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ADMINISTRATOR JACKSON

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EPA Signals Stricter Mining Rules (*Washington Independent*)

Mountaintop Mining Process Will Not be Banned Under Expected Regulations
By Mike Lillis 6/12/09 1:50 PM
The Obama administration on Thursday announced steps to alleviate the environmental damage done by mountaintop coal mining in the Appalachian states, vowing stricter scrutiny of proposed mines, stronger oversight of existing projects and — further in the future — new regulations to protect local waterways and wildlife.

But the new efforts will not prohibit the practice of topping mountains, nor will they include a review of dozens of new strip-mining permits approved by the Environmental Protection Agency in recent weeks. The news has left environmentalists cautiously optimistic that the White House will rein in the destructive mining method, but also wary that it hasn't yet gone far enough.

"This is a necessary but inadequate action by the Obama administration," Vernon Haltom, co-director of West Virginia-based Coal River Mountain Watch, said in a statement. "Without a significant change in policy, mining companies will continue to destroy our mountains and bury our streams on the Obama administration's watch. They need to put a stop to this, and they're not doing so."

Mountaintop mining refers to the process in which companies literally blast away the peaks of mountains in order to expose the seams of coal buried within. The resulting farrago of rock, soil and debris is pushed into adjacent valleys, many of which contain tiny streams — the headwaters of larger streams below.

The coal industry and its congressional backers argue that the process is necessary both to maximize extraction and to create much-needed jobs in an area of the country where employment is relatively spare. But environmentalists and community activists contend that the damage to water systems and wildlife habitats — not to mention the flooding exacerbated by stripping the mountainsides bare — isn't worth the economic benefit to the region.

The issue has been problematic for the young Obama administration, which is trying to honor early vows to rein in mountaintop mining without hobbling a powerful industry that generates more than half the country's electricity and creates thousands of jobs in Appalachia.

Under the policy changes proposed Thursday — which arrived as a "memorandum of understanding" between the EPA, Interior Department and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — regulators would examine each new Appalachian strip-mine proposal on a case-by-case basis to determine the projects' effects on water quality. (Officials said the

evaluation criteria will be released publicly to add transparency to the decision-making process.) Currently, such mines may be approved using a generic national permit that was adopted to expedite the application process, but also allows for a shallower examination of environmental impacts.

“Our announcement today reaffirms EPA’s fundamental responsibility for protecting the water quality and environmental integrity of streams, rivers, and wetlands under the Clean Water Act,” EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said in a statement. “Getting this right is important to coalfield communities that count on a livable environment, both during mining and after coal companies move to other sites.”

Administration officials are also hoping to put the teeth back into a 1983 law dictating that no mining activity can occur within 100 feet of streams if that activity would harm water quality. The Bush administration, in one of its final acts, scrapped that rule, allowing coal companies to dump their mining waste anywhere, including streams, as long as they could offer an explanation why such dumping was unavoidable. One reason companies could offer was that alternative disposal methods, like trucking the waste out, would be too expensive.

David Hayes, deputy secretary of the Interior Department, said the Bush-era rule change is “bad public policy and also legally defective.” Agency officials are awaiting a judge’s ruling in a lawsuit surrounding that rule, and then they’ll reapply the original 1983 guidelines, Hayes said during a press call with reporters.

“The rule itself is a good rule,” he said. “We think it should be applied more strictly than it has been, [and] we’ll be issuing guidance to that effect.”

Looking further ahead, he said the administration will propose new guidelines to replace the 1983 rule altogether. Meanwhile, the White House will be more active than previous administrations in enforcing the existing regulations.

But after decades watching federal regulators do little while the Appalachians crumbled under mining projects, many environmentalists remain skeptical. “You can write rules and regulations from now to forever, but unless there’s strong enforcement none of it’s going to matter,” said Janet Keating, executive director of the West Virginia-based Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. “We don’t need more rules and regulations and memorandums of understanding. What we need is real world enforcement … Are we supposed to celebrate because they decided to do their jobs?”

The policy changes are “a reason for optimism,” Keating added, “but we’ll believe it when we see it.”

Lending some merit to that skepticism, Bob Sussman, EPA senior policy counsel, told reporters Wednesday that 42 Appalachian mining projects — most of them surface mines — recently approved by the agency will proceed as planned. EPA would “like to close the book” on those projects, he said.

Nancy Sutley, chairwoman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, maintained that, while the administration recognizes the environmental threat posed by mountaintop mining, the White House has no authority to ban the practice outright. “It’s allowed under current federal law,” Sutley said.

Meanwhile, representatives of the mining industry are also wary of the changes, though for much different reasons. Carol Roulston, spokeswoman for the National Mining Association, said the group is “concerned that this adds further uncertainty to the permitting process.” Mining companies are also worried about the administration’s vow to reassert its authority over state regulators. “States have pretty much been taken out of the process,” Roulston said.

The White House on Thursday also vowed a new initiative to promote economic development in the Appalachian states, focusing on green jobs to replace those that might be lost as a consequence of tighter regulation of the coal industry. That effort, according to local activists, is long overdue.

“This region has paid a tremendous price to industrialize this country,” Keating said of marks left by the coal industry. “If we’re going to revitalize someplace [with green jobs], what better place to start than right here?”

EPA's endangerment finding on CO2 up for comment (*Examiner*)

June 14, 3:29 AM
The public comment period for the EPA’s carbon dioxide emissions endangerment finding is open until June 23. Meanwhile, the White House and the EPA seem to disagree over proposing new emissions rules.
The finding named five other greenhouse gases in addition to CO2 that pose a potential threat to public health – methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorcarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Some experts say that carbon dioxide accounts for half of global warming.

Carol Browner, special adviser to the president on climate change and energy, was quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* several months ago as saying that following the EPA’s endangerment finding, “the next step is a notice of proposed rule making” for new regulations on carbon dioxide.

However, the EPA currently is not moving toward setting regulations for carbon dioxide, EPA press officer Cathy Milbourne said last week.

The EPA issued the proposed finding a year after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered a thorough scientific review in April 2007. In *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the Court found that greenhouse gases are air pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act. The Administrator was instructed to determine whether emissions of greenhouse gases “cause or

contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare, or whether the science is too uncertain to make a reasoned decision."

The finding confirms that greenhouse gas pollution is a serious problem now and for future generations, said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. To voice your opinion on the finding, go to: http://epa.gov/climatechange/endangerment.html.

The science shows that concentrations of these gases are at unprecedented levels chiefly because of human emissions, and that "these high levels are very likely the cause of the increase in average temperatures and other changes in our climate (such as heavier rain storms, stronger hurricanes, wild fires, rise in sea level)," according to the agency.

Although it seems that most of the world agrees that something needs to be done about climate change and global warming, many manufacturers and businesses fear that costly new regulations would hurt coal plants, refineries, chemical plants, hospitals and even residential buildings. Regulations could further trip up the recovering economy, they believe.

What do you think?

EPA rules coming on coal ash disposal (*Chattanooga Times*)

Friday, June 12, 2009 10:17 a.m.
By: Dave Flessner (Contact)
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is moving this year to regulate coal ash ponds like the one that ruptured and spilled into a river near a TVA power plant last year, U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., said today.
During a Washington D.C. press conference, Sen. Boxer said EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson assured her that EPA will develop some type of new rules for the disposal of coal ash by the end of the year. Sen. Boxer said she is pleased that EPA is on the ground and has taken over environmental management of the cleanup of the coal spill at the Kingston Fossil Plant in East Tennessee.

"That's the good news," said Sen. Boxer, the chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works.

But Sen. Boxer said she is upset that Homeland Security and Army Corps of Engineers' regulations prevent the public from allowing the release of information about similar coal ash ponds elsewhere.

“I can’t tell the people where these other sites are and that means the kind of community response that I believe is positive in these circumstances is just not going to happen,” she said.

Sen. Boxer appealed to federal regulators to disclose more information about coal ash ponds around the country.

Sen. Boxer’s comments came nearly six months after the earthen wall around an ash storage pond at TVA’s Kingston coal plant ruptured and more than 1 billion gallons of fly ash spilled into the nearby Emory River and surrounding properties.

Read more in tomorrow’s Times Free Press

AIR

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JUNE 12, 2009, 6:42 P.M. ET

Navistar Says EPA Let Its Rivals Dictate Exhaust Rules (*Dow Jones*)

Story also appeared: *Wall Street Journal*

By Bob Tita
Of DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

CHICAGO (Dow Jones)--Truck manufacturer Navistar International Corp. (NAV) is accusing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency of allowing rival truck makers to dictate the dominant technology for reducing pollution from diesel engines.

Navistar said the agency disregarded its own regulations and rule making procedures to accommodate companies aiming to use an emissions' treatment system known as Selective Catalyst Reduction, or SCR, Navistar alleges SCR will be less effective at reducing harmful emissions than the system it plans to use on its trucks beginning next year.

"Manufacturers convinced EPA to permit them to use SCR technology, not because it was cleaner, but because it was cheaper for them to deploy," Navistar said in a federal court filing this week. "EPA has bowed to the convenience argument of SCR manufacturers ... and tilted the playing field with relaxed requirements."

The agency did not return phone calls for a response.

The allegations are Navistar's most inflammatory to date in the company's ongoing battle against SCR. Navistar is the only truck maker in North America not using SCR. Stricter standards for tailpipe pollution from diesel-powered commercial trucks take effect Jan.1, 2010.

The Warrenville, Ill.-based company in March petitioned the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., to review the EPA's certification of SCR. In its latest filing, Navistar wants the court to block engine maker Cummins Inc. (CMI); Daimler Trucks North America LLC, maker of Freightliner trucks; Daimler's Detroit Diesel engine division; and Volvo Group North America Inc. from filing briefs in support of the EPA's evaluation of SCR.

"Manufacturers support EPA's position because it is, literally, their position," Navistar said in the filing.

Cummins did not respond to a call for a comment. Volvo said in a statement that Navistar's claims are a "desperate attempt to mislead the court" and accused the company of misusing data from Volvo's Web site to reach a "wildly inaccurate and misguided conclusion" about SCR.

Meanwhile, a spokeswoman for Daimler said: "We strongly disagree with the brief filed by Navistar and will respond accordingly through the legal process."

In a response filed with the court Friday, the companies said excluding them from the review would deprive them of protecting vital business interests at stake in the case.

Navistar's filing said the EPA repeatedly complied with truck makers wishes in sanctioning the use of SCR, which involves filtering engine exhaust through a urea solution to reduce nitrogen oxide and other pollutants in engine exhaust.

Navistar particularly objects to a rule allowing trucks to operate for up to 1,000 miles without a functioning SCR system. Navistar claims the exemption will allow truckers to frequently run with empty urea tanks, undermining the pollution-reduction regulations.

Navistar, meanwhile, is using a treatment system that recirculates exhaust through its engines, eliminating the need for urea and other treatment hardware used in SCR.

Critics have charged Navistar's exhaust treatment technology falls short of meeting the EPA's standards and contributes to reduced fuel economy, a key issue for commercial truck owners, by impeding the flow of engine exhaust.

-By Bob Tita, Dow Jones Newswires; 312-750-4129; robert.tita@dowjones.com

U.S.-Private Bid to Trap Carbon Emissions Is Revived (*New York Times*)

June 13, 2009 Saturday
Late Edition - Final
Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 3
By KATE GALBRAITH
A public-private project to capture and store carbon dioxide emissions that was abandoned by the Bush administration is being restarted, Steven Chu, the energy secretary, announced Friday.

The project, known as FutureGen, was dropped in January 2008 because the Bush administration said that costs had doubled to $1.8 billion, from $950 million. A study later found that a math error had caused the increase to be overstated; costs had actually risen 39 percent, to $1.3 billion.

Under the project, a coal plant will be built in Mattoon, Ill., that will store nearly all of its emissions underground, where they cannot contribute to global warming.

"This important step forward for FutureGen reflects this administration's commitment to rapidly developing carbon capture and sequestration technology as part of a comprehensive plan to create jobs, develop clean energy and reduce climate change pollution," Mr. Chu said in a statement.

The project does not have a green light yet. The Department of Energy said it and FutureGen would make a final decision early next year, after additional cost assessments. For now, the department is estimating government contributions at slightly more than $1 billion, with most of that coming from stimulus money designated for advancing clean coal technologies. The FutureGen Alliance of large coal producers and users will provide $400 million to $600 million.

Senator Richard J. Durbin, Democrat of Illinois, praised the decision to restart the project. "For nearly a year and a half, the people of Illinois have endured delays, reversals and disagreements over costs and funding of FutureGen," Mr. Durbin said. "Today, patience and perseverance pay off."

Henry Henderson, the director of the Midwestern program for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said that from the perspective of climate, it was critical to pursue carbon sequestration projects like FutureGen at a commercial scale.

"We need to get actual experience at scale, and this is a way to do it," he said.

The plant would test techniques for converting coal to a gas, capturing pollutants and burning the gas for power. The carbon dioxide would be compressed and pumped into deep soil layers. Monitoring devices would test whether any had escaped into the air.

NPPC: EPA Greenhouse Gas Reporting Plan Flawed (*Pork Magazine*)

By Pork news staff (6/12/2009)
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposal to require reporting of manure-related greenhouse gas emissions could increase environmental problems, according to the National Pork Producers Council.

The NPPC said requiring livestock producers to report manure-related emissions will add costs to pork operations and duplicate information EPA already compiles. The group says the USDA should take the lead in attempting to reduce greenhouse gases coming from farms and ranches.

"The current greenhouse gas inventory that EPA compiles every year, along with the information from a cap and trade offsets program, is more than enough to support the rule's objectives," NPPC said.

Congress is considering climate change legislation that, among other things, would limit greenhouse gases that large emitters such as energy utilities could release to the atmosphere. Each unit of greenhouse gas an emitter is allowed to release under its cap is called a credit, which may be bought and sold. Those able to release less gas than they are allowed under their cap may sell credits; those over it will need to buy credits or reduce their energy production.

In March, EPA proposed to require businesses, including livestock operations, to report emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide under the Clean Air Act. Those emitting at least 25,000 metric tons of gas annually would be affected under the plan. EPA estimated this would be only 40 to 50 livestock operations nationwide and that compliance costs would be only $900 per facility.

Minnesota pork producer Randy Spronk, chairman of NPPC's environmental committee, questioned EPA's reporting threshold, saying the agency misjudged the number of producers the rule would affect and the costs it would impose.

Spronk said the pork industry is participating in an EPA air monitoring study that will determine with much more certainty the greenhouse gases coming from hog farms, but that data won't be available until next year. "Until we know what's coming off our farms and in what amounts, producers should be protected from regulation for air emissions," he said.

In its comments, NPPC offered a number of reasons why EPA's mandatory emissions reporting program is not appropriate for hog farms and needs to be revised. Among them:

* Relying on the Clean Air Act to address climate change will steer pork producers toward actions that will increase emissions and could cause additional environmental problems. Additional reporting requirements, for example, are a disincentive to installing manure lagoon covers and manure digesters that can capture methane gas and convert it to electricity.
* The Agriculture Department is better equipped than EPA to administer a greenhouse gas program for livestock producers. It has the technical expertise and institutional resources, along with a track record for working with farmers on measuring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Also, USDA has the producer protections required to assure widespread participation in any greenhouse gas reduction program.
* EPA's proposal exempts from reporting requirements greenhouse gas emissions from natural processes such as from animals' digestive systems. But it doesn't exempt manure decomposition—also a natural process—even though it accounts for only a small portion of total livestock-related greenhouse gas emissions.
* EPA failed to adequate describe which operations are subject to mandatory reporting. Conflicting definitions of "facilities" and "manure management systems" leave in doubt who is covered under the regulation and who is not.
* While EPA estimated that farms with at least 73,000 hogs will be required to report emissions, it did not explain how it arrived at this number. NPPC, working with industry and university scientists, has been unable to duplicate it.
* The costs of the recordkeeping and reporting requirements under the rule are underestimated. EPA's estimate of $900 to conduct tests and do emissions calculations bears little relation to the actual costs hog farmers will incur to comply with the rule.

6/12/2009

SCR vs EGR war plays out in US courts (*Truck News*)

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- An ugly legal battle is unfolding in the US Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, as Navistar challenges the EPA's acceptance of selective catalytic reduction (SCR) as a feasible solution for meeting EPA2010 emissions standards.

In a recent ‘Statement of Issues’ court filing, Navistar pointed out that when the 2010 emissions rules were first developed in 2001, the “EPA decided that urea SCR technology would not be available to meet the 0.2 g NOx standard for the applicable model year.”

“The EPA made an express ‘infeasibility’ determination for SCR technology,” Navistar said in its filing. It went on to say the EPA ruled out SCR because of: a lack of infrastructure to deliver urea at the pump; a lack of standardized method of delivery of urea; a lack of adequate safeguards in place to ensure urea is used throughout the life of the vehicles; a lack of safeguards to ensure drivers replenish urea; concerns for public safety; and other concerns.

So when the EPA warmed up to SCR and formally accepted it as a viable EPA2010 solution, Navistar charged that the “dramatic change” imposes “entirely new regulatory requirements.”

Naturally, all other heavy-duty engine manufacturers which have chosen to use SCR to meet 2010 emissions requirements are backing the EPA. Volvo and others have filed an ‘amici curiae’ petition to participate as “friends of the court.” This move was protested by Navistar, prompting Volvo to issue a statement to the media yesterday after sections of its Web site were reportedly used by Navistar to support its case.

“Navistar’s most recent filing demonstrates that the other engine manufacturers must have the ability to participate in this case as friends of the court. This is necessary to refute misinformation Navistar has presented to the court,” said Jim McNamara, spokesman for Volvo Trucks North America.

“This includes Navistar’s desperate attempt to mislead the court by taking information from Volvo Trucks North America’s Web site out of context to reach a wildly inaccurate and misguided conclusion.
The whole point of using exhaust aftertreatment is to meet the 0.2 g NOx requirement, while delivering to the customer excellent fuel economy, performance and reliability. And better fuel economy means a reduced CO2 footprint, courtesy of SCR. Massive EGR can’t deliver these benefits.

“Navistar, of course, admits its technology is unable to reach the 0.2 g NOx limit. There is absolutely no benefit to society, customers or the environment in the approach Navistar has deliberately chosen to confuse this very important issue.”

Navistar has developed an in-cylinder solution for EPA2010 which does not require exhaust aftertreatment. It plans to roll out engines in January, 2010 that will initially exceed the 0.2 g NOx limit by cashing in emissions credits the company has earned by reducing emissions beyond requirements in previous years. Navistar will then continue

to tweak its solution to get it down to the 0.2 g limit by the time its credits run out, expected to happen sometime in 2012.

Smog fines would hit big industries (*Houston Chronicle*)

By MATTHEW TRESAUGUE HOUSTON CHRONICLE
June 12, 2009, 8:24PM
Texas' environmental agency on Friday rolled out plans to penalize some of Houston's biggest industries for smog-forming pollution despite their protests that the fines are unfair.
The plan, resulting from a court ruling, could generate as much as $150 million a year for state efforts to bring the region's air into compliance with federal standards.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality would collect the money under the federal Clean Air Act, which calls for penalties for major polluters when a region fails to comply with standards by a certain date.

Houston had until 2007 to cut enough pollution from vehicles and industrial plants to meet the federal one-hour standard for ozone. If ozone levels exceeded 125 parts per billion for one hour during the day, that was a violation.

Despite its improved air quality over the years, Houston didn't meet the Environmental Protection Agency's one-hour limits even before the agency adopted stricter standards in 1997 and last year.

The state's proposal would apply to industrial sites that release 25 tons or more of smog-forming pollutants each year — 200 to 300 sites in the eight-county region, regulators said.

Industry groups have urged the state to take an approach that allows them to meet their obligations through emissions reductions rather than in dollars.

But the state's proposal requires refineries, power plants and manufacturers, among others, to pay the fines or forfeit pollution credits, including those in a cap-and-trade program designed to reduce the region's smog.

Cap-and-trade is a system that gives each plant a permit to emit a fixed amount of pollution and lets cleaner plants sell their excess allowances to those that release more than their share of pollutants.

Alternatives to fines?

Federal law allows the state to collect $8,126 per ton of ozone-forming pollution above an emissions baseline that is yet to be determined. The money would go to the TCEQ for pollution-fighting efforts in Greater Houston.

Jason Moore, a Baker Botts lawyer who represents heavy industry interests, said the state agency should allow additional alternatives to fines, such as paying to replace or retrofit diesel-powered school buses.

Houston's improved air quality "is due to significant investments by regulated industries in the area," Moore said. "But this rule doesn't address mobile sources of emissions."

'Everyone's responsibility'

Jed Anderson, a Houston attorney who specializes in air quality, also questioned why the proposal focuses on smokestack emissions while ignoring those from cars and trucks. Tailpipes release about a third of the smog-forming nitrogen oxides in the region's air, Anderson said.

"If we are going to be fair and just about this, you can't penalize just one individual or segment," he said. "It's everyone's responsibility."

Anderson said he has sent $10 to the commission to pay his "fair share."

Some environmentalists sounded pleased with the state's proposal in general, but found fault with a rule that would allow industry to aggregate types of pollution when calculating the baseline for emissions.

The pollutants don't contribute equally to ozone formation, so they shouldn't be counted together, said Elena Craft, a Houston-based air quality specialist for the Environmental Defense Fund.

"By not maximizing on the opportunity afforded" by the Clean Air Act to collect the fines, Craft said, "we are setting up our own roadblocks on the path to attainment and to cleaner air."

matthew.tresaugue@chron.com

BUDGET / STIMULUS

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Biden praises economic recovery project in Kansas (*Associated Press*)

Story also appeared: *MSN Money*

June 12, 2009 9:53 AM ET
By DAVID TWIDDY
OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (AP) - Vice President Joe Biden competed with beeping construction equipment and passing trucks Thursday as he praised the start of a suburban Kansas City road project largely funded by economic stimulus dollars.
Biden was in Overland Park for the second of three stops in a national "Road to Recovery" tour, highlighting how states are spending some of the $787 billion set aside for recovery projects.
All but $7 million of the $82.3 million widening of a three-mile section of U.S. 69 is being financed by the federal government. Biden said the project, like thousands of similar ones slated to begin this summer across the country, will create and preserve thousands of jobs.

Bill Clarkson, whose company won the highway contract, expects to employ 300 people a week for at least two and a half years. With state transportation workers and others, the project will employ 500 people a week during its lifetime, he said.

Biden noted the potential ripple effect in those workers helping local businesses stay open and possibly expand.

He also said the project will make the 27-year-old highway safer and ease congestion along a main traffic artery for Johnson County, Kansas' main economic engine.

"We're pumping a lot of money into the economy but that's not just about jobs," he said. "That's about staying competitive in the 21st century."

The tour continues Friday in Michigan as part of the administration's effort to keep up support for the economic stimulus package in the face of higher-than-expected unemployment.

Biden's top economic adviser acknowledged this week that the economic forecasts used to sell the stimulus were overly optimistic. By now, according to those earlier White House economic models, the nation's unemployment rate should be on the decline. Instead, it sits at 9.4 percent, the highest in more than 25 years.

In Kansas, federal officials have provided $1.9 billion in economic stimulus funding, including $378 million for transportation projects. The remainder will go for projects involving everything from education to energy.

Accompanying Biden on his tour was U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, whose administration started the process of attracting stimulus funds for projects while she was still governor of Kansas.

The Obama administration had to do some repair work ahead of Biden's visit after Sen. Pat Roberts, a Kansas Republican, pointed out two stimulus projects in southeastern Kansas that he said were wasteful spending.

Cherokee County is using $760,000 to resurface a 5-mile stretch of what's known as old Highway 96, starting at the Missouri border. Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency plans to use the same road for a $25 million cleanup of contaminated soil in Treece.

Roberts said the cleanup effort would put trucks on the road being repaired, possibly as the road was being surfaced, which could require a second round of repairs. But the White House on Wednesday said the two projects have been scheduled to avoid the problem.

Still, Roberts on Thursday questioned whether cleaning up polluted soil from decades-old mining operations in Treece was the best use of the money. He supports spending an estimated $3 million to move the 100 residents to new homes.

"We don't need to spend $25 million on a problem that won't be solved," he said. "We need to take care of these people and spend $3 million to let them get on with their lives."

CLIMATE CHANGE / GLOBAL WARMING

White Rooftops May Help Slow Warming (*Washington Post*)

Energy Secretary Pitches Low-Tech Idea to Reflect Solar Energy Back Into Space
BY: David A. Fahrenthold; Washington Post Staff Writer
Could climate change be staved off by making the United States look like a scene from "Mamma Mia!"?

That was suggested in a recent talk by Energy Secretary Steven Chu -- although, because he was speaking to Nobel laureates, he did not mention the ABBA musical set in the Greek islands. He said that global warming could be slowed by a low-tech idea that has nothing to do with coal plants or solar panels: white roofs.

Making roofs white "changes the reflectivity . . . of the Earth, so the sunlight comes in,

it's reflected back into space," Chu said. "This is something very simple that we can do immediately," he said later.

Chu has brought increased attention to an idea that -- depending on your perspective -- is either fairly new, or as old as Mediterranean villages, desert robes and Colonel Sanders's summer suit. Climate scientists say that the reflective properties of the color white, if applied on enough of the world's rooftops, might actually be a brake on global warming.

But if anybody is seriously considering a global whitewash, "simple" and "immediate" are probably not words that come to mind.

"I don't think that it could ever be done at a sufficient scale," said Ken Caldeira, a climate scientist at the Carnegie Institution in Stanford, Calif. He added: "It's hard enough, in many of the cities of the world, to keep the streets swept, much less to keep the city reflective."

White roofs work because of the physics of sunlight. Dark roofs absorb and hold more than 80 percent of solar energy, while white ones can reflect 75 percent of it away. That makes a white-roofed building cooler and cheaper to air-condition.

Because of that energy savings, California has since 2005 required most flat-roofed buildings to have white tops, and Walmart has installed them on about 75 percent of its U.S. stores. In January, the District will require new flat roofs on commercial buildings to be covered in vegetation or a reflective material.

Now scientists are wondering whether white roofs might keep the world cooler, too.

The idea does not treat the root cause of climate change, which is heat-trapping pollution such as carbon dioxide and methane. But white roofs do help with the primary symptom: heat. The light they reflect escapes through the polluted atmosphere like a BB through a greenhouse.

"We may have to figure out a way to artificially cool the planet while the atmosphere is still super-saturated with greenhouse gases," said Mike Tidwell of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. This could be it, he said, "because the planet, it's a closed system, it's an absolutely closed system, except for one thing: sunlight."

How well it would do, scientists say, depends on the number of roofs.

In his talk, Chu cited new research from his former laboratory, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California, which imagined the result of painting about 63 percent of the roofs white in 100 large cities in tropical and temperate areas worldwide.

It estimated that would provide about the same climate benefits as taking all the world's cars off the road for 10 years.

Hashem Akbari, a Lawrence Berkeley scientist who co-wrote the study, said: "It buys us precious time" to figure out ways to limit greenhouse-gas emissions or remove the gases from the atmosphere. "It basically buys us time until we come up to our senses."

With that kind of potential, Chu told his London audience, "I would love to appeal to all people. We should convert to white limousines" -- here the laureates laughed -- "and white roofs."

But, as with any proposal to paint large portions of the world the same color, there are skeptics.

Making roofs white "is one of many things that we need to do simultaneously" to combat climate change, said Daniel Lashof of the Natural Resources Defense Council. But, he added, the amount of space that might get painted is "just not enough area to significantly affect the reflectivity of the Earth."

A spokeswoman for Chu said the Energy Department is exploring ways to encourage more white roofs on private and public buildings. (For now, Google Maps shows that Chu's own headquarters is a light beige on top.) She also noted that some homeowners who purchased a "cool" roof would be eligible for an expanded tax credit intended for "weatherizing" homes.

There is also the winter problem: In a cold climate, a dark roof can lower heating costs by soaking up the winter sun. White-roof advocates counter that, in the continental United States, the "winter penalty" is just 10 percent of the overall savings.

"As far north as Toronto, it pays," said Arthur H. Rosenfeld, a member of the California Energy Commission.

And then there is the look of the thing.

To get all the benefits of a white roof, plain old white paint will not do. Instead, the roofs should be covered in a reflective coating, or a specially made membrane (Details about cool-roof products approved by the Environmental Protection Agency can be found at http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=roof_prods.pr_roof_products).

The result: White roofs are not always more expensive than dark ones. But they can be a lot harder on the eyes.

"It's like being in Antarctica or the North Pole or something. I mean, you need to wear sunglasses," said Albert NuÃ±ez, vice president of Capital Sun Group, an installer based in Cabin John. When he pitches it to customers who have a slope-roofed house in the suburbs, "The wife looks at it and says, 'No, I couldn't do that to Sally next door,' " NuÃ±ez said.

In Takoma Park, artist Jon Lickerman did it anyway.

He paid about $1,100 in 2004 to have NuÃ±ez's company paint most of his sloped roof white. Now, Lickerman said, his electric bills are lower and his neighbors have never complained.

At least not to him.

"I'm looking at it right now. You know, it's jarring. But I wouldn't say it's glaring," said Jackie Braitman, a neighbor who works as a designer and contractor for remodeling. Her second-floor office faces the white expanse, which she said is not blinding -- but is unattractive enough that she would not want a neighborhood full of them.

"As a designer, I'm annoyed by it," she said. "As a neighbor, I'm not."

Staff researcher Meg Smith contributed to this report.

Climate Change Treaty, to Go Beyond the Kyoto Protocol, Is Expected by the Year's End (*New York Times*)

June 13, 2009 Saturday
Late Edition - Final
Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 5
By ELISABETH ROSENTHAL
The world is on track to produce a new global climate treaty by December, the top United Nations climate official said Friday as delegates from more than 100 nations concluded 12 days of talks in Bonn, Germany.

The delegates issued a 200-page document that they said would serve as the starting point for treaty negotiations that open in Copenhagen in December.

"Time is short, but we still have enough time," the official, Yvo de Boer, who is the executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, said at a briefing. "I'm confident that governments can reach an agreement and want an agreement."

The goal is a climate treaty that would go beyond the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, a climate-change agreement that set emissions targets for industrialized nations. Many of those goals have not been met, and the United States never ratified the accord.

The document issued Friday outlines proposals for cutting emissions of heat-trapping gases by rich countries and limiting the growth of gases in the developing world. It also discusses ways of preventing deforestation, which is linked to global warming, and of

providing financing for poorer nations to help them adapt to warmer temperatures.

But many environment advocates and politicians suggested that delegates had not made enough progress in winnowing down those options. "Of course we have to respect the way the United Nations works," Denmark's minister for climate and energy, Connie Hedegaard, said in a statement after the talks ended. "But to me, there is no doubt that things are moving too slow."

Representatives of poor countries complained repeatedly in the talks that developed nations had not made an adequate commitment to reduce their emissions. They expressed particular dismay over Japan's announcement this week to reduce emissions by only 8 percent below 1990 levels by 2020.

Shyam Saran, India's envoy on climate change, called such targets "unsatisfactory." China and other developing countries have demanded that richer nations reduce emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels in that period.

Experts described some of the back-and-forth as predictable jockeying in the months leading up to the make-or-break talks to negotiate a treaty in December.

Jonathan Pershing, who led the American delegation at the Bonn talks, said the discussions had unfolded about as fast as could be expected given the number of nations involved and the size of the task. He predicted a treaty would emerge in December.

He said that American negotiators acknowledged at the talks that "climate change is an urgent problem and it needs a global and immediate response."

Despite the shortage of specific commitments, environmentalists took heart from the strong involvement of many nations, especially the United States and China, which jointly produce 40 percent of the world's heat-trapping emissions. (In declining to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the United States cited China and India's lack of participation.)

"There are a lot of options to work out, but we have come a long way," said Alex Kaat, a spokesman for Wetlands International, which fights the destruction of rainforests and decaying bogs. "There is now text on paper, and that's progress."

EDITORIAL / COMMENTARY / OP ED / LETTERS

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Lakes effort gets a leader (*The Buffalo News*)

President Obama's appointment fills a promise, can help region
Updated: 06/14/09 7:17 AM
The Great Lakes now have a czar. Credit President Obama for maintaining a campaign promise to help this region's ecosystem by putting someone in charge of coordinating American efforts to give it a better future.

The Obama administration has appointed Alliance for the Great Lakes CEO Cameron Davis as a special adviser to the Environmental Protection Agency. Davis, a former cochairman of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition, will help oversee the federal program for restoration of the Great Lakes, which is expected to cost more than $20 billion.

During the campaign, Obama promised to create that position and spend $5 billion over a decade toward implementing the restoration plan. This latest appointment is a significant step. Having someone in charge of various programs should focus both the funding and the effort, and could help not only in the United States but in Canada, where responsibility for the Great Lakes doesn't fall to any one minister.

Davis has many years of advocacy with the Alliance for the Great Lakes, in addition to a legal background. With respect to efforts to protect the Great Lakes, legislatively and otherwise, he is acknowledged as at the top of his class. His challenge will be in knowing where the Obama administration needs to engage Canada if both countries are to protect the health of the lakes most efficiently. Protection cannot occur on only one side of the basin.

The new adviser will face daunting tasks and bear heavy responsibilities, but overall this is a positive move that should benefit those dependent on the Great Lakes for everything from drinking water to economic and tourism dollars.

The previous fractured state of affairs was difficult, at best. The EPA's Region 5 has responsibility for the Great Lakes, but there is an array of intergovernmental pacts and agreements—for example, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which has no underlying treaty and therefore, basically leaves it up to each nation to design its own plan for protecting the Great Lakes.

A few years ago, the United States launched the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration as an effort to pull together entities, whether it was the EPA or municipal-level governments and agencies or the Council of Great Lakes Governors. That put in motion efforts to centralize needed work, but there was no one person in charge.

Davis' appointment is a move toward that goal, and complements the new $475 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which the administration and Congress still need to advance.

Obama made the right decision (*Austin Daily Herald*)

Published Friday, June 12, 2009

I want to commend President Obama for his “Executive Decision” on clean cars emission standards. This will not only affect old ladies like me with asthma or children wanting to play outdoors, but will have a far reaching impact on the auto industry and its suppliers and will be a tremendous boost for our economy. It took someone with his negotiating skills and bargaining power to get the auto industry to work together and be serious about finding solutions.

During the last two years I did some research for ACES (Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability) on cars meeting the proposed clean cars standards. The Environmental Protection Agency and Consumer Report Auto survey showed that there were a lot of cars being made then. The catch came when I took a look at the distribution of these cars. They were being made, but were not available to buy in Minnesota.

Apparently at President Obama’s meeting, he pointed out that if other less highly developed countries could produce more environmentally friendly cars, he thought it was about time they started working together to prove we can do it in the U. S., too.

By the way, the BBC late night news has been talking about the big increase in auto sales in Europe.

Ruth Klamm
Austin

Insider: Enter the ‘silly season’ (*Wicked Local Plympton*)

By Bobbi Sistrunk
Fri Jun 12, 2009, 06:16 AM EDT

You’re likely aware by now that there is a lot of hot air floating about in Washington. But just when you think you’ve heard every dopey thing politicians and regulators could come up with there is this: a tax on “belching bovines.”

Oh, that’s right, another tax.

According to Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wisconsin, the Environmental Protection Agency could soon apply a tax on livestock because gas from cows and other animals is seriously contributing to global warming.

He said the EPA is concerned over methane gas that is belched by cows.

Sensenbrenner, a member of the House Global Warming Committee, said the EPA estimates 20 percent of the emissions in the United States that cause global warming are due to livestock. He noted that a Supreme Court Decision in 2007 opened the door for the EPA to regulate carbon dioxide and other emissions and could lead to the regulation of methane gas production from farm animals.

“This cow-fart tax shows how outrageous the whole global warming and climate change debate is,” Sensenbrenner told Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly.

Kelly noted that Stonyfield Farm Yogurt Company feeds its cows alfalfa, flax and grasses in an effort to decrease methane gas produced by its cows while also increasing the Omega-3 in its products.

The congressman said the EPA doesn't care what any farmer feeds its livestock; it is just about the per head yearly tax.

The cost to farmers would be $175 per head for each dairy cow, $80 per head for beef cattle and $20 per head for pig farmers.

Some farmers have already railed against the idea, saying it would literally put them out of business. But farmers aren't the only Americans who would be affected. A tax like this can only be progressive. Eventually the EPA and other climate-change advocates would look to tax all animals that produce methane gas. This could severely affect 4-Hers and horse owners and breeders as well. Not to mention the severe rise in costs to the consumer for beef pork, milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, and every other product derived from these animals.

Will this really curtail global warming? Of course not. It will just further burden American farmers and consumers.

"Well, the silly season has arrived in Washington," Sensenbrenner said.

He's right. Let's see what other taxes the Federal government and the administrations – Obama, Patrick, et al – who ran on a platform of reducing taxes, not increasing them, has up their collective greedy sleeve.

Through the grapevine
Wishes do come true

About two years ago I was lamenting the fact that my horses' manure wasn't being put to good use other than fertilizing friends' gardens or being deposited at a compost dump. There had been a news story about a horse farm overseas that was using manure to heat its indoor riding arena. Perhaps my wish that I could use the heat-producing buns to keep my family warm in winter is about to come true.

In Sanford, Fla., a company is using horse manure to produce energy. Of course environmentalists are again concerned with the gasses the process creates. I consider myself an environmentalist, but the movement loses me when they disregard proposals such as this.

Considering all the factories and large vehicles that spew toxic emissions, I think this may be another viable opportunity to create something great from waste.

MaxWest Environmental Systems has devised a system to convert horse waste into renewable energy. Marion County, Fla., boasts more than 35,000 horses. Animal waste improperly stored can contribute to contamination of ground water supplies. The company's "gasification technology" uses manure to create renewable energy which can then be turned into green energy and sold back to the grid. Maybe my horses will finally pay for themselves. Just think of all the jobs that could be created from this process.

Save the date

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 20, and join in the celebration of your town. The Plympton Old Home Day events take place at the Upland Club and should prove to be a spectacular day for the entire family. For more information log on to the town Web site www.town.plympton.ma.us and click on "cultural services" and then "Old Home Day Committee."

FYI

TC's Sports Den on Route 106, Plymouth Street, in Halifax has added a new lineup to its store shelves. Owner Tom Williams has made a deal with a pet food supplier and now stocks bird seed, dog and cat food and cat litter at the shop for a great price.

If you've never been to TC's, stop in and say hello to Tom and his staff. He has a great selection of fishing equipment and hunting gear too. And remember to tell him , "the *Halifax-Plympton Reporter* sent me!"

FUEL

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Agriculture Showdown to Shape Next-Gen Offsets, Biofuels (*Reuters*)

Fri Jun 12, 2009 6:00pm EDT
Debates over two looming shifts for the role of agriculture in fighting climate change reached a fever pitch this week. The hot topics included key pieces of the Waxman-Markey climate and energy bill, and the U.S. EPA's proposed changes to the renewable fuel standard, which will set minimum volume requirements for different types of biofuels used in U.S. transportation fuels each year, starting in 2010. The outcome of these debates will go a long way to determine how big a player the agriculture industry will be in upcoming carbon and alternative fuel markets — and offer a glimpse of how the government evaluates politically-charged climate solutions with big lobbying budgets behind them.

This week's battles — in a U.S. EPA hearing, fuel standard workshops, negotiations among legislators and in the flurry of press releases that surrounded it all — represent some of the final showdowns in a high-stakes fight over how first-generation biofuels that use agricultural crops for feedstock and agriculture-based carbon offsets will figure into, and compete, in a rapidly changing market. Biofuels are moving toward cellulosic feedstocks, and the still-nascent carbon market is for the first time facing comprehensive regulation in the U.S. that's placing new scrutiny on offset projects, such as methane capture from animal-waste lagoons and reforestation of pastureland, as Climatewire explains today.

Farm-state legislators threatened to block the Waxman-Markey bill this week unless the traditionally agro-friendly USDA is put in charge of managing offset programs and decides what kinds of projects will qualify, and thus be able to vie for a piece of the estimated $24 billion market in agriculture-based offsets. As the Wall Street Journal notes:

[R]ecent analyses by the EPA suggest the environmental agency will rein in what qualifies as an offset. That would mean less money for farmers.

Meanwhile, agriculture and ethanol lobbies have rallied their considerable political forces this week in opposition to the EPA plan to consider land-use changes — such as clearing a forest and turning it into cropland — when judging the greenhouse gas emissions associated with different biofuels under the renewable fuel standard.

The fuel standard itself is not new, having been created as part of the 2005 Energy Act. But the EPA is proposing to implement what it calls the "first ever mandatory GHG reduction thresholds for the various categories of fuels." With land use changes taken into account, this, in short, would spell very tough times for much of the ethanol industry.

If California is leading the way on this one, the land-use accounting may stick. Efforts to hold companies accountable for the climate impact of land-use changes got a boost recently in the state, where a law dealing with the issue has survived its first legal challenge from a major oil company. As Greenwire reports, the Contra Costa County Superior Court rejected an environmental impact report for a planned refinery expansion last week because it did not analyze carbon emissions for the project.

At the end of the day, both the biofuels and offset markets are poised for transformation in coming years. Agro companies want to make sure they can snag a healthy share of the markets as they take off. Time will tell if horsetrading in Washington ends up delivering markets and regulations that can actually make a dent in emissions, and allow room for innovation.

HAZARDOUS WASTES

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Today's electronics, tomorrow's garbage heap (*Baltimore Sun*)

Officials, activists worry about discarded TVs piling up after digital switch
By Meredith Cohn | meredith.cohn@baltsun.com
June 12, 2009
Maryland
The pile of televisions waiting for recycling at the Eastern Sanitation Yard in Baltimore - many of them wrapped in wood paneling popular in decades past - is likely to get larger today when the nation completes its switch to digital TV.

City officials hope so. The rate of electronic waste, or e-waste, is growing, but more than 80 percent of unwanted TVs and computers nationwide are still thrown into the trash, and watchdogs worry that more will end up there. Or that the e-waste, which contains a number of toxic materials, will not be recycled responsibly, a huge problem documented by activists and journalists.

Americans have been creating up to 50 million tons of e-waste in recent years as they upgrade their technology. Now that tens of millions of old TVs have little or no value, they, too, may get tossed.

Local officials aren't exactly sure how much more will come after the switch because all recycling is voluntary in Maryland, but they are ready, said Hilary Miller, Maryland's program manager for recycling and operations. "Many counties report that they have been seeing a lot of TVs coming in, but they don't anticipate being overwhelmed," she said.

Miller said most of the counties contract with in-state recyclers to dispose of their e-waste and officials have visited the facilities. But she acknowledged there isn't a permitting process or official inspection.

The only state law on the subject requires manufacturers selling electronics here to register and pay a $10,000 fee, which goes to counties as grants for recycling programs. Incomplete data for 2008 shows Maryland counties collected more than 7.4 million pounds of e-waste. More than 9 million pounds were collected in 2007.

Baltimore City contributed about a million pounds in 2008, more than double the amount in previous years, according to Tonya Simmons, recycling coordinator. It's hauled to Computer Donation Management Inc. in Southwest Baltimore, where electronics are broken down or refurbished. Some are given to charity.

"We have them pick up electronics three times a week now from the five city drop-off centers, and if we need them more, we make a phone call," she said. "Our goal is to

keep this stuff out of the landfill."

That's a tough task, according to the Electronics TakeBack Coalition, which says the nationwide rate of recycling was about 18 percent for the 27 million TVs and 206 million computers disposed of in 2007. And e-waste is the nation's fastest growing municipal waste stream. Consumers bought 500 million electronic items last year, according to industry data.

Barbara Kyle, the coalition's national coordinator, said recycling goes up when there are strong laws and outreach, such as in Minnesota, where manufacturers must collect the same weight they sell in a year. Also helping are take-back programs launched by at least a half dozen major producers.

Keeping e-waste from being exported to poor countries overseas is even harder because federal laws are weak and enforcement is lax, Kyle said. For individuals to ensure proper recycling, they would have to follow each load through the process. Investigators have done that and often found the worst case scenario: e-waste in the bare hands of poor adults and children, who rip apart and burn it for gold, copper and other valuables while exposing themselves and the ground to mercury, lead, flame retardants, cadmium and other toxic substances.

"It's a big problem, frankly," Kyle said. "Proper disposal means not exporting it."

Federal law does not ban exporting, and those in the industry say not all exporting is bad. And federal law does cover export of lead-filled cathode-ray tubes, or CRTs, found in TVs and computer monitors. The law requires exporters to get permission from the Environmental Protection Agency and the receiving country before shipping. But if the CRTs are going to be reused, the exporters need only notify the EPA. Even this isn't always done, according to an August report by the Government Accountability Office.

Kyle said there is a cost to proper recycling and consumers should be wary of for-profit and even nonprofit groups that take items for free. Baltimore City and surrounding counties, for example, pay 5 cents a pound to have e-waste recycled.

The coalition and the Basel Action Network keep a list of companies pledging responsible recycling, and there are plans for a certification program next year. Kyle is also pushing for products to be designed with recycling in mind.

That is something the industry is supporting, according to congressional testimony last year by Eric Harris, associate counsel for the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries Inc. He said disassembling e-waste is difficult. But many in foreign countries clamor to recycle it, responsibly and otherwise, because pay is good for raw materials, particularly in Asia, where many electronics are made. The group said producers should recycle their own household e-waste, and work on better design.

Dell already is, according to Mark Newton, senior manager of environmental

sustainability there. The company takes back its own brand from consumers through a mail and drop-off system that includes some Goodwill stores. It has a global network of recyclers that it polices.

The company also is working on better design, largely by reducing materials and parts. Newton said the company has also reduced packaging and its carbon footprint by buying energy from renewable sources. He said some of the efforts save money and some, like the take-back program, are costly. (Dell makes the program profitable by selling services such as data scrubbing to commercial customers.)

But ultimately, Newton said, the equipment has Dell's name on it, and the company is trying to "find every way to get this stuff back."

Getting help

•Consumers can offset the cost of a converter with a coupon from the federal government. To order a coupon, visit dtv2009.gov or call 888-388-2009.

•The federal government also offers free digital converter installation through Maryland contractors. To schedule an appointment in Baltimore, call AmeriCorps volunteers at 888-225-5322. Others include The Idea Guy, 888-898-8729, and Apollo Industries, 800-504-5677. People will need to purchase their converter boxes in advance.

•Because several local broadcast stations will show up on different frequencies, even viewers whose sets or converter boxes are equipped with automatic tuners must rescan channels.

How to recycle your e-waste

For lists of permanent collection stations and companies that take back electronics, go to the Maryland Department of the Environment's Web site, www.mde.state.md.us

More drop-off site information:

• Anne Arundel County: Glen Burnie Convenience Center, Millersville Convenience Center; Millersville Landfill & Resource Recovery Facility; Sudley Convenience Center. Open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Saturday and some Sundays. Call 410-222-7951 or go to aacounty.org/dpw

•Baltimore City: Quarantine Road Sanitary Landfill, Northwest Transfer Station on Reisterstown Road; Western Sanitation Yard on Reedbird Avenue; Eastern Sanitation Yard on Bowleys Lane; Northwest Sanitation Yard on Sisson Street. Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday; call 410-396-8450 or go to ci.baltimore.md.us/government/

dpw/recycle

• Baltimore County: Eastern Sanitary Landfill Solid Waste Management Facility in White Marsh; Baltimore County Resource Recovery Facility in Cockeysville; Western

Acceptance Facility in Halethorpe. Open 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Saturday; call 410-887-2000 or go to baltimorecountymd.gov/agencies

/publicworks/recycling

•Howard County: Alpha Ridge Landfill; open 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; call 410-313-7678 or go to co.ho.md.us/dpw/ecycling.htm

MINING

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EPA to rebuild uranium-contaminated Navajo homes (Associated Press)

Story also appeared: *Washington Post*

By FELICIA FONSECA
The Associated Press
Sunday, June 14, 2009 12:33 PM
FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. -- The federal government plans to spend up to $3 million a year to demolish and rebuild uranium-contaminated structures across the Navajo Nation, where Cold War-era mining of the radioactive substance left a legacy of disease and death.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its Navajo counterpart are focusing on homes, sheds and other buildings within a half-mile to a mile from a significant mine or waste pile. They plan to assess 500 structures over five years and rebuild those that are too badly contaminated.

"These families, with the resources they have, they would not be able to put up a new home for themselves," said Lillie Lane, a spokeswoman for the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency. "We don't know how radiation in the home affected these families, but in the end people will be living in safe homes."

Between the 1940s and the 1980s, millions of tons of uranium ore were mined from the 27,000 square-mile reservation that spans Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Many Navajos, unaware of the dangers of contamination, built their homes with chunks of uranium ore and mill tailings.

The U.S. EPA estimates it will cost $250,000 to demolish each structure, haul away the debris and rebuild. The residents of contaminated homes will not be charged for the rebuilding.

"If we find more homes that are contaminated, we certainly will work to find the resources to address them," said Clancy Tenley, associate director for tribal programs at the EPA in San Francisco.

The effort is part of a five-year plan that expires in 2012 in which a number of federal agencies joined together to address uranium contamination and its effects on the Navajo people. Navajos who toiled in the mines and their dependents have suffered or died from cancer, lung and kidney disease, and other health problems caused by exposure to low levels of radiation over time.

"There is growing confidence that each agency is stepping up to its responsibility and doing more," said Stephen Etsitty, director of the Navajo EPA.

So far, the U.S. EPA has assessed 117 structures and demolished 27 of them. Thirteen have been or will be rebuilt, and the owners of the others received financial settlements.

Lane has done much of the outreach work, traveling to homes across the reservation to advise families of the EPA's efforts and securing agreements to allow officials to assess structures they believe are contaminated. She said most families are cooperative, though some have rejected the assessment without reason.

Crews measure the background levels of radiation against levels in the structure. If the levels are high, families are asked to move away from the property while it is demolished and rebuilt. Arrangements are made for them to stay in hotels and for their livestock and crops to be cared for if needed, Etsitty said.

With more than 500 abandoned uranium mines across the vast reservation, EPA officials acknowledge that the issue of uranium contamination is bigger than assessing and rebuilding structures. "We might have taken care of a good piece of the problem," Lane said, "(but) that's just a little part."

Navajo EPA officials worry about recontamination when it rains and contaminated soils are carried toward homes or into the drinking water supply. The caps that cover some former mining sites are eroding, and Etsitty said "we run the risk of the exposure happening again."

Tenley said that President Barack Obama is seeking $7.8 million in the 2010 federal budget to work on structures and abandoned mines on the Navajo reservation.

The project is stretching the staff at Navajo EPA thin and has forced other projects to be put on the back burner, Etsitty said. For every three U.S. EPA officials who go out in the field, two Navajo staffers must accompany them, partly to serve as interpreters.

The U.S. EPA has taken notice of the Navajo EPA's efforts and is honoring the agency in the tribal capital of Window Rock on Tuesday.

Critics find fault with DEP's mercury logic (*Charleston Gazette*)

By Erica Peterson
West Virginia Public Broadcasting
On a warm June evening, fishermen dot the banks of the Coal River near St. Albans. Chris Hesse of St. Albans sits on the ground, his pole propped on a tree limb stuck in the mud. But he has no intention of eating the fish that he catches.
That's because he's afraid of what's in the fish.

Hesse said there are plenty of people in the area who eat the fish, and will even pay for it.

"I mean, it's really bad," he said. "People will sit there and wait for them to fish and catch carp and pay for it.

"It's just something that I personally wouldn't do."

One reason Hesse and other people don't want to eat the fish is because there are high levels of mercury in the water, and all of West Virginia's waterways are under a statewide fish advisory.

Despite that, last month the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection announced it intended to allow more mercury in the state's waterways. Mercury can accumulate in the body and cause birth defects and brain damage.

But a DEP study shows West Virginians eat less fish than the national average.

Therefore, residents won't be affected by higher levels of mercury, they say.

Critics say tools like fish advisories are being misused to justify more pollution.

And they say low-income people who rely on fish for food, in spite of the advisories, are the ones who will be hurt the most if the DEP succeeds in raising the mercury standard.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency recommends that mercury levels not exceed 0.3 parts per million.

But based on the DEP's recent survey, the agency wants to allow mercury levels up to 0.5 parts per million. To do this, they have to get the EPA's approval.

Denise Keehner of the EPA's Office of Water said most states have followed her agency's recommendations.

"You can imagine that is easier for EPA and a smoother process for EPA to approve water quality standards a state submits if in fact the state has followed EPA's recommendations," she said.

Of the dozen states that have implemented mercury standards so far, West Virginia is the only one proposing a less stringent level than the EPA recommends. Oregon strengthened its standard.

The West Virginia DEP says its study proves that more mercury in the state's waters won't hurt state residents.

"The more fish people consume in a given area, the lower that number has to be in order to keep the public safe," said Mike Arcuri, an environmental resources analyst with DEP's water quality standards program.

"And then if people are consuming lower numbers of fish, that number in the fish tissue can be a little bit higher because they're not taking as much in," he said.

It's this logic -- that lower consumption justifies more pollution -- that concerns Catherine O'Neill, a professor at the Seattle University School of Law.

In 2002, she was a consultant to the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, a group that was advising the EPA on fish contamination.

"We actually warned of just this sort of outcome that we're seeing in West Virginia," she said.

"The concern was if states and the federal government continue to look to fish consumption advisories as the solution to mercury contamination, instead of actually reducing the contamination, that eventually this is what we would see," she said.

O'Neill says it's a cycle: the water is polluted, fish consumption advisories are posted, people eat less fish, and then the state uses the fish consumption data to justify more pollution.

She says West Virginia is the first place she's seen her prediction so perfectly borne out.

Janice Nease of Coal River Mountain Watch agrees.

"The fact that West Virginia is eating a lot less fish, doesn't that seem to tell him that we are afraid to eat the fish?" she asked.

Mercury has always existed in West Virginia's waterways -- it's a naturally occurring element. But since humans began burning fossil fuels for energy, the amount of mercury in the air and water has increased.

There's no easy and inexpensive way to remove mercury from the water.

To crack down on mercury in fish, the DEP would have to go after the source. In West Virginia, three-fourths of the mercury air emissions come from coal-fired power plants.

Power plants in other states also contribute to mercury in West Virginia's waters.

Small amounts of mercury aren't harmful to humans. But too much causes problems.

High levels of mercury can harm fetuses and small children whose brains are still developing. In adults, too much mercury can cause headaches and memory loss.

Many of these symptoms are reversible, but children and pregnant women are the most vulnerable. Damage can be permanent for those who have particularly heavy or prolonged exposure.

Higher-educated, higher-income people are the ones who are most likely to know about and follow fish advisories, said Conrad Volz, director of the Center for Healthy Environments and Communities at the University of Pittsburgh.

He says this makes West Virginia's disregard for its fish-eating population an environmental justice issue.

"Your state cannot tell me that there isn't a group of people who live more on a subsistence basis because I know there is," he said. "And there's no way the state can survey those people unless they're going door-to-door in hollers and places where people may not even have telephones."

What this issue boils down to, Volz says, is that fish advisories aren't reaching everyone.

And even if everyone understood these fish advisories and followed them, it would still take a toll on public health because fish are a great source of nutrients.

Fish are the best source of omega-3 fatty acids, which have numerous health benefits. Large fish such as swordfish and shark have more mercury and should be avoided, but the EPA recommends eating up to two meals a week of most low-mercury fish, like canned light tuna, shrimp, catfish and salmon.

O'Neill, the Seattle University law professor, says forcing people to choose between the health benefits of fish and the risk of getting mercury poisoning isn't a fair choice.

"It's not acceptable as a 'regulatory strategy' to tell women and children, and in fact all citizens, in West Virginia to stop eating fish for several decades of their lives," she said.

Erica Peterson is a reporter with West Virginia Public Broadcasting, which provided this story through an agreement with the Sunday Gazette-Mail.

PESTICIDES

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Published: June 12,2009

The Wrong Flea/Tick Medicine Can Kill Your Pet (*News Blaze*)

By John McCormick
In the northern part of the country this is the time of year when pet clinics start seeing more and more patients with flea and tick infestations as well as Lyme disease infections and the even more dangerous heart worm attacks. Heart Worm causes congestive heart failure and often can't even be treated - it must be prevented.

No responsible pet owner wants their animal to suffer needlessly and anyone with a house pet certainly doesn't want their dog or cat to bring fleas and ticks into their home, vehicle, or most embarrassing, into other people's homes on a visit.

For years people have seen TV ads and store displays offering medicate-it-yourself drops you can put on your pet's neck and back.

Many pet owners have also heard horror stories about the use of these spot-on flea and tick products causing illness or even the death of the pet they were supposed to protect.

Now the U.S. EPA and Health Canada are investigating these reports and considering stricter regulations.

See below for more information on these over-the-counter medications but I wanted to begin with what appears to be a highly safe and effective medication so pet owners know that not everything is bad.

While TV news has been reporting the possible problems, they have not been telling consumers about safer specific prescription medications which are available.

But some flee, tick, and heartworm prevention products are considered safe and I checked with a well-known local veterinarian to see what he used and why. Unsurprisingly, he recommended Revolution, the same medicine he prescribes for his patients and uses on his own pets.

Here is what Dr. Blais, a graduate of Penn State and the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine had to say exclusively to Newsblaze.com about Topical Parasite Prevention In Dogs and Cats.

"In 2008, 44,000 potential toxicities associated with the use of topical parasite prevention products were reported to the EPA. In my practice, Blais Veterinary Hospital, 107 Blais Road, Indiana, PA, four cats were treated for convulsions last summer their owners reported they used Spot On.

Since 2000, every summer has caused some client's poisoned animal to require hospitalization in our Clinic. Most go home alive, some don't.

All of the animals hospitalized at Blais Veterinary Hospital have been treated with over the counter preparation Spot On or Hartz products seem to predominate. No animals have been hospitalized after using Advantix, Frontline, Frontline Plus, or Revolution.

In most cases I recommend Revolution for my client's cats and dogs. It does a good job for flea and ear mite prevention. I've successfully treated scabies with the product and it is as good as the others for ticks and it prevents heartworms.

I've only seen a few heartworm positive over the years, but the treatment for heartworm is not safe. Left untreated most dogs drift into congestive heart failure. Arsenic is the active ingredient in the treatment available. Most of the dogs I've treated did well but I remember a little Boston from Connecticut that died from liver failure caused by the arsenic and cats can't be treated at all.

My view is better safe than sorry. Reactions to Revolution in my practice after tens of thousands of doses have been very few and mild loose bowel for a day or irritated skin rashes where the product was applied. Flea bite dermatitis in dogs and cats is now rare and the number of Zepps or ear ablations I've done in the last ten years of practice is zero. Outside hunting cats are now free of intestinal parasites and I presume so are their owners.

I couldn't recommend another product that is as effective with so few side effects.

I use Revolution on both my cat and dog.

Douglas R. Blais, VMD"

Of course the pet supply companies are fighting back and the original list of products being investigated has apparently been modified now to include all EPA listed products, not just the ones originally targeted for investigation.

On April 20, 2009, the EPA released a document titled "Increased Scrutiny of Flea and Tick Control Products for Pets. (epa.gov/pesticides/health/flea-tick-control.html)

The original list (http://www.biospotvictims.org/EPAAdvisory-IncreasedScrutinyList2.pdf) included these major products and brands: Hartz Mountain, Zodiac, Farnam (Adams), Sergents, and TradeWinds.

The new list (May 15, 2009) is many pages longer and now includes "all" EPA registered/listed products.

It is, of course, up to the reader and pet owner to make up your own mind as to which list (the original one of "those being targeted" by the EPA for investigation, or the replacement list of "all" available products) is most informative and why any changes might have been made.

You might also want to read a report on ZooToo (http://www.zootoo.com/petnews/epainvestigateshundredsoffleat-1368).

The EPA has a pet safety page at http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/flea-tick.htm.

As with any medical advice, Dr. Blais stressed to Newsblaze.com that pet owners should visit their own veterinarian for specific advice and prescriptions best for their particular pet.

John McCormick is a reporter, /science/medical columnist and finance and social commentator, with 17,000+ bylined stories. Contact John through NewsBlaze.

WATER

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Green reissues bonds, notes for public works, other projects (*Akron Leader Publications*)

6/11/2009 - South Side Leader
By Kally Mavromatis
GREEN — Financial matters were the focus of the June 9 Green City Council meeting, with Council passing a number of ordinances to refinance old debt, and in one instance, raise new funds.

Council authorized the issuance and sale of notes and bonds of approximately $18 million for public works including roadwork projects, water storage facilities and sanitary sewer lines.

The refinancing should save the city approximately $750,000, said Green Finance Director Larry Rush.

Third readings of the ordinances were waived to meet the July 31 maturity date.

Bonds also were issued to raise new money for the city's Central Administration Building (CAB). The anticipated $4 million is slated for additional construction costs and costs to furnish and equip the facility, bringing the cost of the building to $180 per square foot.

During his report, Mayor Dick Norton announced the move-in date to the CAB has been set for Sept. 11.

Also discussed during the meeting were the ongoing septic inspections.

According to Councilwoman Lynda Smole (at large), her neighborhood has been the site of inspections from the Summit County Health District, with neighbors receiving notices that inspections had taken place and/or systems were in need of upgrading.

According to City Engineer Paul Pickett, the district is most likely preparing to meet updated Environmental Protection Agency regulations on storm water discharge.

According to Pickett, the burden has shifted; municipalities are now responsible for taking the lead on compliance rather than the EPA.

"Like it or not, we're a part of this," he said.

Councilman Jim Colopy (Ward 1), an employee of the Summit County Department of Development, said there are several no-interest loans available through the county.

"There are some financial resources available," he said, for residents who could potentially be faced with large bills due to outdated septic systems.

Many on Council and in the administration expressed surprise that inspections had been ongoing. Pickett was asked by Norton and the rest of Council to investigate further and report back at the next meeting.

In other business, Council:

• asked the Summit County Sheriff's Office to enforce speed limits and ticket those who "shortcut" through parking lots at the roundabout construction site;

• heard from Norton that he and Rush held a conference call with Standard & Poor's regarding the city's credit rating, and a rating determination is expected to be forthcoming next week;

• passed two rezoning ordinances, after three readings and a public hearing. The first ordinance rezones approximately 0.88 acre of land from I-2 (Limited Industrial) to R-1 (Single Family), allowing the Romanian Baptist Church on Boettler Road to construct an addition. The second ordinance rezones approximately 15 acres of land from R-1 to R-4 (Multiple-Family Residential), permitting Redwood Management to proceed with plans for a 104-unit senior living complex on South Arlington Road north of Boettler Road;

• heard from the mayor that a walk-through was conducted with the new employees of Progressive Insurance, which will be moving into the old SkyBank building; and

• heard from Norton that the city is being considered as a location for a $12 million investment from a medical equipment company looking to relocate.

During committee meetings, Council also heard from Environment & Parks Committee Chairman Dave France (Ward 2) that there are several upcoming events, including:

√ June 12: "City of Green Night" at Canal Park, with fireworks on display after the game;

√ June 23: the official opening of the Farmer's Market at Boettler Park from 3 to 8 p.m.; and

√ June 27: the city's annual Freedom Fest from 2 to 11 p.m., with games, food, vendors and fireworks to cap off the evening.

The next regular Green City Council meeting will take place June 23 beginning with committee meetings at 5 p.m. and followed by the regular meeting at 7 in the city's Legislative Offices, 1900 Steese Road.

Investment in Water Systems Required for Economic Rebound (*Red Orbit*)

President of New Jersey American Water Speaks to Utility Professionals
CHERRY HILL, N.J., June 12 /PRNewswire/ -- Investing in the state's aging water infrastructure is necessary to maintain the reliability and safety of that infrastructure. But according to John Bigelow, president of New Jersey American Water, such upgrading is also essential for the state's economy to rebound. Bigelow was speaking on a panel at the New Jersey Utility Association's annual conference.

"The panel's topic of 'strengthening the economy through utility investment' is important because without infrastructure investment, communities cannot continue to attract businesses nor maintain a quality of life," said Bigelow. According to Bigelow, New Jersey has already taken a strong lead through the state's energy stimulus program, though no such program is in place for the water industry. "The water industry is working with state regulators on possible implementation of a mechanism similar to the energy stimulus filings that have proven to reduce water infrastructure backlog in other states," said Bigelow.

"There is no doubt that New Jersey has legitimate water infrastructure needs," said Bigelow. "There are some 20- to 30-thousand miles of pipeline in the state, and much of it is more than 100 years old." Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the American Society of Civil Engineers have estimated that as much as $10 billion needs to be invested in New Jersey's water infrastructure over the next 20 years.

New Jersey American Water, a wholly owned subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor-owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and/or wastewater services to approximately 2.5 million people. Founded in 1886, American Water is the largest investor-owned U.S. water and wastewater utility company. With headquarters in Voorhees, N.J., the company employs more than 7,000 dedicated professionals who provide drinking water, wastewater and other related services to approximately 15 million people in 32 states and Ontario, Canada. More information can be found by visiting www.amwater.com.

Appeal nets $5M for sewer replacement (*Ironton Tribune*)

By Jim Sullivan | The Tribune
Published Friday, June 12, 2009
IRONTON — The city's persistence for a slice of federal stimulus money won out over the Environmental Protection Agency's resistance to give it up.
Following an April 23 setback that saw Ironton shut out to receive a portion of $278 million the Ohio EPA allocated for water and sewer rehabilitation, the state agency reconsidered this week and earmarked $5 million towards the city's heavily-dated sanitary and overflow sewer separation facilities.

The reversal followed extensive lobbying the past six weeks by Mayor Rich Blankenship to EPA brass. In both written and verbal testimony to officials in Columbus, Blankenship pointed out inconsistencies in the sliding scale, scoring system EPA officials used to grade other sewer separation facilities around the state.

One of Blankenship's arguments was a finding that funds were being allocated to sewer networks the EPA deemed in better condition than Ironton's.

Adding insult was the city had just gotten through paying the EPA nearly $100,000 the week before in fines for non-compliance in rehabilitating its sewer overflow system.

While still unofficial, news of the successful appeal spread throughout city hall fast.

Blankenship made his announcement official at Thursday's city council meeting.

"We still need to act with caution as the decision is still unofficial, but I am very excited for the city," Blankenship said when asked before the meeting. "It is a step in the right direction for infrastructural improvements."

Council agreed.

"If it wasn't for you we wouldn't have got it done," Councilman Leo Johnson said while praising Blankenship for his continued "face time" in Columbus on the appeal.

The decision by the EPA to fund a portion of the estimated $23 million sanitary and overflow sewer separation project comes following the agency's decision to revise its original list of 324 "priority" projects statewide that were awarded stimulus money for drinking and water pollution control through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The agency said the revised list came about as some projects first selected could not meet the mandated completion schedule or the requirements of the EPA.

"I must emphasize that the inclusion of a project on the revised list does not guarantee that a particular project will be funded as the project lists will be subject to change until all funding has been awarded," EPA Director Chris Korleski said.

Along with being awarded the $5 million, the city now has the opportunity to finance the remaining $18 million though the Ohio EPA's revolving loan program.

The program allows communities a longer payback time at lower interest rates for programs like the sewer separation project.

Engineer consultant Doug Cade of E.L. Robinson said the city has not been notified on the terms or the structure of the loan.

Following years of neglect and ball-dropping, the EPA levied a consent order against Ironton in January, effectively placing the city on the strictest of deadlines when it comes to replacing its combined sewer overflow system.

Under a 17-year agreement with both federal and state EPA authorities, Ironton must have its entire city-wide combined sewer overflow system financed and replaced.

The agreement is peppered with an extensive list of both short and long-term deadlines Ironton is required to hit.

Should the city fail to meet any of the timetables ordered by the EPA, they could face fines ranging from $200 to $600 per day based on the amount of days overdue.

More than 750 communities nationwide have combined sewer systems with 108 of those in the state of Ohio. Twenty nine of these are under EPA consent orders.

The EPA states that combined sewer overflow discharges during heavy storms can cause serious water pollution problems in these communities and nearby waterways like the Ohio River.

In the mid-1990's the EPA issued an order requiring municipalities to make improvements to reduce or eliminate combined sewer overflow pollution problems.

Six years later, Congress amended the Clean Water Act that mandated municipalities comply with the EPA policy.

Removing the Political Shortage of Water (*Gwinnett Gazette*)

Submitted by H. Sterling Burnett and Ross Wingo
Friday, 12 June 2009
About 82 percent of Americans receive drinking water via publicly owned water systems, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Many of these municipal and regional systems operate at a loss, meaning users' fees don't cover the cost of treating and delivering the water. Many water authorities are critically behind on maintenance. They lack the capital to update their water purification and wastewater treatment plants or to secure additional water supplies to meet expected growth in demand.

Privatization could solve these water supply problems. The majority of drinking water supply and treatment facilities and wastewater treatment plants in the United States are owned and operated by the government. According to the EPA, many need to be upgraded or replaced, at an estimated cost of nearly $350 billion over the next two decades. Georgia alone will need $2.35 billion to control wastewater pollution for up to a 20-year-period, the EPA reported in 2008, based on 2004 data.

These projects cannot be funded from monthly municipal water fees, which don't even cover operating expenses. In 2002, the Government Accountability Office found that 29 percent of drinking water and 41 percent of wastewater systems did not raise enough revenue to cover the cost of water distribution, much less the maintenance of capital equipment. Furthermore, it found that nearly 30 percent of all water systems had

deferred water infrastructure projects due to a lack of funds. A 2002 EPA report projected a $222 billion shortfall in capital spending for needed drinking and wastewater infrastructure renovation between 2000 and 2019.

Local governments often contract with private firms to replace infrastructure and provide financing. For example, a 1993 outbreak of cryptosporidium parasites forced a $90 million overhaul of Milwaukee's water purification system. In response, the city's Metropolitan Sewerage District contracted with United Water to renovate the infrastructure and temporarily operate the wastewater treatment system. United Water's upgrades came in below cost and the city's water supply exceeded all federal, state and local quality standards. As a result, United Water was allowed to take over the system entirely and saved the district about $170 million over 10 years.

Private companies also provided capital financing in Buffalo, N.Y. The city saved $21 million from a public-private agreement. In British Columbia, Canada, private firms partnered with local governments to finance $5 billion (Canadian dollars) of $9 billion in water-related construction costs**.**

Often cited as an example of why not to privatize is the city of Atlanta's privatization with United Water and the "deprivatization" four years later. The largest deal in the country, it involved United Water pledging to save Atlanta $20 million a year and improve service. Service improved and savings were evident, but not to the extent promised. Atlanta residents got a better deal than through the municipality, but the private company, hamstrung by city requirements and eagerness to win the contract, still could not fulfill its contractual obligations.

Instead of serving as an example of why not to privatize, Atlanta should serve as an example of *how* not to privatize. As Geoff Segal concluded in a 2003 Reason Foundation analysis of Atlanta's agreement with United Water, "It's important to note that even after some additional payments the city will still be saving a tremendous amount of money when compared to previous in-house operation."

According to the Rio Grande Foundation, private systems are more efficient than government-run systems:

- Operating expenses are 21 percent lower for privately run systems than comparable government-run water systems.
- Maintenance costs for privately run water suppliers are on average half that of public water systems.
- Private water companies require less than half as many employees as public water systems and spend one-third less of water sales revenue on employee salaries.

- The public officials who manage water systems often receive especially large salaries. For example, the superintendent of the Great Neck Water Authority outside New York City earns more money than the governor of New York.
- Lower Rates. Consumers benefit when private suppliers are allowed to manage water supplies:
- Water fees are slightly lower - an average of $14 less per household per year - in counties where water is provided solely by private companies, according to the AEI-Brookings study.

The AEI-Brookings study found ratepayers saved about 10 percent or $33 per year, on average, in counties served by a number of private companies. The Rio Grande Foundation found even higher savings, an average of 25 percent, on water rates in areas where a number of private companies provide water and sewage treatment.

In contrast to the United States, private companies dominate the market for water delivery and wastewater treatment in Europe. In order to ensure safe, sufficient and relatively inexpensive water supplies in the future, the U.S. water delivery system must change. Historically, municipal water authorities have been underfunded and many have been unable to keep water delivery systems operating safely and efficiently. The gap between needed resources and investments could grow due to the recession. Accordingly, the move to private financing and private water suppliers already taking place should be encouraged and expedited.

For the complete study, go here. For the Reason Foundation's analysis of the Atlanta water privatization, go here.

H. Sterling Burnett is a senior fellow and Ross Wingo is a research assistant with the National Center for Policy Analysis, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization headquartered in Dallas, Texas. The Georgia Public Policy Foundation is an independent think tank that proposes practical, market-oriented approaches to public policy to improve the lives of Georgians. Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before the U.S. Congress or the Georgia Legislature.

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