U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

Prepared by the Office of Public Affairs

Monday, February 18, 2013

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(BNA articles can be viewed online **http://Intranet.epa.gov/desktop/news.htm**

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ADMINISTRATOR JACKSON

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7/20/2009 2:56:00 PM

AMI Urges EPA To Deny Petition To Increase Ethanol Blend Levels (*CattleNetwork.com*)

Overland Park,KS
AMI joined a diverse group of business associations, public interest organizations and environmental groups in urging the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to deny a petition that would allow the use of so-called “mid-level ethanol blends” (blends above 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or E20) in commerce.

“Any decision to introduce a new fuel formulation must only be undertaken after independent, rigorous and verifiable testing has been completed and concludes that such mid-level ethanol blends (whether E12, E15 or E20) will not pose a risk to all gasoline-powered engines, to public health, to the environment and to consumers,” the letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson states.

EPA should take over New Bedford cleanup (*Fall River Herald News*)

07-20-09
The Herald News
Posted Jul 20, 2009 @ 12:00 AM
The residents of New Bedford are asking Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson to please take over the various toxic remediation efforts at the various properties on and near the New Bedford high school campus as soon as possible. We have lost confidence in the ability of the local government to accomplish the task.

For three years all Mayor Scott Lang has offered the citizens are platitudes and vague statements amounting to little more than, “We are working on it.” We need help from the federal government and we need it soon.

The words Love Canal and toxic contamination are synonymous, even to this day. Love Canal is a toxic black eye on the city government of Niagara Falls, New York, but alternatively a significant success for the EPA. But as large as the Love Canal issue was, it pales when compared to the contamination issues found in the old industrial town of New Bedford in both size and scope. The Love Canal property that needed to be cleaned was around 70 acres. In New Bedford, on the site of the city’s former burn dump is the New Bedford High School, the junior high school, the surrounding sports

fields, several nearby residential homes and two church properties that cover approximately 104 acres and contains a chemical cocktail potentially more devastating than the dioxins and benzenes found at Love Canal. The plume of toxins is spreading, following the various underground water systems; invading nearby neighborhoods. Land(s) re-mediated as recently as last year are again highly toxic, requiring a second cleanup with zero guarantee of success. Recently, several tens of tons of contaminated soil were removed using methods not in compliance with EPA standards based on the toxic chemicals contained within and the high levels at which they were found.

New Bedford has several clean p efforts in various stages of completion, most of which are directed by your agency. The EPA is intimately involved with the cleanup and continual monitoring of Sullivan's Ledge in New Bedford. The EPA is intimately involved with the Herculean effort to clean the Acushnet River of heavy metals and PCBs.

We, the members of Citizens Leading Environmental Action Network Inc., the residents surrounding the school property and those not yet determined to be affected are asking you to please remove the cleanup responsibility from our City Hall and place it with your agency. We are fed up with no answers from the mayor and his environmental stewards, Scott Alphonse and David Fredette. We are upset and distressed by incomplete or missing documentation regarding findings and cleanup efforts. We are saddened that covering a toxic field for semi-pro baseball team took precedence over the health of residents, many with small children. We are puzzled that the city extended building permits to property owners even though to dig will expose barrels of toxins still buried and still leaking.

The city of New Bedford in our opinion and in the opinion of our lawyers is that the stealth maneuvers of the former and the current mayor has put upwards of 20,000 residents at risk for cancers, tumors, birth defects and other health issues. Please come to New Bedford and repeat the success of Love Canal. We need help from your agency as our own local government is not equipped for such a large and complicated project.

Carol Strupczewski
Secretary
C.L.E.A.N.

EDITORIALS / OP-ED / COMMENTARY / LETTERS

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A Global Climate Deal (*New York Times*)

July 21, 2009 Tuesday
The New York Times on the Web
Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; LETTER; Pg.
To the Editor:

"A Lesson on Warming" (editorial, July 10) focused on the difficulty President Obama and the G-8 are having getting to a deal on climate change with China and other developing nations before the Copenhagen deadline in December.

At the G-8 meeting in Italy this month, Mr. Obama put "**climate change** front and center" with a meeting at the launching, which, you reported (front page, July 9), "demonstrated again the most vexing problem in reaching a consensus on **climate change.** ... While the richest countries have produced the bulk of the pollution blamed for **climate change,** developing countries are producing increasing volumes of gases."

That poorer countries feel they are being asked to place protecting the environment before pulling themselves out of poverty is nothing new: this script has played out at every major negotiation since the Stockholm Conference on Environment and Development in 1972. We should know better.

The editorial and most debate on climate treaties address only half of the problem: emissions reductions targets. Rather, the most successful environmental treaties have built-in mechanisms to provide "financial and technological help for poorer nations." These are the keys to getting to a truly global climate deal.

J. Timmons Roberts Providence, R.I., July 14, 2009

The writer is the director of the Center for Environmental Studies at Brown University and co-author of "A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics and Climate Policy."

Letters to the Editor (*Galveston County Daily News)*

July 21, 2009
Save Bayous Through Voice Of The People

Anyone who enjoyed the dead-fish smell July 15 is really going to enjoy smelling three package-sewer plants 24/7.

I'm told residents will get used to the smell in a few years, and only their family and friends will smell it when they come to visit. The residents will even enjoy eating outside once the smell is part of their life.

The major problem will be when they try to sell their homes. Even baking cookies will not clean up the smell.

I'm sure the Environmental Protection Agency, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Health Department will tell us the odor is safe, but for whom?

We can stop package-sewer plants by acting now. We must run out of office anyone who will not speak out and stop the plants. Our bayou war is real.

We need 500 to 1,000 calls to our elected officials and TCEQ now, and no money for any politician running against us.

Politicians need us — we don't need them.

Jean Moffett
League City

Take To The Web To Put New Spin On Trees

I keep thinking cooler heads will prevail in the matter of cutting down those magnificent oak trees on the island.

It is increasingly apparent that the issue is more about getting more federal dollars than about the trees themselves. Making this decision from the opinion of a lone forester is ludicrous.

How about a second opinion? How about affording these trees more time to recover? Does anyone believe 10 months is an adequate assessment of whether these trees are alive or not?

The city is "waiting until the birds hatch and fly their nests before removing the trees," but what about next year's bird cycle?

Once again, the city of Galveston is making an incredibly shortsighted decision that will have long-term consequences.

I encourage residents to go to the Environmental Protection Agency's Web site and report this travesty to people who can put an immediate stop to this and give these trees an adequate chance to recover.

Cindy Milina
La Marque

Isle Residents Should Save Trees At All Costs

I can't believe trees on Galveston Island showing signs of life are being destroyed. It's insane to cut down a tree that's showing its strength and will to survive. Money should be spent to help the trees, not fell them.

Why can't truckloads of fresh non-chlorinated water be brought in for the trees that still are alive? Oh, wait; that would make sense.

Galveston residents should look until they find nests or other signs of wildlife in their trees, if that's what it takes. Let the yellow tape fly.

What happens after another half-dozen hurricanes strike here? Will we be cutting down the last tree just as it sprouts a tiny little leaf?

What are the Galveston mayor and council members thinking?

Jonathan Heitz
Friendswood

Chemical plants can and must make themselves much safer (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

July 21, 2009 Tuesday
Main Edition
OPINION; Pg. 11A
By Molly McLaughlin, Sierra Barnes; For the AJC

The vulnerability of U.S. chemical plants to terrorism and serious attacks has been widely reported since before the Sept. 11 attacks. Unfortunately, since 9/11 Congress has only managed to enact a temporary program to make these areas safer and it will soon expire.

The current program is extremely ineffective, exempting thousands of chemical plants from safety regulations and barring the government from requiring the chemical plants to use security measures that would safeguard communities now at risk.

Later this month, the House Energy and Commerce Committee will take the next step toward enacting a comprehensive program that will reduce the risks associated with chemical plants, thereby protecting people in surrounding areas.

The magnitude of risks posed by one chemical plant far surpasses the damage of the

9/11 attacks. It is not uncommon for a chemical plant to possess large quantities of chlorine, benzene or chloroform. All these chemicals are extremely harmful if released into the air.

The United States contains 300 hazardous chemical plants that put more than 100 million Americans in areas of high risk, according to the U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency.** Fifty-six chemical plants in Georgia put 10,000 people at risk, each. These facilities were not designed to withstand a terrorist attack.

In June 2007, DuPont Chairman Charles Holliday Jr. conceded, "I feel very comfortable that we've taken all the reasonable steps, but if someone wants to fly an airplane into a plant, it's very hard to guard against it."

The U.S. Naval Research Laboratory estimated that 100,000 people could be killed or injured in the first 30 minutes of such an attack.

Before the Sept. 11 attacks, ringleader Mohamed Atta visited Tennessee, asking lots of questions about a nearby chemical plant. In 2007, at least five successful terrorist attacks in Iraq used relatively small cylinders of chlorine gas to kill dozens of people.

Also in 2007, thefts of 150-pound cylinders of chlorine gas occurred in California and Texas, prompting the Department of Homeland Security to alert local bomb squads and chemical plants across the U.S.

The good news is that at least 220 chemical facilities have voluntarily converted to safer chemical processes since 2001 that eliminated risks to millions of people.

The legislation that Congress will soon vote on could eliminate these risks to millions more Americans. By requiring the highest-risk plants to use already feasible, cost-effective processes to secure their hazardous chemicals, these plants can be rendered harmless, thereby providing protection to the surrounding communities. Although chemical companies are fielding an army of lobbyists to oppose this legislation, the largest shippers of these poison gases have a different point of view.

In 2008 the Association of American Railroads issued a statement saying, "It's time for the big chemical companies to do their part to help protect America. They should stop manufacturing dangerous chemicals when safer substitutes are available. And if they won't do it, Congress should do it for them."

Hopefully, congressional members from Georgia will agree and join their colleagues in sending strong legislation to the White House soon.

Molly McLaughlin is a chemical engineering student at Georgia Tech. Sierra Barnes is Georgia field organizer for Greenpeace.

Editorial:

Containing coal ash (*Greensboro News Record*)

Tuesday, July 21, 2009
What do you think?
On Christmas Eve 2008, a massive black river of ash and sludge snaked into the hills of Tennessee, and without warning, covered the countryside in an ominous blanket of toxic goo.
Some houses were swept off their foundations. Panicked residents were forced to evacuate.
Measuring 4 to 6 feet thick and comprising more than 1 billion gallons, the blob came from a nearby Tennessee Valley Authority power plant and spilled free when an earthen dike collapsed and a lake of coal ash mixed with water overflowed its banks.

That lake and others like it hold the waste that results from burning coal in power plants. There are 14 of them in North Carolina -- 12 of which are listed among the nation's 44 "high-hazard potential" ash sites by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Two of them serve Duke Energy's Dan River power plant, near Eden. The ranking does not mean the site lacks proper safeguards. But it does mean that "a failure will probably cause loss of human life," the EPA says.

None of the ponds operated by Duke and Progress Energy in North Carolina is as big as the Tennessee reservoir. The two near Eden total 8 acres.

But a bill pending in the General Assembly rightly favors an ounce of prevention over millions of gallons of trouble, all the same. Sponsored by Rep. Pricey Harrison, a Greensboro Democrat, the bill calls for regular structural inspections of the dams that hold the lakes.

Some legislators first treated the bill as if it were the toxic substance. But they changed their minds when the EPA list came to light in late June. Gov. Bev Perdue also has announced her support for the bill, as have even the power companies.

After almost certain defeat, the coal ash bill is likely to pass this week.

Good. Federal studies say coal ash contains significant quantities of heavy metals such as lead, selenium and arsenic that can cause cancer and neurological problems.

Some critics initially charged that Harrison's true motive was to close coal-fired plants altogether. But her bill merely calls for the state to be safer rather than sorry.

Direct inspections of coal ash lake dams would occur at least every two years, as is the case with other dams in North Carolina. Under current law, utilities must file reports

done by private engineers every five years with the state Public Utilities Commission. That's not enough.

Nor, arguably, is this bill. But it's a significant first step.

An earlier, tougher version also prohibited the manufacture of cinder blocks from recycled coal ash. "We're recycling so much of it and we have no idea if it stays inert," Harrison says of the various construction products made from reclaimed coal ash. "That's frightening."

Harrison was right to battle for a bill that seemed destined to fail but now appears certain to become law.

And she's also right not to let the discussion end there.

AIR

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Chemicals that eased ozone crisis now aggravate another (*Washington Post*)

Story also appeared: *Boston Globe*

HFCs building up fast, trapping heat
By David A. Fahrenthold, Washington Post | July 21, 2009
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.

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. 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 account for about 2 percent of the climate-warming power of US 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 last month, 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. "Now, in the next couple of years, is when you have to do this.''

In the 1970s, scientists theorized that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were slowly eroding stratospheric ozone. 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 UN 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.

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, absorbing energy from the sun and keeping it from being reflected out into space.

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

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 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 negotiations that will reduce carbon dioxide. So they will probably be on the table when diplomats gather in Copenhagen in December.

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 Durwood Zaelke, president of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development. “You can reach in and pull out a piece.’’

Democratic senators John F. Kerry, of Massachusetts, and Barbara Boxer, of California, who chair two powerful committees, urged this approach in a letter to President Obama in April.

A bigger question: What will replace these chemicals? Experts say some substitutes, with less global warming impact, can be made, but others are needed. ■

EPA provides $4M to reduce diesel emissions (*Fort Scott Tribune*)

Monday, July 20, 2009
Tribune Staff Report
KANSAS CITY, Kan. -- In a move that stands to create jobs, boost local economies, reduce diesel emissions and protect human health and the environment for people of the State of Kansas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded $4 million to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) for the reduction of diesel emissions in local communities. This clean diesel project will create jobs while protecting air quality in Kansas City, Wichita, eastern and western Kansas.

The funds are provided under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) of 2009 National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. Under this funding competition, EPA Region 7 alone received 34 grant applications requesting almost

$92.2 million to help fund clean diesel emissions projects. The award announced today was chosen to both maximize economic impact and emissions reductions.

"These Clean Diesel grants provide an excellent opportunity to upgrade diesel fleets while improving local air quality," said William Rice, Acting Regional Administrator. "They also allow local businesses needed work, thus increasing regional economic stability."

KDHE requested federal funds for a project to address diesel emissions in Kansas. The projects include upgrading of construction equipment, retrofitting vehicles with diesel oxidation catalysts, and replacing engines.

In addition to helping to create and retain jobs, the clean diesel projects would reduce premature deaths, asthma attacks and other respiratory ailments, lost work days, and many other health impacts every year.

The Recovery Act allotted the National Clean Diesel Campaign (NCDC) a total of $300 million, of which the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program received $156 million to fund competitive grants across the nation. The Recovery Act also included $20 million for the National Clean Diesel Emerging Technology Program grants and $30 million for the SmartWay Clean Diesel Finance Program grants.

In addition, under the Recovery Act's State Clean Diesel Grant program, a total of $88.2 million has been provided to states for clean diesel projects through a noncompetitive allocation process.

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 on February 17, 2009 and has directed that the Recovery Act be implemented with unprecedented transparency and accountability. To that end, the American people can see how every dollar is being invested at http://www.recovery.gov.

For information on EPA's implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in Region 7, visit http://www.epa.gov/recovery

For information about EPA's clean diesel initiatives, vhttp://www.epa.gov/cleandiesel

For information about the Kansas Department of Health and Environment: http://www.kdeks.gov.

NM court considers dispute over auto emissions (*Associated Press*)

Story also appeared: *Silver City Sun-News*

By Barry Massey/Associated Press
Posted: 07/21/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT
SANTA FE - The state Supreme Court was asked Monday to toss out a lawsuit challenging a regulator's power to establish stricter emission requirements for new cars and trucks in New Mexico.
A group of Democratic legislators, car dealers and a farmer contend that the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board exceeded its authority by approving emission standards in 2007 that were more stringent than federal requirements. New Mexico is among 13 states that have adopted California's tougher air pollution rules for cars to help fight global warming.

The emission standards in New Mexico will take effect with 2011 model cars, which become available to consumers next year.

In April, Democratic Gov. Bill Richardson vetoed measures passed by the Legislature to delay the requirements for cleaner-burning vehicles for two years.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has cleared the way for states to implement the California emission standards. The EPA last month granted California a waiver for imposing more stringent air pollution rules than required by the federal government.

The legal challenge in New Mexico was filed in 2007, but it has become entangled in procedural questions and it's up to the Supreme Court to decide whether the lawsuit can move forward.

Justices heard arguments from lawyers in the case, but the court likely won't issue a decision for several months.

One of the main issues for the Supreme Court is whether the lawsuit focuses only on questions of law - such as the scope of powers of the regulatory board - rather than factual matters such as the substance of the pollution standards and the effect of them being adopted in New Mexico.

Tania Maestas, an assistant attorney general, said state law required challenges of the board's air pollution decisions to go to the state Court of Appeals. The lawsuit, she said, wrongly asked a state district court to invalidate the rules through a declaratory judgment, a procedure typically reserved for purely legal questions.

"The EIB adopted these regulations because they believe that they have the authority do so. The mere authority is not challenged in this matter. It's the merits of the regulations that are being challenged," she said.

The board wants the justices to affirm a district judge's decision dismissing the lawsuit. Last year, the Court of Appeals reversed the judge and revived the lawsuit. The board, which is part of the Richardson administration, appealed the ruling to the Supreme Court.

Victor Marshall, an Albuquerque lawyer, said the lawsuit was proper.

"These pure questions of law are for the judiciary to decide, not for an agency to decide the scope and power that it might exercise," said Marshall.

The lawsuit contends that state law prevents the board from adopting air quality standards tougher than federal pollution requirements.

"It may well be that to save our environment we need stricter auto emissions," said Marshall, "but if we do that's going to have to be done by the Legislature."

Two of the legislators who brought the lawsuit, Senate President Tim Jennings of Roswell and Rep. Jim Trujillo of Santa Fe, attended the court hearing. Also bringing the case was Sen. John Arthur Smith of Deming, car dealers from Clovis, Alamogordo and Las Cruces and Curry County farmer Scott Pipkin.

Are small particulates a big deal? (*Mother Nature Network*)

U.S. particulate pollution isn't the deadly threat it once was, but the dangerously tiny specks still often plague big cities as well as rural wilderness.
By Russell McLendon
Tue, Jul 21 2009 at 5:00 AM EST
Read more: CLEAN AIR, EMISSIONS, POLLUTION

People have been choking on manmade air pollution for roughly half a million years, ever since Pleistocene cavemen huddled around the first campfires. That was clearly worth a few lungfuls of soot — fire gave us warmth, night vision and cooked meat, most likely outweighing the times it gave us bronchitis.

Being such ambitious apes, however, we were only satisfied by wood fires for so long. We eventually discovered stronger fuels like coal, oil and gas, which we began burning — along with even more wood and charcoal — at a dizzying pace. Britain emerged as the epicenter of this sooty renaissance by the 19th century, giving London its trademark haze and inspiring the English idiom, "Where there's muck, there's money."

Stoves, factories, cars and power plants around the world were soon churning out smoky fumes, elevating particulate pollution from an annoyance to a menace. After a smog cloud killed 20 people in Donora, Pa., in October 1948 — and another killed as many as 12,000 in London four years later — many Western nations began limiting their emissions of particulates and other air pollutants, leaving Asia and Eastern Europe as the major remaining sources.

But while Americans now breathe less particulate matter overall than they used to, cities such as Los Angeles, Atlanta, Pittsburgh and Detroit often still suffer unhealthy spikes during summer, and rural areas can be inundated by diesel exhaust and road dust from four-wheelers, or by smoke from wildfires. These hazy blankets serve as a harsh reminder that, whether the fuel comes from a forest or a filling station, where there's fire, there's smoke.

What is particulate pollution?

Particulate matter is a diverse, lung-damaging blend of microscopic solids and liquid droplets that hangs suspended in the air. It often looks like stereotypical, iconic air pollution — a thick stew of soot particles (see photo) wafting up from towers and tailpipes — but it also includes particles not normally thought of as pollutants — windblown sandstorms, dirt bikes' dust clouds, smoke from wildfires and volcanic ash.

Some particulates, especially in fire and volcano emissions, are big and dark enough to see with the naked eye, while others are so tiny they're only visible under an electron microscope. Breathing in big, burning ash flakes is certainly unpleasant, but it's the smaller kind that most threatens human health. The EPA focuses on particulates with a diameter smaller than 10 microns (aka micrometers), which it calls "inhalable coarse particles." Within that group is an even more sinister speck — the "fine particle," with a diameter no bigger than 2.5 microns. Known as "PM10" and "PM2.5," respectively, both types are much smaller than the width of a human hair.

Although EPA regulation generally treats all particulates of similar size as equal offenders, research suggests that what they're made of can play a major role in how they affect human health. Urban particulates tend to be more dangerous than their country cousins, for example — partly because the sand and dust granules common to rural areas are bigger than most flecks of citified soot, and partly because urban air's crowd of chemicals often team up against us, becoming worse than any one of them alone.

How do particulates affect people?

The human respiratory system is usually well-prepared to deal with airborne invaders: Nose hairs catch the biggest ones, tiny moving hairs called cilia trap others with mucus to be coughed or sneezed out, and specialized immune cells devour any stragglers. In fact, anyone with allergies knows the body is often *too* prepared to defend itself.

Snot and cilia can't catch everything, but even as some smaller particles sneak through, healthy cilia and immune cells are usually able to ward off long-term damage at normal exposure levels. The people at greatest risk from particulate pollution are those whose natural defenses aren't at full capacity, including children, the elderly, people with heart or lung disease, and smokers.

Urban air pollution is often more toxic than rural dust clouds in part because other pollutants — especially sulfur dioxide, nitrous dioxide and ground-level ozone — can stun or overwhelm the body's defenses, opening the floodgates in much the same way cigarette smoke paralyzes cilia and leaves the body more vulnerable to infection.

The diverse mixture of pollutants floating through many cities makes it hard to pinpoint which one caused which illness, but scientists seem to agree that, once inside the lungs, PM2.5 is responsible for the most serious health problems related to air pollution. Particles 10 microns wide and smaller stubbornly lodge themselves into lung tissue, with the smallest ones digging down the deepest. That may cause irritation, coughing and difficulty breathing in the short term, and stirs up asthma attacks or an irregular heartbeat in many susceptible people. Over time, particulate buildup in the lungs can lead to chronic bronchitis and reduce overall lung function; one type of particulate is believed to be carcinogenic.

A recent Columbia University study also suggests prenatal exposure to air pollution can reduce a child's IQ. Researchers gave backpack air monitors to the mothers of 259 children in low-income New York City neighborhoods, and reported that, even after adjusting for other factors, the children with the highest exposure before birth scored four to five points lower on IQ tests taken at age 5 than children who breathed less pollution in utero.

Aside from its affects on human health, particulate matter carried by wind or water can create a variety of ecological problems depending what it's made of. Certain particles can turn lakes and streams acidic, make plants produce less chlorophyll and sugar, disrupt nutrient balances, and form haze that reduces visibility in many national parks as well as big cities.

Where does particulate matter come from?

Particulates are released by a wide range of sources, both mobile and stationary. Road dust is by far the No. 1 source of PM10 emissions in the United States, and the second highest source of PM2.5, behind only fires. Cars and trucks kick up debris clouds even on paved roads, but off-road vehicles' large plumes stir up much more trouble. Mold, pollen and other human allergens often plague the driver or people downwind, and the tiny dust and diesel granules threaten waterways as well as human lungs, clouding clear water and blocking sunlight from algae and plants.

Whether they're on-road or off-road, diesel vehicles throw a little extra into the particulate pot. Diesel emissions contain formaldehyde, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and other hazardous air pollutants, including thick soot particles. Although some particulate emissions from diesel engines are almost inevitable, they can be reduced with pollution controls and by avoiding idling in diesel-powered vehicles.

Despite the popularity of fossil fuels, wood is still the main emitter of fine particulates in the United States — wildfires are the No. 1 source and home firewood consumption is No. 5. Coal, oil and gas do contribute substantially, though — electricity generation, transportation and other fossil burning is a top three source of PM2.5 and in the top five for PM10. Coal-fired power is a smog-prone enterprise by nature, and while many utilities in developed Western countries have now cut back on particulates and sulfates, softer regulations in parts of Asia and Eastern Europe have led to rampant air pollution there. Widespread use of wood- and dung-burning cookstoves has also come under fire as a source of dangerous particulates and other problems.

For more on particulate matter and other forms of air pollution, check out these 10 links from Uncle Sam:

- EPA: Particulate Matter Basic Information
- EPA: Particulate Matter Standards
- AIRNOW: U.S. air pollution map
- AIRNOW: Particle Pollution
- EPA: Sulfur dioxide
- EPA: Nitrous oxides
- EPA: Ground-level ozone
- EPA: Carbon monoxide
- EPA: Lead
- EPA: Visibility

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.

Posted on Jul. 20, 2009
By Chris Horner

Scrap Metal Facility Agrees to Remove Refrigerants before Crushing, Recycling (*Occupational Health Safety*)

Jul 21, 2009
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 in Chicago has issued an administrative consent order to Midway Iron and Metals Inc. to comply with EPA regulations designed to protect the stratospheric ozone layer. The order covers the company's scrap metal recycling facility in St. Cloud, Minn., where EPA alleges the company accepted small appliances and motor vehicle air conditioning units and crushed them without properly verifying that ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants were removed before they were sent for recycling.
Midway agreed to, among other things, begin recovering within 30 days from receipt of the order any remaining refrigerant from each appliance and motor vehicle air conditioning unit or to verify that the refrigerant has been previously removed from the appliances, EPA said. The agency learned about the company's alleged failure to remove the refrigerants from the company's response to a September 2008 EPA information request.

EPA notes that chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants deplete the stratospheric, or "good" ozone layer, allowing dangerous amounts of cancer-causing ultraviolet rays from the sun to strike the earth. Some chlorofluorocarbons are also potent greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Production of some of these chemicals was stopped in 1995, and federal law strictly controls their use and handling.

Global Warming's Missing Link: EPA Whistleblower Exposes Agenda's Fatal Flaw (*Energy Tribune*)

Houston,TX
The Environmental Protection Agency is pushing the greatest regulatory intervention in US history, seeking to declare that carbon dioxide poses an "endangerment" under the Clean Air Act, threatening human health and the environment. To hear the EPA tell it, CO2 – which nonetheless remains indispensible to life on earth and without which plants die, more of which produces higher crop yields, etc. – will kill us all.

This proposal is a cornerstone of the Obama administration's attempt to bring the energy sector of the economy under state control just as it seeks to do with health care, essentially ruining something in order to take it over in the name of cleaning up capitalism's mess. It's an old play, which the statists have run for decades, certain that every now and then it will break for a big gain. But an inconvenient EPA career professional just doing his job assessed the premise and informed his superiors, in the sole substantive report presented in the Agency's internal deliberations, that upon scrutiny CO2 clearly does not drive temperatures or climate but oddly enough, the sun and oceans do. His boss told him to shut up, that nothing good could come to their office by injecting this analysis into the process, as the decision had been made.

One problem with that, of course, is that the decision is not allowed to be made before the process has run its course. That is the entire purpose of an internal debate which, internal documents now prove, was truncated and in fact illusory.

For his troubles, this physics graduate of Cal Tech and MIT PhD economist – which are why he had his job – was subjected to the ritual smear job as unqualified by the thugs running the global warming industry. The nicest thing said about him was "He's not a climate scientist!" shrieked by legions of non-scientists nonetheless cocksure of their own wisdom, insight and informed judgment on the matter.

Left unmentioned were the scientific credentials of the EPA administrator, President Obama, and the 535 members of Congress who are tasked with deciding the issue. "He's just an economist!" the non-scientists' line continued, ignoring that whole physics-degree thing and that, ah, well, the UN's "chief climate scientist" is "just an economist." Again, as the whistleblower Dr. Alan Carlin learned, facts have little weight in this debate. Still, one key truth that Carlin brought to the fore exposes how – assuming that sanity prevails in the Senate and Congress is unable to impose "cap-and-trade" energy rationing – his exposé will carry the day in court.

This is man-made warming theory's missing link. The global warming industry and its political enablers have been getting away with an amazing stunt of backing out from the

equation inconvenient things which your lying eyes might tell you. Amid the cries of "warming proceeding even faster than predicted" – an actual, common claim among alarmists, politicians and the media – observations reveal that the recent cooling has brought us to the average of the entire 30-year history of the satellite temperature record.

Climate changes and temperatures go up and down, that's what they do, so it is surely an amusing coincidence of statistics to see no temperature change following a three-decade-long cooling spell that ended with the coldest decade of the century (the 1970s). To see this as "global warming" hysteria hijacks the policymaking process of a major economic power is staggering.

The crux of what Carlin revealed is that the alarmist campaign has, through indignant repetition and an absurdly flawed syllogism, substituted man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a proxy for temperatures. The disfavored human activity somehow now equates with the weather, a bizarre apples-and-stethoscopes comparison.

To grasp this we need a quick history of the campaign. By the late 1980s "global cooling" had given way to warming as a vehicle for various types to rally the public around their agenda (the Club of Rome admitted this in its 1991 book "The First Global Revolution"). This global warming industry coalesced to demand fealty to a strange premise: Mankind would agree to employ the gentle ministrations of national and, preferably, supranational bureaucrats to keep the earth's temperature from rising more than two degrees Celsius higher than "pre-industrial" temperatures.

Now, "pre-industrial" is code for the most cynical statistical cherry-picking of our time, given the approximation with the end of a geophysical phenomenon known as the Little Ice Age, a miserable, cold and cloudy period of crop failure, infant mortality and disease.

This "two degree solution" didn't last long, thanks to what I can only guess was a nagging fear that the public are aware that temperatures go up and down. It soon gave way to a metric of keeping atmospheric GHG concentrations below a "dangerous" level, though the UN scientists (economists, whatever) tasked with asserting what that level is refused to do so.

This was never about climate anyway but population, lifestyle, energy use and, above all else, control, so such obstacles were ignored and the industry moved right on to a metric even more convenient for them, GHG emissions. This is the tortured path bringing about the oddity of alarmists citing emissions going up faster than predicted as proving that global warming is proceeding faster than predicted, while temperatures are flat and even cooling. To date, it's worked.

EPA's "endangerment finding" is rife with this absurd *non sequitor*: CO2 concentrations are going up, Man's CO2 is surely behind this, therefore man is causing climate change. In its "finding" the EPA, like the UN's IPCC, fail to establish the missing link, that CO2

drives climate. Instead, EPA just points to the IPCC, which in turn simply proclaims the relationship, having itself also never having cited any authority establishing (rather than assuming) that CO2 drives temperature or climate, in the past or now.

While never the subject of a US court's scrutiny, this premise for the entire enterprise will by necessity be a principal focus of any challenge to EPA. It seems highly doubtful that EPA could support such a line of, for lack of a better word, reasoning, particularly in light of Carlin's stifled analysis and recent peer-reviewed literature. This will only occur by avoiding the panic-stricken acceptance by industry holdouts of some (they hope) a less-bad deal in the Senate for fear of EPA.

Upon scrutiny, covered industry has no option for long-term survival but to pursue victory. This begins in the Senate, which still lacks the votes to pass climate legislation. Neither peace nor concern is for sale, and industry should not cut a deal. The alarmist industry has never been forced to make its case. The EPA can be forced to make it, and it is unlikely that they can.

Study indicates preference for SCR to meet EPA 10 rules (*Modern Bulk Transporter*)

Jul 20, 2009 2:52 PM
With just six months to go before the new EPA 2010 emissions standards for heavy-duty diesel engines go into effect, a national research study conducted in May 2009 by Quixote Group Research indicates that purchase consideration for SCR (selective catalytic reduction) remains significantly higher than increased EGR.
The online study was fielded among owners and operators of Class 8 heavy-duty trucks on behalf of the North American SCR Stakeholders Group and FactsAboutSCR.com. The final sample of 1,603 responses has a margin of error of ±2.4%.

More than half (51.2%) of all respondents are likely or very likely to consider SCR for their EPA 2010 engine purchase compared with 31.2% that are likely or very likely to consider increased EGR. Overall purchase consideration for the two emissions choices have remained statistically unchanged since the last survey was conducted in November 2008.

The ability of SCR to deliver increased fuel efficiency will likely have a strong influence on which emissions technology is selected for 2010 and beyond. Three-quarters (75.4%) of all respondents rated fuel efficiency as very important to the decision to purchase an EPA 2010-compliant engine, and nearly half (48.8%) of all respondents now correctly relate fuel savings of about 3% to 5% with SCR, which is up from 38.7% in November 2008.

Proven technology (production trucks and engines have been proven on-the-road) was rated as very important to the purchase decision by 70.1% of all respondents. Engine optimization and scheduled maintenance required by the 2010 technology were rated very important by 59.6% and 59.0% of all respondents, respectively. The weight added by the 2010 emissions technology had a significantly lower level of importance (44.2%) to the decisionmaking process.

Compared with November, a significantly greater percentage of respondents can accurately recall the key benefits of SCR technology, including reduced particulate matter output (47.4% now say SCR), less engine heat rejection (43.5%), and the need for fewer active regenerations (41.2%). Knowledge of what is included in the EPA 2010 regulations has also increased, with 62.5% of all respondents correctly identifying nitrogen oxide as being specifically included in the standards, which is up from 59.6% in November.

For more information, visit www.FactsAboutSCR.com or www.TruckSCR.com.

AWARDS

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Gov. Doyle announces $6.3 million for environmental clean up (*WKOWTV*)

Posted: Jul 20, 2009 8:17 PM EDT
MADISON (WKOW) -- Governor Jim Doyle announced Monday that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded $6.3 million in economic recovery funds to the State of Wisconsin to help clean up at sites contaminated by leaking underground storage tanks. The funds will also help to create local jobs, protect public health and revitalize sites contaminated by hazardous substances.
The State of Wisconsin will use recovery funds for clean up when there is no known or viable responsible party or where environmental cleanup is necessary to make the site a viable location for future business growth.
A cooperative agreement between the State of Wisconsin and EPA will be reached this month. It will include a specific spending plan for the $6.3 million.

BUDGET / STIMULUS

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'Go RED' federal stimulus funding workshops planned (*Northwest Arkansas Times*)

Posted on Tuesday, July 21, 2009
URL: http://www.nwanews.com/nwat/News/78322/

The Arkansas Recovery Office and the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality announced that the state will offer financial assistance opportunities totaling $1.5 million in a new round of funding through ADEQ's Reduce Emissions from Diesels program.

The program, known as "Go RED," is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from money received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The program helps pay for projects that reduce diesel emissions in Arkansas.

Workshops will be held in the area on July 23. At 10 a.m. a workshop will be held at the Fort Smith Public Library Community Room, 2301 Rogers Ave.; and at 2 p.m. it will be held in Springdale at the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, 1311 Clayton St.

The department has already awarded $400,000 for Go RED projects in an initial funding assistance round targeted at government and nonprofit agencies. With the new funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, private entities will also be eligible for money.

ADEQ will limit funding assistance to up to $200,000 per organization.

ADEQ's funding assistance opportunities will pay for retrofits, idling reduction technologies and engine upgrades up to 100 percent, engine replacements up to 75 percent and equipment replacement up to 25 percent. ADEQ will provide up to 50 percent funding for school bus replacements meeting 2010 emission standards.

Private entities must provide a 15-percent funding match.

ADEQ will host a series of workshops throughout the state to promote the program and provide assistance in submitting applications.

All workshops are free and open to the public.

More information about the Go RED program, as well as an application guide, can be found on the department's Web site, www.adeq. state.ar.us. Infor mation is also available at the Arkansas Recovery Office site, recovery.arkansas. gov.

The deadline to submit applications is Aug. 31. Projects must be completed by Aug. 31, 2010.

CLIMATE CHANGE / GLOBAL WARMING

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July 20, 2009

Senate Agriculture Panel Begins to Stake Its Claim in Climate Bill (*New York Times*)

By ALLISON WINTER of ClimateWire
Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee will vet options this week for the sweeping energy and climate bill, which they are expected to play a significant role in shaping.

The panel will have a hearing Wednesday to explore the role for agriculture and forestry in climate change legislation. They are scheduled to hear from two major farm groups on opposing sides of the debate and question senior Obama administration officials: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and White House Office of Science and Technology Director John Holdren.

The hearing comes as senators consider their options for a massive cap-and-trade measure expected after the August recess. Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, who is heading up the effort, says the measure the House passed last month, **H.R. 2454 (pdf)**, will serve as her basis for a bill.

Senate Agriculture Chairman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and other Senate chairmen with a stake in the bill have been brought in for their contributions.

As Senate leadership aims to advance the bill this fall, agricultural interests could form a formidable coalition. Several key fence-sitters on the bill sit on the Agriculture Committee, and farm interests have wide appeal in the Senate. Each senator has some farm interests in his or her state -- unlike the House, which has more representatives from urban and suburban areas.

Boxer plans to introduce her bill the week of Sept. 8, after lawmakers return from the monthlong recess, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has set a Sept. 28 deadline for all committees to finish their work on the measure.

Harkin has said he is not sure if he will have a separate markup on the committee's contributions to the overall bill.

Agriculture concerns

Harkin and other senators on the Agriculture Committee have said they want to ensure any effort at wide-ranging climate legislation in the Senate will include all of the

provisions that House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) brokered for the House cap-and-trade bill.

House leaders compromised with Peterson and included a raft of changes he suggested in order to win his and other key votes for the bill. The changes were a major victory for farm groups but a disappointment to many environmentalists who are concerned it could weaken efforts to cut down on emissions.

The much-publicized deal put the Agriculture Department, rather than U.S. EPA, in charge of programs that would offset emissions with conservation efforts on farms, ranches and forests. Peterson's language also allowed "early actors," farmers who have been doing such conservation practices for years, to participate in the program.

The language would allow certain farm projects that date back as far as 2001 to qualify. Critics are concerned that instead of reducing carbon, the program may just pay farmers for what they are already doing.

The offset market could be a boon to farmers and other landowners who plant extra trees to absorb carbon dioxide, install methane capture systems over animal waste lagoons or practice no-till farming to store carbon in the soil. The question for some environmental groups is whether these projects will measurably reduce carbon dioxide overall.

Members of the Senate EPW panel said at a hearing last week that they want to make sure the bill is not overly generous in its offset program.

"There is a tremendous amount of sequestering potential, but we have to have it work," said Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.). "It has to have a high level of integrity, if there is too much of a loophole it will be irrelevant and ineffective."

Peterson also included a set of provisions friendly to corn-based ethanol, another important issue for Harkin and other Midwestern senators. Peterson's language would temporarily block EPA from calculating a fuel's total worldwide carbon footprint before determining whether it qualifies as a biofuel eligible for incentives. It also bars EPA for five years from including emissions from indirect land-use changes abroad.

Economic analyses

The top Republican on the Agriculture Committee wants more information on the legislation's potential economic effects. Last week he asked agency chiefs who will be testifying at the hearing to release new economic analyses of the House cap-and-trade bill.

Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) sent letters to Jackson and the chief economist at the Agriculture Department requesting the studies. Chambliss' requests came out of frustration over the lack of statistics and economic analyses on the bill at the farm-level,

according to an aide for the second-term senator. He and other Republicans are likely to press the issue this week.

From EPA, Chambliss requested existing research the agency gained from a contract with Bruce McCarl of Texas A&M University. McCarl is a professor of agricultural economics and has specialized in climate change research, developing models that analyze global warming effects on farm economics from a variety of angles.

Chambliss requested McCarl's model, along with all data and supporting information. EPA officials said last week that his request will likely be satisfied. Dave Ryan, a spokesman for the agency, said the computer model is not EPA's property but that its custodian is open with the code and data.

"EPA is working to respond to Senator Chambliss's letter expeditiously," Ryan said.

Chambliss also requested a new study from USDA chief economist Joseph Glauber that would quantify the potential for the offset market and assess the effects that increased energy costs from the House bill could have on farmers and food costs.

USDA is already working on an analysis of some of the costs and benefits of the bill. William Hohenstein, director of USDA's global change program office, said the agency is examining how the bill will effect costs of fuel and fertilizer and its incentives for renewable energy, as well as the impacts and costs of climate change.

Schedule: The hearing is Wednesday, July 22, at 1 p.m. in 325 Russell.

Witnesses: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack; EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson; John Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology; Roger Johnson, president of National Farmers Union; Bob Stallman, president of American Farm Bureau Federation; and Jo Pierce, a family tree farmer from Maine, representing the Forest Climate Working Group.

Report Gives Sobering View Of Warming's Impact on U.S. (*Ethiopian Review*)

Posted by Desta Bishu | July 21st, 2009 at 2:57 am |

A new U.S. government report paints a disturbing picture of the current and future effects of climate change and offers a glimpse of what the nation's climate will be like by century's end.

For anyone wondering whether climate change has already hit the United States, a recent U.S. government report says it has — and in a big way.

Witness these trends: In the northeastern U.S., winter temperatures have increased by 4 degrees F since 1970; in the Pacific Northwest, the depth of the Cascade Mountain snowpack on April 1 has declined by 25 percent over the last half century, while spring runoff from the Cascades now occurs nearly a month earlier than 50 years ago; and in

Alaska, winter temperatures have increased a stunning 6.3 degrees F in the last 50 years.

Those are just some of the sobering signs of rapid warming spelled out this month in a new report by a U.S. government body that almost no one has heard of: the United States Global Change Research Program (USGCR), which by law is required to report to Congress every ten years on the causes, effects, and possible responses to climate change in the U.S.

If the changes that the U.S. already has experienced make you uneasy, then perhaps you shouldn't read the the downloadable document itself: It makes quite clear that if the U.S. and the world do little or nothing to slow greenhouse gas emissions, then the climate in the U.S. will be far hotter — and decidedly unpleasant — by the end of this century.

For those inclined to dismiss the USGCR's report, it should be noted that the group's scientific pedigree is impeccable. The study is a joint effort of the departments of Energy, Commerce, Defense, State, Interior, Transportation, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture — plus the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Science Foundation, and the Agency for International Development.

The report, which includes new material not contained in the 2007 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, brings climate change down to the level where people live. For each region of the U.S., the report describes some of the changes that have already been observed, then looks at what's likely to happen under both a low-emissions scenario (in which emissions of greenhouse gases are cut substantially) and a high-emissions scenario (where the world pretty much stays on the course it's now following).

Either way, the authors say, significant changes are coming. Substantial emissions cuts are under active debate, but they remain hypothetical so far; the highlights cited here will therefore focus on the business-as-usual scenario — not in order to be alarmist, but to stay in the realm of the concrete.

NORTHEAST

Since 1970, average temperatures in the Northeast have risen by 2 degrees F. There's more rain and less snow in the winter, with mountain snowpack correspondingly smaller. Summers are longer, winters shorter, and sea level has begun to rise.

If emissions continue on their current trajectory, these changes are likely to intensify. Cities like Boston, where 100 degree-plus days are now rare in summer, can expect about 20 of them every year. Cities like Hartford and Philadelphia could have up to 30. The hottest stretch of summer could begin three weeks earlier than it does now, and last three weeks longer in the fall. In winter, the snow season in the mountainous, northern part of the region could be only half as long; partly as a result, droughts lasting

from one to three months are likely to occur as often as once a summer in those same areas.

These changes could have a significant impact on regional economies. Dairy farming, for example, is worth $3.6 billion, but the report says heat stress on cows is projected to cut milk production by up to 20 percent by century's end. Areas of the Northeast that now produce apples, blueberries, and cranberries may become inhospitable, and sugar maple habitat may shift so far northward that maple syrup could largely become an imported delicacy. Winter recreation including skiing and snowmobiling, which bring in $7.6 billion annually, could suffer dramatically.

Because the Northeast has an extensive seacoast (New York State alone, observes the report, has more than $2.3 trillion in insured coastal property), the sea-level rise associated with climate change poses a major risk: the kind of coastal flood that inundates New York City once a century, for example, will happen ten times as often.

SOUTHEAST

Like many regions, the Southeast will experience both more intense downpours — in large part because of more water evaporating from warmer oceans — and longer periods of drought. Already in the Southeast, average autumn precipitation is up 30 percent since 1901, while areas experiencing moderate to severe spring and summer drought have expanded 12 to 14 percent since the mid-1970s.

Without major cutbacks in greenhouse-gas emissions, add about 10 degrees to the average summer day in Atlanta or Birmingham and you'll have a pretty good idea what's in store by 2100. In the 1960s and 1970s, north Florida experienced about 60 days a year with temperatures above 90 degrees; by the end of this century, that number could be 165 days, and in the southern part of the state, it could be more than 180 days.

The Southeast is especially prone to hurricanes, which are expected to get more powerful (but not necessarily more frequent) by century's end. By itself, that would inevitably cause more destruction, but the threat will be made worse by rising sea levels.

MIDWEST AND GREAT PLAINS

In the Midwest — a region far from the moderating influence of oceans — heat waves have been more frequent in recent decades. Heavy downpours now come twice as often as they did a century ago. If emissions aren't curbed, heat waves like the one that struck in 1995 — during which temperatures nearly reached 100 degrees and 700 people died — are likely to occur about three times a year. One possible silver lining: The region's frigid winters will moderate.

Warmer summers — and shorter winters with less ice cover — will also

Imagine that by 2100 the state of Illinois will have a climate similar to the Texas Gulf Coast.

cause more evaporation from the Great Lakes. As a result, average lake levels could drop by up to two feet by 2100, disturbing both natural shoreline ecosystems and the lakeshores' industrial and tourist infrastructure. Shallower Great Lakes will also force ships to carry lighter cargoes — which means shipping costs will go up.

In the crucially important agricultural sector, a longer growing season will be a good thing, but the combination of heat waves and floods, plus potential invasions by heat-loving insects and weeds, could erase any such benefits. These pests would threaten not just crops, but livestock and forests as well. To think about the change in climate conditions, imagine that by 2100 the state of Illinois will have a climate similar to the Texas Gulf Coast.

While rainfall is likely to increase in parts of North Dakota and Montana, it will probably decrease in already-dry West Texas, Oklahoma, and eastern Colorado. The region's population is currently using underground aquifers for irrigation and drinking water at an unsustainable rate. Stresses on water supply, along with higher temperatures in summer, will have a detrimental impact on cattle ranching and on crops such as wheat, corn, hay, barley, and cotton.

SOUTHWEST

In the past 30 years alone, temperatures in the Southwest — already the hottest part of the U.S. — have averaged 1.5 degrees F higher than the 1960 to 1979 baseline. And thanks to southern California and cities like Phoenix, the region has a large and growing population, which places increasing demands on the region's water resources

. Meanwhile, California's Central Valley, whose climate is very dry, uses massive irrigation to create one of the most productive areas of cropland in the nation.

So far, the region's population growth has come during a relatively wet period; but that is already changing, with reduced snowpack in the mountains and significant die-offs in pinon pine populations in the Four Corners area. Periodic droughts are nothing new here, but the current one is being made worse as higher temperatures force already-scarce water to evaporate from the ground more quickly.

Taken together, these factors make water a very scarce and precious resource, one that will come under increasing pressure as springtime precipitation is projected to decrease, while average temperatures are likely to shoot up by 7 to 10 degrees F. Longer, more severe droughts are pretty much inevitable under any emissions scenario, and under the high-emissions scenario they could be devastating. Scarce water resources would presumably go to people first, leaving California's economically vital agricultural economy difficult to sustain. The inevitable drawdown of giant reservoirs such as Lake Mead will also reduce the reliability of hydroelectric power.

NORTHWEST

The temperature rise in the Northwest has been smaller overall than in other parts of the nation — roughly 1.5 degrees F over the last century. The effects are clear

nevertheless, particularly in the decline of spring snowpack, which means less water flowing into surrounding aquifers and irrigation systems in summer. The drop in snowpack and runoff could also mean a reduction in hydroelectric power, which provides 70 percent of the region's electricity needs. And as more winter precipitation falls as rain and snowmelt begins and ends earlier, streams will run faster in spring, damaging spawning areas salmon depend on, and then run warmer in summer, threatening the fish themselves, which die when the water temperature is too high.

Pest infestations due to warmer winters are already having a devastating effect on western pine forests, where pine beetles have destroyed 2.5 million acres of Rocky Mountain woodlands. Such infestations will likely become more widespread, creating tinder for forest fires that will intensify during warmer, drier summers.

by Michael d. Lemonick

ENERGY

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PSO Recognized for Leadership (*Greater Tulsa Reporter Newspapers*)

07-20-2009
Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO), a subsidiary of American Electric Power, is announces that it has been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with a 2009 Energy Star Leadership In Housing Award. This award recognizes PSO's efforts to promote energy-efficient construction and environmental protection by sponsoring an Energy Star for New Homes program in its service area. PSO received the award at a June 25 Energy Star workshop, which was held at the PSO headquarters building in downtown Tulsa.

To earn the Energy Star, a home must meet strict guidelines for energy efficiency set by EPA. These homes are at least 15 percent more energy efficient than homes built to local code, and include additional energy-saving features that typically make them 20-30 percent more efficient than standard homes.

"PSO is committed to helping our customers save energy," says Kathy Champion, PSO manager of consumer programs. "Through our partnership with Energy Star and participating builders, our customers can be confident that the Energy Star certified homes they buy will not only save energy, but also help them manage their energy costs, and help protect our environment."

Energy Star qualified homes offer homebuyers all the features they want in a new home, plus energy-saving features like effective insulation systems, high performance

windows, tight construction and ducts, properly-sized and installed efficient heating and cooling equipment, efficient products and third-party verification.

"EPA is privileged to work with a diverse group of utilities, state programs, and home builder associations who effectively support Energy Star Qualified Homes," says Sam Rashkin, National Director of Energy Star for Homes. "Thanks to the leadership of these sponsors, home buyers across the country have greater access to Energy Star Qualified Homes that cost less to own while improving comfort, indoor air quality, durability, and our environment."

July 20, 2009

Rep. Lee: Clean Energy Act would raise taxes on gas, heating oil (*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*)

Jill Terreri
Staff writer
Legislation recently passed by the House of Representatives aimed at slowing climate change will raise taxes on gas and home heating oil, Rep. Chris Lee said today during a visit to Greece.
The Republican from Erie County said putting pressure on the Senate, which has not yet passed the bill, is the only hope of avoiding cost increases for consumers.

The Environmental Protection Agency, however, said in its analysis of the bill that households will experience a "modest" impact if the revenues from the program are returned to taxpayers.

From Monroe County's delegation, Lee and Rep. Eric Massa voted against the bill. Reps. Louise Slaughter and Dan Maffei voted to support it.

The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, or cap and trade, as it is known, would put limits on polluters, and Lee said slowing climate change is a worthy goal. However, consumers, farmers and manufacturers would be affected, which he said could lead to job loss.

Gas is expected to cost as much as 77 cents more per gallon under the bill, Lee said, citing figures from the Congressional Budget Office.

JTERRERI@DemocratandChronicle.com

FUEL

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Biodiesel gains ground in overcoming obstacles (*Examiner*)

July 20, 7:49 PM · Michelle Smith - Sacramento Green Living Examiner
From being featured on Dirty Jobs, to being a facet in major political campaigns, biodiesel has earned a lot of interest recently--especially in light of the past few years' tire-screeching hike in fuel prices. For many living green, this buzz word isn't anything new, but for most, what it is remains simply an accepted mystery.

In the transportation industry, having alternative fuels not only creates a competitive environment, but heightens awareness about new technologies designed to help clean the air we breathe by significantly reducing emissions. It also lessens our dependency on foreign oil. There are different applications for biodiesel. Private, home-brewed blends with waste oils such as used French fry grease. Then there is commercial use which is a blend of B5 (five percent biodiesel with 95 percents diesel) and up.

Biodiesel in its pure form is B100 and according to the California Air Resources Board, can reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions up to 80%. Most diesel engines can run on biodiesel without needing special equipment. The process of making biodiesel is called esterification. Vehicles that use raw vegetable oil or recycled greases that have not been refined into esters are not considered biodiesel and not registered by the EPA and would need to be certified.

Over the past ten years biodiesel has enjoyed the public support both in the United States and in Europe. In 2004, 25 million gallons of B100 were sold, and by 2005 the numbers tripled. In the United States today, well over 600 fleets use biodiesel. In California, there are roughly 70 service stations for various blends of biodiesel available for consumption including a few in the Sacramento and Elk Grove area. However, due to a recent technicality, a number of these stations in California were forced to close.

Biodiesel is stored much like every other fuel, in above and underground tanks. This has been deemed acceptable by the standards of governing agencies and biodiesel material was considered compatible with that of diesel fuel storage.

Until January of 2008.

Misinformation in a presentation by Robert Hodum, a Water Board staff member, to a unified program of CalEPA regulations community (CUPAs) raised concerns about the storage of biodiesel and the safety of its material. This resulted in the closure of B100 and B99 diesel services. The misinformation in Mr. Hodum's non-referenced presentation focused on the chemical compatibility of home brewed biodiesel rather than the commercial blend which follows a manufacture-consistent, formulated quality controlled process rather than the unique forms by those individuals making it in their garage for private use. It is a lot like comparing moonshine to the regulated beverage

alcohol industry. The Water Board's response was with the intention of working with the industry to provide guidance on how to deal with biodiesel and emergency regulations.

In a post-MTSB world, the new regulations for fuel storage didn't incorporate a regulated environment for new non-petroleum based fuels, therefore placing the commercial biodiesel industry into a unique situation. Ordinarily, any material blended with petroleum must be considered hazardous material. According to Eric Bowen, CEO and President of Tellurian Biodiesel, Inc., and Chairman of the California Biodiesel Alliance, to have the stations in use again with the storage tanks currently in place requires third party approval—in this case, United Laboratories (UL) of which, certification is a lengthy process. The unique situation is the technicality that there is no legal way to store biodiesel until United Laboratories certifies.

In mid 2008, the California Biodiesel Alliance put forth a bill (SB1574) that would create a grace period for biodiesel operations to stay open until this certification would prove the commercial biodiesel material was compatible with today's fuel storage regulations. The bill passed with Governor Schwarzenegger's support. However, California Biodiesel Alliance (CBA) discovered potentially harmful ambiguity in the bill amendments that could later lead to freezing the industry. Rather than fighting that battle, they quickly asked the governor to veto the bill in order to start over. Governor Schwarzenegger stated in his message dated September 30, 2008, that: "We need to be prepared to handle this situation in a manner that neither impedes the deployment of alternative fuels, nor sacrifices our other environmental goals, such as improved water quality." Governor Schwarzenegger further wrote in his veto, "…that each entity…establish biodiesel and underground storage tank compatibility standards that can be consistently applied throughout the state."

Currently, the biodiesel industry is waiting for UL's completed results and the certification to re-open the B99 and B100 stations. The good news is there has been a solution for blends selling B20 and lower. The negative impact has been felt for fleets using biodiesel blends higher than B20. According to CBA's website, as of May 2009 the California State Water Resource Control Board voted to adopt emergency regulations governing the underground storage tanks (UST) for biodiesel given the stations with USTs can supply for materials compatibility and leak detection devices with their local CUPA to resume operation.

The progress is being made—slowly but surely—to get the commercial biodiesel stations back up and running at full capacity. Whether a supporter of biodiesel or not, understanding the importance of welcoming alternative fuels and resources will lead to the sustainability and change to our current dependency on foreign oil. This opens the door for green jobs, green resource studies, and the research needed develop the technology in the transportation industry to assist with emissions control.

For more information, visit California Biodiesel Alliance.

AllSAFE Comments on E-15 Fuel Waiver Application (*EP Magazine*)

Jul 21, 2009
Bifurcating the fuel supply would confuse consumers, according to the Alliance for a Safe Alternative Fuels Environment.
"E-15 has not been sufficiently tested and poses a hazard that could potentially bring physical endangerment to consumers," said Kris Kiser, a spokesman for the Alliance for a Safe Alternative Fuels Environment (AllSAFE), which speaks for some manufacturers on fuel-related legislation.

The group announced on July 16 that it submitted comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about Growth Energy's fuel waiver application for E-15.

Growth Energy and 54 ethanol producers have asked EPA to approve the use of ethanol blended with gasoline up to 15 percent. The organization says that increasing the blend of ethanol by 5 five percent will help boost the economy by creating jobs, increasing energy independence, enhancing car performance, and greening the environment.

AllSAFE's comments also expressed concern over EPA's expansion of the waiver request to include "bifurcating" the fuel supply — allowing two fuels (E-10 and E-15) in the marketplace at one time via the 211(f)(4) fuel waiver process.

Kiser added that, "With the additional concern of a 'bifurcated' fuel supply, EPA has not evaluated all the complex issues, such as misfueling, which again, leads to permanent damage of non-road equipment and older vehicles and poses a risk of personal harm to the consumer. These concerns deserve a full evaluation through the proper section of the federal Clean Air Act and should not be insufficiently addressed through a fuel waiver request."

In EPA's response to Growth Energy's waiver application, the agency requested comments on a potential "partial fuel waiver" that would in concept only apply to certain newer on-road vehicles. The "partial waiver" concept would be based on somehow bifurcating the national production, distribution, blending, and marketing of separate E-10 fuels (for non-road products and older automobiles) and then offering E-15 fuels for newer automobiles only.

In practice, consumers would now be faced with two fuel pumps at any given station—one with E-10 and one with E-15. "AllSAFE has strongly cautioned the EPA against such a measure since consumers could be confused and possibly use the wrong fuel, especially if they see that E-15 is cheaper and choose that blend rate to save money," said Kiser.

In its comments, AllSAFE pointed out that EPA's attempt to offer leaded and unleaded fuels via two separate pumps was not completely successful. Even with education and physical barriers against misfueling at the fuel pump and on the automobile, misfueling still occurred with 13.5 percent of vehicles needing unleaded gasoline (based on EPA's own misfueling study).

AllSAFE's comments also point out that from a legal and public policy standpoint, the EPA cannot approve any "partial" mid-level ethanol fuel waiver until EPA has completed a separate rulemaking process under section 211(c) to prevent misfueling.

AllSAFE is made up of national consumer, manufacturing, and gasoline retailer associations that consume gasoline and ethanol fuel blends. It speaks for manufacturers on fuel-related legislation representing 400 million products that over 250 million Americans own and operate, including recreational boats and marine engines, chainsaws, lawnmowers, motor vehicles, motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, generators, and related vehicles and equipment.

PESTICIDES

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Dow halts pesticide use on Tampa golf course (*Tampa Tribune*)

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE | The Tampa Tribune
A chemical company has halted plans to use a controversial worm-killing pesticide on a city-owned golf course, citing fierce opposition from neighborhood residents.

Dow Chemical Co. planned to begin injecting the pesticide Curfew into the ground at the Babe Zaharias Golf Course on Wednesday morning under the auspices of the Tampa Sports Authority, but in a last-minute decision has canceled the yearly treatment.

"Dow Agro Sciences will not place the applicator, itself, or the product in a volatile situation that could result in unfounded allegations, the unnecessary expenditure of regulatory resources or potential litigation," the company said in a statement.

Curfew is applied to fairways and tee boxes on the course to kill worms that feed on grass, but residents have for years complained that it drifts onto their properties and makes them nauseous and light-headed. The sports authority has used Curfew since 2001.

Dow said it would continue using Curfew on other golf courses to control nematodes.

Sports authority officials said the pesticide is approved by the Florida Department of Agriculture and that warning signs go up around the golf course when it's sprayed.

Certified workers inject it into the soil, and after treatments post warnings at golf cart path entrances. Environmental regulations prohibit use of Curfew within 30 feet of houses.

The active ingredient in Curfew, a soil fumigant, is 1,3-dichloropropene. The warning label states its vapors can cause kidney, lung and liver damage, and death if inhaled.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies it as a possible carcinogen.

Opposition to the pesticide use was led by Debra McCormack, vice president of the Forest Hills Neighborhood Association, which represents about 1,000 households.

Golf course pesticide pulled over complaints (*Tampa Tribune*)

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE
cwade@tampatrib.com
Debra McCormack didn't want her neighborhood to be used as a laboratory.

When she learned that a pesticide made by Dow Chemical Co. was going to be used to kill turf-eating worms at the Babe Zaharias Golf Course next to her home, she decided to fight.

Nevermind that the pesticide, Curfew, was sanctioned by state and federal regulators and that previous attempts to get city and county officials to ban its use had failed. Or that most Forest Hills residents didn't seem to want to get involved.

McCormack and other activists were undeterred. They bombarded the Tampa Sports Authority, which manages the city-owned golf course, with phone calls and e-mail, and filed complaints with federal, state and local government agencies.

"Since when is green grass more important than protecting the health of people?" said McCormack, vice president of the Forest Hills Neighborhood Association.

Last week, in an unexpected move, Dow canceled its plans to use the pesticide, citing opposition from neighborhood activists.

In a written statement, the company defended Curfew, which is used on golf courses throughout the country.

"Dow Agro Sciences will not place the applicator, itself, or the product in a volatile situation that could result in unfounded allegations, the unnecessary expenditure of regulatory resources or potential litigation," Dow spokesman Tim Maniscalo said.

Dow said it would continue using Curfew on other city-owned golf courses. The TSA has used Curfew since 2001.

The active ingredient in Curfew, a soil fumigant, is 1,3-dichloropropene. The warning label states its vapors can cause kidney, lung and liver damage, and death if inhaled. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies it as a possible carcinogen.

Sports authority officials said the pesticide is approved by the Florida Department of

Agriculture and that warning signs go up around the golf course when it's sprayed.

"We have been told by both state and federal regulators that there are no alternatives that are safer than Curfew," said Barbara Casey, a spokeswoman for the TSA.

West Nile Virus Mosquitoes Detected In Four Memphis Zip Codes (*Eyewitness News Memphis*)

Reported by: Caroline Cody
Email: ccody@myeyewitnessnews.com
Last Update: 7/20 9:40 pm
MEMPHIS, TN-- The Memphis and Shelby County Health Department has received confirmation of mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus within the 38107, 38053, 38104 and 38118 zip code areas.

Since April, the Health Department has treated (applied larvicides) to bodies of water in these zip codes. These actions are consistent with the Health Department's efforts to be proactive in decreasing the adult mosquito population. Larviciding is the practice of applying an Environmental Protection Agency registered insecticide to areas where mosquito breeding has been confirmed.

As an additional precaution, the Health Department will also conduct truck-mounted spraying (adulticiding) of EPA-registered insecticides in portions of the 38104 zip code on Tuesday evening from 8:30-11:30 p.m. Crews will also spray, weather permitting, in portions of the following zip codes: 38103, 38105, 38106, 38109, 38114, 38116 and 38126. Adulticiding will also take place in portions of the 38104 zip code on Wednesday evening from 8:30-11:30 p.m. Crews will also spray, weather permitting, in portions of the following zip codes: 38103, 38105, 38107, 38108, 38112 and 38127. Adulticiding will also take place on Thursday evening, weather permitting, from 8:30-11:30 p.m. in the following zip codes: 38108, 38127, and 38128 zip codes. Adulticiding will also take place in portions of the 38053 zip code on Monday evening from 8:30-11:30 p.m. Crews will also spray, weather permitting, in portions of the following zip codes: 38127, 38128, and 38135. Citizens who do not want their residences to be sprayed should contact the Health Department's Vector Control unit at 901.324.5547.

Citizens are also encouraged to be vigilant as it relates to controlling mosquito populations. For example, citizens should:

Wear DEET-containing mosquito repellants according to label directions. This is also recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

Eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Citizens are asked to check their property for objects that collect rainwater and either drain or dispose of the water.

Install or repair window and door screens.

Empty, clean and refill birdbaths and small wading pools weekly.

Repair failed septic systems.

Repair leaky outside faucets.

Clean rain gutters and downspouts.

Evidence of West Nile virus – a viral disease of wild birds spread by infected mosquitoes – has been ongoing in Shelby County since 2001. Most human cases of West Nile in Shelby County have been identified in August and September. Outbreaks usually decline in October. Dogs and cats appear to not be susceptible to West Nile virus.

Road Could Chase Off Eagle Pair, D.C., Park Service Officials Say (*Washington Post*)

July 21, 2009 Tuesday
Suburban Edition
METRO; Pg. B01
Maryland
BYLINE: David A. Fahrenthold; Washington Post Staff Writer
The Department of Homeland Security -- an agency with a bald eagle on its seal -- might drive away a pair of bald eagles by building a road near their nest in Southeast Washington, officials with the city and the National Park Service say.

The eagles live in a thickly wooded sliver of national parkland in Anacostia, where towering trees overlook their hunting grounds on the Potomac River. When they settled there in 2000, the pair were the first bald eagles to nest in the District in a half-century.

Now, DHS wants to cut an access road through that parkland, officially known as Shepherd Parkway. The road would connect the department's new headquarters, on the grounds of the former St. Elizabeths Hospital, with a traffic interchange at Malcolm X Avenue SE and Interstate 295.

The road is not scheduled to be built until 2014. A spokesman for the department said it had been designed in consultation with eagle experts at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and would not disturb the birds.

But two officials who oversee wildlife in the city say they are still concerned about the eagles -- fearing that, for birds surrounded by traffic, busy neighborhoods and airplanes,

the road might be the last straw.

"The assumption is that there's already so much going on that a little more won't hurt. And I don't think that we can make that assumption," said Bryan King, head of fisheries and wildlife for the D.C. Department of the Environment. "It's a definite possibility" that the eagles will abandon the nest, King said.

Bald eagles vanished from the Washington area and many other places in the 20th century because of hunting, development and the eggshell-thinning effects of the **pesticide** DDT. The birds rebounded under the protection of the Endangered Species Act. There were 417 nesting pairs in the lower 48 in 1963; now there are more than 1,000 in the Chesapeake Bay region alone.

That includes at least three pairs in the heart of metro Washington, all along the Potomac. One pair -- initially George and Martha, then George and the Other Woman -- lives near the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Another, which neighbors named John and Abigail after the second president and his wife, lives along the George Washington Parkway in north Arlington.

But the Southeast Washington eagles were the originals.

They might have been among 16 transplanted young eagles released in the city by a local nonprofit organization, the Earth Conservation Corps, in the early and mid-1990s. City and federal officials said the eagles were the only pair nesting in the city, but a Corps official said there is another near the D.C. police academy in far Southwest Washington.

The nest of the Southeast eagles overlooks military installations along the Potomac and the rushing traffic on South Capitol Street and Interstate 295. But the spot offers good access to fishing in Oxon Cove and at the outfall of the Blue Plains sewage plant, and is protected by thick woods and a ravine.

"You get the sense, yeah, these guys know what they're doing," said Stephen Syphax, chief of the resource management division at National Capital Parks East, a group of parks on the city's east side. On one recent morning, he was in a muggy, overgrown ravine, peering with binoculars through the tree canopy, looking for the nest. Finally, Syphax gave up: it was too well hidden to be seen from the ground. "I've lost this guy. But good for the eagles."

Syphax said the planned road would not require removal of the tree with the nest. But, he said, it could take away other trees that the birds use when they are eating, looking for food or loafing. That could drive them out, he said.

"That loss of habitat, will that destroy the eagle? I don't know," he said. "But it's loss of habitat . . . it limits the areas they can perch in."

A DHS spokesman said the road was purposefully laid out a few hundred yards from the birds' nest. The plan for the road was approved this year, after an environmental impact statement determined that there would be a "negligible increase in noise" around the nest.

Craig Koppie, a Fish and Wildlife scientist who is a preeminent authority on Washington area eagles, said he agreed. Eagles might roam widely from their nests, but they return each December to begin the breeding season. They normally use the same nest for seven or eight years before building another nearby.

"I actually don't see [the road] as being a problem," Koppie said. "Clearly, the birds have seen the human infrastructure that's in place," he said, and they don't mind it enough to leave.

SUPERFUND

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Monday, July 20, 2009
Story last updated at 7/20/2009 - 10:18 am

EPA targets contaminated Alaska mines (*Juneau Empire*)

Salt Chuck edges toward Superfund status; company to pay to clean up radioactive Bokan

By Kate Golden | JUNEAU EMPIRE
An old mine on Prince of Wales Island will become Alaska's newest Superfund site, if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has its way.
The Salt Chuck mine is one of two big contaminated mine sites on Southeast Alaska's Prince of Wales Island that state and federal agencies have known about for years but are just now starting to make progress.
Salt Chuck miners dumped much of their tailings, or ground-up waste rock, right into the intertidal zone. Now people go clamming, crabbing, camping and hiking there. The clams and mussels have been found with unhealthy amounts of arsenic, vanadium and copper. In areas with especially high metal levels, there aren't many clams or mussels, according to a Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation database of contaminated sites.
This month, the U.S. Forest Service received $1.4 million from the stimulus package to clean up Salt Chuck.

And it got a little closer to Superfund status, as Gov. Sarah Palin's administration on Friday said it wouldn't object to listing it or Red Devil, an Interior mine, on the National Priorities List of contaminated sites.
The other site getting some attention this year is Bokan Mountain, 38 miles southwest of Ketchikan. The site of Alaska's only producing uranium mine, the Ross Adams open-pit and underground mine operated from 1957 to 1971. Recently a Canada company, Ucore Uranium Inc., has been drilling there to look for rare elements that are useful in modern technologies such as nuclear control rods, fuel cells, magnets and lasers.
At the same time, the Forest Service has posted signs in the area that warn passers-by that it's dangerously radioactive.
This year, more than three decades after it was last mined and 12 years since agencies identified it as an official problem, the Forest Service nailed down Newmont Exploration Ltd. as responsible for cleaning it up.
Agencies know the two sites are hazards. What they don't know is the full extent of the contamination. It's too early in the process at both sites for officials to know what the cleanups will entail or how much they will cost, though it's fair to assume costs will reach millions of dollars.
Don't eat the clams
Long before statehood, the Salt Chuck mine opened in 1906, when two deer hunters discovered a bluish-purple copper ore four miles from Thorne Bay. Over the years, it was mined for copper, gold, palladium and platinum. At one point, the Salt Chuck mine was the nation's largest supplier of palladium, according to a Forest Service field study. The major mining was finished by 1941, though prospecting and logging in the area continued. But by the mid-1970s, the mill building and ore bunkers had collapsed and rotted.
The federal government owns the upland site - it's Tongass National Forest land - but the state owns the intertidal zone full of contaminated tailings.
EPA needed Palin's concurrence to proceed with its Superfund listing process.
It wasn't certain what she would do until Friday, when DEC Commissioner Larry Hartig wrote the EPA.
Alaska says it's not responsible for the Salt Chuck cleanup because it inherited the mess at statehood.
And the miners or companies that made the mess are "dead or long gone," said Michael Wilcox, who is coordinating the cleanup for the Forest Service.
Alaska has eight sites on the National Priority List now.
Ken Marcy of the Seattle EPA office that proposed adding Salt Chuck explained the listing:
"You're on a list with the worst cleanup sites in the country. So if funding is there, it's going to get it. There's no guarantee, but it's about the best situation you could hope for the cleanup."
However, the cleanup also becomes long and complex, requiring lots of study of the dangers before tackling how best to fix them.
That's a good thing, according to DEC contaminated sites manager Anne Marie Palmieri, considering what's unknown. For instance, they know the mussels have metals in them. But are those toxic metals getting into other animals higher on the food

chain, or other subsistence resources such as shrimp and geoducks? Is the arsenic inorganic or organic, as the toxicity differs for each? Which areas exactly are affected?
"There are a lot of questions," Palmieri said.
"We wouldn't be trying to propose this site to the NPL if we thought it could be handled by a removal," Marcy said, "removal" being a term for a simpler federal process.
Superfund listing isn't assured. The Forest Service's $1.4 million in stimulus money won't come close to cleaning up the whole thing, but it will help deal with some of the immediate safety hazards, such as the dilapidated old mill.
The mountain is hot
It's probably not a good idea to picnic at Bokan Mountain, where the Forest Service signs warn people not to camp, not to drink the water, and not to spend more than two hours a year there.
Michael Wilcox at the Forest Service, who is working on cleaning it up, called the signs "ludicrous" and said he's re-evaluating what to put on them.
"Anything less than five days is ridiculously conservative," he said.
Environmental consultants at this site will wear Level D low-level protective garb, basically coveralls and gloves, plus wristbands that measure the dose of radiation they're absorbing. (Level A is similar to wearing scuba gear on land.)
This doesn't mean Bokan is safe.
The area has 184,000 tons of waste rock with higher-than-normal levels of arsenic and lead. Discovery of the gamma radiation in 1955 is what prompted the mining there in the first place.
Radiation is inescapable on Earth and, at low levels, not a worry. But at high levels, cumulatively, it causes cancer. The radiation at Bokan is between two and 100 times greater than background levels. The shafts have carcinogenic radon gas at 50 to 125 times the upper limit of safe indoor exposure levels. The surface water is contaminated and heads into Kendrick Bay, a spawning delta for all four salmon species.
EPA tracks Bokan as a low-priority Superfund site, but isn't considering it for the National Priorities List like Salt Chuck.
This is because there is an obvious source of cash for the cleanup. Newmont has cooperated since the agency told the company it was legally responsible in March this year, according to Wilcox. Environmental contractor Tetra Tech has begun sampling the area and will return during the extra-low tides this month.
• Contact reporter Kate Golden at kate.golden@juneauempire.com.

C&D Recycling to lose status as Superfund site (*Hazleton Standard-Speaker*)

By KELLY MONITZ (Staff Writer)
Published: July 20, 2009
The former C&D Recycling in Foster Township won't be a federal Superfund site much longer.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency recently started the final close-out report on the 46-acre hazardous material site just off Route 940 between Freeland and White Haven, said Joseph McDowell, the project manager for the site.

The report "documents and certifies" that the site has been cleaned up, he said. The next step will be to propose deleting the site from the National Priorities List, the list of the most hazardous sites in the country, McDowell said.

C&D on Brickyard Road recycled copper from plastic- and lead-encased telephone cables on the Pond Creek site from the 1960s through 1984. Tests conducted since its closing found elevated levels of copper and lead both on- and off-site.

Back in 1985, the state Department of Environmental Resources (now Department of Environmental Protection) oversaw the removal of nearly 70 tons of lead-contaminated material, when the site was discovered and proposed to the Superfund list.

Two years later, C&D was added to the National Priorities List.

Nassau Metals, a subsidiary of American Telephone and Telegraph, agreed to pay for most of the cleanup, because it delivered cables to the site. Four companies contributed to the the site cleanup, and 10 companies were named as potentially responsible parties.

The EPA finished its investigation and proposed a remediation plan in 1992, five years later. Both the EPA and AT&T favored on-site disposal of remaining contaminated material, but residents pushed for off-site disposal.

The agency later changed its position and also opted for off-site disposal of stabilized soil, ash, and sediment in a landfill in its Record of Decision in September 1992, and upheld that decision despite challenges from AT&T.

The agency ordered AT&T Nassau Metals to begin the cleanup in August 1994, and two years later, the company began work. The old furnace was taken down and removed, and additional debris taken from the site.

Excavation, stabilization and removal of contaminated soil began in 1998. Ninety-thousand tons of soil was disposed of off-site.

Underground water was sampled and tested for contamination in 1999 and 2000, and they met safe drinking water standards. Sediment samples were taken from the pond and Mill Hopper Creek, and both were safe for aquatic life.

Cleanup activities ended in 2005, McDowell said, although additional work to prevent downstream washout on Mill Hopper Creek occurred in late 2006.

The main building remained, McDowell said, although parts were taken down.

"We sampled the entire building and most of the building did not have to be cleaned up," he said.

A wall was taken down to remove some contamination beneath the building, but when the work was done, the wall was restored, McDowell said.

The property went up for tax sale and changed hands in 2006, said a representative from the conservancy that purchased the tract.

Remaining buildings, except a brick barn, were torn down in January 2008 and an eight-foot fence still rings the property. No development is planned, the conservancy representative said, keeping the site in its natural state.

McDowell knew about the new property owner and the conservancy's plans to keep the site as a wildlife preserve. He intends to return to the site one last time for closure after more than two decades of agency involvement.

Residents living near the site will also get closure as the EPA readies to delete the site from the National Priorities List. Many community activists, leaders and even their attorney did not live to see C&D taken off the Superfund list.

Others from the community did not want to talk about the end of their decades-long struggle and chose to put the past behind them.

Debbie Oberst, whose lives adjacent to the C&D site and is a member of the Concerned Citizens of Foster Township, was among those who want to look forward.

"We did the very best we could," she said. "You're always looking for a better remediation."

The citizens' group worked relentlessly on getting the contamination removed, flooding public meetings, enlisting the help and support of elected officials and securing advisors to help them understand the technical document.

An EPA technical assistance grant helped them pay for those advisors, but their hard-fought efforts still cost them time and money, she said.

"We pushed for a cleanup to a lower level of lead on-site," Oberst said. "We got the contamination removed. Other sites weren't cleaned to this level."

She advises others, like herself living near a Superfund or other hazardous site, to stay organized, keep the issues in the news and get their congressmen on board.

Despite all the work, Oberst believes the group also had timing and luck on their side, as the Superfund program has been weakened since Concerned Citizens formed so many years ago, she said.

The EPA's involvement ends once the closeout report is completed and the site deleted from the National Priorities List, because of the level of cleanup on site, McDowell said.

All of the contamination was removed from the site, he said. Had the materials remained on-site, as AT&T proposed, the agency would have had to come back and monitor the site to ensure there were no release or potential releases, McDowell said.

The EPA expects to complete its final report this year, and notices will go out when the agency proposes the site's deletion.

kmonitz@standardspeaker.com

TOXICS

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State issues new mercury warning in Escambia County, Ala., and upgrades fish consumption advisories on Fish and Escatawpa rivers (*Press Register*)

Posted by katurner July 21, 2009 06:25AM
Just one new mercury consumption advisory was issued for local waters after the latest round of fish testing by state officials, and existing warnings for both the Fish and Escatawpa rivers were strengthened.

Anglers were warned to eat just one meal of bass per month from Burnt Corn Creek in Escambia County.

The upgraded river advisories suggest people eat bass no more than once every two months. In each case, the one meal allowed is just 6 ounces of fish per serving.

All previously issued warnings for area waters remain in effect, primarily directed toward either largemouth or spotted bass.

In years past, advisories have also been issued for Big Escambia Creek, Little Escambia Creek, Bilbo Creek, Blackwater River, Bon Secour River, Chickasaw Creek, Mobile River, Cowpen Creek, Escatawpa River, Fish River, Fowl River, Perdido River, Polecat Creek, Styx River and Tensaw River.

Scientists say bass in other nearby streams are also likely high in mercury due to southern Alabama's unique water chemistry.

Called blackwater streams -- sandy bottom creeks and rivers with clear water stained the color of tea -- local rivers are especially efficient at converting mercury pollution from

coal-burning power plants and other industrial sources into a form that can be absorbed by living creatures.

Repeated testing has shown that bass in south Alabama routinely test much higher than inshore saltwater fish, such as speckled trout, redfish, flounder, croaker, white trout, sheepshead and mullet.

There has long been concern about fish consumption and mercury. Recent studies suggest mercury has significant effects on the cardiovascular system, and can cause problems with blood pressure and neurological functions.

Despite those concerns, state toxicologist Neil Sass -- who issues the state advisories -- believes people should feel comfortable eating the fish they catch.

"My bottom line is still I want people to eat fish. It's good food. The risks from mercury and PCBs are far outweighed by the benefits," Sass said. "But heed the state warnings. Be judicious about what you eat." Sass said it was important to eat a variety of fish from a variety of sources, rather than eating just one species caught in the same place. He also said that smaller, younger fish tend to have lower mercury levels and encouraged anglers to eat them instead of the largest fish they catch. Sass said young children and pregnant or nursing women are especially vulnerable to mercury.

A number of new advisories were issued in the north part of the state in Barbour, Covington, Greene, Russell and Shelby counties.

This is the third year that state officials have used the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's graduated system of issuing consumption advisories. That system is designed to set a consumption limit for an area based on the mercury levels seen in the fish. Higher mercury levels in fish mean fewer meals per month.

Under the old system, no consumption advisory was issued for a lake or stream unless a fish caught there tested higher than 1 part per million for mercury in its flesh. Now, regulators urge people to limit consumption of fish containing about half that amount of mercury.

"We knew we'd have more advisories under the EPA system because the threshold is lower," Sass said. "It doesn't mean we suddenly have more mercury pollution everywhere."

Posted on Tue, Jul. 21, 2009

Keeping skeeters at bay (*Miami Herald)*

By JODI MAILANDER FARRELL
Special to The Miami Herald
It's skeeter season. Willing to try anything to keep the bloodsuckers from biting? Forget stuffing a dryer sheet in your pocket, eating garlic or taking vitamin B -- all home remedies that have been disproven in studies. Here's what works and what doesn't:
• CAN'T BEAT DEET: Studies show that DEET, a commonly used active ingredient in insect repellents, is more effective and lasts longer than any other deterrent, according to the American Mosquito Control Association. Protection time is based on the amount of active ingredient in the repellent. A 10 percent DEET-based spray or lotion will last about 90 minutes; a 30 percent one will last five to six hours.

• **IS IT SAFE?** Yes, says the Environmental Protection Agency, as long as it's used for short-term exposure. Don't reapply it and wash clothes that have come in contact with it before wearing them again. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that anyone over the age of 2 months can use DEET-based repellents with up to 30 percent concentration. The group advises against using sunscreens that contain DEET because sunscreens are often applied repeatedly since they can be washed off; DEET is not water-soluble so repeated applications will increase the potential toxic effects.

• **EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES:** Two other active ingredients have been declared safe and effective repellents in the past four years by the Centers for Disease Control. They're not as effective as DEET, but they're close. One of them is Picaridin, which can be used on infants as young as 2 months. Oil of lemon-eucalyptus, which can't be used on kids younger than 3 years, is the other. Permethrin-treated clothing also has been proven to repel mosquitoes.

• **PREVENTION:** Stop mosquitoes breeding by dumping water out of pots, tires and containers in the yard. Flush bird baths, bromeliads and pets' dishes weekly. Keep roof gutters clean and cut your grass often. If mosquitoes become a nuisance, call Mosquito Control to have the area sprayed. In Miami-Dade, call 305-592-1186; in Broward, call 954-765-4062.

Get Smart appears every other week, and offers a quick overview of health and medical topics in the news. Got a question or suggested topic? E-mail jmailander@MiamiHerald.com.

Scrap coal ash dumpsite plans, Cebu officials urged (*Manila Bulletin*)

Environment advocates urged the provincial government of Cebu to drop its plan to set up a dumpsite for coal ash by a beach, citing the dangerous levels of harmful chemicals contained in the waste product associated with cancer.

According to the Ecological Waste (EcoWaste) Coalition, the building of a dumpsite is being proposed in Naga City, Cebu province in time for the operation of the 200-megawatt Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO) in February 2011. It will be used to receive tons of coal combustion waste or coal ash from said power plant.

In a letter faxed to the offices of Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia and Vice Gov. Gregorio Sanchez Jr., the EcoWaste Coalition expressed its “profound objection” against the planned dumping of coal ash at the provincial government-owned Balili Beach Resort in Naga City in Cebu.

EcoWaste president Manny Calonzo said the KEPCO will pay $1 million to the Cebu provincial government for the permit to dump.

The letter from the group bolsters earlier opposition lodged by Cebu law faculty lawyers Gloria Estenzo Ramos and Benjamin Cabrido for the engagement of the provincial officials in the business of coal ash dumping.

“In the greater interest of human and ecological health, we urge the government of Cebu to apply precautionary principle, reconsider its coal ash deal with KEPCO, and prevent a potential chemical crisis that might even cost beyond the US$1 million promised by the company,” said Calonzo.

“We urge the government of Cebu to learn from the unfolding health and environmental problems in the US due to toxic releases from coal combustion waste ponds, pits, dumpsites and landfills, some of which have been declared as Superfund sites or toxic waste sites requiring very costly cleanups,” he added.

According to the group, “coal combustion byproducts are not exactly benign waste” as these can contain dangerous levels of harmful chemicals associated with cancer and non-cancer risks such as arsenic, boron, cadmium, cobalt, lead, mercury, molybdenum, nitrates/nitrites, and selenium.

Citing a study conducted by international environmental group Greenpeace Southeast Asia, EcoWaste said ash samples from the coal-fired power plant of the National Power Corp. located in Calaca, Batangas tested positive for toxic metal mercury.

The EcoWaste Coalition also questioned the capability of the provincial and city authorities to monitor, regulate, and mitigate the adverse effects of coal ash dumping to ensure the long-term health and safety of the constituents, water supplies and marine resources.

Citing another report released in March 2009 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the group noted that the disposal of coal ash, especially in unlined ponds “results in alarmingly high risks of cancer and diseases of the heart, lung, liver, stomach and other organs and can seriously harm aquatic ecosystems and wildlife near disposal sites.”

In the same report, the EPA warned that “contamination from coal ash ponds will not peak until about 78 to 105 years after waste is dumped, while peak exposure from landfills may occur after even longer periods of time.”

July 21, 2009

Is your house making you sick? (*Lansing State Journal*)

The Nest
If you're recently hitched and suddenly find yourself sick more than before, take a good, long look at your environment especially if you and your sweetie recently moved, or just moved in together.
Here are some tips on how to find out what's lurking inside your home and how to make a change that's better for you and the environment:
Paint
Beware: Two things: lead and toxins. If your house was built before 1978, your walls could be full of lead - paint, that is. Chipping or peeling paint can be ingested by infants and children, which may lead to serious health problems. Also, paints and finishes release low-level toxic emissions into the air, even years after you applied it. These toxic emissions are called VOCs, or volatile organic compounds. They're so toxic you can smell them. If you've ever painted a room, you know what they smell like.

Take care: Lead in paint was banned in 1978 and is no longer sold. If you're worried about lead, have your home tested and then seal any traces of lead paint with a fresh coat of lead-free paint. Until recently, VOCs were essential to the performance of the paint. Now, low- and no-VOC paints are available from mainstream and eco-friendly companies nationwide. For cost-effective, low-VOC wall color, try a shade from Benjamin Moore's Eco Spec. and Aura. paint lines.

Carpet

Beware: Chemicals in your carpets. Carpets and carpet cushions can contain VOCs and emit formaldehyde, a colorless, pungent-smelling gas. According to the EPA, formaldehyde has been shown to cause cancer in animals and may cause cancer in humans. Health effects include eye, nose and throat irritation; wheezing and coughing; fatigue; skin rash; and severe allergic reactions.

Take care: Look for carpets made from natural fibers with little or no chemical treatment. Shaw Floors sells a variety of eco-friendly colors and styles for both wall-to-wall and area carpeting. Also, purchase carpets with natural-fiber backing that's attached with less-toxic adhesives.

Wood flooring

Beware: Who knew even wood was toxic? Well, it's not the wood; it's the stain and finish. VOCs (here we go again) from solvents, such as mineral spirits and petroleum distillates, can cause allergic reactions, headaches and nausea.

Take care: Why cover a beautiful wood floor with toxic chemicals? Look for a low-VOC finish, available at most home improvement stores. If you're in the market for new flooring, consider bamboo. It costs less and is better for the environment compared to traditional wood flooring.

Mattresses

Beware: Bugs and toxic chemicals. A typical-used mattress may have anywhere from 100,000 to 10 million bed mites inside, feeding on your dead skin cells and causing allergic reactions in some people. Many mattresses also contain flame-retardant chemicals known as PBDEs, which have accumulated in high levels in American blood and breast milk.

Take care: Dust mites hate hot water! By covering and protecting your mattress and washing all comforters, sheets and pillows in hot water every week, you'll get rid of those unwelcome visitors. Also, consider replacing your mattress with an organic cotton model or an affordable one from IKEA - they contain alternative flame-retardants that haven't raised any significant consumer health or environmental concerns.

Additional Facts
DETOX YOUR HOME

10 easy things you can do today for pennies or less:

1. Clean your fabrics, drapes and rugs to eliminate dust, molds and pollens.

2. Open a window. Circulating air in the home ensures good ventilation.

3. Choose natural cleaning products to reduce toxins in the home.

4. Buy a vacuum with a HEPA filter to remove dust mites, dust and dirt from your floors and carpets.

5. Keep your house clean and remove any piles of clutter that are collecting dust.

6. Go green with plants. They improve air quality by adding oxygen and removing carbon dioxide.

7. Replace or cover the plywood and MDF. Glues in cheaper woods can contain volatile toxins.

8. Make your house a smoke-free home. Who needs to breathe in toxic fumes?

9. Run computers in a well-ventilated area and shut them off when not in use. They release gaseous pollutants into the air the longer they run.

10. Think before you buy. Make a healthy home a priority every day.

July 21

Mine tunnel discharge not chemical (***Wilkes Barre Times-Leader***)

DEP says substance in Susquehanna River is acid mine drainage mixing with leaves and organic material.
By Steve Mocarskysmocarsky@timesleader.com
Staff Writer

An official with the state Department of Environmental Protection said Monday that a substance seen floating down the Susquehanna River near the Butler Mine Tunnel on Sunday night was not a chemical discharge.

“It’s basically the acid mine drainage mixing with leaves and other organic material, and as the water moves, it creates that foam and the brownish, rust-colored scum,” DEP spokesman Mark Carmon said.

Carmon on Sunday said his office notified the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency after receiving a report from a Pittston resident that an “unusual substance” was floating south in a slick at an area near the tunnel.

Because the substance was spotted just before dusk, an investigation was delayed until Monday morning.

“Our staff took a look at the Butler tunnel and determined it’s the natural acid mine drainage mixing with organic matter, foam and scum, and not any type of a chemical discharge out of the tunnel,” Carmon said.

He said the formation of the organic material is common in several locations along the Susquehanna in the summer.

The Butler Mine Tunnel, built before the 1930s, drains a 5-square-mile area of underground mine caverns and waterways. Now a Superfund site, the tunnel was in the past used as a drain for hazardous materials.

Carmon said there were “distinctive oily discharges” from the tunnel during heavy rains in the 1970s and 1980s, but the rust-colored foam spotted in the area of the tunnel on Sunday isn’t unusual.

WATER

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July 20, 2009

Man sought in 2 cases arrested in Mexico (*Louisville Courier Journal*)

A 65-year-old man wanted in Indiana for polluting wetlands and sentencing in a separate federal firearms case has been arrested in Mexico, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.
Robert Wainwright of Chesterton was arrested by U.S. marshals and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agents working with Mexican police. The EPA said two tips led to his arrest Tuesday. He will be returned to Indiana.

Officials said Wainwright managed Sterling Material Services, a company that separated metal from slag and brick waste from steel mills in Lake County. They said he disposed of waste in an adjacent wetland without a permit.

A message left for Steve Bom, Wainwright's attorney in the environmental case, wasn't immediately returned. Bom has called the case against Wainwright "ridiculous and flaky."

Wainwright's attorney in the gun case, Kevin E. Milner, also couldn't be reached.

Wainwright and two others were charged in 2007 with seven counts of violating environmental management laws. He was put on the EPA's Web site as a wanted fugitive after failing to appear at a January hearing.

During an EPA search of the business in 2007, authorities said they also discovered that the convicted felon possessed 23 guns. He was charged and convicted in June 2008 in that case but fled to Mexico.

We’ve Got a Drinking Problem (*GOOD*)

Posted by: GOOD

on July 20, 2009 at 6:00 am
It's always disconcerting when the local news tells you to boil your tap water before drinking it, especially if you consider that we've been experimenting with water filtration since 1627. But what if you found out—and you're about to—that there could be industrial pollutants, pesticides, and hormones floating in your tap water right now? There are federal laws that limit certain contaminants, but many toxins don't make those blacklists at all. While your water probably isn't making you sick, here is a guide to some potential offenders and how to keep them out of your cup.
Disinfectants
These are chemicals, such as chlorine and its derivatives, that are used to disinfect water before it gets to you. There's a lot of controversy over this, but critics say chlorine has strong links to cancer and sometimes anemia. Others say it's fine. As it stands, chlorine is the most popular disinfectant and has been used in water for over 60 years.
When it goes wrong This one's tricky. Chlorine in our water has been pegged as one of the most important achievements of modern civilization. There are also a lot of people who think it makes us sick, causing stomachaches and eye and nose irritation.

What you can do about it A simple countertop water filter—like a Brita—will do the trick. And yes, you do need to change the filter as often as the box tells you to if you want it to work properly.

Disinfectant Byproducts

These byproducts come about when additives used to control bacteria come into contact with naturally occurring matter in water and create other compounds.
They are problematic in drinking water and even more so in public pools and spas.

When it goes wrong These compounds aren't meant to make their way into your mouth. They do, though, and can be responsible for anemia, birth defects, and, in some cases, bladder cancer.

What you can do about it You've got to pick your battles. If you decide this one's worth it, you will need to check with the manufacturer of your home water-filtration system to be sure it cleans up byproducts. If it doesn't specifically say it does, choose another.

Micro-organisms

These are the grossest contaminants, which most often come from fecal matter from animals and, yes, people. Other microorganisms include viruses and parasites from animal waste. When these buggers get into our water they can be responsible for stomachaches, a rare form of pneumonia, and, extremely rarely, death.

When it goes wrong This happens all the time, and is the reason for those health scares you read about in the paper. The most dangerous cases involve E. coli (which has also been detected in certain bottled waters) and can lead to death.

What you can do about it Boiling your water before you drink it will kill off all the bad guys.

Inorganic Chemicals

These come from petroleum refineries, asbestos-cement decay, steel mills, and drug factories—to name just a few. The possible human effects of consuming such sludge include hair loss, liver problems, thyroid problems, intestinal lesions, rashes, and, of course, cancer.

When it goes wrong Erin Brockovich and the Case of the Chromium-filled Water is probably the most famous instance of water contamination. More recently, a major probe last year revealed that 41 million Americans' water had pharmaceuticals in it. The probe was conducted by a media outlet, not a public-safety organization.

What you can do about it Write a letter to your state Environmental Protection Agency, and ask it to set limits for drugs and other contaminants in water. You should also get a home purifier. (And if you're concerned about fluoride, you'll need the Cadillac of water filtration—a reverse osmosis purifier—which can cost thousands of dollars.)

Organic Chemicals

The "organic" part sounds innocuous, but these are often toxic chemicals, coming from pesticides, herbicides, and runoff from industrial-chemical factories. They have ties to liver, kidney and adrenal problems, fertility issues, and cancer.

When it goes wrong Organic chemicals were the culprits at the legendary Love Canal, which sat atop 21,000 tons of toxic waste that contaminated the water and made an entire community sick in the late 1970s.

What you can do about it Regulation has certainly gotten much better in the last few decades, and many organic chemicals, such as pesticides, are taken care of with a simple Brita pitcher. To encourage the EPA to test for more of these chemicals, though, write it a letter.

Radionuclides

A fancy word for radioactive contaminants, some are naturally occurring, others are not, and all are potentially dangerous. Associated risks in real life include cancer and kidney toxicity. The good news is they don't tend to leach into water in large enough amounts to hurt us all that often.

When it goes wrong There has been a spate of recent incidents, including one at a trailer park in Colorado that had too few taps to warrant the price associated with an up-to-date filtration system.

What you can do about it Not much. This is a bigger problem in rural and sparsely populated areas, where residents are at the mercy of local authorities, who are often at the mercy of state authorities, who can't always afford to pony up to fix such an expensive problem.

To learn about the EPA watch list, visit foodandwaterwatch.org.

EPA: ex-conservation chairman committed wetlands violation (*Weymouth News*)

MA
By Ed Baker
GateHouse News Service
Posted Jul 20, 2009 @ 09:56 AM

Two former conservation commissioners recently resigned because they disagreed with Mayor Susan Kay's decision to ask Chairman John Thompson to step down, but the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) claims that laborers working for Thompson committed a wetland violation at his residence in 1991 and 2008.

The two conservation commissioners who resigned were Scott Coven and Jeffrey Kent.

The EPA's findings are detailed in an order of conditions that requires Thompson to remove the fill from the wetland.

He must also restore the site to its previous state to avoid being fined by the federal agency.

"(The) EPA has determined that the discharges which were undertaken by you and/or persons acting under your supervision or control were in violation of the Clean Water Act," wrote Susan Studlien, director of the EPA's office of environmental stewardship, in a June 3 letter to Thompson. "The discharge of dredged and fill material into approximately one to two acres of wetlands at the site was not authorized by a permit under Section 404(a) of the Clean Water Act."

Kay said that she asked Thompson to resign to maintain the integrity of the conservation commission.

Thompson told the News that he is complying with the EPA's demand to restore the site.

"I am doing exactly what the EPA is requesting," Thompson said in a July 17 statement. "The work I did on my Union Farm is fully compliant and allowed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Agency law and local Weymouth regulations."

The work done by laborers at the property consisted of land clearing at the site.

“This work is specifically allowed under ‘normal maintenance and improvement of land in agricultural use,’” Thompson said.

He said that local and state regulations that permit the type of work he had done previously are trumped by the Clean Water Act.

Weymouth Conservation Director Mary Ellen Schloss said that Thompson is fully cooperating with the EPA.

“He has to file a (wetlands) restoration plan with the EPA, and he has done that,” she said on July 17. “He intends to do the restoration work that is required, and he is supposed to complete the work by Sept. 30. The EPA has said he is doing a good job, and he has a high quality consultant who is working with him.”

Kay spoke to the News on July 16.
“The EPA told Mr. Thompson that he had to file for a federal permit to do the work (land clearing) that he was doing,” she said. “He sent a letter back through his attorney that he would not file.”

The letter mentioned by Kay refers to July 1, 1999 correspondence by Thompson’s attorney, Gregor I. McGregor.

McGregor sent the letter to the EPA in response to its belief that some land clearing by Thompson’s workers on his property may have been done in violation of the Clean Water Act.

EPA officials stated in a Jan. 29, 1999 letter to Thompson that a federal permit must be obtained to authorize discharges of fill materials into U.S. waters, including most wetlands.

“A review of (U.S. Army) Corps (of Engineers) records indicates that you did not obtain a federal permit authorizing the wetland filling activities which have occurred on your property,” the letter declared.

McGregor wrote in his July 1, 1999 letter to the EPA that the land clearing done on Thompson’s property was exempt from needing a permit.

“It is the position of our client, supported by the extensive work of his environmental consultant and our legal research, that the activities are exempt, regardless that they may once have been or are altered wetlands

present (which he does not concede)," McGregor wrote. "He has spent a great deal of time and money for the conservation commission proceedings and making sure that he conforms to the extensive detailed regulations of the Massachusetts DEP defining normal maintenance and improvement of land and agricultural use."

Kay said she decided that Thompson should resign after she reviewed the recent order of conditions issued to him by the EPA as well as the July 1, 1999 letter written by McGregor.

"When I saw the letter he (Thompson) sent through his attorney that stated he would not comply with a mandate from the EPA, I then decided that I could not allow this man to sit in judgment of residents, corporations, and businesses when he was not in compliance," Kay said. "That is part of a policy that says 'do as I say and not as I do.' I found it hypocritical, and I couldn't allow him to sit on a regulatory agency for the town."

EPA attorney Denise Leonard said that wetland violations on Thompson's property occurred in 1991 and 2008.

"In 1991, respondents or persons operating under their (Thompson's) control, supervision, or authorization undertook mechanized land clearing activities to clear the woody vegetation within one to two acres of wetlands at the site," she wrote in the EPA order of conditions. "Subsequent to this activity, the respondents prepared the land for haying activities by grading the site, including the wetland, with a makeshift grader. The above activities resulted in the discharge of dredged or fill material into (the) wetlands."

Leonard indicated that the wetland likely provided wildlife habitat for mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and songbirds prior to the violation.

"In addition, the wetland likely provided flood storage functions," she wrote. "The discharge of the dredged and fill material adversely affected the wildlife habitat and the ability of the wetland to hold flood waters."

The EPA directed Thompson and his workers to refrain from haying the area and allow the wetlands to revert to its previous state, or to apply for a

permit with the Army Corps of Engineers to retain the work they previously did.

“Instead, in or around August, 2008, (the) respondents or persons operating under their control, supervision, or authorization, imported fill to the wetland and undertook further activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill materials into the wetland,” Leonard wrote.

She added that this work further diminished wildlife habitat in the wetland and decreased its ability to store floodwaters.

The EPA report also found that Thompson’s workers placed a drainage system on his property to draw water from the wetland into an adjacent forested wetlands and imported fill that included gravel to place the drainage pipes.

“This activity resulted in the discharge of dredged and fill materials consisting of soil and gravel (the dredged and fill materials) into one to two acres of the wetland,” Leonard wrote.

She found that the filled wetland was once part of a larger undistributed wetland system that abuts an unnamed stream. This brook flows into a culvert under Union Street and eventually flows into the Old Swamp River. The water from the Old Swamp River flows in a northerly direction into Whitman’s Pond and then into an unnamed stream that empties into the Back River that is linked to the ocean.

The order of conditions issued by the EPA forbids additional changes to the wetlands by Thompson’s workers, and he must remove the drainage structures and all associated bedding materials that were installed last year.

Thompson must also make sure that the wetland is seeded with a native wetland seed mix and allow the site to revert back to its prior state before it was previously disturbed.

“Refrain from operating any heavy machinery on the restored wetland (including the use of tractors) or managing the site in any way which would inhibit the wetland from reverting back to its natural state,” Leonard wrote.

EPA attorney Ann Williams said the primary focus of the agency is to restore the wetland to its prior state and Thompson must comply with the order of conditions to avoid paying a fine.

“There is no fine,” she said. “We are not really in a position to describe our enforcement thinking. What I can tell you is that at this point in time, it is critical to get that area restored. That is our primary focus right now, and the efforts Mr. Thompson has taken and his willingness are important to see that the restoration occurs. The extent to which he cooperates with this order will have a bearing on whether there is a fine in the future.”

Bottled water under scrutiny (*Examiner*)

July 20, 12:52 PM · Rebecca Lacko - Green Living Examiner

There are a few things we consumers, er, humans need to take seriously: the first is air, the second is water. Let's put aside a debate about the ozone for a moment, as Jennifer Aniston's face passes by on the side of a bus. She is shushing us about Glaceau's smartwater. Is it because consumers are given less information about bottled water than what they can drink from the tap because the two are regulated differently? Companies that produce bottled water--a $11.2 billion industry including PepsiCo Inc.’s Aquafina and Coca-Cola Co.’s Dasani--currently aren’t required to report tests that turned up contamination.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) doesn’t require companies that produce bottled water to report positive tests for contaminants. However, municipal water authorities, overseen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), must report dangerous contaminants within 24 hours. Consumer advocates testified Wednesday, July 8, before the Energy and Commerce Committee’s oversight and investigations panel that bottlers should be required to disclose more information to consumers. As Wall Street Journal's Jane Zhang, succinctly says, "Federal regulation hasn’t caught up with Americans’ taste for bottled water." Ironically, taste does not seem to be a high priority for Glaceau's smartwater; a spokesperson for the company had this to say: "To us, Jennifer truly embodies what smartwater is all about as she combines substance and style like nobody else."

Stricter labeling urged for bottled water

Both the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nonprofit research and advocacy organization, recommend that bottled

water be labeled with the same level of information municipal water providers must disclose.

The EWG recommends purifying tap water with a commercial filter; According to Emily Fredrix, "**The researchers urged Americans to make bottled water 'a distant second choice' to filtered tap water because there isn't enough information about bottled water."**

The GAO said the FDA should start by requiring that bottled water labels tell consumers where to find out more. Community water systems must distribute annual reports about their water's source, contaminants and possible health concerns. Wiles agreed; "If the municipal tap water systems can tell their customers this information, you would think that bottled water companies that charge 1,000 times more for this water could also let consumers know the same thing."

Bryan Pullen, President of Summit Spring, a bottler of natural spring water, has a different perspective. “Pure spring water needs no label," points out Pullen. He says, however, "consumers expect to see nutrition facts and labels on all their products," and criticizes Aquafina, Dasani and Smart Water for using labels to mislead consumers to believe their products are purified well water. "Just because there is a mountain on the label," remarks Pullen, "does not mean it comes from a spring."

Does Summit Spring test its water for purity? "Absolutely," says Pullen, "and those test results are always available on our website." In the very least, shouldn't every company be made responsible to report on its company website?

The issue before a subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee was specifically about about the mechanics of regulating bottled water, but there are consequential benefits to seeking new legistation for labeling.

1. Growing awareness about the high quality level of filtered tap water encourages consumers to drink water in reusable containers, rather than purchasing multiple plastic and glass bottles of water which may or may not be recycled. The bottled water industry has been suffering lately as colleges, communities and some governments take measures to limit or ban its consumption, motivated by cost savings and environmental concern because the bottles often are not recycled.

2. Helps consumers make informed decisions about purchasing bottled water. "Consumers should know where all their water comes from, how it is treated and what is found in it," said Richard Wiles, senior vice president for policy and communications for the Environmental Working Group. According to trade publication Beverage Digest editor John Sicher, "some consumers are turning on the tap during the recession simply because it's cheaper."

3. The GAO noted the FDA has yet to set standards for DEHP (one of several chemicals known as phthalates) that are found in many household products---while the EPA limits the presence of phthalates in tap water.

4. Regulated labeling could increase consumer awareness of the difference between purified water and natural spring water.

For more info: Effective December 1, 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is amending its bottled water regulations to require that bottled water manufacturers test source water for any coliform organisms, and to determine whether any of the coliform organisms are Escherichia coli (E. coli), an indicator of fecal contamination. Bottled water containing E. coli will be considered adulterated, and source water containing E. coli will not be considered to be of a safe, sanitary quality and will be prohibited from use in the production of bottled water.
Further, before water from a source that has tested positive for E. coli can be used, the bottler must take appropriate measures to rectify or eliminate the cause of E. coli contamination of that source, and the bottler must keep records of such actions.
This final rule will ensure that FDA's standards for the minimum quality of bottled water, as affected by fecal contamination, will be no less protective of the public health than those set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for public drinking water.

More bacteria live in turf than in surf (*Press of Atlantic City*)

Study finds more people are sickened from digging in sand than swimming
By MICHAEL MILLER, Staff Writer, 609-463-6712 | Posted: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 |
Beachgoers may be more likely to contract a stomach bug from building sandcastles than swimming in the surf, according to a study published this month.
The study in the American Journal of Epidemiology surveyed beachgoers and found that people who buried themselves in the sand or built sandcastles were more likely to expose themselves to harmful bacteria than those who went swimming on the same beaches.
"It's been known for some time there was an association between water quality and swimming. The big question was what, if any, association is there between sand contact and health?" study author Chris Heaney said.

The study likely will not win the appreciation of America's coastal tourism officials. Heaney said his intention was not to kick sand at beloved pastimes: "The results didn't change my attitude about the beach. I've never shied away from digging in the sand or swimming or snorkeling," he said. "It just helps remind you to use proper hygiene and remember to wash your hands before eating."

County health departments across New Jersey regularly monitor water quality to protect bathers from bacteria caused by stormwater runoff, wildlife and dog droppings, or human waste. But Heaney said his findings led him to wonder whether testing the sand rather than the water may be a better barometer for bacteria.

Researchers with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Environmental Protection Agency surveyed 27,000 people who visited beaches in Florida, Rhode Island and the Great Lakes.

The researchers followed up with survey subjects 10 to 12 days later to see if they had experienced any problems such as diarrhea, rashes, eye irritation, earaches or infected cuts.

People who reported digging on the beach had more ailments than those who went swimming, Heaney said.

Only a tiny percentage of people reported health problems of any kind as the result of their beach experience, Heaney added.

Beach closures caused by high bacteria counts are so rare in New Jersey nowadays that they become front-page news when they do occur.

Beachgoers on Stone Harbor's picturesque strands Monday were a little amused by the idea of potentially harmful microbes lurking in the cool, white sand between their toes.

And there was nary a bottle of hand sanitizer to be found on this stretch of carefree beach.

"Looks clean to me," Harrisburg, Pa., resident Bob Lutz said while lounging in a beach chair on the south end of the island. "The water looks good, too."

"We never considered it," Jessica O'Dell, of Old Saybrook, Conn., said while playing in the sand with her toddler. "It seems like the water here is cleaner than in Connecticut. We just rinse off in the water and have our snack."

But Lori Diminick, of Harrisburg, Pa., who is celebrating her 48th birthday today in Stone Harbor, said the study makes sense. Her doctor informed her about bacteria in the sand when he treated a cut on her hand.

"He warned me to make sure I kept it wrapped when I went to the beach," Diminick said. "He said there were more contaminants in the sand."

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Romulus: Toxic wells to lose license (*Detroit Free Press*)

More bad news for controversial project
BY TINA LAM • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • July 21, 2009
Nearly three years after shutting them down for violations, Michigan environmental regulators said Monday they will revoke the existing license for hazardous deep-injection wells in Romulus.

A firm owned by Detroit businessman Jim Papas now must seek a new state license to operate the wells. And that process, including public hearings, could take years, said Bob McCann, spokesman for the state's Department of Environmental Quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency already terminated its permits for the wells, requiring Papas to apply for a new permit. His application has been pending since December 2007.

The state license covers the operations above ground, while a federal license controls the operation below ground. The wells must have both state and federal licenses to operate.

Calls to attorneys for Papas were not returned.

Detroit's police and fire pension fund has invested more than $40 million in the project. The fund wanted regulators to transfer the license to Papas' firm, Environmental Geo-Technologies LLC, so it could restart the wells and allow the fund to recoup at least $10 million of its investment. Calls to the pension board also were not returned.

"I want to think this is the end, but I have no idea," said Romulus Mayor Alan Lambert. His city and others have fought the wells for nearly two decades. The wells were shuttered in late 2006.

U.S. Rep. John Conyers' role in the wells issue has been under scrutiny. Conyers, a Detroit Democrat, wrote a letter to EPA officials in July 2007 supporting the transfer of the license to Papas after seeming to oppose the wells earlier. Sam Riddle, former aide to ex-Detroit Council President Monica Conyers, said Papas hired him for $20,000 as a consultant and that Monica Conyers assisted with the letter for a cut of the fees. Papas and John Conyers have denied any link between the letter and the contract.

Riddle was indicted last week on federal extortion, bribery and mail fraud charges, but it's not clear whether the contract with Papas was involved, given the vague wording in the indictment.

Contact TINA LAM: 313-222-6421 or tlam@freepress.com

Sewer bylaw hearing slated (*The Republican - MassLive.com*)

Tuesday, July 21, 2009
By NANCY H. GONTER
ngonter@repub.com
WARE - Proposed amendments to sewer bylaws that will be the subject of a public hearing at Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting do not include any rate increases or changes, Public Works Superintendent Gilbert M. St. George-Sorel said.
The hearing will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Town Hall. The proposed regulations can be viewed at the Town Manager's office on the ground floor of Town Hall.

The main reason for the change is to bring the town's sewer bylaw in compliance with regulations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, especially as it relates to the pre-treatment of waste from industrial users, St. George-Sorel said.

"Some of this is boiler plate from the EPA," he said.

Currently, regulation of the sewer system in town is based on bylaws passed by an act of the state Legislature back in the 1960s when the wastewater treatment plant opened, he said.

To make changes to those bylaws requires an act of the Legislature, so it was determined that it is easier to make sewer regulations that are governed by the Board of Selectmen, Sorel-St. George said.

While the new rules will give the Environmental Protection Agency more tools to deal with problems with industries, domestic sewer users will have the same rules, he said.

"I don't think anybody is going to notice any big difference," he said.

Right now, the special Legislation only allows a $200 charge for connection to the sewer system and it would require Legislative action to change that. While there is currently no proposal to change that, this would allow selectmen to hold a public hearing and change the amount, he said.

The lawyer hired by the town to develop these regulations, George A. Hall of Cambridge, will attend the public meeting to answer any questions about the proposal.

Right now, the sewer system has 1,500-1,600 dwelling units that it serves and one industrial customer, Kanzaki Specialty Papers Inc. The sewage treatment plant could

handle up to 2 million gallons of waste, but it only handles an average of 650,000 gallons per day, St. George-Sorel said.

Most sewer users are in downtown Ware, but the sewer was extended up Route 32 to the Lowe's and Walmart several years ago. If new customers were to connect, it would be those who live off Route 32 or on the west side of town, he said.

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