



The LEAGUE LINE

A Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League publication

The Inside Line



Fall Issue 2009

BREDL Mounts State-Wide Campaign to phase out use of toxic dry cleaning solvents

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Despite new regulations and clean up efforts, chlorinated dry cleaning solvents remain toxic and threaten public health



*By Sue Dayton, Statewide Coordinator,
NC Healthy Communities Project*

Contaminated dry cleaning sites have been discovered in at least 41 counties in North Carolina, sites that have impacted soil, groundwater, drinking water wells, surface waters, and commercial and private property. There are at least 2,000 active and abandoned dry-cleaning facilities in the State of North Carolina. Of this number, an estimated 1,500 contaminated dry cleaning sites are likely to have released contamination into the environment. Unsuspecting members of the public can be exposed to perc through contaminated drinking water; breathing vapors in contaminated buildings or living near a dry clean cleaning establishment; or wearing clothing cleaned with perc.

Perc – the silent killer. The culprit responsible for all the mayhem is a chlorinated dry cleaning solvent known as perchloroethylene - or "perc" for short. The US Environmental Protection Agency has classified perc as a hazardous air pollutant because of its potential adverse impact on human health. Perc has been found to cause cancer in laboratory animals, and likely causes cancer in people. Exposure to perc can also harm the digestive and nervous systems, blood, liver and urinary tract, and cause developmental damage. Perc crosses the placenta and can be found in women's breast milk; therefore, the fetus and nursing newborn may be at increased risk of adverse effects from maternal exposure. Perc's toxic byproducts include phosgene, a hazardous gas that evaporates and can be lethal in closed spaces; vinyl chloride, a proven carcinogen; carbon tetrachloride, a known liver toxin; and trichloroacetic acid (TCA), used as an herbicide in the 1950s and 1960s.



(continued on page 4)

BREDL: Who and what we are

In March 1984, fifty citizens of Ashe and Watauga Counties met in the Mission House of Holy Trinity Church in Glendale Springs, North Carolina. Teachers and farmers, home-makers and merchants listened to the report of the Episcopal Church Women on the US Department of Energy's siting search for a high-level nuclear waste dump in the rain-rich east.

Recognizing that the North Carolina mountains were a region at risk, the assembled group organized the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) to protect their own backyard and those of other threatened communities.

Grassroots organizing was a cornerstone of our early all-volunteer organization. One of our first multi-county boards of directors adopted our credo, which embodies our mission statement:

BREDL Credo

We believe in the practice of earth stewardship, not only by our league members, but by our government and the public as well. To foster stewardship, BREDL encourages government and citizen responsibility in conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement in order to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL functions as a "watchdog" of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions. BREDL networks with citizen groups and agencies, collecting and disseminating accurate, timely information. BREDL sets standards for environmental quality, and awards individuals and agencies who uphold these standards in practice.

Moving into the future

Since then, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has grown to be a regional community-based, nonprofit environmental organization. Our founding principles - earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice and community empowerment - still guide our work for social change. Our staff and volunteers put into practice the ideals of love of community and love of neighbor, which help us to serve the movement for environmental protection and progressive social change in southwest Virginia, east Tennessee, north Georgia, the foothills of South Carolina, Maryland, Alabama, and all of North Carolina.

Grassroots Campaigns

Nothing creates hopefulness out of helplessness like a successful grassroots campaign -and our chapters have a history of winning. For twenty-four years Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters have protected their communities by stopping dangerous facilities and promoting safe alternatives.

In the 1980's and 1990's, BREDL stopped the ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator and the proposed southeastern nuclear waste dump. In 2007, our coordinated grassroots citizens' lobby won a legislative victory with the passage of the NC Solid Waste Act, effectively blocking at least four multi-state mega-dumps. This year our chapter won a victory when the Person County Board of Commissioners rejected attempts to expand the Republic Services landfill there. Our Cascade, Virginia, chapter shut down a huge hazardous waste incinerator. Other chapter victories over the years include the elimination of mercury emissions from the Stericycle incinerator, the shut down of a tire incinerator in Martinsville, the landmark environmental justice court decision in Greene County, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. Further, our chapters have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter.

Our work on nuclear power and coal plants laid the groundwork for our new Safe Energy Campaign. Victories over twenty-four mega-dumps have resulted in our affirmative Zero Waste Campaign. Our work on air and water quality has led to the creation of our newest campaign: the NC Healthy Communities Project. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is an effective strategy for change.

The LEAGUE LINE

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Ban the Burn

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Janet Marsh, Executive Director



"waving their
smokestacks like
magic wands"



While we at the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League were working on zero waste campaigns, dry-cleaning contaminated sites and safe energy projects, the burning industries have been busy in our state capitals changing their image and waving their smokestacks like magic wands. Suddenly incinerators are cropping up like mushrooms with new names: gasification, plasma arc, waste-to-energy and (heaven help us) renewable energy.

These burning industries have insinuated themselves into state laws and public policies. For example, North Carolina's infamous Senate Bill 3 set aside poultry manure incineration as a requirement for so-called renewable energy even though these incinerators are unproven, not carbon neutral and dirtier than coal. Lou Zeller, or own science director, reported that the Fibrowatt plants would be more polluting than Duke's new Cliffside coal plant—a conclusion which state officials later corroborated. MXI near Abingdon, Virginia has applied to expand their pollution sixteen-fold from volatile organic compounds simply because ethanol is their middle name. Because burning is all the rage, IMPACT Services Inc near Knoxville, Tennessee is so shameless as to apply for a permit to burn radioactive wastes from everywhere including commercial nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons sites.

Among the most insidious burning proposals are incinerators which would burn forest residues and even contaminated wood products. When state governments have done assessments of potential health impacts from these incinerators, they have frequently used EPA's human exposure model which calculates only inhalation exposure. The burning of wood products is a huge source of dioxin the major danger of which is ingestion not inhalation. In addition, interviews with state officials which I have conducted have documented back-engineering of the data and tweaking of the inputs to make these deadly incinerators meet state regulations.

Incineration creates dioxin. As you know, dioxin is the stuff of Agent Orange. When dioxin reaches detectable levels, it is already deadly. Our old friend Brian Hunt used to say that one drop of dioxin in an Olympic-sized swimming pool was enough to kill.

For nearly twenty years, the people of North Carolina, many southeastern communities and much of the nation understood that incinerators are bad news. Twenty-two NC communities said *no* to ThermalKEM's hazardous waste incinerator, medical waste incinerators throughout the region were spurned or shut down, and the federal Environmental Protection Agency established a waste burning moratorium.

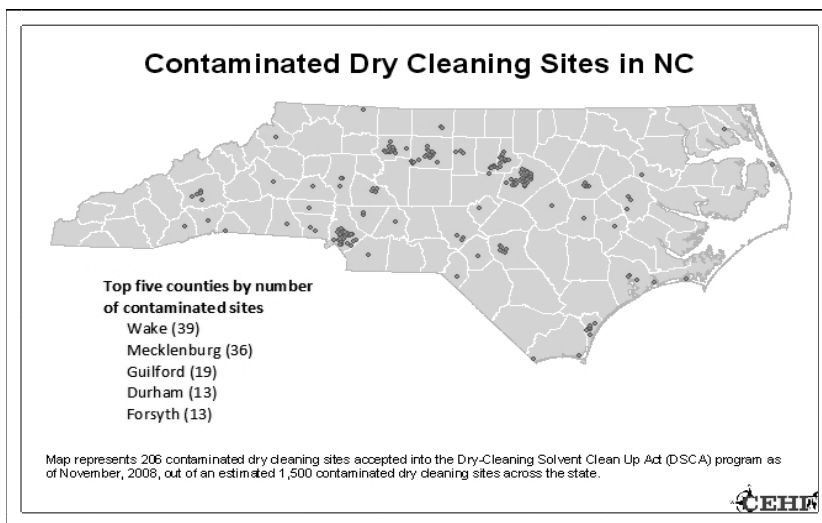
Today our job is a bit harder. The burning industries have wrapped themselves in green clothing. They are flying banners reading zero carbon and energy independence.

***"We must not allow incineration, renewable or not,
to pollute communities and threaten human health. "***

(continued from page 1)

Are contaminated dry cleaning sites being cleaned up? That depends on one's definition of "clean up." The 1997 North Carolina Dry Cleaning Solvent Cleanup Act (DSCA) created a program to help clean up these contaminated sites through sales tax revenues.

. Clean up has been estimated to cost a minimum of \$300,000 per site. To save money, the program implemented risk-based standards. Risk-based levels are much less stringent than NC drinking water standards. Risk-based standards mean that someone, perhaps you or a family member, may contract cancer because contaminated dry cleaning sites were not fully cleaned up.



Perc's heavy toll on NC. Although only 200 contaminated dry cleaning sites have been assessed for impacts to the environment, we already see the impacts of perc. Among these:

- The top forty-five "priority sites" ranked by the DSCA program according to extent of contamination and degree of threat to public health and the environment include sites in Wake, Durham, Orange, Cabarrus, Onslow, Winston-Salem, Mecklenburg, Guilford, Forsyth, Iredell, Catawba, Scotland, Gaston, Cumberland, Onslow, Pasquotank, Polk, and New Hanover Counties.
- Concentrated areas of perc contamination in groundwater (also known as "plumes") range from a few feet to thousands of feet in length.
- Both private and public water supply wells have been impacted by contaminated dry cleaning sites, and many residents have been connected to city water supplies because their drinking water wells have been contaminated by perc.
- At least seventeen surface water bodies in NC – creeks, rivers and streams - in Wake, Mecklenburg, Guilford, Forsyth, Orange, Onslow, Cabarrus, Moore and Rockingham Counties have been impacted above the DENR's Division of Water Quality's maximum allowable limits for surface water standards.
- Contamination from at least six (6) contaminated dry cleaning sites located in the City of Raleigh has impacted surface water tributaries at levels above the maximum allowable limits for surface water standards.
- In Durham County, perc has contaminated Ellerbe Creek above the maximum allowable limits for surface water standards. Ellerbe Creek flows into Falls Lake, the drinking water source for the City of Raleigh.
- An African American church congregation that occupied a former contaminated dry cleaning site resulted in the congregation's exposure to toxic perc vapors that were subsequently deemed an "imminent danger to human health."
- At the U.S. Marine Corps' Camp LeJeune, perc-contaminated drinking water is suspected of causing or contributing to breast cancer in men. Approximately 484 people who lived at Camp LeJeune say they have been diagnosed with cancer and other illnesses. More than 1,600 former base residents have filed claims against the federal government seeking \$34 billion in damages.
- The "clean up" of each contaminated dry cleaning site is estimated to cost taxpayers, on average, \$300,000 per site. At this rate it will take a minimum (not including inflation) of \$450,000,000 to mitigate contamination at all 1,500 contaminated dry cleaning sites in NC.

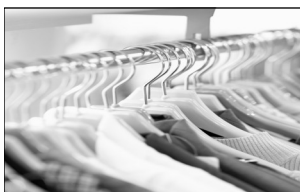
Contamination doesn't end after clean up. The impacts of perc go well beyond contaminated dry cleaning sites. Clothes, drapes, and other dry-cleaned fabrics may serve as a source of perc releases. One study found that newly dry-cleaned garments stored in a residential closet resulted in perc levels of 0.5 - 2.9 milligrams per cubic meter. Airing out of the clothes for four to eight hours had little effect on the resulting emissions. Other studies have concluded that chronic, environmental exposure to airborne perc adversely affects neurobehavioral function in healthy individuals living near dry cleaning facilities. Workers in the dry cleaning industry have an increased likelihood of exposure.

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is partnering with the Children's Environmental Health Initiative, a program of the Nicholas School for the Environment at Duke University, to produce statewide maps showing locations of contaminated dry cleaning facilities. BREDL's goals are to alert the public about the locations of these sites, educate residents about the dangers of perc contamination, and involve communities with contaminated dry cleaning sites in decision-making to protect water quality and public health.

What can you do?

- Buy clothing that does not require dry cleaning.
- If you must use a professional cleaner, seek out a cleaning facility that uses a wet cleaning process or safer alternative.
- Call us to find out what you can do to protect you, and your family's health and environment.

If you want to know if there is a contaminated dry cleaning site in your community, or want to learn more about our campaign, contact Sue Dayton, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League at: (336) 525-2003 or sdayton@swcp.com.



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SSAN gets off the ground with support from BREDL

By Myra Dotson, Chair, Sewage Sludge Action Network (SSAN)

As of December 17, 2010, SSAN is no longer a chapter of BREDL.



My name is Myra Dotson and I am the Chair of the newly formed BREDL chapter, Sewage Sludge Action Network (SSAN). SSAN was a product of a discussion between myself and Sue Dayton, the statewide coordinator for BREDL's NC Healthy Communities program. Over a cup of coffee and breakfast at the Saxapahaw General Store, one sunny February morning of this year, the impetus to create a BREDL chapter devoted to the risk of land application of sewage sludge was born. Soon we had a group comprised of about seven residents from Orange and Alamance Counties with deep concerns about the use of sewage sludge as a fertilizer on farmlands, and the potential impacts of this so-called "fertilizer" on our health and environment.

I had first-hand experience with sewage sludge being applied on farmlands. I watched sewage sludge being spread in my neighborhood in Orange County, without notice, to residents for 25 years. I listened to my neighbors say "I'm scared to drink my water," too many times. I smelled the stench of the sludge, too many times. I felt like I no longer had "peace of mind" on my own land, and, most importantly, I was tired of feeling helpless and exploited. I was also diagnosed with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), a bacterial infection, which I attribute to sewage sludge spreading near my home in Orange County.

SSAN has steadily increased its membership, from seven to fifteen, including new members from Chatham County. We have begun public education and outreach efforts with monthly film screenings of the documentary film, "SLUDGE DIET," to church groups, in coffee houses, at community centers, in people's living rooms, in public libraries, community colleges, a fire station, a synagogue, a market, a converted mill, and even in a vacant lot.

SSAN has engaged members of the public, and representatives of state agencies and local government in discussions about the spreading of sewage sludge in critical watersheds of NC. We were a visible presence at the NC Commissioner of Agriculture's Food Safety Forum held on August 18, 2009, in Raleigh, NC, where members of SSAN passed out information and fact sheets on the potential risks of using sewage sludge on food crops for human and animal consumption.

Recently, we spoke at a Board of Orange County Commissioners' meeting to request that the Commissioners consider retaining funding earmarked for sampling contaminants in sludge runoff to soil and surface waters - instead of using the funds to convene a "Community Educational Forum" on the benefits of using sewage sludge as a fertilizer. A large portion of these funds were in the "cross hairs" of the 'pro-sludge' faction of the county government and the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) which spreads "exceptional Class A" sewage sludge in a number of counties in NC.

SSAN is making headway on a grassroots level, with projects that include developing a farmer education program on the risks of using sewage sludge as a fertilizer, producing a statewide mapping of permitted sludge fields in critical watershed areas of NC, and on a state policy level, advocating for stricter enforcement and regulation of land applying sewage sludge on farmlands.

"We recently received news that we were awarded a \$500 grant from Weaver Street Market, a locally owned, community-based food co-op, located in Orange County, to assist with our campaign to educate the public about the risks of using sewage sludge as a fertilizer on farmlands."

With continuing help and guidance from BREDL, our new chapter is getting off to a great start!

For more information contact Myra Dotson, SSAN, at (919) 270-7534 or myradotson@hotmail.com.

Visit the SSAN website at: <http://sewagesludgeactionnetwork.com>

Citizens for Marlboro County Win Double Victory Against Mega-Dump!

By Belvin Sweatt, Co-Chair, Citizens of Marlboro County
and David Mickey, BREDL Zero Waste Coordinator

Hundreds of people filled the Marlboro County Court House on the evening of September 1st, 2009 for the public hearing on the MRR Mega-dump issue. Most were from Marlboro County, but North Carolina BREDL chapters in Richmond (SOAR) and Scotland (SCOT) were there as was Horry County (HEAT). Other speakers came from Florence, Georgetown, Chesterfield and Richland Counties in South Carolina. The South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Sierra Club and several other environmental groups were also represented.

Almost 50 people who signed up to speak were heard and every speaker spoke AGAINST the landfill. The only one speaking in favor of the landfill was the attorney representing MRR's Mega-dump partner, Z.V. Pate, Inc.

First the Marlboro County Zoning Board went into executive session and came out with a unanimous vote of NO to MRR and Z.V. Pate for rezoning. Then, in a surprise move, Council member, Ron Munnerlyn made a motion to Chairman Carolyn Prince to accept the decision made by the zoning board. It was seconded and then passed with a unanimous vote of YES!

Finally, the Council took up the new solid waste plan for the county. Plan "A" would allow landfills into the county; Plan "B" would not. When the entire county council unanimously accepted Plan "B", a standing ovation of applause erupted.

According to the Richmond Daily Journal, "People were joyous," Brearley (SOAR's Barbara Brearley) said. "Everyone thanked the council for their decision. But the council still has to deal with DHEC." The South Carolina

"The Citizens For Marlboro County worked tirelessly for several weeks prior to the meeting, calling people and sending letters to landowners near the proposed site urging them to attend this meeting. The main concern of all attending was the possible contamination of their water supply, decrease in land values, and the possible health-related issues."

Department of Health and Environmental Control must still approve Marlboro's new solid waste management plan.

MRR has already appealed the zoning decision and will appear before the appeals board September 22. Citizens for Marlboro County will be out in full force again to support the council's vote against the mega-dump.

Megadump rezoning request rejected in Marlboro Co.



MARLBORO COUNTY, SC (WMBF) - A controversial rezoning request for a proposed megadump has been unanimously rejected by the Marlboro County Council.

“A groundbreaking environmental justice case with potential for national impact “

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League v. Commonwealth of Virginia



Update from Janet Marsh, BREDL Executive Director

I write to provide you with an update on our environmental justice campaign. As you may remember, in February we won the first round in *Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League v. Commonwealth of Virginia* (Virginia Circuit Court Case No.07-6083). The case centers on the illegal discharge of pollution from a nuclear power plant into a fresh water lake surrounded by homes in the community of Bumpass in central Virginia. Our principal opponent in this case, Dominion-Virginia Power, has promised to appeal and events are still unfolding.

After the February 2009 ruling in favor of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, Dominion-Virginia Power filed a motion to reconsider. The court denied the motion to reconsider. Then, on August 17 our attorney Rob Wise of Bowman and Brooke, LLP submitted the order which memorializes Judge Margaret Spencer's February ruling.

Dominion-Virginia Power filed a motion to stay the entry of the judge's order pending further appeal.

We are contacting technical and legal experts in a broader campaign for environmental justice in rural communities with power plants in their midst. Nationwide, 680 electric generating plants—both coal and nuclear powered—have pollution problems similar to Dominion-Virginia Power's.

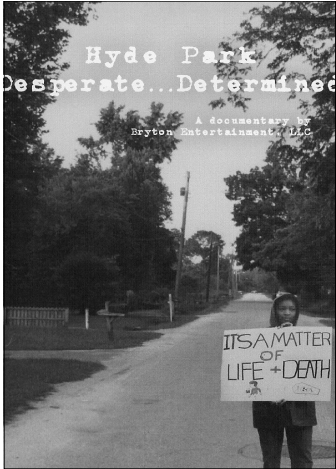
The federal Clean Water Act allows electric utilities to seek variances to meet water quality standards. Dominion-Virginia Power and approximately one-third of the nation's thermoelectric power plants rely on this variance. But the variance has been misapplied. Until the League's challenge, Virginia had issued permits to Dominion-Virginia Power for decades without basis in federal law.



“Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League v. Commonwealth of Virginia is a groundbreaking environmental justice case with potential for national impact. Preserving and strengthening the precedent would provide communities throughout the nation protection from water pollution from nuclear reactors and coal-powered plants.”

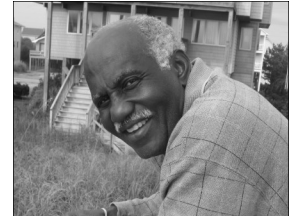
Documentary Debut, *Hyde Park Desperate...Determined*

Since the 1940s, industrial contamination has plagued residents of Hyde and Aragon Park. Even though the wood processing plant has been shut down and scrap metal from a junk yard has been removed, negative health and environmental effects continue. In this documentary, hear from the residents themselves and learn of their determination to relocate their entire community.



Congratulations to all who are involved in the creation of this revealing documentary. We are especially proud of **Charles Utley, of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League**, who has invested so much of himself in this powerful true story of the close-knit community of Hyde and Aragon Park, in South Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia. This documentary has revived hope and strength and offers new and promising possibilities to these good people and to those who suffer similar environmental hazards all over the country.

Observe how Charles helps to bring together thirty pastors to take action in the Hyde Park injustice. These pastors know that they are dealing with a spiritual as well as a moral issue. They know these families are long suffering with unacceptable living conditions, health concerns and illnesses. They realize the immediate need of relocation from this environmentally contaminated hazardous waste site.



**To order your copy of Hyde Park Desperate...Determined,
contact Charles Utley, BREDL Environmental Justice/SRS Campaign Coordinator
706-798-7833 utleyc@mail.paine.edu**

Lou Zeller of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League describes Hyde Park as a “*witches-brew of chemicals*”. His description helps us comprehend the contamination and the unhealthy environment the Hyde Park community must live with day and night. The documentary will shock you with details of flooding waters, often re-contaminating the community with arsenic, zinc, iron ore, lead, cadmium, mercury, PCB, creosote and other horrors, which turn into worse toxins as they merge in the water, air and the soil. They contaminate gardens, playgrounds, wells, homes, inside and out. Indeed, as one resident reflected, “*there is a cloud of contamination hovering over the entire community.*” This contamination produces a heartbreaking array of illness including cancer, lupus, arthritis, asthma, muscle disease, miscarriages, birth defects, premature babies, lesions, and heart conditions.

Under the weight of all this suffering, this proud and resourceful community has come together to form strong partnerships with private and public organizations, multicultural environmental groups, state and federal agencies, doctors, anthropologists and analysts. They have also created a plan of full relocation for the entire community of 150 families. This plan will take the cooperation and assistance of many to be successful. It will serve as a guiding light for other communities trapped in similar situations.

Order your copy of this documentary in DVD format. Sit down with your friends and family and watch it intently. Then pass it on to others to do the same. Open your heart to these families in Hyde Park as if they were your *own* family. Get involved. Send them your support in the form of letters, phone calls, emails and financial donations. They have marched, protested, fought and planned and worked for years, never giving up hope. They deserve our support. As the cover of the DVD displays...“It’s a matter of life and death.”



By Beverly Kerr, BREDL Development Director

THE BIOMASS MESS IN NORTH CAROLINA

By David Mickey, BREDL Zero Waste Coordinator

With the passage of renewable energy legislation in 2007, North Carolina became a prime target for companies seeking to cash in on biomass and waste to energy. But biomass is a very loose term that includes some very dirty fuels. A closer look at some examples reveals just how dirty renewable energy from biomass is.

The 2007 law lists several broad categories of biomass resources (fuels): agricultural waste, animal waste, wood waste, spent pulping liquors, combustible residues, combustible liquids, combustible gases, energy crops, or landfill methane. The law did not provide any definitions or include any restrictions on these materials or how they would be converted to electricity. Two forms of biomass waste, poultry waste and swine waste, were actually set-aside (mandated) as renewable energy resources. No other state renewable energy program has such a requirement.

The General Assembly gave the authority to certify projects as qualifying renewable energy facilities to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Information on the Commission's rules and the regulation of renewable energy facilities is on their website at <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/reps/reps.htm>

As of August 31, the following companies have been certified to burn biomass as renewable energy facilities:

<u>Company (owner)</u>	<u>Biomass Fuels</u>
Coastal Carolina Clean Power (Carlyle Group)	wood waste, railroad ties, engineered wood
Peregrine Biomass LLC (South Carolina)	woody biomass (logging slash, thinnings)
Craven County Wood Energy (Decker Energy International)	wood wastes, poultry litter, creosote-treated poles and ties, cotton gin wastes, plywood waste, Weyerhaeuser sludge
Riegelwood Paper Mill (International Paper)	spent pulping liquors, wood waste
Other companies with projects in North Carolina that are not yet certified include:	
Fibrowatt (Homeland Renewable Energy)	poultry litter, wood waste
Hertford Renewable Energy (Decker Energy International)	wood waste, forest harvest chips
Bio-Energy Conversion EUNC/EPCOR USA (EPLP, Ontario)	municipal solid waste biomass, tire-derived fuel, coal



David Mickey, Zero Waste / Clean Energy Campaign Coordinator, shown here at the 2009 Southeast Energy and Environment Expo with the ...

BIO-MASS MONSTER!

“Wood waste” is the common denominator for these projects and the long-term impact on the landscape of stripping forests of so-called wood waste is severe. Of more immediate concern is the use of renewable energy plants as waste incinerators. Neither the renewable energy statute nor the Utilities Commission’s rules provide adequate guidance on what constitutes an acceptable “renewable energy resources”. When one potential applicant, Bio-Energy, asked the Commission to allow municipal solid waste, the response was:

“In its comments, Bio-Energy described its waste-to-energy conversion process and requested that the Commission **“specifically identify municipal solid waste and refuse derived fuel within the meaning of ‘renewable energy resource.’”** No party commented on Bio-Energy’s request.”

“The Commission concludes that a determination of whether a resource used by a particular facility is a “renewable energy resource,” such as that requested by Bio-Energy in this proceeding, should be ***made on a case-by-case basis with an adequate opportunity for the Public Staff or other interested persons to challenge asserted facts.***”

(Emphasis added)

As this rule, Rule R8-67, is currently applied, a company that wants to burn garbage and generate electricity can do so unless there are “interested persons to challenge asserted facts”.

With this process, North Carolina’s biomass renewable energy has morphed into waste to energy incineration. Fibrowatt is the most glaring example of a company seeking to profit from North Carolina’s renewable energy program, but the list of projects either already certified or on the drawing board shows us what to expect-dirty energy from biomass at the expense of clean energy from solar, wind, conservation and efficiency.

The immediate challenge is to stop the projects we know about; the greater challenge is to clean up the biomass mess in North Carolina’s renewable energy program. →



Frances Blalock shows off recycled products made by Person County elementary school students.



The “Can Man” (Ken Hill) was on hand to remind everyone to recycle those aluminum cans!

On September 11, 2009 PC PRIDE joined Person Industries to celebrate the grand opening of the Person Industries Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). The new equipment is up and running at the Person County Recycling Center in Roxboro. The grand opening, parade and plant tours on September 11 and 12 gave the public a first-hand view of how recycling benefits Person County by recovering valuable resources from waste that was headed to the landfill.

Congratulations to PC PRIDE and their campaign to make Person County a leader in the movement for Zero Waste!

Plutonium Plague

By Cathy Garger

Unless you've been hidin' out in a 1961 nuclear fallout shelter, you've no doubt seen a hefty push to create what is gleefully being called a "Nuclear Renaissance." With memories of Chernobyl and Three Mile Island "so, like, yesterday, dude," utility companies, the Department of Energy (DOE), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Nuclear Energy Institute nuke-biz pimps are feverishly working to build a slew of reactors with price tags estimated as high as \$24.3 Billion (each!) in Every City, USA.

Nuke-lovers like Senator Lamar Alexander R-TN are antsy to build 100 reactors within the next 20 years - and that's on top of the 104 commercial nukes already operating. Yet, out of the 33 new reactor applications submitted to the NRC for approval since 2007, only 20 have published schedules for "safety" and environmental reviews, with the first review slated for completion in 2012.

Could this frantic push be merely an earnest desire to make more electricity while improving "clean air" and global warming? Hardly! In reality, the concept of building a "fleet" of reactors to help "climate change" and improve air quality is beyond laughable. These claims are, in fact, not grounded in actual science.

So what's really behind the drive to plunk a nuke down on practically every lake, river, and Bay - in lieu of cleaner, safer, sustainable - and just plain *saner* - energy sources like wind and solar power? Hint: It has *nothing whatsoever* to do with saving the planet.

The push to construct umpteen "Generation III" nuclear reactors is a major "mission" of the DOE - one it makes no bones about hiding. The federal agency responsible for our electricity is also tasked with finding a way to make highly radioactive Plutonium-239, a material used in thermonuclear bombs, magically disappear.

In 2000, the US made a deal with Russia in which we each agreed to get rid of 34 metric tons, or 74,956 lbs., of "surplus" Bomb-grade Plutonium. But instead of arranging to more safely encase it inside glass or ceramic material, DOE opted instead to "dispose" of volatile Bomb-Plutonium inside America's commercial reactors to the tune of \$14 Billion (a 2007 estimate).

In fact, what's being called Mixed Oxide or "MOX" fuel - *which I've named "POX," a manufactured Plutonium Plague upon humanity* - will be cooked-up at the new MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility at the Savannah River Site, SC, for use in at least 27 of the 33 new reactors.

Indeed, "clean up" work for the US weapons program simply means dumping deadly Bomb-Plutonium into nuclear reactors near you and me. Tragically, it appears to matter not that last year, "POX" fuel tests had to be terminated prematurely due to catastrophic problems with dangerous, abnormal growth in the fuel assemblies.

Can you say Chernobyl II?

Sadly, Americans don't seem to have a blessed clue what's coming.



Cathy Garger is a Maryland writer and speaker with a B.S. in Psychology and certification as a Personal Coach. When the People Against A Radioactive Chesapeake (PAARC) Co-Founder is not fighting the continued radiation contamination and poisoning of the planet, Cathy can be found outside bird-watching and walking in nature in search of wildlife not yet extinct - or pouring through cook books, trying to figure out which finger foods to serve at the next fundraising party.

Alleged “Nuclear Renaissance”

By Arnie Gundersen, Fairewinds Associates



With 26 applications for the construction of new nuclear plants before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), nuclear proponents currently claim that the United States has entered a “Nuclear Renaissance”. Most of these newly designed, yet to be constructed, and yet to be operated nukes are projected for the Southeastern US, an area of the country fraught with declining water supplies.

In his December 8, 1953 speech to the UN, President Eisenhower announced the Atoms for Peace campaign designed to “hasten the day when fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds of people.” In the post-war rush to erase the onerous image of nuclear weapons, the US surged ahead with the construction plans for approximately 230 nuclear reactors. Ultimately less than half of the proposed 230 reactors were constructed and operated. While industry proponents continue to claim that the cause of the rapid decline in the nuclear industry was the Three Mile Island accident, the evidence clearly shows that the actual 1980’s nuclear power decline was due to out of control construction costs.

Now, the energy companies proposing these new reactors claim that the new design is based upon lessons learned from the construction and operation of the existing 100 nukes. Nuclear power plant supplier Westinghouse touts the fact that its design uses at least half the seismic concrete of its predecessor designs and has less safety related pumps, pipes, and valves. Given new designs with fewer safety systems, less seismic concrete, and other cuts to construction material in these so-called “inherently safe” designs, one would wrongly assume that the construction problems, delays, and the astronomical costs of the old nukes are in the past. Instead, numerous worldwide studies show that the capital costs of these new nuclear reactors is 2-4 times higher than the industry originally claimed in 2002.

According to economist Dr. Mark Cooper, nuclear power is once again creating the world’s most costly method of energy production. Dr. Cooper and I were retained by the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) to testify to the Florida Public Service Commission regarding four newly designed Westinghouse AP 1000’s nuclear reactors proposed for Turkey Point and Levy County. Florida Power and Light (FPL) and Progress Energy Florida (PEF) claim that each reactor can be built in less than five years at a total cost of approximately \$36 Billion. Clearly \$36 Billion is a lot of money, and my analysis showed that this figure is only a low-ball estimate.

Out of all the methods of generating electricity, Dr. Cooper ranks nuclear power as the most expensive, with 18 more cost effective and environmentally sound methods ahead of it. Since Wall Street will not invest in nuclear power because Moody’s investor assessment has given nuclear power a “bet the farm” risk, why then would FPL and PEF want to incur such a huge cost liability? As Deep Throat said during the Nixon years, “Follow the money”. New laws have shifted the cost of these nukes from energy companies to the ratepayer. For example, while FPL’s two proposed plants at Turkey Point will double the value of the company, which is a boon to stockholders, the ratepayers will be left with only a 10% increase in power production for their astronomical investment. PEF’s will triple its asset values, once again at ratepayers’ expense. Floridian’s electric rates will skyrocket, while corporations pocket incredible profits. More profits, less risk, not a bad idea!

Is there alternative to nuclear power that does not involve coal or oil? According to Dr. Cooper through the efficient use of power we already have, the US should not even need any new power plants until at least 2035. Dr. Arjun Makajani of IEER has even developed a detailed road map to US energy development entitled *Carbon Free Nuclear Free by 2050*.

If we as a society “work smart” to more efficiently use the power we’ve got, we have more than 20 years to develop renewable sources and associated electrical storage cells which will simply negate the need to build large base-load power plants. With the construction of new “smart grids” and smaller distributed sources close to the load, nuclear power plants will simply be outdated. Smaller distributed sources of power generation along with storage devices to retain the electricity are the wave of the future.

Arnie Gundersen, an energy advisor with Fairewinds Associates, Inc, has more than 35-years of nuclear power engineering experience. A former nuclear industry senior vice president, he earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in nuclear engineering, holds a nuclear safety patent, and was a licensed reactor operator. During his nuclear industry career, Arnie managed and coordinated projects at 70-nuclear nuclear power plants around the country. He currently speaks on television, radio, and at public meetings on the need for a new paradigm in energy

www.bredl.org

(1999 – 2009)

Ten Years on the World Wide Web

By Mark Barker, BREDL Webmaster



www.bredl.org was launched on February 15, 1999. Our first order of business was to promote the upcoming People's Hearing on Plutonium fueled Nuclear Power, which was held in Charlotte on Feb. 22, 1999.

One of our earliest records of webstats shows that in May 1999, we had 5345 hits for a daily average of 172. Our most recent webstats indicated that in August 2009, we had 86,515 hits for a daily average of 2790.

We reached our first million website hits on July 19, 2001. By August 2009, our website hits to date had climbed to over 11 million.



As our website has evolved through a few different looks, our website tallies have leveled out over the last four years to just under 1 million hits per year. In 2008, we had 954,491 hits for a daily average of 2608. In 2008, we had a daily average of 333 visits viewing a daily average of 901 pages.

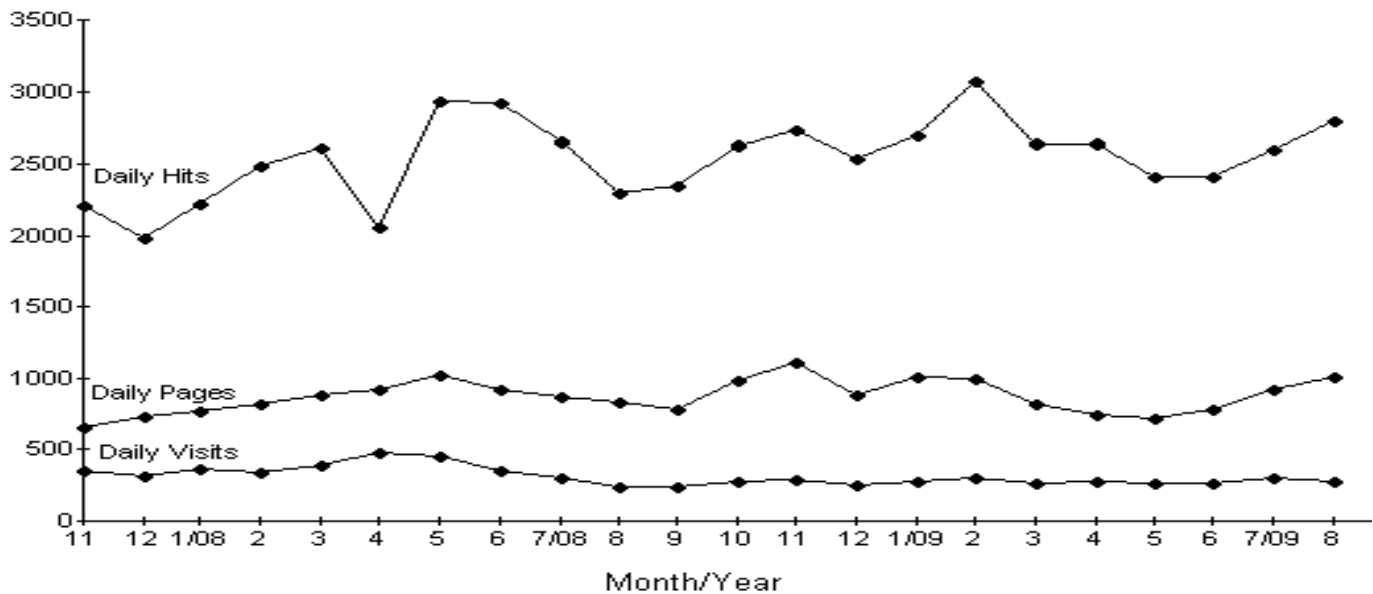
BREDL.org Webstats

YEAR	TOTAL HITS	DAILY AVE.
1999	66,713	209
2000	408,493	1,116
2001	1,126,767	3,087
2002	2,305,021	6,315
2003	2,022,827	5,542
2004	796,819	2,177
2005	995,979	2,729
2006	984,899	2,698
2007	946,270	2,593
2008	954,491	2,608
2009*	643,148	2,646

*through August 31, 2009

Since November 30, 2001, we have been using PayPal as our service to handle internet memberships/donations/merchandise via credit card payments. PayPal offers a secure site.

BREDL Website Daily Averages Nov. 2008 – Aug. 2009



- **Daily Hits** includes the actual page, graphics, pictures, scripts and document files displayed on a page.
- **Daily Pages** includes all the pages visited by a visitor.
- **Daily Visits** displays the number of visitors to the website.

Our website continues to be a source of information for our communities and beyond. We do not track individual user habits on our website, but general data tabulated indicate our website is frequented by concerned citizens, students, faculty, government officials, state and federal environmental and energy agencies, industry, the media and even politicians.

Our report on waste gasification continues to be one of our more popular downloads. It was downloaded 1920 times in August. That report was recently quoted by concerned residents of Christina Lake, a small British Columbia town in Canada. Their picturesque resort community is fighting a proposed gasification plant.

Also in August, we had 162 downloads of our SCREEN Modeling Report for Fibrowatt – Surry Co., 96 downloads of our 2008 Report Sow The Wind: Toxic Air Pollution From The Savannah River Site and 60 downloads of the GAIA Report: An Industry Blowing Smoke - 10 reasons why gasification, Pyrolysis & Plasma Incineration are not "green solutions". In addition, we have had 800 downloads of our Summer newsletter.

Our website is also green as our webhost announced in August that its offices and data centers are 100% powered by renewable energy. Our webhost doesn't generate wind power onsite, but they offsite their energy use by purchasing Renewable Energy Certificates.

We will continue to make our website a grassroots resource as we look for ways to improve. Feedback may be sent to **Mark Barker at webmaster@bredl.org** and to any BREDL staffer.

"BREDL's website is frequented by concerned citizens, students, faculty, government officials, state and federal environmental and energy agencies, industry, the media and even politicians."



Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League Mission Statement

The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is a regional, community-based non-profit environmental organization founded in 1984. BREDL encourages government agencies and citizens to take responsibility for conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL also functions as a “watchdog” of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions.

We are a true league of grassroots chapters working in rural communities in the Southeast. For twenty-five years the same organizing principles have guided our work: public health protection, environmental democracy, earth stewardship and social justice. Our mission is to prevent harm from air and water pollution and to create sustainable alternatives for sound waste management and economic development. Protecting children’s health from environmental poisons, empowering whole communities to engage in crucial decision making, and changing the balance of power to prevent injustice are key components of our work.

Thank you for helping make our world safer!

Yes, I support BREDL’s work! Send Check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629

or use your credit card at **www.BREDL.org**.

BREDL annual Membership is \$20 per person. All donations help BREDL’s mission and are tax deductible.

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