009)
Farm Futures staff

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is extending the comment period by another 60 days on a waiver application that would boost the amount of ethanol in a gallon of gasoline from 10% to 15%. The new fuel, often called E15, is being supported by a range of ethanol and commodity groups.
The original comment period was to end last week on May 21, but has been extended until July 20. The move to boost the level to 15%, or E15, was supported by Growth Energy and 54 ethanol manufacturers that submitted the E15 application waiver in March.
The rules of the Clean Air Act require that EPA respond within 270 days of receipt of the application, which is Dec. 1, 2009. The agency extension of the comment period won't impact that time frame. The agency says the comment period extension was granted to provide the public "additional time" to respond to the legal and technical issues raised in the application.

**EPA Extends E15 Application Comment Period (*EP Magazine*)**

May 26, 2009

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency extended the comment period by 60 days on a waiver application requesting an increase in the amount of ethanol blended into a gallon of gasoline to up to 15 volume percent (E15).

The original public comment period was to end May 21 and will now end on July 20. The current limit on the amount of ethanol that can be blended into a gallon of gasoline is at 10 volume percent ethanol (E10) for conventional (non flex-fuel) vehicles. Growth Energy and 54 ethanol manufacturers submitted the E15 waiver application on March 6. The statutory provision calls for EPA to make a decision within 270 days of receipt, which is Dec. 1, 2009. The comment period extension will not change this timeframe.

**NFU Favors Higher Ethanol Limit (*Pork Magazine*)**

Tuesday, May 26, 2009

National Farmers Union submitted comments to the Environmental Protection Agency today calling for an increase in the allowable ethanol content of gasoline beyond the current 10 percent limit. NFU's comments came in response to waiver request by Growth Energy and 51 ethanol producers to the Clean Air Act.

"Approving this waiver will enable continued growth of the ethanol industry and lead to the next generation of biofuels," Johnson said.

"The United States is rapidly approaching the point at which we will be able to blend

ethanol in 10 percent of al l transportation fuels. However, the 10 percent limitation jeopardiz es our ability to meet the requirements set by the Renewable Fuels Standard," NFU President Roger Johnson said.

The Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS2), which was passed as part of the 2007 Energy Bill, requires the use of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022. In the near term, the RFS2 requires 13.15 billion gallons of ethanol by 2012.

**Ethanol proposal may derail climate bill (*Politico*)**

By: Lisa Lerer
May 26, 2009 04:24 AM EST
Rural Democrats are threatening to vote against climate change legislation unless the Environmental Protection Agency halts new proposals that could hamper the development of corn ethanol.

Ethanol has long been an energy third rail in Congress, with lawmakers — particularly those from the Midwest and other states with large agricultural industries — clamoring to support the biofuel both to transition away from foreign energy and to support rural economies. But in recent years, environmentalists, livestock producers and grocery manufacturers have raised concerns about the fuel, claiming that it threatens to exacerbate global warming and that it raises food prices.

The debate intensified recently when EPA released a draft decision ruling that “indirect land use” issues must be considered when calculating the carbon footprint of corn-based ethanol. That decision raises the overall emissions of corn ethanol by including sometimes tenuously linked activities — critics say totally unrelated activities — in its carbon count. And in fact, the EPA finding showed that while biofuels from plants and other next-generation renewables reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, the fuel might not be as environmentally friendly as the law requires.

Biofuels are required to generate 20 percent less greenhouse-gas emissions than gasoline — a standard substantially more difficult to meet when life cycle emissions are counted. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said certain types of corn-based ethanol reduce carbon emissions by only 16 percent and thus fall short of the mandate.

The indirect land-use ruling is a key element that unfairly drives up the carbon count, critics charge, and ethanol backers from rural states greeted EPA’s decision on it by threatening to go nuclear on the climate change bill, a key piece of the administration’s agenda.

“There’s just enough concerns that the committee members have pretty much decided to stick together — that unless we get a resolution here that we think we can live with, we don’t see how we can support this,” said House Agricultural Committee Chairman

Collin Peterson (R-Minn.).

Peterson and the 26 Democrats on his committee say they will vote against climate change legislation passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee last week unless it better addresses several concerns raised by farmers, including reversing the EPA decision.

The issue could be even dicier in the Senate, where Democrats most likely need almost every Democratic vote to pass a climate change bill. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and 12 other farm-state senators sent a letter in March asking the EPA to refrain from including the effects of indirect land-use changes in their calculations; the agency has not yet responded, Harkin said last week.

The EPA's ethanol analysis was mandated by a 2007 energy law, which required EPA to evaluate the "life cycle emissions" of biofuels, or how much pollution the fuels generate from the time they are first being produced to the point when they are burned in vehicles.

As part of that calculation, EPA was required to consider indirect land-use changes prompted by biofuels, a category that includes ripple effects across the globe, and one that critics say holds U.S. farmers responsible for economic factors far beyond their control.

For example, they say, if an American farmer decides to respond to the ethanol market by planting corn instead of soybeans — and as a result, Brazilian farmers decide to clear rain forests to grow soybeans — the increased carbon emissions from cutting down the forest would be calculated as a cost of producing ethanol.

"EPA's actions, if based on erroneous indirect land-use assumptions, could hinder biofuels development and actually extend America's reliance on dirtier fossil fuels," said Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), who claims to be the only working farmer on the Agriculture Committee. "Agricultural practices and land-use decisions in other countries are not driven by U.S. biofuels policy and should not be used to undermine our domestic biofuels industry."

Last week, Peterson introduced a bill that would exclude indirect land use from the life cycle definition and would put the departments of Energy and Agriculture — instead of EPA — in charge of evaluating the emissions. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) introduced a corresponding measure in the Senate.

Ethanol backers argue that there is no reliable scientific methodology or economic modeling that accurately links decisions by American farmers to crop changes across the world.

"Assume that those soybeans grown in Brazil are processed into animal feed and used to produce pork that ends up on someone's dinner plate in China," Bob Dinneen, CEO

of the Renewable Fuels Association, explained last week to the House Agriculture Committee. “According to the indirect land-use-change theory adopted by the EPA, U.S. corn ethanol would be responsible for the carbon footprint of that plate of moo shu pork being consumed in China.”

Dinneen and the Renewable Fuels Association plan to introduce “hundreds of pages” into the peer review process, hoping to persuade EPA to abandon the indirect land-use calculation. They’re using a similar strategy in California, where the Air Resources Board ruled last month to count indirect land-use changes when determining if biofuels meet the emissions standard set by California’s low-carbon fuel standard.

But a coalition of environmental groups is hitting back, arguing that calculating indirect land-use impacts is an important part of ensuring that the biofuel regulations actually lead to lower greenhouse-gas emissions. Including the indirect land use will help determine which types of biofuels have the biggest environmental benefit, they argue.

“Properly done, accounting for indirect land use will improve the ability of investors and developers to distinguish promising approaches from dead ends and drive investments and innovation towards these feedstocks and technologies,” the coalition argued in a letter to EPA.

**Lose-Lose on Biofuels? (*American Com*)**

By Ted Gayer Tuesday, May 26, 2009
Filed under: Government & Politics, Public Square, Science & Technology
Forcing the market to produce large amounts of renewable fuel will harm consumers. Even though it reduces some emissions, it increases others.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently released its analysis of the renewable fuel standard enacted by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. The standard requires 11.1 billion gallons of renewable fuel to displace petroleum fuel in 2009, ratcheting up each year until reaching 36.0 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022. There are separate volume requirements for advanced biofuels, cellulosic, and biodiesel.

Forcing the market to produce large amounts of renewable fuel will harm consumers in two ways: it will increase prices at the pump, because biofuels are more costly than gasoline, and it will drive up the price of food, because it diverts crops into fuel. The impact of food price inflation will weigh most heavily in developing countries where food purchases comprise larger shares of consumption. Food expenditures account for as much as 70 percent of household consumption among lower income groups in the developing world.

What can justify a policy that deliberately increases the price of food and fuel? Calling passage of the bill the “shot heard ‘round the world,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it would improve the “health of our children.” But this is questionable at best. While the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) analysis suggests that the switch toward renewables will decrease ammonia, carbon monoxide, and benzene, it also predicts “significant increases in ethanol and acetaldehyde emissions” and “more modest increases in nitrogen oxides, formaldehyde, particulate matter, hydrocarbons, acrolein, and sulfur dioxide.” Citing time constraints, the EPA did not do a full analysis of the net health effects of these emission profiles, but a reasonable assumption is that the detrimental health impacts from increased particulate matter will at least offset the health improvements from the predicted reductions in the other pollutants.

Supporters of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) also claimed that it will reduce greenhouse gases. Both Speaker Pelosi and then-President Bush said the bill will help reverse global warming. Indeed, much of the early enthusiasm for biofuels was based on the belief that their use would reduce greenhouse gases. It is true that burning biofuels results in less tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases relative to burning petroleum. Yet this ignores the increase in emissions that results from the production of biofuels, especially the land use changes as farmers convert forest and grassland into cropland for biofuel production. An article published in Sciencemagazinein 2008 found that “corn-based ethanol nearly doubles greenhouse gas emissions over 30 years and increases greenhouse gases for 167 years.” Another article in Scienceconcluded that crop-based biofuels create a “biofuel carbon debt of 17 to 420 times more carbon dioxide than the greenhouse gas reductions that these biofuels would provide by displacing fossil fuels.”

Congress was aware of this concern. EISA requires that the mandated renewable fuels reduce greenhouse gases relative to petroleum, and it also requires emissions to be measured on a “lifecycle” basis that includes any “significant emissions from land use changes.” Under EISA, corn-based renewable fuel must result in a 20 percent reduction relative to petroleum; advanced (i.e., non–corn based) biofuels and biodiesel must result in a 50 percent reduction; and cellulosic biofuel must result in a 60 percent reduction. However, EISA gives the EPA discretion to lower these requirements by up to 10 percentage points.

This is where the EPA’s analysis is especially interesting. Given the results published in Science, many biofuels might not meet the greenhouse gas reduction required by EISA. This would largely gut the biofuel mandate.

The EPA’s findings indeed show a substantial increase in greenhouse gas emissions stemming from the initial land use changes needed to meet the mandate. Only over a long time horizon do the relatively clean-burning fuels start to accrue reductions in greenhouse gases relative to petroleum.

The following figure from the EPA’s analysis shows the estimated emission profiles for corn-based biofuel, soy-based biodiesel, sugarcane ethanol, and switchgrass ethanol,

stemming from the 2022 mandate of 36.0 billion gallons. There is an extremely large spike in emissions due to initial land-use changes, especially for corn-based ethanol and soy-based biodiesel. It takes more than 30 years for the emission reductions from these cleaner burning fuels to make up for the spike in emissions from the land-use changes. (Sugarcane and switchgrass biofuels fare much better.)

Opting not to substantially gut EISA's biofuel mandate, the EPA evaluates these time profiles using either a very long time horizon of 100 years (so that there are more years in the future garnering emission reductions in order to dominate the first-year emissions spike), or a shorter time horizon (30 years) but with a zero discount rate (eliminating the typically assumed preference for current benefits relative to future benefits).

This figure clearly calls into question the merits of the renewable fuel standard. At a cost of higher fuel prices (the EPA predicts 2.7 to 10.9 cents more per gallon), higher food prices (the EPA predicts $10 more per person per year on food), increases in harmful local pollutants, and a considerable increase in short-term greenhouse gas emissions, the standard only starts paying climate-related dividends many years in the future.

There are three important concerns here: First, it is dangerously naïve to consider only direct emissions stemming from different fuels. As acknowledged in EISA, the full lifecycle emissions from a fuel include "all stages of fuel and feedstock production and distribution, from feedstock generation or extraction through the distribution and delivery and use of the finished fuel to the ultimate consumer." A lifecycle analysis is extremely complex and the results are highly uncertain.

Second, a lifecycle analysis will present different emission time profiles for different fuels, leading to the tricky question of weighing the current emissions increase from land-use changes to the relative emission reductions in later years. The net results are highly contingent on the time horizon used for the evaluation, as well as the discount rate selected.

The third, and most important, lesson is an old one: reducing greenhouse gas emissions is best achieved from a comprehensive cap or tax that allows full flexibility across sectors or industries. Right now, Congress is considering the Waxman-Markey bill, which would establish an economy-wide cap on greenhouse gases. With a firm cap in place, a law that mandates different fuel mixes will increase the cap's compliance costs and will not achieve any further reductions. Indeed, to the extent that land use changes are not captured by the cap, the biofuels mandate may actually lead to emission increases. Unfortunately, not only does the Waxman-Markey bill keep the biofuels mandate in place; it goes one step further by creating a renewable electricity standard that mandates different fuel types for electricity generation.

Ted Gayer is an associate professor at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute. From July 2007 to July 2008, he served as deputy assistant secretary of economic policy at the Treasury Department.

Posted on Tue, May. 26, 2009

**What do the new fuel rules mean? (*Modesto Bee*)**

By Dan Strumpf
The Associated Press
last updated: May 25, 2009 09:37:07 PM
Automakers are fully behind the Obama administration's new set of fuel economy rules unveiled last week. But make no mistake -- these regulations will not be easy for them to meet.

The new rules call for manufacturers to reach an overall fleet average of 35.5 mpg by 2016, with passenger cars reaching 39 mpg and light trucks hitting 30 mpg under a system that develops standards for each vehicle class size. Manufacturers also would be required to hit individual mileage targets.

The regulations are expected to cut American oil use by billions of barrels, which is equivalent to removing hundreds of millions of cars from U.S. roads. But they are expected to cost car buyers an extra $1,300 per vehicle by the time the plan is complete.

The new rules also will have a cost for automakers, who will have to pour billions more dollars into new technologies to help them meet those goals. The Transportation Department last year estimated that requiring the industry to meet a looser standard of 31.6 mpg by 2015 would cost nearly $47 billion.

Here are some questions and answers about what the automakers will need to do to achieve the new standards for emissions and fuel economy:

**Q:** How big a challenge will this be for the industry?

**A:** To get an idea of how far away the auto industry is from the new benchmarks, consider this: Only six vehicles on sale today offer fuel economy of at least 35.5 mpg, according to the auto Web site Edmunds.com. They are the Toyota Prius, the Honda Insight, the Honda Civic hybrid, the Ford Fusion hybrid, the Mercury Milan hybrid and the Smart microcar.

**Q:** What are they going to do to meet these requirements?

**A:** For starters, manufacturers have vehicles in the pipeline that will help them clear the new hurdles, and they likely will announce more.

Ford is bringing fuel efficient small cars such as the Fiesta to North America in the coming years and is planning to put fully electric cars in showrooms by 2011. General Motors Corp. still plans to debut its Chevrolet Volt plug-in electric car next year, provided it isn't derailed by bankruptcy.

Chrysler LLC also has plans to introduce electric cars and small cars from Italian automaker Fiat Group SpA.

Toyota and Honda will ramp up hybrid and plug-in vehicle production in the coming years.

**Q:** Are there other technologies that will help automakers meet the new regulations?

**A:** Besides more conventional hybrids and extended-range plug-ins such as the Volt, expect to see so-called clean diesel cars such as the Volkswagen Jetta TDI.

Extended-range plug-ins rely on a rechargeable battery for short distances, then a combination of gas and electric power for longer trips. Clean diesels use technology that filters out particulate matter and offers better fuel economy.

Automakers plan to introduce more exclusively electric vehicles. Meanwhile, companies including GM and Honda have long experimented with hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles, though they remain a long way off.

"There's all kinds of technologies that can be brought" to market, said Aaron Bragman, an auto analyst with the consulting firm IHS-Global Insight.

**Q:** When assessing a manufacturer's fuel economy rating, how will miles per gallon be calculated for vehicles such as plug-in hybrids, which can be driven without using a drop of fuel as long as they don't travel too far at a time?

**A:** That isn't yet known. The Environmental Protection Agency has said it is working on how to measure the fuel economy for these sorts of vehicles, and for pure electric cars and vehicles with other exotic powertrains.

**Q:** Could there be some unintended side effects of the new policy, in terms of what the manufacturers produce and sell?

**A:** U.S. automakers have long been criticized for relying too much on trucks and sport utility vehicles. And Jeremy Anwyl, chief executive of Edmunds.com, said the new rules might not change that because the fuel-economy standard for light trucks remains lower than the one for cars.

"In the United States, trucks have been sort of given a free pass on the (fuel-economy) standard," Anwyl said. "What's been happening is the automakers are building more and more vehicles and labeling them as light trucks."

As for cars, one easy way to boost fuel economy is to make them smaller. But that could raise questions about vehicle safety, Anwyl said.

**Q:** I like my SUV because it's comfortable, fun to drive and makes me and my family feel safe. Does this spell the end of big SUVs such as the Cadillac Escalade and the Hummer H3?

**A:** Even the hybrid version of the Escalade gets a relatively weak 20 mpg. Hummer, which GM has been trying to sell for some time, does not have a promising future under the new standards. All in all, the new rules could lead to a dramatic reshaping of the vehicles available in U.S. showrooms.

"The new regulations may indeed affect what vehicles are available for purchase nationally, and they are sure to spell the end for less efficient offerings in various segments," Bragman said in a research report.

**PESTICIDES**

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May 26, 2009

**South Dakota not immune to bedbug infestations (*Argus Leader*)**

Jeff Martin
jemartin@argusleader.com

Jeff Sauer, his flesh marked by red wounds from the constant bites of blood-sucking bedbugs, made a plea for help this month.

The Sioux Falls resident wrote to the mayor, the Environmental Protection Agency and the media, hoping something could be done about the problem in his east-side apartment.

"I am covered in welts, from a bug that I have never - NEVER experienced in my almost 40 years of renting and living in Sioux Falls," he wrote. "As I write this tonight, afraid to go asleep, I have well over 15 very bad bites." He adds that "I am sincerely afraid to go to my bed, to go to sleep."

Health officials and pest control experts say he's not alone.

South Dakota appears to be experiencing a resurgence in the reddish-brown bugs, which are about a quarter-inch long.

It's difficult to gauge how much of a problem they are because statistics are not kept at the state or local levels. But pest control workers, who see bedbug infestations regularly in Sioux Falls, say this spring is turning out to be worse than past ones.

"I am seeing a huge increase," said Justin Bosma, division owner of P&K Pest Control in Sioux Falls.

Clark Hepper, director of the office of health protection at the South Dakota Department of Health, also said "we've had an increase in bedbug infestations in the past five years." The state health department deals with bedbug issues in the hotels and other facilities regulated by the agency.

Bedbugs are "a nuisance. They're not known to carry any disease," said LuAnn Ford, environmental health supervisor with the Sioux Falls Health Department.

"We haven't had a lot of complaints lately," Ford said. "They're always somewhere in town, and sometimes we get calls about it and sometimes we don't and people just handle it on their own."

Ford said the city health department can give residents advice on how to identify bedbugs and the nasty tell-tale signs they leave on bed sheets.

(Warning: If you are eating breakfast right now, take a quick break from that as you read this next part.)

"What happens is they eat blood, so then when they defecate, they defecate dried blood and that will leave dark spots - pin marks on your linens," Ford said.

Sauer wasn't sure what was attacking him at first. He suspected it might be mosquitoes, he said. So he took a roll of duct tape and fixed some holes in his window screens - but the bites continued.

Then, "I caught one of the little critters and put it in a pill box," he recalls. He showed it to an exterminator, who immediately recognized it as a bedbug.

Bedbugs are on the rebound nationwide, experts say, and have infested college dorms, hospital wings and homeless shelters.

Faced with rising numbers of complaints to city information lines and increasingly frustrated landlords, hotel chains and housing authorities, the EPA last month hosted its first-ever bedbug summit in suburban Washington, D.C.

"The problem seems to be increasing and it could definitely be worse in densely populated areas like cities, although it can be a problem for anyone," said Lois Rossi, director of the registration division in the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs.

One of the problems, according to researchers and the pesticide industry, is that there are few chemicals on the market approved for use on mattresses that are effective at reducing bedbug numbers. The EPA, out of concern for the environment and the effects on public health, has pulled many of the chemicals that were most effective in eradicating the bugs from the U.S. during the past 50 years - such as DDT - off of shelves.

Increasing international travel also has increased the chances for the bugs to hitchhike from developing countries that never eradicated them completely.

"This is a worldwide resurgence," said Dini Miller, an entomologist and bedbug expert at Virginia Tech, who until 2001 saw bedbugs only on microscope slides dating from the 1950s. Now she gets calls several times a day from people who are often at their wits' end dealing with the problem.

"I can't tell you how many people have spent the night in their bathtubs because they are so freaked out by bedbugs," Miller said. "I get these people over the phone that have lost their marbles."

In Sioux Falls, Bosma said he fought bedbugs several times in the past few weeks. "It's going to be like cockroaches now," he said, "where it's not really all that uncommon."

"It's probably the hardest insect I've treated for," he said. "Basically, if you spray they'll hide out from the spray and just wait it out."

That's why Bosma uses a mixture of several different pesticides that dooms the bugs.

Ford says people concerned they might have a problem can look for the bugs around their bed frame, box springs and mattress. "They like being tight places," she said.

They can also hide out in couches and chairs, Ford said. Sauer knows this first-hand.

A few nights ago, "I went out to my rocking chair watching TV and got bit there too," he said. "I'm just getting attacked."

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Jeff Martin can be reached at 605-331-2373.

Additional Facts
WHAT YOU CAN DO:
- If you own your residence, contact a licensed pest control operator.
- If you are a tenant, contact your property manager or landlord.
- Search for signs of bed bugs. Carefully inspect the bed frame, mattress, and other furniture for signs of bed bugs and their eggs. Search for live (crawling) bugs and ensure they are bed bugs before considering treating (several kinds of insects resemble bed bugs).

 Once their identity is confirmed, a careful plan should be devised to eliminate the bed bugs.
 Don't discard furniture and don't treat until and unless you have a plan.
 Reduce clutter to limit hiding places for bed bugs.
 Managing bed bugs requires an approach that generally includes cleaning, room modifications, and insecticidal treatments to the residence.
Source: Harvard University

**TOXICS**
**==========**

**Consumer group pushes J&J on chemicals in shampoo (*Napa valley Register*)**

**Story also appeared: *Boston Globe***

By LINDA A. JOHNSON

TRENTON, N.J. - A coalition of health, environmental and consumer groups is demanding that health products giant Johnson & Johnson remove tiny amounts of two chemicals suspected of causing cancer from its Johnson's Baby Shampoo and other products.

In a letter sent late Friday by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics to J&J's chief executive, William Weldon, the seven-year-old group asks the company by the end of August to reformulate its personal care products so that they are free of 1,4-dioxane and any preservatives that release formaldehyde.

The letter was signed by nearly 50 groups representing about 1.7 million members, from the Environmental Working Group and Friends of the Earth to the American Nurses Association and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Johnson & Johnson spokesman Bill Price said, "The trace levels of certain compounds that were noted by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics can result from processes that make our products gentle for babies and safe from bacteria growth. Many regulatory agencies around the world consider these trace levels safe."

Price said the New Brunswick, N.J.-based company takes concerns about its products

"very seriously" and would consider meeting with the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. He said J&J has no immediate plans to remove the two ingredients.

The chemicals in question are 1,4-dioxane, a byproduct of the manufacturing process, and the preservative formaldehyde, which is slowly released by a chemical called Quaternium-15 to kill bacteria. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 1,4-dioxane and formaldehyde both are probable human carcinogens; formaldehyde also is a skin, eye and respiratory irritant.

"There's really no excuse for a baby shampoo marketed as the No. 1 choice of hospitals to contain chemicals suspected of causing cancer," Lisa Archer, the campaign's national coordinator, told The Associated Press in an interview.

Tests by an independent laboratory commissioned by the campaign, Analytical Sciences of Petaluma, Calif., found Johnson's baby shampoo had 210 parts per million of formaldehyde, and about two dozen other products out of 48 tested had similar or higher levels.

Johnson's baby shampoo also had a low level of 1,4-dioxane, a chemical banned by the European Union that was also found in three Aveeno baby wash products made by J&J, Johnson's moisture care and oatmeal baby washes, and about 25 baby and personal care products made by other companies.

Though the amounts in question are so small that many deem them safe, Dr. Sidney Wolfe, acting director of consumer group Public Citizen, said, "Generally with carcinogens, there isn't any safe level."

The campaign notes that the two chemicals are not listed on product labels because they are contaminants, not ingredients.

The campaign released its test results in March. At that time, Dr. John Bailey, chief scientist for the Personal Care Products Council, said the "extremely low" levels of chemicals in the products tested "are not a cause for health concern."

Last month, Sen. Kerstin Gillebrand, D-N.Y., introduced a bill directing the FDA to regulate such products made for children.

The campaign's letter to Weldon states that other companies make similar products "by using ingredients that do not have contamination concerns." The letter also notes J&J products in Japan do not release formaldehyde because it is banned in products there.

Price said that is true, adding J&J products "meet or exceed the regulatory requirements in every country where they are sold."

However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not regulate cosmetic products, said Wolfe, whose group is not involved in the campaign.

"The cosmetic industry has pounded on ... Congress to keep the FDA from having any kind of authority to require (safety or testing of) cosmetic ingredients used by tens of millions, including many children" for more than three decades, he said.

He said these chemicals can be absorbed by the skin but could easily be removed from the products _ at additional cost.

If the two chemicals were food additives, he noted, they would have to be tested before being sold to prove they didn't contain dangerous chemicals.

"These products would flunk such a test," Wolfe said.

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

MAY 26, 2009

**Fur Flies Over Flea Treatments (*Wall Street Journal)***

By ANJALI ATHAVALEY
Not long after Jennifer Croezen applied flea and tick drops to the back of her Chihuahau, Saki, earlier this month, the dog's back began to turn red.
The next day, Saki seemed tired and lost her appetite. Ms. Croezen, a 26-year-old medical assistant, took her dog to the vet the following morning, where Saki was treated for chemical burns on her back and diagnosed with a dangerous anemia. "It makes me

really mad," Ms. Croezen says. "If I would have known it could have done this to my dog, I would have never put it on her."
Central Life Sciences, manufacturer of the Bio Spot brand Spot On Flea & Tick Control used on Saki, says its product isn't responsible for the anemia. "Skin sensitivity could have been exacerbated by the presence of severe anemia which led to blistering of the skin," said Laura Petree, manager of technical services at Central Life Sciences, in a statement.
Saki's Sickness
Some pet-owners are taking action because they believe their animals had reactions to fleas treatments applied directly to the pet's back.

An increasing number of pet owners are reporting what they believe to be harmful side effects from over-the-counter and prescription flea and tick treatments. The Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates topical pet treatments, says the number of reported incidents stemming from so-called spot-on flea and tick treatments -- drops that are applied directly to a pet's skin, usually on the back -- increased 53% to 44,263 in 2008 from the previous year. As a result of the increase, the EPA said last month that it is intensifying an evaluation of spot-on products.

Product manufacturers are required by law to pass along reported incidents to the EPA. In its advisory on the topic, the agency said it is evaluating all spot-on products and posted a list of those it is examining. The list includes products by major manufacturers such as Sumitomo Corp.'s Hartz Mountain Corp., Central Life Sciences, Bayer AG, maker of Advantage, and Merial Ltd., a joint venture between Merck & Co. and Sanofi-Aventis SA, that makes Frontline products. EPA advises consumers who buy treatments from any of these companies to read the label closely and apply the products as instructed.

Incidents reported to EPA range from skin irritation to seizures and sometimes death, the agency says. The reason for the rise in incidents is unclear, the agency says, adding that it is investigating the size of the market relative to the increase in reported incidents. "We are investigating and having discussions to learn more about the problem and will take action when we determine that it is warranted," EPA spokesman Dale Kemery said in an email.

Spot-on treatments generally kill fleas and ticks by affecting their nervous systems, and some products contain chemicals that keep flea eggs from developing. Veterinarians consider them more effective than other treatments, such as shampoos and sprays, and say their use has increased in recent years. "The market has moved dramatically toward spot-ons in the last 10 to 15 years," says Steven Hansen, a veterinary toxicologist and director of the Animal Poison Control Center at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Manufacturers are required to submit safety and efficacy studies of their flea and tick products to the EPA before they go on the market. The EPA says safety standards are

the same for brands sold at pet retailers -- such as Hartz and Bio Spot -- as they are for those that are sold at veterinary offices, like Frontline and Advantage.

Consumers who believe their pets have had reactions to spot-on treatments are increasingly questioning the products' safety. "I will never put flea and tick medication ever again on my dog," Ms. Croezen says. She says Saki is doing better, but is still taking medication for her anemia.

As spot-on treatments have grown in popularity in the past decade, online forums like HartzVictims.org and BioSpotVictims.org have popped up for people who say their pets have experienced side effects following the use of flea and tick products. The Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group, has a site called Greenpaws.org that advocates ways to take care of fleas without chemical treatment, such as using flea combs and washing a pet's bedding once a week.

Dr. Hansen of the ASPCA says that in general, most spot-on treatments have good safety records. He says that if used appropriately, "in healthy animals we are not going to have very many reactions." Veterinarians and manufacturers say that most of the problems they see are cases where the treatment has been misused.

Manufacturers emphasize that their treatments are safe only for the pet profile listed on the box. Product labels specify the species, age requirements and weight range of the animal to which the treatment should be applied.

One common misuse that veterinarians see is that consumers apply flea treatments meant for dogs on cats by mistake. A review of toxicity studies published in the Veterinary Journal last year concludes that cats are "most often affected by inappropriate application of the spot-on" treatments, though misuse can occur in other species.

For example, the chemical permethrin, found in spot-on treatments such as Bayer's K9 Advantix, is safe for dogs but not for cats. In cats, "it causes their nervous system to go into overdrive," says Mark Stickney, director of general surgery services at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. "They can develop seizures." Dr. Stickney says he sees such cases once or twice a month in the emergency room.

Also, certain animals may be more susceptible to side effects than others, veterinarians say. If an animal is pregnant, heavily flea infested or has an illness, for instance, the owner should consult with a veterinarian before applying flea treatments.

Dr. Hansen of the ASPCA advises against applying flea powders and sprays in addition to a spot-on treatment because chemicals in different products could interact with each other. "You probably do not want to double up on these," he says.

Consumers whose pets experience unusual reactions following treatment should wash the animal with soap, unless the product label specifies otherwise, and immediately contact a veterinarian, the EPA says. They should also contact the manufacturer via the number on the product label. Manufacturers advise saving the box so that consumers can describe exactly what product was used. Companies like Central Life Sciences and Hartz say that they review complaints and decide whether to cover veterinary bills on a case-by-case basis.

The chemical burn on Saki's back, which appeared soon after the dog received its spot-on treatment, continues to heal.

Sometimes pet owners and manufacturers disagree about whether the animal had a reaction to the flea treatment or if the pet had a pre-existing condition.

Richard Parsons, 64, of La Quinta, Calif., applied Hartz Advanced Care 4-in-1 Flea & Tick Drops for Dogs on his Scottish terrier Duffy in May 2007 and dropped the dog off at a kennel the next morning. He says he received a call two days later from the kennel saying that Duffy was experiencing seizures and vomiting. Duffy died the next day.

"It was a torturous, tragic, painful death," says Mr. Parsons, who believes the death resulted from the Hartz treatment. He says he believes the product should be taken off the market.

Hartz reached a different conclusion after investigating the case. The company says Duffy's illness and death was directly related to elevated sodium levels in the blood that resulted from an undiagnosed, pre-existing disease. The company says its spot-on products are safe. "You can't get a product to market without showing a high level of safety and efficacy," says Bill Ecker, Hartz's chief executive.

Write to Anjali Athavaley at anjali.athavaley@wsj.com

**Obama taps Ariz. for cadre of leaders (*AZ Central*)**

by Erin Kelly - May. 26, 2009 12:00 AM
Republic Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - Former Gov. Janet Napolitano is the most prominent Arizonan in the Obama administration, but she is not the only resident of the Grand Canyon State to be tapped for service by the president.

While Napolitano is serving as Homeland Security secretary, fellow Arizonans will be overseeing the national-highway system, regulating the use of pesticides to protect the environment, working to improve the health of American Indians and providing legal advice to the Air Force.

The appointments reflect not only President Barack Obama's continued focus on Arizona, a state he hopes to win in the 2012 election, but also his efforts to reach beyond the ranks of Washington insiders for advice and ideas

"I think it's very useful to have folks that are outside the Beltway," said Charles Blanchard, a Phoenix attorney who was confirmed on May 18 as the new general counsel for the Air Force. "I think it's easier for us not to get caught up in the frenetic news cycle there and remember that most people are going about their lives and not sitting around watching CNN or worrying about the things that are considered important in Washington. It can give you the courage and perspective to do the right thing."

The Arizonans in high places could be an advantage for local and state officials who are looking for federal help.

"If you're calling from Phoenix, it's a lot better to have someone from Arizona answer the phone than somebody from Maine who has never heard of you," said Patrick Kenney, chairman of the political-science department at Arizona State University.

Having Arizonans as key members of his administration also could help Obama win what is sure to be a swing state in 2012, when favorite son Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., the 2008 GOP nominee, won't be on the ticket, Kenney said.

"Arizona is a state that the Democrats definitely want to turn blue in the next presidential election," he said.

Blanchard said the network of Arizonans in Washington could help one another. For example, he said, the Air Force and the Defense Department often work with the Department of Homeland Security and could assist each other on issues such as security along the Southwestern border.

The military also needs to be able to work with the Environmental Protection Agency to clean up toxic waste at its bases. Stephen Owens, former director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, has been nominated by the president to be assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances.

"Nothing gets done in Washington without going through an interagency process," Blanchard said. "Knowing people in other agencies will be very helpful."

Napolitano, an early and close ally of Obama, undoubtedly gave the Arizonans a boost in the White House screening process, he said.

"She could very well have made the difference in some cases," Blanchard said.

At the same time, they all had their own contacts and experience to help land the jobs.

"Each of us had our own pathways to getting noticed and getting selected," said Blanchard, who served in the Clinton administration.

Owens worked with EPA officials while serving the state.

Yvette Roubideaux, the Arizonan recently confirmed as director of the Indian Health Service, worked with the service before as a medical officer and clinical director on the San Carlos Reservation and in the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona.

Victor Mendez, who has been nominated as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, is a former director of the Arizona Department of Transportation and made nationwide contacts as the president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

**WATER**
**==========**

May 26, 2009

**Disagreement in handling sediments, change in plans delay action on Twelve Mile (*Greenville News*)**

Sediment removal dispute delays work on Twelve Mile River
By Anna Simon
Clemson bureau
CLEMSON — A federal judge told The Greenville News that he would welcome a motion to force compliance with a three-year-old court-ordered settlement for the removal of dangerous PCBs from an Upstate river.

“If I had it, I would enforce it vigorously,” U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson said.

In January of 2006, Anderson signed a restoration compensation settlement that called for dredging and removing most of the sediment trapped behind two dams on the Twelve Mile River in Pickens County, as well as “properly dispose” the sediment.

The Greenville News reported in earlier stories this month that more than three years have passed since the judge's order and no action has yet been taken.

A new plan would allow substantially more sediment to flow downstream as the dams are dismantled.

Some fear that proposal would leave more contaminated sediment in the river than the prior dredging and storage plan.

“Tens of thousands of cubic yards of sediment will flush downstream. The finer material that contains PCBs will remobilize and go downstream,” said Larry Dyck, a stream restoration expert who lives on the river.

“It's clearly not the same plan that was sold to the community,” Dyck said.

Anderson told The Greenville News that action needs to be taken.

“The public interest in this thing is extremely high, and I'm concerned,” he said. “This thing has been pending almost four years.”

Anyone affected, including members of the public, can file a motion, Anderson said.

“The public interest is too valuable to be entrusted to private corporations and individuals,” Anderson said.

Susan Ganz, a spokeswoman for Schlumberger, the company responsible for cleaning up PCBs released from the former Sangamo Weston plant in Pickens, said company officials anticipate meeting with the trustees in early June.

It would be “premature and inappropriate” to “comment on the approach at this time,” Ganz said.

Releasing substantial amounts of sediment downstream would destroy aquatic habitat, adversely impact aquatic biota, and further spread PCB contamination in the Twelve Mile and Lake Hartwell, said Diane Duncan, who represents the Department of the Interior and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a natural resource trustee named in the 2006 settlement.

“These accumulated sediments should be removed prior to removal of the dams,” Duncan said. “This is the primary issue which the natural resource trustees now have with Schlumberger.”

Ross Self, who represents the state Department of Natural Resources, the lead trustee agency, said, “Schlumberger and the trustees are working to insure that when the project is implemented it will meet the spirit and intent of the 2006 settlement.”

Unanticipated circumstances have lead to delay, which isn't related to conflict or differences between the trustees and Schlumberger, Self said.

“Going back to court is always a course of action, but it is a course of last resort. I don't believe this will have to happen,” Self said.

The goal of the trustees is to minimize the amount of sediment from behind the dams that slips out of the project area, Self said. It's unrealistic to say “none” will slip out in a flowing-water environment, he added.

“The goal is to avoid intentional release of pulses of sediment,” Self said.

Dyck, who serves on the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District and the Lake Hartwell Association board, said slugs of sediment built up in the river after past releases from the dams, and he fears a repeat.

Removal of two century-old dams that once powered a Cateechee textile mill would improve flow of cleaner sediment into Lake Hartwell to cover PCB contamination. The process, called natural capping, was ordered in a Superfund clean up of 400,000 pounds of PCBs released between 1955 and 1978 from the former Sangamo Weston plant into Town Creek, a tributary of the Twelve Mile.

Hot spots of PCBs are scattered throughout the sediment backed up behind the dams, said Cindy Lee, a professor of Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences at Clemson University, who has tested samples for a decade and as recently as 2008.

The 2006 settlement specifies dismantling the two dams and removal and proper disposal of PCB-contaminated sediment behind them.

“The primary purpose of the project is to compensate the public for the ecological losses resulting from the PCB contamination by restoring the creek to a free-flowing system, which will increase the biodiversity and population densities of native aquatic organisms,” Duncan said.

The Environmental Protection Agency supports removal of the dams because it would enhance flow of sediment to cover PCBs in Lake Hartwell, said Craig Zeller, project manager for the EPA, which is monitoring the project but isn't one of the six federal and state agencies named as natural resource trustees.

“We would like it to go forward, but we have very little leverage, if any, with regard to schedules or implementation,” Zeller said.

One of the goals for many of the biologists and fishery experts involved is to create a fast-moving river gorge with a pebbly rocky bed desirable for fish habitat, Zeller said. The current waterway is sluggish and not as productive a habitat for aquatic life.

If no sediment is removed from the impoundments, “what happens downstream is rather catastrophic,” Zeller said. EPA modeling shows that could dramatically raise the river bottom at Lay Bridge, immediately below the lower dam, by creating a sandbar with a thin layer of water moving over it; very different from the healthy fast moving water there now, he said.

On the other hand, removing all the sediment down to bedrock could create a highly unstable river bank. Removal of all the sediment would leave a trench in the river bed as deep as 30 feet in places, Zeller said.

“There is a balance here. Usually, the answer lies in the middle someplace,” Zeller said.

Removal of the dams and restoration of the Twelve Mile also will enhance recreational opportunities, particularly canoeing and kayaking, Duncan said.

Local kayakers, including Dyck, have said opening the river gorge could attract whitewater enthusiasts from across the Southeast.

Since the 2006 settlement, sediment flowing downstream and backing up behind the dams has doubled, from an estimated 350 cubic yards to about 700 cubic yards, experts have said. The cost of removal has increased as well, Joe Ferguson, who heads the project for Schlumberger, has told The Greenville News .

In addition to removal of the two dams, the settlement includes restoration of natural stream conditions and planting native vegetation, as well as creation of enhancements to fishing to make up for PCB damage to fishing in Lake Hartwell.

Signs are posted to warn against eating certain fish caught in Hartwell. PCBs have been linked to cancer and other health concerns. EPA reports show the level of PCBs has decreased over the years in the lake sediment but not in the fish.What that means is that PCBs are embedded in the food chain. It's a problem that Zeller and others, including Bill Bowerman, a Clemson professor of wildlife ecology and ecotoxicology who has studied the impact of PCBs on birds and animals, expect will taint Lake Hartwell for decades.

**Arsenic in well water higher than thought (*Food Consumer*)**

26/05/2009 01:35:00 admin
Sunday May 25, 2009 (foodconsumer.org) -- With recent reports that even low level exposure to arsenic may compromise the immune system, concerns about water contamination from the carcinogen may be justified.

More than 20 percent of private domestic wells contain at least one contaminant of potential health concern, according to a March 2009 study by the U.S. Geological Survey.

In samples taken nationwide, the USGS found that about 43 million people, or 15 percent of the population, use drinking water from private wells, which are not regulated by the government.

A recent report by scientists at the Marine Biological Laboratory and the Dartmouth Medical School found that low level arsenic exposure can significantly compromise a person's immune system, leaving them more susceptible to viruses such as H1N1.

USGS scientists sampled 2,100 private wells in 48 states and found that the inorganic contaminants most frequently found, at concentrations of potential health concern, were radon and arsenic.

Arsenic is a well-known toxic chemical that the Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization list as a known carcinogen. While arsenic occurs naturally, it can also be found in industrial applications such as leather and wood treatments and pesticides
.

Man-made arsenic contamination results from the manufacture of metals and alloys, petroleum refining, and the burning of fossil fuels and wastes.

"These industrial activities have created a strong legacy of arsenic pollution throughout the United States," says an EPA report from April 2004. "The combination of high toxicity and widespread occurrence has created a pressing need for effective monitoring and measurement of arsenic in soil and groundwater."

Arsenic is listed second only to lead as the main contaminant on the National Priority List of Superfund sites. The problem with arsenic, according to the EPA report, is that it cannot be transformed into a non-toxic material. It can only be transformed into a form that is less toxic when exposed to living organisms in the environment.

"Because arsenic is a permanent part of the environment," states the report, "there is a long-term need for regular monitoring at sites where arsenic-containing waste has been disposed of and at sites where it occurs naturally at elevated levels."

**Bacteria Closes Wake Lakes (*MyNC*)**

WAKE COUNTY, N.C. -
Wake County has closed recreational swimming areas at Sandline Beach and Camp Kanata due to elevated levels of bacteria, based on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.
The County routinely tests recreational lakes for bacteria, including Enterococci and E coli. When bacteria levels exceed EPA standards, the area is closed to "primary contact recreation," which is swimming or any activity where your head may go underwater. The County samples the lakes weekly each summer.
"We are trying to prevent people from getting sick, so we'll keep sampling and reopen the lakes for swimming as soon as the levels return to normal," said Wake County

Environmental Services Director Tommy Esqueda. "Two consecutive acceptable samples are required to reopen the lakes, which could be as soon as this weekend."
Officials say the bacteria likely came from wildlife fecal matter and the closing is affecting even those who don't necessarily go to the beach to swim, like Scott and Schyler Rumley.
The couple spent most of Friday tanning near the Beaverdam swimming area.
"We were planning to go to the other beach and there was a sign up that said it was closed," Scott said. "Luckily this area over here was open so we just decided to go across the road and spend time over here."
One less beach means they'll have to deal with more people at the open ones and more people could force park officials to close more of their beaches.
"Every year, typically on the Sunday or the Monday of Memorial Day, and also on the July Fourth weekend, we typically will close one or two of our recreational areas because of over capacity," said Falls Lake Park Superintendent Scott Kershner.
The lakes are not closed to fishing. County staff suggests that citizens call their recreational lake facilities to find out if they are open to swimming. Citizens are also reminded to always wash hands with soap and water, and thoroughly shower after swimming, tubing or skiing in area lakes.

**Wilmington business participates in wastewater treatment project (*Wilmington Advocate*)**

Tue May 26, 2009, 07:00 AM EDT
Wilmington - Koch Membrane Systems, Inc. (KMS) of Wilmington, a world-class developer and manufacturer of innovative membranes and membrane filtration systems, is a key participant in the Santa Paula wastewater treatment plant (WTP) upgrade project, which has been short listed in the “Water Deal of the Year” category of the Global Water Awards 2009.

When completed, the Santa Paula WTP will be one of the world’s largest membrane bioreactor (MBR) projects. Readers of Global Water Intelligence, Water Desalination Report and members of the IDA and IPWA are all eligible to vote in the online survey and the eventual winner receiving the award at a ceremony in Zurich.

“The nomination reflects the importance of the upgrade of the Santa Paula treatment plant. It will be Koch Membrane Systems’ largest MBR project in the U.S. market and one of the largest installations of the PURON product worldwide,” said Imran Jaferey, vice president, water and wastewater for KMS.

The nomination focuses upon the PURON modules supplied as part of an MBR system to the city of Santa Paula, Calif. for the city’s new state-of-the-art water recycling facility. The project, which was awarded to Santa Paula Water LLC, a company formed by Pacific Environmental Resources Corp. (PERC) and Alinda Capital Partners, replaces the city’s existing wastewater treatment plant.

The new water recycling facility is intended to produce an effluent that meets or exceeds all current environmental wastewater quality standards mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

MBR systems are used for some of the toughest wastewater treatment applications, including sewage treatment for municipalities and treatment of wastewater for the beverage, textile, food, paper, and chemicals industries. The PURON single header design with a free floating membrane fiber tip combined with the centrally located air scour nozzle delivers optimal solids management and reliable operation at peak flux rates, while using 50 percent less air scour energy than other submerged MBR membrane modules. PERC selected PURON membrane filtration modules for Santa Paula's water recycling facility because the modules are energy-efficient and the system is easy to operate, with features that are designed to provide significantly lower lifecycle costs.

"PERC felt that Koch Membrane Systems had studied the challenges experienced by other membrane manufacturers and consequentially improved the PURON design in these areas," remarked Juergen Nick, vice president, design and engineering at PERC. "The reduced air scour requirement of the Koch Membrane Systems design versus other membrane manufacturers translated directly into reduced energy consumption and a reduction in operational costs."

PERC's innovative design will make efficient use of the surrounding area by using a fraction of the city of Santa Paula's land, five acres less than the amount of land a conventional wastewater treatment facility would require. A recycling education center is expected to be included as part of the facility, where local students can learn how water recycling facilities operate. Commissioning of the water recycling facility is expected to take place in mid 2010.

For more information on the Global Water Awards 2009 please visit www.globalwaterawards.com.

About Koch Membrane Systems

Koch Membrane Systems, Inc. has been a global leader in separation and filtration products for more than 40 years. A designer and manufacturer of state-of-the-art membrane cartridges and elements, as well as complete membrane systems, Koch Membrane Systems products are specified for the most demanding applications. To enhance membrane performance, KMS offers a line of antiscalants and cleaning chemicals, and provides a wide range of maintenance and technical service programs. The company has supplied membranes for more than 15,000 systems installed around the world, serving the food processing, life sciences, and general manufacturing industries, as well as providing potable water and wastewater treatment technologies for communities of all sizes.

Headquartered in Wilmington, Koch Membrane Systems is a Koch Chemical Technology Group, LLC company. For more information on Koch Membrane Systems and its full line of membranes and accessory products, visit www.kochmembrane.com, or write to info@kochmembrane.com.

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