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EDITORIAL / OP-ED / COMMENTARY / LETTERS

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Another Voice / Federal regulation

FDA should require disclosure by water bottlers (*Buffalo News*)

By Paul Whittam
July 20, 2009, 7:05 AM /
The Erie County Water Authority recently issued its 2008 Annual Water Quality Report to its 170,000 ratepayers informing them that water produced and delivered by the authority continued to meet or exceed all federal and state regulations for drinking water quality and safety. This report provided detailed data from more than 70,000 tests conducted during the past year of 300 regulated and non-regulated contaminants.

The report fulfilled the authority's obligation under the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Act to prepare an annual "consumer confidence report." The guiding principle for having public access to this information is that people have the right to know about their drinking water. However, this right does not yet exist for consumers of bottled water.

Public water systems, like the Water Authority, are regulated by the EPA. Because the federal government has classified bottled water as a food, the Food and Drug Administration oversees the industry. This distinction has resulted in many regulatory differences that greatly impact consumers' ability to learn about the quality of bottled water.

The FDA requires bottled water producers to use a boilerplate food label that lacks details specific to drinking water quality and testing data for contaminants. A 1996 study by the FDA concluded that it was feasible for the bottled water industry to provide the same type of information that is required of public water suppliers. The FDA did not implement those findings and bottled water producers are not mandated to make this essential information public.

The federal government's Government Accountability Office recently released a report recommending that bottled water be labeled with the same level of information that public water suppliers must disclose. As a professional who works every day ensuring that tap water is extremely safe to consume, I couldn't agree more. Congress should mandate that bottled water producers clearly inform consumers of the source of their water, what contaminants they test for and the results of those tests. More detailed information, similar to what public water suppliers are mandated to provide customers, should at a minimum be available at an Internet address printed on the label.

The bottled water industry is big business, worth about $16 billion in sales last year alone. As a result of mass-marketing efforts, many consumers have the misconception

that bottled water is safer or healthier than tap water. This is not true. In fact, public water suppliers are far more regulated than the bottled water industry.

The Erie County Water Authority delivers 1,000 gallons of safe, high quality water to customers' homes for $2.86 — less than it costs for a single gallon of bottled water. It's time consumers avoid the hype, learn the facts, put down the bottle and turn on their taps. Their wallets will appreciate it.

Paul Whittam is director of Water Qualityat the Erie County Water Authority.

Suncook will become browner and faster (*Concord Monitor*)

Paul Adams, Chichester
For the Monitor
Cause and effect! Cause and effect! As your July 12 article on the Suncook River notes, the water is brown. That is the effect: topsoil in the water as Suncook River watershed development destroys wetlands, paves over fields and cuts down forests.
With a 91-unit development in Chichester and a proposed 40-household development in Epsom as obvious negative changes to the watershed's profile, the water is going to become much browner and fast flowing. Residents of Allenstown can look forward to another 10-year flood in the next 10 years.
While the Corps of Engineers solved this problem in the Merrimack River watershed after the 1938 floods by planned construction of a flood-control system, the lesson has not been learned in smaller watersheds.
The Environmental Protection Agency recently issued new non-point source storm-water rules that require water at developed sites to be collected and stored in ponds and systems during a 100-year event. Runoff can be minimized by using porous paving, rooftop collection systems and other on-site collection and storage systems for water to be used later for irrigation and fire prevention. And don't forget those beaver ponds - leave them alone!
It's time for land-use planning boards to consider storm-water requirements and regulations for consideration during development discussions. So doing could prevent or minimize "avulsions" and eliminate the needs for dams and levees, which no one wants to pay for or maintain. And the people living in Allenstown would be grateful.
PAUL ADAMS
Chichester

July 20, 2009
My Voice:

Addiction to fossil fuels threatens jobs, lives (*Argus Leader*)

Orrie D. Swayze

As the leaders of two of the top oil-exporting nations to the United States, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah are understandably opposed to an effective cap-and-trade system as it will slow our transfer of wealth to them. A growing number of Americans are suspect of the shrill chorus of voices opposing cap and trade or any additional taxes on gasoline.

Like oil exporters, the American Petroleum Institute knows taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel limit profits and stimulate use of conservation technologies as well as the production of safer renewable fuels such as ethanol. These fuels do not emit known human carcinogens such as gasoline's benzene and 1,3 butadiene, which also are found in cigarette smoke.

Under the guise of defending free enterprise, the American Petroleum Institute paid for hate radio talk-show hosts and others profiting from our job-killing transfer of wealth to oil exporters to join Putin in denouncing cap and trade.

Children are the most vulnerable and thus the biggest winners as we reduce gasoline use and limit the family tragedies resulting from gasoline- and diesel-caused birth defects, cancers, respiratory illnesses and related heart disease. The International Center for Technology Assessment estimates these medical costs alone to be well beyond $500 billion annually.

The touted new "green" gasoline made from biomass still is identical to old poisonous gasoline with its benzene, butadiene, dioxin and particulate emissions almost identical to cigarette smoke. Why do Americans accept the use of an Environmental Protection Agency-designated Class A known human carcinogen - benzene - as the octane enhancer of choice used by refiners to replace lead? This deceptive strategy must have worked because of the seven EPA-designated Class A known human carcinogens, only benzene and 1,3 butadiene found in gasoline and diesel emissions do not have severe restrictions placed on them.

A Denver study found children living near heavy traffic areas or filling stations are six times as likely to have cancer and eight times as likely to have leukemia. In 2005, research done by Britain's Birmingham University found auto emissions to be the "primary culprits" causing UK's children living near transportation hubs to have a 12 times greater risk for dying from cancer. German research found benzene concentrations in the blood of children living near filling stations or heavy traffic areas to be 70 percent higher than normal. Gasoline evaporative and combustion emissions are the source of 90 percent of the amount of benzene in our environment today.

Ethanol blender pumps have enabled thousands of standard auto owners driving millions of miles every month to demonstrate that standard auto engines can efficiently use much safer and lower volatility blends of ethanol to reduce gasoline toxins by well

more than 50 percent. Former General Motors executive Robert Lutz's fear tactic that "your standard auto's engine will blow up using higher blends" of ethanol is as bankrupt of truth as is his company.

In higher ethanol blends, acetaldehyde emissions, which are possible carcinogens, are almost totally controlled by catalytic converters. The octane in mid-level ethanol blends enables the use of an almost benzene-free sub-octane gasoline as the base gasoline, thus reducing the toxicity of these blends' evaporative emissions by almost 100 percent.

Our gluttonous use of benzene-spiked gasoline and our almost total disregard for the toxicity of gasoline and diesel emissions put all Americans but especially our children at much higher risk for birth defects, cancer and respiratory illness.

Our addiction to fossil fuels is an American legacy no American can be proud. It has been a job killer and tragically a child killer for far too long. We must do better.

Ethanol increase could be costly (*South Bend Tribune*)

By LOUIE STOUT Tribune Columnist
If you think the price you pay at the pump is the only headache caused by gassing up a boat, just wait.

It's going to take more than aspirin to cure that headache if ethanol producers have their way with the Environmental Protection Agency.

An ethanol lobbying group has petitioned the EPA for an increase from 10 to 15 percent of the amount of ethanol permitted in gasoline.

Ethanol (ethyl alcohol) is made from corn, sugar and other grains and is mandated for gasoline use as a 10 percent blend (E-10) in most areas of the country. It is believed to be environmentally safer than MTBE, which previously was used as an oxygenate additive for gasoline.

However, the thought of more ethanol added to gasoline scares the daylights out of outboard manufacturers. If their concerns are accurate, you should be worried, too."Unlike automobiles, outboards have open loop fuel systems that can't compensate for fuel composition, and that can lead to problems," explained Mark Riechers, director of regulatory development for Mercury Outboards. "Also, most of today's outboards aren't warranted to run on fuel with greater than 10 percent alcohol."

Newer outboards perform adequately providing ethanol content doesn't exceed 10 percent. If it does -- and believe me it does happen -- you'll likely experience problems. If you haven't already.

Ethanol is blended with gasoline in the tanker truck before it heads to your favorite gas station. It basically gets "mixed" while being driven down the road. It's an imprecise process that can, through human error, produce higher blends of ethanol.

The bigger problem with ethanol is it absorbs large amounts of water. The issue is compounded when boats are used infrequently.

"You get phase separation where the water and alcohol drops out of the gas and settles in the bottom of the tank," explained Riechers. "The fuel pick-up is in the bottom, so you wind up trying to run the engine on a mixture of water and ethanol."Experts say fuels that inadvertently exceed E-10 levels already have created problems.

"We have received warranty claims that we are reasonably sure were attributed to (high) ethanol levels in fuels," said Riecher.

Outboards built within the past five years are designed to run on E-10, but older ones aren't.

The problem doesn't end with watered down tanks, although the ethanol industry insists E-10 gasoline hasn't caused problems.

Some fiberglass gas tanks, built prior to 1992, are said to decompose from extended use. Rubber seals and plastic material used in older boats will dry out and become brittle.Outboard makers say some breakdowns -- such as stalling, misfires, prematurely worn engine parts, rusting, clogged fuel filters, and carburetor jets are often caused -- unbeknownst to the boater -- by higher-than-acceptable concentrations of ethanol.

Riechers says fuel conditioners added to the tank will help keep carbs and fuel systems clean, but they won't prevent phase separation. Purchasing high octane fuels won't make a difference, either.

Gas with ethanol has a shorter shelf life than fuels with MTBE. Safeguards include buying fuel from reputable dealers, avoid running low tanks, and use or replace outboard fuel every two to four weeks.

Riechers said the small engine industry (lawn mowers, chain saws, etc.) is equally concerned about E-15's approval. Higher content of ethanol can cause an increase in idle speeds with small engines and lead to a safety hazard, officials say.

*All engine producers fear an increase to 15 percent ethanol will compound those problems and have urged the EPA to give them time to test E15 before boosting levels. A decision likely will come this fall.**Deer quotas set***

The Michigan DNR has set a quota of 728,100 antlerless deer licenses for the upcoming season, an increase from 641,075 in 2008.

The state has approved 68,300 public land licenses and 659,800 private land licenses, up from 65,875 and 572,200 respectively last year.

In the Southern Lower Peninsula, the NRC approved 35,700 public land licenses and 423,000 private land licenses, down from 35,900 and up from 406,800 respectively in 2008.

"We are still well over goal in southern Michigan and this regional population needs to be reduced," said Wildlife Management Specialist Supervisor Mike Bailey, in a press release. "This year's quotas also reflect an expanded area open during the late antlerless season, as well as the new Deer Management Unit 486, which includes most of the counties in southern Michigan."

Lunker's openings

Lunker's annual bass tournament on Eagle and Juno lakes has openings remaining. The tournament pays 10 places and has become one of the region's most popular event.

Entry fee for the Aug. 1 contest is $100 per team. One or both members may sign up at the Edwardsburg store. For more information, call (269) 663-3745.

Louis Stout:
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AIR

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Chemicals That Eased One Woe Worsen Another (*Washington Post*)

July 20, 2009 Monday
Suburban Edition
A-SECTION; Pg. A07
Maryland
By David A. Fahrenthold; Washington Post Staff Writer
This is not the funny kind of irony: Scientists say the chemicals that helped solve the last global environmental crisis -- the hole in the ozone layer -- are making the current one worse.

The chemicals, called hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), were introduced widely in the 1990s to replace ozone-depleting gases used in air conditioners, refrigerators and insulating

foam.

They worked: The earth's protective shield seems to be recovering.

But researchers say what's good for ozone is bad for **climate change.** In the atmosphere, these replacement chemicals act like "super" greenhouse gases, with a heat-trapping power that can be 4,470 times that of carbon dioxide.

Now, scientists say, the world must find replacements for the replacements -- or these super-emissions could cancel out other efforts to stop **global warming.**

"Whatever targets you thought you were going to make," said David Fahey, a physicist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "it will be undermined by the fact that you have . . . additional emissions that you hadn't planned on."

The colorless, odorless replacement chemicals enter the atmosphere in tiny amounts, often leaking out of refrigerators and air conditioners, or escaping when those machines break and are improperly dumped. They now account for about 2 percent of the climate-warming power of U.S. emissions, according to the **Environmental Protection Agency.**

That is still far less than carbon dioxide, which is produced by burning fossil fuels and accounts for about 85 percent of the problem. And it is less than the roughly 10 percent of warming from methane, which comes from sources including farm animals and decomposing trash.

But in recent weeks, these obscure gases have been given a higher profile in the carbon-dominated debate on **climate change.**

Last month, a group of scientists published a paper projecting that, if unchecked, the emissions would rise rapidly over the next 40 years. By 2050, they found, the amount of super greenhouse gases in the atmosphere might be equal to six or more years' worth of carbon dioxide emissions.

And last week, diplomats met in Geneva to discuss ideas for a worldwide reduction in HFCs.

"You have this moment when you could nip this problem in the bud and avoid this very large growth of a dangerous chemical," said David Doniger, policy director at the Natural Resources Defense Council's climate center, from Geneva. "Now, in the next couple of years, is when you have to do this."

The roots of the problem go back to the 1970s, when scientists theorized that chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were slowly eroding stratospheric ozone. That was a dangerous thing, since the ozone layer protects the planet from harmful UV radiation.

In 1987, governments signed the Montreal Protocol, agreeing to reduce CFCs. Since then, this agreement has been a kind of bureaucratic miracle: Ninety-six percent of ozone-depleting substances have been phased out, according to the United Nations.

The United Nations says there is still a hole in the ozone above the South Pole, but global ozone levels are expected to return to their pre-1980 level by about 2050.

"If this were a soccer team . . . it's won every single game," said Durwood Zaelke, president of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development. "That's astounding in the international environmental field."

It worked because chemists engineered substitutes for CFCs, new gases without the propensity to chemically unlock ozone molecules. The replacements could still chill cold cuts and Chevrolets -- in refrigerators and under car hoods, they are compressed and uncompressed in a process that sucks heat out of passing air.

But the chemicals' strong bonds also cause them to act as heat sponges in Earth's atmosphere, absorbing energy from the sun and keeping it from being reflected out into space. In the "blanket" created by heat-trapping gases, that makes them especially heavy strands.

"Pound for pound, they're much more powerful than CO2, you know -- hundreds or thousands of times more powerful," said NOAA physicist Fahey.

Exactly how powerful depends on the makeup of the gases. One, common in fridges and auto air conditioners, lasts 12 to 14 years in the atmosphere and has 1,430 times the **global warming** impact of carbon dioxide. Another has a 52-year life and 4,470 times the power.

According to the recent paper, there will soon be many more of them, as developing countries become more prosperous and their people buy vehicles and air conditioners.

Even if the world makes significant progress in reducing carbon dioxide and methane -- still a big if, since recent negotiations on the topic have produced little -- the scientists said the growth in HFCs could undo a significant part of their work.

Internationally, the gases are still supposed to be dealt with in the same vast and balky negotiations that will reduce carbon dioxide. So they will probably be on the table when diplomats gather in Copenhagen in December to create a successor to the Kyoto Protocol of 1997.

But many environmental groups, including the nonprofit Environmental Investigation Agency, say they would like to see the gases regulated using the Montreal Protocol, because the framework succeeded in dealing with other pollutants.

"The climate problem is not one global problem. It's a package of global problems," said

Zaelke, of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development. "You can reach in and pull out a piece."

Sens. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), who chair two powerful committees, urged this approach in a letter to President Obama in April. Last week, an official said the administration was still deciding what approach to support.

A bigger question: What will replace these chemicals? Experts say that some substitutes, with less **global warming** impact, can be made with new HFCs or by using ammonia or butane. But others are needed. "We don't know all of them yet," said Mack McFarland, global environmental manager for DuPont Fluoroproducts, a division of Delaware-based DuPont.

Posted on Mon, Jul. 20, 2009

New air rules could affect cement plants in Houston (*Macon Telegraph*)

By S. Heather Duncan
Federal regulators are proposing tougher new air quality standards for Portland cement plants, just as a federal stimulus package creates a greater demand for concrete.

Existing plants, including the Clinchfield Cemex plant in Houston County — Georgia's only major cement plant — would face limits on their mercury emissions for the first time.

The changes also would tighten limits on other air pollution for both old and new cement plants.

The outcome of the debate could cause Houston American Cement, which has plans for a plant next to Cemex, to re-evaluate its plans, said project director Ed Buehler.

"At this point in time, I don't think (the proposed limits are) achievable for this plant to reach," he said. "This adds another level of uncertainty to an already major investment."

The Houston American project has already been delayed as the company waits for the economy and cement demand to stabilize.

The Environmental Protection Agency's draft rules would dramatically reduce the amount of mercury, hydrocarbons, hydrochloric acid and particulate matter allowed from kiln smokestacks.

Mercury can damage fetuses and cause developmental problems. The other pollutants can be toxic or cause breathing and heart problems.

Cement plants grind limestone, usually from an adjacent quarry, with other raw materials before heating them in a kiln. The resulting product, called clinker, is ground and mixed with a little gypsum to produce concrete.

Cemex officials said they are still evaluating how the rules could affect that company's plants.

"We don't know the theoretical costs right now because we are first trying to determine what technology exists and if it could even be applied to any of our plants," Jennifer Borgen, Cemex communications director, wrote in an e-mail.

The cement industry contends that the proposal could put more than half of American cement plants out of business just as the demand for cement is likely to skyrocket. Congress's $787 billion economic stimulus package is expected to create a building boom for roads, bridges and schools, all of which rely on concrete.

"Every recovery dollar is going to buy less economic impact in terms of employment if the price of cement goes up," said Scott Segal, a consultant on regulatory and communications matters for the Portland Cement Association. "If you've got to import the cement, you'll be creating infrastructure jobs. ... You'll just be creating them in another country."

The EPA modeled the financial impact of the proposed changes and found the benefits would outweigh estimated costs of $222 million to $684 million annually in 2013. Benefits were calculated at $2.2 billion to $11 billion annually — including the value of preventing 620 to 1,600 premature deaths a year.

THE CEMENT INDUSTRY IN HOUSTON

At more than 80 years old, the Cemex Clinchfield plant is one of Houston County's two longest continuously operating industries, said Morgan Law, executive director of the Houston County Development Authority. The authority was a partner in nominating Cemex for Georgia small business Manufacturer of the Year for 2009.

Law said the plant has a good environmental record. Cemex was selected as the EPA Energy Star 2009 Partner of the Year for its efforts to reduce its energy use and carbon footprint at all its plants. According to the company, Clinchfield is one of five Cemex plants to have individually received the EPA Energy Star certification, more than any other U.S. cement company in 2008.

With about 120 employees, Cemex is a medium-sized employer for Houston County, but one of the larger manufacturers, Law said.

According to the company, the Clinchfield plant generates $6 million in annual payroll and more than $500,000 in taxes.

New plants, such as the planned Houston American manufacturer, already have more strict emissions limits than existing kilns.

Houston American expects to add nearly 100 jobs when its $200 million cement plant is built on Houston County's rich limestone deposit. The company, a subsidiary of Brazilian company Votorantim Cimentos North America, announced in March 2007 that it would begin construction last summer and begin operating next year.

But although the plant has received all its environmental permits, "we're just waiting out the economic doldrums," Buehler said.

Industry analysts predict a sustainable turnaround by 2012, and the Houston plant remains on hold until then, he said.

AIR POLLUTION

According to EPA documents, Cemex is a significant source of air pollution. Of about 75 major emitters, Cemex ranked in the top third (21st) for sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollution, and even higher (13th) for particulate matter pollution in 2007.

Existing cement plants do not face limits on their mercury emissions, but the EPA used data from 89 kilns to calculate how much mercury the average plant produces, said Keith Barnett, with the EPA office of air quality standards. The proposed standard is about 60 percent lower than that.

The rules would allow only 30 percent of the hydrocarbon pollution now acceptable per plant, and one-sixth of the fine particle pollution, Barnett said.

The Portland Cement Association argues that the proposed standard isn't achievable for many plants. Mercury and sulfur content in limestone varies in different regions, so some plants would have to remove much more pollution than others.

"This kind of discrimination between have and have-not states may not be legal," Segal said.

Barnett said EPA recognizes this concern and wants public comments on it. He acknowledged that the agency is aware of two plants — both on the West Coast — that can't meet the standard no matter what.

Georgia is likely to be in better shape.

"Of states that produce cement, Georgia is one of the most favored in terms of its limestone content," said Buehler, with Houston American. "That was a factor in our (company's) analysis for site selection."

Segal emphasized that cement plants need to be where the demand is, because the material is so costly to transport.

Buehler said Georgia already produces just 20 percent of the cement used in the state.

The proposed rules remain open to public comment until Sept. 4.

To contact writer S. Heather Duncan, call 744-4225.

It's never as bad as they say it will be (*Examiner*)

July 19, 10:57 PM · Stephen Okin - NY International Security Examiner
In 1990, a cap-and-trade program to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions (the pollutant that causes acid rain) was passed into law as part of the Clean Air Act Amendments. The EPA estimated the program would cost $6 billion a year once it was fully implemented (in 2000 dollars). Looking back years later, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has estimated the actual cost to be between $1.1 and $1.8 billion dollars – a quarter of the original forecast. In fact, the OMB "found that the Acid Rain Program accounted for the largest quantified human health benefits of any major federal regulatory program implemented in the last 10 years, with benefits exceeding costs by more than 40:1."

In March, then-CEO of General Motors Richard Wagoner said the automaker would end up being liquidated if it entered bankruptcy. He said restructuring out of court would accomplish 99 percent of what could be achieved in bankruptcy, and wouldn't risk scaring away customers or the huge expense of Chapter 11. General Motors entered bankruptcy on June 1st and exited as a new, smaller company on July 10th – a 40 day process that most industry experts say went much faster and smoothly than expected. Furthermore, the prediction of scared consumers and lower resale values has not come true. As a result, most observers would consider the bankruptcy process for GM a resounding success.

Repealing "Don't ask, Don't tell" - the policy that forbids gays from serving openly in the military - is a top priority of the gay community. In their way stands testimonies from countless active and retired military officers stating that repealing "Don't ask, Don't tell" would undermine unit cohesion and therefore make the military less effective. However, a recent Associated Press report looked at the militaries of our allies (Israel, Australia, and the UK) that allow gays to serve openly and found no such effect on unit cohesion or the overall capability of the armed forces.

What's the take away from these three examples? Simple: It's never as bad as they say it will be. Every time major change is attempted, those who will lose out or are afraid predict exorbitant costs, which rarely ever turn out to be true. Thus, when

deciding the merits of the cap-and-trade bill just passed by the House or the health care bill winding its way through the Senate, be wary of the doom and gloom scenarios predicted by those in opposition. The past has shown their position to typically be erroneous.

Minnesota Dry Cleaning Plant Ordered to Stop Using Banned Machine (*Occupational Health & Safety*)

Jul 20, 2009
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 has issued an administrative consent order to Pfeffer's Cleaners to comply with the Clean Air Act at the company's dry cleaning plant in White Bear Lake, Minn. The order requires the company to stop using a transfer machine in its dry cleaning process no later than Sept. 1. A transfer machine is a multiple-machine dry cleaning operation in which washing and drying are performed in different machines. Transfer machines have been banned for use in dry cleaning since July 2008.
Pfeffer's is subject to the dry cleaning rule of the national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants because it uses perchloroethylene in its dry cleaning process. EPA says perchloroethylene may cause serious health effects including birth defects and cancer, and it may also cause harmful environmental and ecological effects.

The agency notified Pfeffer's in January that it believed the company was in violation of the dry cleaning rule. In February, EPA and company representatives discussed the alleged violation. EPA says it learned of the alleged violation from local health authorities and from the company's response to an EPA information request.

July 20, 2009

Wolfram: If ethanol is great, abolish the tariff on importation (*Lansing State Journal*)

The corn-based ethanol industry exists in the United States because of a political decision to provide higher corn prices and land values for farmers at the expense of everyone else. Yet despite massive subsidization the industry is floundering. Now a lobbying group composed of ethanol firms is asking the Environmental Protection Agency to grant a waiver from the Clean Air Act to allow 15 percent ethanol blending in gasoline.

This result will harm all consumers, in order to favor a special interest group.

The federal ethanol program includes a tax credit and a federal mandate that at least 20.5 billion gallons of bio-fuels must be used annually in the United States. This is a benefit for farmers in corn-belt states but a loss for everyone else. The increased demand for corn results in an increase in the price of foods, like tortillas, beef, and poultry, that depend upon corn for production.

The ethanol program is effectively a food tax of about $1 billion annually.

The arbitrary mandates for blending ethanol with gasoline have now become unrealistic with declining gasoline prices. Rather than admitting that central planning has failed, we now hear that we should increase the blend from E10 to E15 (10 percent ethanol to 15 percent ethanol). This will pile even more harm upon the average consumer.

Only a few flex-fuel vehicles are designed to run on ethanol blends this high. Automakers are worried because of the harm E15 fuel causes emission devices in the existing fleet of cars. There are hundreds of millions of small engines in boats, chain saws, weed trimmers and similar devices that could also be adversely affected.

There is a simple solution to the problems that Congress and the EPA seem to want to load on us. If there are indeed environmental benefits from using ethanol as a motor fuel, then we should end the mandates for use of ethanol and eliminate the tariffs on imported ethanol.

Brazil produces ethanol much more efficiently from sugar cane than American farmers produce corn ethanol. We currently impose a tariff of 54 cents per gallon and 2.5 percent of the value of the imported ethanol. By eliminating the tariff we could enjoy whatever environmental benefits there are from using ethanol in motor fuel, and at the same time reduce food prices and water pollution. Removing the arbitrary mandates on the amount of ethanol that must be blended in gasoline would remove the risk to your car, lawn mower, and boat from E15 fuel.

It is time for ordinary citizens to call a halt to special interest legislation that harms every one of us so some farmers and a few investors can have slightly higher incomes. The EPA is seeking comment on the ethanol lobby's proposal to push for E15 fuel. We should use this opportunity to have a national call for common sense - end government interference in what we put in our cars and lawn mowers and let the Brazilians provide us with efficiently-produced ethanol.

BUDGET

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Indiana gets $4 million for gas tank cleanups (*Associated Press*)

3:00 AM CDT, July 20, 2009
INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana is getting more than $4 million in federal stimulus funds to help the state clean up some of its leaking underground gasoline storage tanks.

The money is part of $197 million in stimulus funds appropriated nationwide for shovel-ready sites tainted by petroleum products leaking from underground storage tanks.

Fuel can ooze from tiny holes in old tanks, posing a threat to the groundwater that nearly one-third of Americans use for their source of drinking water from wells.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says the funds will be used for overseeing assessment and cleanup of leaking tanks, and for other related uses. The EPA will enter into a cooperative agreement with Indiana's environmental agency to assess the state's plans for the money.

CLIMATE CHANGE / GLOBAL WARMING
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House climate bill was flooded with last-minute changes (Los Angeles Times)

July 20, 2009 Monday
Home Edition
MAIN NEWS; National Desk; Part A; Pg. 11
The Nation;
House climate bill was flooded with last-minute changes;
Many provisions were narrowly focused to help certain industries. Expect more of the same in the Senate.
By Jim Tankersley
WASHINGTON
Less than 24 hours before the House approved its landmark energy and climate bill last month, Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.) got several paragraphs added to the 1,200-page measure -- additions expected to be worth millions of dollars to companies that install solar panels.

About the same time, Rep. Melissa Bean (D-Ill.) took the lead in adding another little-noticed provision to the legislation -- a section designed to prevent regulatory action she said could shut down the multitrillion-dollar market for over-the-counter derivatives, a complex type of financial instrument.

These narrowly focused amendments were part of a torrent written into the bill during

the wheeling and dealing that took place as Democratic leaders rounded up the votes needed to squeak out a victory.

There were about 300 pages of last-minute amendments, many designed to make money for industries and constituencies important to fence-sitting lawmakers.

The bill that passed the House included sweeteners for developing natural-gas-powered cars and energy-efficient mobile homes, plus financial rewards for early participants in the Chicago Climate Exchange, North America's first trading center for greenhouse gas emissions.

Surprisingly for a climate bill, there was also a provision making it harder to develop the vast wind-power potential of states like North Dakota -- a key element in President Obama's strategy to fight **global warming.**

Some of the provisions could be tweaked or killed in the Senate. But more likely, analysts said, more will sprout as Democratic leaders and the White House strive to build a majority on that side of Capitol Hill.

Making deals to get votes is a time-honored part of the legislative game, but the enormous scale of the climate bill and the pressure to act quickly in a time of economic crisis put the process on steroids.

"We started hearing about deal-making before the bill came to the House for debate, but then it blossomed," said Rep. Joe L. Barton of Texas, the top Republican on the energy and commerce committee and a critic of the legislation.

Obama indicated he would accept the grab bag of added provisions so long as they did not undermine the bill's core goals of curbing **global warming,** spurring renewable energy production and efficiency, and creating "clean energy" jobs.

"There are going to be provisions in the House bill and in the Senate bill which I question, in terms of their effectiveness," Obama told a group of energy reporters in the Oval Office after the legislation passed. "I'm not going to have a line-item veto, so ultimately, you know, I'll take a look at the final product."

The centerpiece of the climate bill is establishing specific limits on heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions from major pollution sources such as power plants and factories. To comply with the limits, which would tighten over time, emitters would be required to obtain permits or pay to offset their emissions by funding tree-planting or other means of soaking up carbon dioxide.

The system, called cap and trade, would impose new costs on some parts of the economy but open profit opportunities for others. For example, a recent analysis by the investment group Goldman Sachs projects that the U.S. emissions trading market could generate as much as $400 million a year in trading fees.

Perlmutter, the Colorado Democrat, used his seat on the rules committee to insert loan guarantees and a variety of other incentives for home energy efficiency and so-called distributed power generation -- in-home sources of electricity such as solar panels.

He also added language to prevent homeowners associations and real estate covenants from banning construction of solar panels on the roofs of houses.

John Berger, chief executive of Houston-based Standard Renewable Energy, one of the nation's largest installers of solar panels, predicted the homeowners association language would generate millions of dollars in new sales to his company alone.

Perlmutter said it was a matter of national security. "To have a distributed and diverse energy grid just makes us that much stronger of a country," he said in an interview.

One of the congressman's biggest campaign contributors is the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which is betting that the expansion of solar power will provide new jobs for its members.

In the case of wind power, the key to realizing its potential is the construction of transmission grids to carry electricity from the windy Great Plains states to urban centers.

The climate bill gave the federal government the power to overcome local delays and speed up construction of the power lines. But East Coast representatives, worried that jobs would migrate to Chicago and other cities closer to the sources of wind power, changed the bill to take away that expediting power anywhere east of the Rocky Mountains.

Bean, a member of the House Financial Services Committee who is helping design a regulatory framework for the financial industry, said the climate legislation could kill trade in over-the-counter derivatives, which are touted for reducing investor risks but blamed for helping to bring on the worldwide recession.

Bean, who has long received campaign contributions from the financial services industry, made it clear to party leaders that she would oppose the bill unless the language was changed.

Two days before the vote, the change was made. Bean voted yes.

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New worry: HCFs chip in on global warming (*UPI*)

WASHINGTON, July 19 (UPI) -- Scientists in the United States say hydrofluorocarbons, chemicals credited with helping save Earth's ozone layer, may be contributing to global warming.

Some researchers fear HCFs are "super" greenhouse gases, far more capable than carbon dioxide of capturing heat.

HCFs were developed as coolants for refrigerators and air conditioners after scientists determined that chlorofuorocarbons were eroding the protective ozone layer.

The Washington Post said Sunday the Environmental Protection Agency estimates HCFs account for about 2 percent of total U.S. global warming emissions. However, new research indicates that if unchecked HCFs could equal about six years of carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

Wal-Mart using its clout to go green (*Boston Globe*)

July 20, 2009 Monday
BUSINESS; Pg. 4
By Scott Kirsner, GLOBE CORRESPONDENT
Shopping sustainably. Will Wal-Mart's Sustainable Product Index change the way we shop? The mega-retailer is working with suppliers to collect information about the environmental impact of products it sells and plans to share that information with consumers via a simple rating. Harvard Business School professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter blogged that Wal-Mart's new initiative ``changed the game with respect to environmental issues."

Wal-Mart's unilateral decision to put its purchasing and communication power behind going green also shows that a single company using its unique clout can accelerate public action to reduce greenhouse gases and reverse **climate change.** By rolling out an environmental labeling program disclosing to consumers the environmental costs of making products sold at Wal-Mart, the $401 billion retail behemoth has transformed green standards from nice-to-have to must-have.

This is one small step for Wal-Mart and one giant leap for Planet Earth. It is also one enormous demand on suppliers, among them many small companies that will feel crushed by the giant's new non-carbon footprint. But though Wal-Mart spent $200 billion buying from 56,000 US suppliers in 2007, a high proportion of Wal-Mart's total annual purchases emanate from China, where it is high time environmental standards are raised.

The beauty of the Wal-Mart innovation is that it doesn't ask anyone to change anything except the information that is provided and received. If polluters want to keep polluting, they are free to do so as long as they provide that data on their Wal-Mart labels. And if consumers choose to buy from polluters whose labels they can read, they are free to do so. In theory.

In practice, of course, we know suppliers will change their practices to avoid embarrassing disclosures, and consumers will think twice about the choices they make.

blogs.harvardbusiness.org/kanter

In support of noncompetes. The Boston tech community continues to debate whether noncompete agreements, intended to prevent former employees from competing against a former employer for a defined period of time, are good or bad for the state's economy. Amrith Kumar, vice president at Dataupia Corp., in Cambridge, blogged that he once regarded noncompetes as ``intrusive and unfair to employees,'' but changed his mind.

If, as an entrepreneur, I had an idea that I knew would take many years to completely prosecute, wouldn't I want some protection for my idea and my ability to benefit from it? While I appreciate that noncompetes make it difficult for workers to ``change jobs freely,'' I think that this is a good thing if the purpose of changing the job is to take an idea and develop a competitor. I agree with [those who feel] that noncompetes should not be so broadly and generally worded that they stifle innovation. But, I disagree with the perspective of those who feel that the only answer is to outlaw the noncompete.

There are several areas of innovation where it takes a considerable amount of time, trial and error, and cost, to take an idea to fruition. At any time during this process, the inventor is vulnerable to the theft of the idea, and the non-compete is the only thing that provides protection for the investment in sweat, tears, and midnight oil. Without this protection, we will do more damage to innovation because investors will be reluctant to provide the significant funds for projects that have little or no entry barrier . . .

Rather than outlawing the noncompete (the simplistic solution), why not address the problem in a manner that provides the protection to innovation and inventors and yet deters the use of ``broad'' and ``sweeping'' noncompetes? Or better still, allow the market to regulate itself. If innovators feel strongly about this, let them advertise this fact; prospective employees can weigh offers and consider the benefits of not having a noncompete in their choice. That way, in areas of technology or endeavor where the market supports the lack of a noncompete, that will become the norm. And in areas of the technology where the market supports the noncompete, that will be the norm.

hypecycles.wordpress.com

Have you seen an interesting item on a

local business blog lately? E-mail kirsner@pobox.com

INNOVATION ECONOMY BLOG

Read Scott Kirsner's new blog on tech, life sciences, start-ups, and venture capital in New England at www.boston.com/innovation.

July 20, 2009

Pollution credits are hot issue in climate bill (*DesMoines Register*)

By PHILIP BRASHER
pbrasher@dmreg.com
Washington, D.C. - Rio Tinto, a mining giant that provides coal for utilities in the United States, is a major producer of the greenhouse gas emissions the Obama administration wants to cap.

But the Australian company is counting on farmers in Iowa and around the globe to help the business avoid making some costly changes in its operations.

Rio Tinto, together with utilities and other polluters, wants to reduce the cost of complying with proposed emission controls by being allowed to purchase "offsets" from farmers and other landowners who have undertaken carbon-saving practices, such as planting trees on their property or reducing their tillage of crop land.

Those credits are a key issue as Congress shapes legislation to reduce U.S. carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050. The House passed a bill in June; the Senate is working on similar legislation.

The polluters are pushing lawmakers to make the terms of the credit-earning programs as liberal as possible, to keep the value of the credits relatively low.

But some environmentalists say that will let the polluters off the hook for making real reductions in their own emissions.

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Ia., who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, shares some of their concerns and says he hopes to tighten the credit provisions in a House-passed climate bill.

The American Farm Bureau Federation and other farm groups are wary for other reasons.

They worry that the bulk of the credits will go to foreign countries where land is cheaper.

The Farm Bureau also says it will be impractical or too expensive for many U.S. farmers to qualify for credits.

But Jeffrey Hopkins, an environmental adviser to Rio Tinto, told a Senate committee recently that the use of agricultural offsets will "enable us to proceed farther and faster toward stabilizing" greenhouse gas emissions. He proposed provisions that would maximize the use and availability of international offsets.

Doug Gronau, who farms near Vail in western Iowa, said the offsets are needed to help farmers pay the higher prices for fertilizer, fuel and other crop inputs that will result from caps on carbon emissions.

Gronau switched to no-till farming to prevent soil erosion on his rolling land. He now earns carbon credits through a program run by the Iowa Farm Bureau.

"Are we going to get compensated enough? That's the whole rub in this," he said.

A bill passed by the House last month would set caps on greenhouse gases and require polluters to have permits for their emissions.

Some of the permits will be given away to soften the effect on the economy. However, polluters will also find other ways to reduce or compensate for emissions for which they don't have permits. That could mean cutting their energy use, switching from using a carbon-rich source such as coal - or buying credits.

At the insistence of farm-state lawmakers, the House bill was changed to put the U.S. Department of Agriculture in charge of the credit program, rather than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Another provision added at the last minute would allow growers to earn credits for no-till farming even if they, like Gronau, have already been doing that.

Critics say awarding credits to farmers for practices they are already doing does nothing to reduce greenhouse emissions, the goal of the legislation.

There's also no guarantee that the carbon being stored in the soil, through no-till farming, planting cover crops or other measures, will not be released in the future.

Farmers would earn payments through contracts that would expire in as few as five years. After that, the soil could be cultivated again, releasing the carbon into the air.

Environmental groups largely backed the House bill.

But the Environmental Working Group has issued a critique of the bill, arguing that the offset provisions were so lax they would effectively allow as many as 67 coal-fired power plants to avoid reducing their emissions.

"We think that somebody has to continue to speak out, at least to try to get some people to think about what kind of damage we're doing to this climate-change legislation in the process of trying to accommodate the agricultural community," said Craig Cox, the group's Midwest vice president.

Harkin does not object to offering credits to farmers who are already conserving carbon, but he said he wants some restrictions on offsets for no-till practices.

Harkin is concerned about the amount of herbicides needed to control weeds in fields that are not tilled. He said stored carbon would be lost if growers resumed plowing when their contracts end.

Still unclear is how many offsets U.S. farmers are likely to earn.

An EPA analysis of the House bill found that domestic offsets would not come close to the legislation's billion-ton cap. Most of those credits would go for planting trees or conserving existing forests, not for practices such as no-till farming.

One of the reasons: Federal biofuels mandates will encourage crop residue to be processed into ethanol rather than left in the soil.

Cost also could be a deterrent to landowners.

Sen. Christopher Bond, R-Mo., said a landowner would have to spend about $1,200 per acre planting trees to earn forestry credits likely to be worth about $75 an acre per year.

He called the offset program "a pig in a poke."

ENERGY

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Monday, July 20, 2009

Eco-friendly light bulbs flip switch on problems (*Washington Times*)

Ann Geracimos

An energy-efficiency measure is turning into a ticking green time bomb.
The federal government plans to require consumers over the next several years to replace incandescent light bulbs with more expensive but more energy-efficient and longer-lasting compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs).

But improper disposal of the mercury-powered bulbs poses an environmental hazard, and the federal government has given little guidance to consumers. The outlets for safe disposal are few and haphazard, and history suggests that compliance will be spotty.

"The problem to the environment comes when millions get disposed of and the cumulative effect becomes problematic. That is when the [Environmental Protection Agency] gets concerned," said Neal Langerman, a former chairman of the American Chemical Society Division of Chemical Health and Safety. "If you have a municipal urban landfill and have a population of 450,000 households disposing of one or two CFLs a year - you do the arithmetic. Put one-half milligram of mercury per bulb, it amounts to a significant loading, and mercury does migrate into groundwater."

Although California has banned CFLs from trash since 2006, local governments there estimate that less than 10 percent of CFLs receive proper disposal and recycling, said San Francisco's KGO-TV.

Revised standards for home appliances and lighting under the December 2007 energy bill require incandescent light bulbs - the basic model that has been used for 130 years - to be phased out in order to achieve about 25 percent greater efficiency for bulbs by 2014 and about 200 percent greater efficiency by 2020.

Without organized programs to educate consumers on safe handling and disposal of used or broken bulbs, landfills are likely to become even more polluted, Mr. Langerman told The Washington Times.

"The appropriate thing for us as a nation is not to dispose but have an aggressive take-back program," said Mr. Langerman, who advocates a profit incentive for recycling, a system where "if you go out of your way [to safely dispose or recycle the bulbs] you get some money back. People will do this if made convenient."

The federal Web site Energy Star (www.energystar.gov) notes that each CFL bulb contains an average of 4 milligrams of mercury, compared with the 500 milligrams contained in old-style glass thermometers. None of the mercury is released in operation, and leakage is a risk only if the bulbs are broken.

The site says "electricity use is the main source of mercury emissions in the U.S.," so it's important that CFLs use less electricity than incandescent lights. The EPA says that "a 13-watt, 8,000-rated-hour-life CFL (60-watt equivalent; a common light bulb type)" will save enough energy over its lifetime to offset even all of its mercury leakage into landfills.

EPA spokeswoman Tisha Petteway wrote in an e-mail: "Once a CFL or a fluorescent lamp is at the end of its life, EPA strongly encourages Americans to recycle it."

The CFLs sold at supermarkets and drugstores have small warnings that the bulbs contain mercury. A 13-watt model from General Electric Co. does not elaborate on the

risks beyond telling consumers to "manage in accord with disposal laws." The packaging refers buyers to a recycling information Web site (www.lamprecycle.org) and provides a toll-free phone number.

Breaking a thermometer "can raise mercury levels in a tight bedroom to high enough levels to cause symptoms in a child in a short amount of time," Mr. Langerman said. "The biggest difference is the amount of ventilation."

No federal mandate requires households to recycle or safely dispose of such bulbs. The massive energy bill in Congress offers no guidance on the question of disposal, and the subject has generated little discussion during debate. That leaves this issue subject to a hodgepodge of state and local rules, some more serious than others about regulation.

The EPA gives consumers advice about finding safe disposal and recycling facilities across the country on its Web site www.epa.gov/waste/hazard/wastetypes/universal/lamps/live.htm.

D.C. residents, for example, are directed to trash transfer stations in Northeast. Contractors accept items for recycling from those with proof of local residency or from vehicles with D.C. license plates.

The two D.C. stations take recyclables only on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. A total of "620 unit pounds" of CFL bulbs and mercury lamps were dropped off in an eight-month period since collection was made available last year, said Nancy Lyons, a spokeswoman for the D.C. Department of Public Works.

Home Depot, Ace Hardware, Ikea and other retailers collect the bulbs for recycling as a customer service.

Chris Jensen, the employee in charge of lighting supplies at Frager's Hardware on Capitol Hill, said the store considered offering a disposal center but found that it would cost "one grand a month."

The store advises customers to go to Prudential Carruthers Realtors sales office at 216 Seventh St. SE, where bulbs can be dropped off for recycling in a cardboard box with a heavy plastic liner.

Prudential manager Larry Kamins said the office periodically buys the package for $95 from a professional recycling company he found on the Internet. He said he decided to offer the community service because, when he started using the bulbs, he couldn't find any information on recycling locations.

"They certainly don't go out of their way" for this, Mr. Kamins said.

He said people often drop off bulbs on his doorstep overnight and that a Capitol Hill resident voluntarily collects used bulbs from neighbors and brings them to Prudential.

Mark Kohorst, senior manager for environment, health and safety at the Rosslyn-based National Electrical Manufacturers Association, said federal business regulations classify mercury-containing lamps as a subcategory of hazardous waste.

"A nationwide network of recyclers exists to serve that sector," he said.

The rule exempts households but gives states the right to adopt the federal law and apply it to households, thereby making it illegal for anyone to dispose of the bulbs in any way other than recycling.

Mr. Kohorst said Maine has enacted "the first law of its kind requiring manufacturers to fund recycling," forcing the development and implementation of state-approved programs by January. Manufacturers that do no comply will not be allowed to sell the lamps in Maine.

"We do need a national program because what good does it do for California to ban it" when neighboring states don't, said Leonard Robinson, chief deputy director of California's Department of Toxic Substances Control.

He plans to address the subject when he visits Washington with Energy Secretary Steven Chu, "a Californian," he said, who "knows the situation."

A pilot project in Humboldt County in Northern California allows households to mail used bulbs directly to a recycler, he said.

With the cooperation of the U.S. Postal Service and funding provided by Pacific Gas & Electric Co., about 58,000 residences have used direct shipment since February, he said. "That takes care of the rural people, because not everybody has a Wal-Mart or Ikea nearby."

New compact fluorescent light bulbs that carry the "Energy Star Qualified" label are supposed to last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs and use one-quarter of the energy to produce the same amount of light. Although the CFLs numbers are higher, the bulbs save money because they last longer.

Mr. Jensen noted, however, that most CFLs on the market don't work with motion sensors or "dusk to dawn" fixtures, "and many models warn they are 'not for use with dimmers.' "

Lane Burt, an energy policy analyst with the Natural Resources Defense Council's Washington office, said CFL bulbs are just "a stopover" before an even more efficient type of light bulb arrives.

"Everyone should know where we want to go is LEDs [light-emitting diodes]. They are much more efficient and costs are coming down quickly. They have improved tenfold in the past decade."

FUEL

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President Barack Obama signs US scrappage incentive law (*Fleet Directory)*

US president Barack Obama has signed a law for a scrappage incentive for old cars based on the European model, which draws the attention of car buyers to the smart fortwo. In future, Americans who trade their old car for the two-seater with its exemplary environmental credentials will receive the maximum premium from the state.
Buyers of new cars will receive a maximum scrappage bonus of $4,500 in future (currently the equivalent of around €3,200) when they exchange a gas-guzzling old car for an environmentally friendly new one. Unlike the German system, the Car Allowance Rebate System (Cars) - commonly called "cash for clunkers" plans for a sliding scale with the amount of the bonus depending on the fuel consumption of the new vehicle. smart fortwo buyers will always receive the maximum premium - irrespective of the old car being scrapped. The innovative smart concept with its outstanding fuel efficiency therefore presents a further attractive advantage to customers in the USA.
According to the American Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the smart fortwo is America's most fuel-efficient car without hybrid drive. The US authority confirms independent European studies that had previously established the clever two-seater as the most economical car. In addition, the smart already exceeds US standards for fleet consumption (CAFE = Corporate Average Fuel Economy) that will apply from 2020 and it has been classified as an ultra-low emission vehicle by the California Air Resources Board on account of its extremely low exhaust-emission figures.
Thanks to its outstanding features and its fresh design that combines functionality with joie de vivre, the smart fortwo has become a sought-after city car in many countries. smart fortwo models take up an unrivalled amount of road and parking space and yet they bring two people including luggage to their destination extremely comfortably and safely. smart provides lots of unique answers to questions concerning individual and eco-friendly urban mobility.

07/19/2009 5:49 PM

You Can Comment On Higher Blends Of Ethanol (*Keloland TV*)

South Dakotans have until tomorrow to make their opinions known on whether higher blends of ethanol should be offered at the pump.

Right now, the Environmental Protection Agency limits ethanol blends to 10 percent.

But members of Congress, including South Dakota Senator John Thune, are encouraging the E-P-A to allow higher blends, like E-15. Supporters claim the change will help create jobs, and lower our dependence on foreign oil and fossil fuels.

Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0211, by one of the following methods:

www.regulations.gov: Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.

Issue Date: CSP Daily News, July 20, 2009,

'At-the-Pump' DEF (*CSP Daily News*)

Pilot announces diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) schedule, locations
KNOXVILLE, Tenn. -- Pilot Travel Centers, the nation's largest retail operator of travel centers with more than 350 owned or licensed retail interstate locations in 41 states, has announced installation plans for the rollout of 100 diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) "at-the-pump" locations. The company was the first travel center chain to make the commitment to offer DEF at the pump, it said, and will carry prepackaged supplies of DEF at all 350 Pilot retail stores.

Pilot's initial plans call for the installation of 100 bulk dispensing pumps at locations spread out nationally and at a rate of 25 pumps per quarter beginning in the third quarter of 2009 through the second quarter of 2010.

The initial phases of Pilot fuel island DEF pump locations will include Amarillo, Texas, Avondale, AZ, Bordentown, N.J., Brooks, Ore., Carlisle, Pa., Charlotte, N.C., Cheyenne, Wyo., Denver, Dexter, Mich., Effingham, Ill., Fort Pierce, Fla., Gallup, N.M., Greenville, Va., Hesperia, Calif., Houston, Meridian, Miss., Milford, Conn., Murfreesboro, Tenn., Oak Creek, Wis., Oklahoma City, Santa Nella, Calif., Seville, Ohio, St. Cloud, Minn., Stanfield, Ore., West Memphis, Ark.

"We have worked closely with Detroit Diesel Corp. and Daimler Trucks North America, as well as Gilbarco, to develop Pilot's bulk dispensing capabilities and a billing/transaction system that will meet our customers' need for ready DEF supply and fuel island convenience," said Mark Hazelwood, executive vice president for Pilot Travel Centers, Knoxville, Tenn.

"The maximum distance between any two of our locations will be 2,618 miles," Hazelwood added. "That is the distance between Milford, Conn. and Santa Nella, Calif., and it is also within the normal range for one tank of DEF on a Class 8 on-highway truck." The company expects to offer DEF at-the-pump at prices that are equal to or less than diesel fuel.

"Pilot is committed to its customers and communities. Both will be served by the fuel

efficiency and near-zero emissions enabled by DEF in selective catalytic reduction (SCR)-equipped commercial vehicles," he added. "And, since a little DEF goes a long way, Pilot will leverage its national network in a rollout of DEF pumps at travel centers from coast to coast."

David Siler, spokesperson for Detroit Diesel and Daimler Trucks North America, said, "Pilot's rollout plan for DEF will serve the industry's need for bulk DEF availability and pricing, and will support customers while demand for DEF builds and the rest of the DEF supply infrastructure develops," said David Siler, spokesperson for Detroit Diesel and Daimler Trucks North America. "SCR, along with convenient, bulk supplies of DEF, will create efficiencies for truckers and trucking companies."

He added, "It will improve fuel economy, saving them money—up to 5% or better—and truckers will have easy access to ample and affordable supplies of DEF where and when they need them," Siler added.

Virtually all of the heavy-duty engines in volume production today, that will continue to be sold after the new standards take effect, will use SCR to comply with the new 2010 standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). SCR technologies optimize engine function and, in turn, reduce fuel consumption and improve reliability and driveability for their owners.

Headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn., Pilot is one of the largest operators of travel centers in the United States with more than 300 locations in 41 states and in Canada.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

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Published on July 20th, 2009

The HHW Dilemma: Lots of Waste, Nobody to Collect (*Earth 911)*

by Steve Uydess

There was probably a time in our lives, not too long ago, when we gave little thought to the ingredients in many of our household products. The one thing we wanted, whether it was our paint, pesticides, oven cleaners or our drain cleaners, was for the products to work.

Perhaps there was an assumption that because we bought these items in a public store, they were safe as long as we didn’t ingest them or get them in our eyes.

What we now know, of course, is that many common household items contain ingredients that can not only be harmful to our bodies, but they also have the potential to contaminate the land, air and water on which we depend.

Such items are designated as Household Hazardous Wastes (HHW), and they are far more prevalent in homes than one might think.

The U.S. EPA found that the air inside our homes is on average two to five times more polluted than the air outside. Photo: In.gov

What's So Bad About HHW?

The U.S. EPA describes HHW as "leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable or reactive ingredients." While anything with a big WARNING label on the container likely fits the bill, many other items also qualify as HHW.

In fact, the EPA estimates that between garages, closets and cluttered basements, the average American home can contain as much as **100 pounds** of HHW.

Disposing of these items by pouring them down the drain can contaminate drinking water, as well as rivers and oceans. In addition, placing these items in landfills eventually leads to their ingredients, such as heavy metals and poisons, leaching into the ground or being incinerated and entering the air.

In light of these dangers, many cities and municipalities have developed collection programs for HHW. However, there are still many parts of the country that lack permanent local collection resources.

But fear not! We didn't tell you about HHW just to scare you about the toxins lying around your house. There are still options for you to safely rid your home of your HHW.

An Ounce of Prevention

While it may sound obvious, the best way to keep you home clear of HHW is not to purchase it in the first place. While some products, such as antifreeze, do not seem to have easy substitutes, many household cleaners are phasing out more dangerous ingredients.

Companies such as Method and Seventh Generation make many cleaners and detergents that have no hazardous ingredients, and even Clorox has developed a green line of cleaning products called Green Works. Baking soda and vinegar, as well as citrus oils are each making a resurgence as people question the idea of keeping so many "fatal-if-swallowed" products under their sinks. Regardless of your home's needs, check first to see if environmentally sound alternatives are available.

When purchasing your cleaning products, check for biodegradability, highly concentrated and if it's made from plants or other renewable resources. Photo: Theecolife.net

Know Your Waste

Before you contemplate disposing of your HHW, it will help to know what items in your home qualify. Purdue University has an excellent HHW Web site that takes you through a virtual house, room by room, and lists the typical harmful products found there. Categories to be wary of include:

- Household cleaners – especially oven and drain cleaners
- Auto fluids – such as anti-freeze, oil or other engine fluids
- Paint products – especially varnishes and thinners
- Pesticides – anything meant to kill pests is probably not great for people or pets either

Special Days Around the Country

Even in towns that do not have year-round collection programs, it is still possible to dispose of HHW. There are thousands of special collection days around the country, when it is possible to drop off your HHW at a local facility.

Most state environmental agencies provide information about special collection dates on their Web sites, or you can call to find out when and where the next collection is planned.

Frequency varies by location (anywhere from weekly to yearly), but if you can collect and store your HHW in a single location, it will be easy to drop off at the next event. Check out our recycling location database for HHW drop-off locations. The EPA also has a Web site with information and resources for starting your own local collection event.

Check With Local Businesses

The concept of product stewardship has made its way to many commercial businesses, both voluntarily and through recent laws. Electronics chains, such as Best Buy, offer to take used stereo and computer equipment on select days, and many auto service stations have collection facilities for hazardous used fluids like oil and antifreeze. Hardware stores also accept certain items for recycling, such as mercury-containing CFL light bulbs.

No matter what alternative you choose, you do not ever have to resort to simply dumping your HHW down the drain or into gutters. The amount of waste you have may seem small to you, but consider that a single quart of used motor oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of drinking water. With a little patience and research, keeping

household hazardous wastes out of your local environment is easy, and you will reap the benefits of a cleaner community.

Coal ash bill breaks free of a logjam (*News & Record*)

Monday, July 20, 2009
By Mark Binker
Staff Writer
RALEIGH — A proposal to subject power companies' coal ash ponds to more government oversight cleared a key committee last week and appears on a fast track to become law before summer's end.
That's in stark contrast to the measure's fate three months ago, when senior lawmakers said coal ash regulation was unlikely to be heard this year.

"I felt like I was beating my head against the wall for seven months," said Rep. Pricey Harrison, the measure's lead author and a Greensboro Democrat.

Coal ash ponds came to national attention in December when a Tennessee Valley Authority dam broke and released more than a billion gallons of a slurry.

Whether stored in a wet form, as in the case of the TVA spill, or as dry powder, the ash is what's leftover from burning coal for energy.

It contains hazardous chemicals such as arsenic and selenium.

The state has 14 coal ash ponds. No state agency inspects the dams to ensure they are structurally safe. Instead, utilities companies are allowed to submit their engineering reports to the N.C. Public Utilities Commission.

Harrison's legislation would place the coal ash dams under the Dam Safety Act, which would require state inspections.

Opposition from the utility companies stalled that bill this year. But in the past month, two things changed the landscape:

lThe U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a list of 44 high-hazard dams and 12 were in North Carolina. Two of those are in Eden beside a Duke Energy power plant.

lGov. Bev Perdue lent her support to the legislation, saying that "greater safety oversight and more frequent inspections will help reduce potential risks."

Power companies also appear to have dropped their opposition.

“We support the legislation that came out of the House Environment Committee,” said Jason Walls, a Duke Energy spokesman. In April, Duke was circumspect about Harrison’s bill.

The measure is now part of a larger package of environment bills, all related to power generation.

But it does not have some of the provisions in Harrison’s earlier legislation that would have more strictly regulated how coal waste is used. Dry coal ash is a common ingredient in dry wall and is sometimes used as fill material for roadbeds and other large projects.

“There’s a lot more that we could be thinking about,” Harrison said. That, she said, could be studied by environmental regulators after the General Assembly adjourns this summer.

Harrison’s bill next will go to the House floor and then must be approved by the Senate.

Contact Mark Binker at (919)832-5549 or mark.binker@news-record.com

TOXICS

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Chinese villagers flee county in radiation scare (*Associated Press*)

By AUDRA ANG (AP)

BEIJING — Residents fled a central Chinese county at the weekend over rumors of a radiation leak at a factory but most had returned by Monday after government assurances it was safe.

The exodus was sparked Friday, when bystanders saw government workers at a factory using robots to examine a cobalt-60 irradiator that had malfunctioned. The irradiator is used mainly for sterilizing pepper powder, flavoring used in instant noodles and garlic.

"There was chaos on the streets from about 2:30 p.m. until dark," Zhu Zhihai, manager of a different factory that processes garlic, told The Associated Press by telephone Monday. "All kinds of vehicles were going out of the county — farm vehicles, motorcycles and cars."

He estimated that a third of the population of about 1 million in Qi county, Henan province, fled, many because they had heard rumors of explosions. Officials have not estimated the number who fled.

The incident illustrates how quickly rumors can spread and cause panic in China, where many don't trust local officials and the government-controlled media.

Some people fled as far as the capital city of Zhengzhou, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) away. Some parents were keeping their children away for a few more weeks, said residents interviewed by telephone.

"People were in a hurry and they didn't take anything with them. The public security bureau kept trying to persuade them not to leave," said Zhu, whose 30 employees left as well.

He said he didn't leave because his friends at the local environmental protection bureau told him the rumors of a disaster were untrue.

Telephones at government offices rang unanswered Monday. Li Chunsheng, deputy director of the Environmental Protection Bureau of Kaifeng, which oversees Qi county, said in a statement posted on the government site Saturday that the irradiator problem "will not cause any harm to the public."

He said that the cobalt-60 is stable and would not explode or emit radioactive gas.

Li said the irradiator malfunctioned June 7 when its protective shield was knocked askew while a batch of peppers was being sterilized. As a result, the device could not be put properly into its storage well, Li said.

It was not clear why the malfunction was not reported sooner.

The irradiator, which is operated by remote control, was in a sealed room secured with concrete and two layers of stainless steel, Li said. Daily inspections since have shown no leaks, he said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says cobalt-60 is increasingly used for sterilization of spices and that exposure to gamma radiation directly from cobalt-60 can increase a person's cancer risk.

Researcher Xi Yue contributed to this report.

WATER
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EPA sets Ind. meeting for Great Lakes cleanup (*Associated Press*)

Story also appeared: *Chicago Tribune*

3:00 AM CDT, July 20, 2009
MERRILLVILLE, Ind. - Federal officials will visit northern Indiana this week for a public meeting on President Barack Obama's plan to clean up the Great Lakes basin.

Thursday's meeting hosted by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials will be held in Merrillville. It's one of a series of meetings set for each of the eight Great Lakes states.

Indiana encompasses parts of both the Lake Michigan and Lake Erie watersheds. The Obama administration wants to restore the ecosystems of the five Great Lakes, which have been battered by invasive species, toxic pollution and other problems.

Obama has requested $475 million in his 2010 budget for projects ranging from cleaning up contaminated river bottoms to restoring wildlife habitat.

Weld commissioners oppose 'fracking' oversight (*The Tribune*)

Bill Jackson,
The Board of Weld County Commissioners has joined six other counties in opposing proposed federal regulations on natural gas exploration.

Reps. Diana DeGette and Jared Polis, Democrats from Denver and Boulder, support the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness for Chemicals Act of 2009, which is making its way through Congress without the support of other Colorado members of the House. The legislation would require energy companies to disclose any chemicals used in fracturing, a method used by energy companies to release oil and natural gas in tight formations.

The legislation was introduced by DeGette and Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-N.Y., and would place fracturing under federal oversight. The House Appropriations Committee approved a measure by Hinchey calling on the Environmental Protection Agency to study potential risks from hydraulic fracturing, which is also known as “fracking.”

Industry groups point out that a 2004 study by the EPA shows fracking doesn't endanger groundwater and that the companies have their own private methods of fracking, methods the companies don't want their competitors to know. Hinchey counters the study is widely considered to be flawed.

Bill Garcia, chairman of the Weld commissioners, said he cannot understand the reasoning behind the measure.

“I guess it makes sense if you want to stop oil and gas production in the United States. If that's your goal, then this is the way to do it,” Garcia said.

Weld contains a majority of the Wattenberg Field, the eighth largest of its kind in the U.S., commissioners pointed out in their resolution, and the county has about 25 percent of the state's natural gas wells.

The industry provides 7,000 jobs and contributes more than $3.1 billion to the Colorado economy each year.

Fracking injects liquids, sand and chemicals underground to force open channels in tight sand and rock formations so that oil and gas will flow.

Weld commissioners, in their opposition resolution, pointed out that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 explicitly exempted fracturing from the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act, and said that the technology has been used more than 1 million times in the past 60 years with no harm reported to groundwater supplies.

“There is no problem here; no allegations of it affecting water,” Garcia said.

Gov. Bill Ritter, meanwhile, has asked DeGette “to consider authorizing a comprehensive study of the issue instead of jumping directly to a new and potentially intrusive regulatory program,” according to the Denver Post.

Meanwhile, Ben Marter, communications director for Rep. Betsy Markey, D-Colo., said she has been looking at the measure “and does have some serious concerns with it.” He said Markey, who represents Colorado's 4th Congressional District, which includes Weld, “knows full well the importance of natural gas to north and northeastern Colorado and will keep that in mind as she evaluates” the bill.

Weld joins Morgan County on the Eastern Slope and Delta, Mesa, Moffat and Rio Blanco on the Western Slope in adopting resolutions opposing the proposed legislation. Yuma County commissioners are expected to adopt a similar resolution at a July 31 meeting.

EPA to Host Public Meetings on Restoring the Great Lakes (*Occupational Health & Safety*)

Jul 20, 2009

Starting tomorrow, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will host public meetings in each of the Great Lakes states to discuss the federal government's draft action plan for restoring the Great Lakes. The goal of this federal multi-agency, multi-year initiative is to address the most urgent problems affecting the lakes. EPA and other federal agencies have identified five principal areas on which to focus efforts:

- Toxic substances and areas of concern
- Invasive species
- Near shore health and runoff
- Habitat and wildlife protection and restoration
- Accountability, monitoring, evaluation, communication, and partnerships.

The schedule for the meetings is:

- Tuesday, July 21, Doubletree Hotel Milwaukee City Center, Wisconsin Room, 611 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wis., from 5 to 7 p.m. CDT.
- Wed., July 22, Metcalfe Federal Building, Room 331, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill., from 6 to 8 p.m. CDT. This meeting will be Webcast live at http://epa.gov/greatlakes/live.
- Thursday, July 23, Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management Northwest Office, 8380 Louisiana St., Merrillville, Ind., from 5 to 7 p.m. CDT.
- Monday, July 27, CanalWay Center, State Boat Landing Room, 4524 E. 49th St., Cuyahoga Heights, Ohio, from 6 to 8 p.m. EDT.
- Tuesday, July 28, Tom Ridge Environmental Center, Presque Isle State Park, Room 112, 301 Peninsula Drive, Erie, Pa., from 6 to 8 p.m. EDT.
- Wednesday, July 29, Radisson Riverside, FitzHugh Room, 120 Main St. East, Rochester, N.Y., from 5 to 7 p.m. EDT.
- Monday, Aug. 3, Kellogg Center Auditorium, 55 South Harrison Ave., East Lansing, Mich., from 5 to 7 p.m. EDT.
- Tuesday, Aug. 4, EPA Mid-Continent Ecology Laboratory, Gitchee Gumee Conference Center, 6201 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, Minn., from 4 to 6 p.m. CDT.

More information is available on EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/grtlakes/glri.

Filter membrane protects against water-borne illnesses (*Fluid Handling)*

20 July 2009
SWISS company Vestergaard Frandsen has selected Ultrason E 6020 P resin, a polyethersulphone from BASF, for its new portable Lifestraw Family water purification system.
Vestergaard Frandsen, a manufacturer of products to protect against illnesses, primarily in developing countries, says that the design of the LifeStraw range simplifies on-site

conversion of large quantities of dirty water into potable water in villages and by families.
The primary element is an approximately 30 cm long plastic housing that contains filter membranes made from Ultrason E. The elements provide ultrafiltration membranes and remove viruses as well as bacteria from dirty surface water that may have come from rivers, lakes, rainwater collection barrels or puddles.
Vestergaard Frandsen says that the principal benefit of the high performance resin Ultrason E in such filters is that it lends itself extremely well to production of membranes with a precisely controlled pore size, which gives it clearly defined filter characteristics. By using the portable purification station, the risk of contracting gastrointestinal illnesses from dirty water is reduced drastically.
According to Vestergaard Frandsen, the LifeStraw Family system is lightweight and easy-to-use, as well as being inexpensive. It is able to purify at least 18,000 litres of water reliably without the need for batteries, electricity, replacement parts, chemicals or complex technology. Water purified by the unit has been tested by the EPA and declared potable. The products can be quickly and easily distributed during natural disasters.

Council looks at revised Goldsby water contract (*Norman Transcript*)

By Tom Blakey
July 20, 2009 01:15 am
— Utilities Director Ken Komiske will present a cost/benefit analysis of the proposed Goldsby Water Sales Contract to the Norman City Council at the council's study session, scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Municipal Building Conference Room, 201 W. Gray St.
The council voted at its June 9 regular session to put consideration of the contract on hold until the financial study could be conducted.
"Goldsby is looking at purchasing 3 million gallons a month to begin with," Komiske said.
Goldsby's maximum water demand under the proposed 20-year contract is 8 million gallons per month, which represents about 2 percent of Norman's total monthly production, Komiske said. The Norman Utilities Authority produces an average of 375 million gallons per month.
"It's an expensive proposition for Goldsby, because they'd need to drill a water line under the (Canadian) river," Komiske said. "They want to know if they spend over a million to connect to us, that we'd have a long-term contract to provide water to them."
Goldsby's town representatives have reported that Oklahoma City has proposed to run a water line to Goldsby and bill the town according to OKC rates, officials said.
A bigger issue for the council to consider, Komiske said, is a "regionalization" strategy being pushed by the Environmental Protection Agency and the state, encouraging nearby cities and towns to rely on each other in crisis situations.
The waterline would connect the McClain County town's water system to Norman's

water main at the southernmost point of 24th Avenue SW, south of State Highway 9. Meters would be installed at the location to measure the quantity of water provided to Goldsby.

Under the proposed 20-year contract, Goldsby would pay Norman's current commercial rate for water, plus an accelerator amount per 1,000 gallons. The accelerator would be adjusted beginning each fiscal year based on the number of days Norman purchased water from Oklahoma City during the previous year and the average amount of water purchased by Goldsby on those days.

A mathematical formula has been established to arrive at the accurate amount Goldsby would pay for its water purchase.

Komiske said the formula assures the City of Norman that Goldsby is paying its way for all of the water it purchases, while utilizing a system that is easy for Norman's finance staff to track and easy for Goldsby to budget for.

The initial rate for the first year would be $2.24 per 1,000 gallons instead of Norman's standard commercial rate of $2.10 per 1,000 gallons. The accelerator is based on 36 million gallons a year, and the average number of days per year Norman has purchased water from Oklahoma City since it began doing so in 2001.

The contract allows for adjustments throughout the year should Norman or Oklahoma City increase their rates during the fiscal year, he said.

At its June 9 meeting, Councilman Tom Kovach made a motion to postpone consideration of the proposed contract until a cost/benefit analysis could be performed. The analysis was performed by the utilities department, presented to the Council Finance Committee, and revisions were proposed to address council concerns. One of the concerns was that the contract would not adequately protect the city should a water main break or some other infrastructure failure occur. Language has been added to the proposed contract to cover such system breakdowns. Additionally the contract was revised to more clearly cap the city's provision of water to Goldsby in the amount of 8 million gallons per month. The contract allows for Goldsby to request an increase in water supply as its demand increases, and provides that the Norman Utilities Authority not unreasonably deny such a request as long as it does not affect Norman's ability to provide water to its own customers.

Based on the rate structure proposed in the contract, Norman's net revenue from selling water to Goldsby over a 10-year period would be approximately $700,000.

No additional staff would be required. Associated variable costs, such as electricity, chemicals, pumps and other supplies are built into the rates all customers pay, including the rate that would be charged to Goldsby, officials said.

Pressure mounts on council (*Toowoomba Chronicle*)

Jim Campbell | 20th July 2009

PRESSURE is mounting for the Toowoomba Regional Council to explain why it has failed to seal a $900,000 land deal for a wastewater treatment plant at Westbrook.

Former Jondaryan Shire Council CEO Noel Cass and former councillor Annette Frizzell slammed the council last week for not proceeding with the sale, which the former shire council approved in 2007.

A Toowoomba Regional Council spokeswoman said the arrangement with the landholder was subject to Environmental Protection Agency, now the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), approval.

“Approval for the Wastewater Treatment Plant as proposed on the land was not forthcoming and the arrangement is at an end,” the spokeswoman said.

However, David Darvall from the DERM said the department’s role was only to provide advice to council.

“The decision to proceed with the sewage treatment plant or not, rested solely with the Toowoomba Regional Council,” he said.

Mr Darvall said DERM provided a number of conditions to the council before it made its decision.

“These conditions addressed a number of environmental factors associated with the site including shallow soils and groundwater, poor drainage and the adequate leaching of salts from the soil profile.

“DERM also had some concerns with the site’s ability to recycle and release adequate water during periods of wet weather and during periods of minimal irrigation demand.”

Lawyers have been hired by the owner of the land to negotiate with council over the failed contract.

Mr Cass has labelled the failure to buy the chosen site an “absolute disgrace” and a “complete waste of public money”.

He said “well over $1 million on planning, studies and consultants” was spent.

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