

CACC



NEWS

The Future of the Earth is in our Hands

www.caccmi.org



From The Admin's "Desk"

Wes Raymond, CACC Administrator

I do have a desk – a nice desk. I keep a Rolodex on the desk. This device, crafted of the highest quality 1960s cast aluminum, contains the CACC contact list circa 1990, typewritten in permanent ink on paper notecards. While a few of the contacts might need updating, it still turns as smooth as silk. It weighs a ton, with

Bakelite plastic dials – it's seriously a high quality Rolodex. It reminds me that we're on the cusp of a new and exciting technological era, since the only reason I ever need to touch the thing is to dust it, admire it, or move it so I have space for the laptop.

The 21st century is finally beginning to dawn. It's 2015, and as popular culture is accepting the reality of climate change, new technology is beginning to chip away at the relevancy of fossil fuels. BMW's investors have announced with excitement that the manufacturer may be able to phase out the internal combustion engine within ten years. Tesla Motors has brought us an electric car that might actually get somebody a date. Advances in home-scaled wind and solar are made every day in the garages of independent tinkerers around the world. The race to dominate 21st century energy generation is well underway. Unfortunately, here comes nuclear power from the backstretch, moving to the inside right behind fossil fuels, and both seem still well ahead of the pack.

Many in the mainstream environmental movement have gone pro-nuclear these days. Coal fire electricity must be eliminated immediately, and some think the only way to do that is to embrace nuclear power. "Nuclear power does not emit CO2!" they say. "Wind and solar are still being developed, while nuclear is ready to do the job!" Personally, that line of reasoning kind of makes me gag a little.

CACC has been and will continue to be opposed to nuclear power.

Many use addiction as a metaphor for our relationship with

fossil fuels. Well, if coal, oil and gas are heroin, then uranium is morphine. By going "all-in" for nuclear, or even by failing to oppose nuclear, we will trade oilfields for uranium mines, oil spills for radiation leaks, and CO2 emissions for ever larger deposits of nuclear waste. No doubt the commodities traders would rather see nuclear power knock coal and oil out of the race. After all, we can't mine the wind. Nobody can own the sunlight.

The math is pretty plain to me. We need nuclear power to continue using electricity *at the rate we use it now*. Go to Times Square in Manhattan, or visit downtown Hong Kong, and you'll see why we "need" nuclear power. It's not because you left the light on in the kitchen. It's because our city centers, the hearts of commerce, are awash in terawatts of blinking disco glitz.

We all benefit from the consumer-based energy economy, and we should all focus on finding and supporting the solutions to its inherent problems. No matter the method, the unlimited supply of energy we've come to expect is likely to diminish.

That's what I'm reminded of most when I look at the Rolodex.

Anti-Biodiversity Bill Vetoed!

In mid-January, Michigan environmental and conservation groups praised Governor Snyder's veto of a bill that would have undercut the use of science in managing the state's plant communities and forests. Dubbed the "anti-biodiversity bill," it would have halted a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) program to help landowners and the state identify and improve protection for intact and functional natural communities. In addition, a number of critical references to preserving biological diversity in the DNR's rules would have been eliminated, as well as removing the agency's charge to conserve biological diversity as part of forest management. Biological diversity is the variety of organisms, both plant and animal, in an ecosystem and is considered a measure of environmental health. Governor Snyder was quoted by the Associated Press as saying, "Biodiversity is essential to how our world-class natural resources are managed."

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Proposed Clean Air Act Amendments a Bad Idea

Bill Freese, Director, Huron Environmental Activist League (HEAL)

Since October of 2011, HEAL members have worn pins in the shape of the word *Breathe*. The pin was created by Earthjustice to draw attention to the main reason for our suit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for failing to enforce the new provisions of the Clean Air Act and cleaner air for everyone to . . . breathe.

In the past two weeks, the EPA has taken steps to prevent harmful chemicals from entering the marketplace and introduced regulations to safeguard disposal of coal ash. Both of these steps are welcome and the latter is past due. However, what was in my email inbox posted on the Enviro-Mich Listserv today is totally unacceptable. The articles are titled, "Why Are 60 Progressive House Democrats Trying to Reverse 30 Years of Clean Air Act Progress?"

The "wolf in sheep's clothing" that got this by so many intelligent environmentalists is good. I agree with those who are calling this the worst idea ever conceived by national environmental organizations to amend the Clean Air Act in the entire 44 years since Senator Muskie pushed the Act through in 1970. (See Enviro-Mich for complete details.)

There are two parts to the proposed rule. One is the FRESHER Act and the other is the BREATHE Act, which we find the most repulsive. If enacted, the BREATHE Act would cause a nationwide deregulation across all sectors of presently binding emission limitations on hydrogen sulfide on industrial sources. In Michigan, if enacted, the BREATH Act would render unenforceable hydrogen sulfide emissions limitations at some facilities. This is more than just two steps back.

Natural Gas Leak May Be Related to Fracking

Twenty-eight families in Monroe County, Ohio were evacuated from their homes on December 13, 2014 because of a natural gas leak at a fracking site. Work crews from the energy company, Triad Hunter, were unable to stop the leak for ten days. A 1.5-mile radius evacuation zone was established, along with a no-fly zone below an altitude of 5,000 feet within a three mile radius of the leak.

Neither Monroe Country Emergency Management nor Triad Hunter provided a statement regarding the amount of natural gas released during the event. All evacuees were permitted to return home on December 23. There have been other explosions and fires at fracking wells and drilling sites in Ohio and other states. See CACC's website, www.caccmi.org, for more detailed information.

Please be sure to check out our **website** for a delicious and healthy winter recipe, "**Chicken or Tofu Country Captain**," provided to us by CACC Director, chef, and caterer, **Connie Beauvais!**

**Please consider renewing your membership and volunteering!
We could use your support, ideas, and help!**

Contact Wes, Jennifer, or Katie!

New York State Bans Fracking

In December 2014, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation banned fracking in the state of New York, following a report by the New York Department of Health on public health and safety issues associated with the practice. The law should go into effect sometime this year.

During a televised cabinet meeting, Governor Cuomo cited pressure from the public, stating “I’ve been asked about fracking about 14,600 times – at various decibel levels.” The Governor went on to explain that the debate over the controversial drilling technique is very emotionally charged, and called for a dispassionate scientific assessment.

Opponents of fracking in New York have indeed been vocal. Protests have occurred throughout the state, including 400,000 people who joined in the 2014 Global Climate March. This popular momentum met a state government willing to take notice and focus on scientific fact. It is notable that the agency commissioned to review the issue was the Department of Health, as opposed to a natural resources or energy management agency. Health department commissioner Howard Zucker remarked, “I have considered all of the data and find significant questions and risks to public health which as of yet are unanswered. I think it would be reckless to proceed in New York until more authoritative research is done. I asked myself, ‘Would I let my family live in a community with fracking?’ The answer is ‘No.’ I therefore cannot recommend anyone else’s family to live in such a community either.”

It’s a valuable lesson for us in Michigan. Our vocal opposition to fracking can and will have an effect on government, but only if state leadership is willing to take an objective notice of the issue and evaluate it based on the pertinent public health and safety questions. Whether or not Michigan currently has leaders capable of an evaluation of that nature is up to you, the citizen. See www.cacmi.org for more detailed information.

Safety Concerns Continue at Palisades Nuclear Plant

Kevin Kamps, Beyond Nuclear

The problem-plagued, 44-year-old Palisades nuclear power plant, owned by Entergy Nuclear, is located in Covert, Michigan. On Lake Michigan’s shore, it’s immediately between the 110-year-old Palisades Park resort community of several hundred cottages, and the popular Van Buren State Park. The Big Lake is often full of children swimming, fishermen, and boaters, many unknowingly attracted by Palisades’ hot water discharge and possibly exposed to radiation from the plant. This, because the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has no rule prohibiting “routine batch releases” of liquid radioactive wastes, once or twice per season, from happening on a summer weekend.

Palisades has the single worst neutron-radiation embrittled reactor pressure vessel in the nation, and it is at risk of pressurized thermal shock (PTS). This means that like a hot glass under cold water, the vessel could fracture if the emergency core cooling system ever pumps cold water onto hot metal. This would cause a “Loss of Coolant Accident” and core meltdown, which could breach the plant’s containment and release catastrophic amounts of hazardous radioactivity into the environment. To accommodate the age-degraded Palisades, the NRC has weakened safety standards for reactor pressure vessels numerous times over the decades.

In 2007, a Great Lakes-wide coalition, including CACC, opposed a 20-year license extension for Palisades. The top concern was PTS, but the NRC rubber-stamped its approval nonetheless. The Michigan Public Service Commission (PSC) approved the sale of the nuclear plant from Consumers Energy to Entergy, with assurances that Entergy would fix the embrittlement problem, and resolve other safety issues at the plant - broken promises.

Beyond Nuclear, Don’t Waste Michigan, Michigan Safe Energy Future, and the Nuclear Energy Information Service

of Illinois recently intervened against yet another similar regulatory rollback sought by Entergy. See www.beyondnuclear.org for more information about Palisades and other nuclear energy issues.



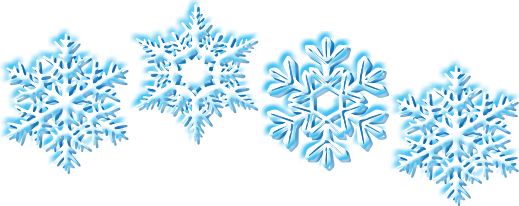
*Palisades Nuclear Power Plant
Photo credit: Nuclear Regulatory Commission*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Mar. 3, 2015. Full Moon Snowshoe Hike. Hartwick Pines Logging Museum Contact Station. 4216 Ranger, Road, Grayling, MI. Bring your own snowshoes. Free.

Mar. 24, 2015. Wild & Scenic Film Festival. The State Theatre. Traverse City, MI. Call FLOW For Water (www.flowforwater.org) at 231-944-1568 for more information, including the time. \$12.

April 11, 12, 2015. Owl Banding and Stargazing. 8-10 p.m. Headlands Dark Sky Park Guest House. 15675 Headlands Road, Mackinaw City, MI. Free. Reservations only; call 231-348-1713.



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