



BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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The LEAGUE LINE

Winter 2014

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Call It What You Want, Frackin' Waste is Still Poison

By Pastor Cary Rodgers, BREDL Community Organizer

Cary Rodgers of Peachland, NC was recently hired to work for the League in communities across North Carolina on a variety of environmental issues, including solid waste mega-dumps and hydrofracking, the invasive process for extracting natural gas. Rodgers states, "As a minister and healthy lifestyle advocate, it is a privilege to assist BREDL in empowering communities to have a unified voice to keep local, county, and state governments accountable to environmental health issues that affect the health of ALL its citizens."

Does changing the name of a poison make it less lethal? What about mixing it up with a harmless substance? Does that take away the dangerous effects of that lethal poison? Like most common sense people your answer would be, "No way, it's still the same." This is exactly what the oil and gas hydraulic fracturing industry is doing. Let's briefly explore how they are doing it.

In order to extract natural gas from shale rock thousands of feet underground, the oil and gas industry are using a very controversial method known as hydraulic fracturing, also known as "fracking". They drill vertically about 2000 to 5000 feet down into the earth piercing through pristine underground waterways and springs until they hit shale rock. Once they hit shale rock they then drill several thousand feet horizontally into that shale rock formation. Then they inject a mixture of sand, water and hazardous chemicals into the rock at high pressure in order to fracture the shale formation several times releasing the natural gas for extraction.

According to some estimates, it takes between 2 to 9 million of gallons of water ⁽¹⁾ and approximately 75,000 gallons of hazardous mixture of chemicals to "frack" a single well. What do they do with the millions of gallons of the poisonous water mixture when a single well is fracked? Approximately half of it remains in the

ground, contaminating for years to come. Because of the nature of the depth of the drilling operation, some of this industrial waste has been known to have dangerous levels of radioactive material. Each fracking site uses a combination of methods to dispose of their poisonous industrial mess. They dispose it in waste pools near the site lined with plastic, drill thousands of feet in the earth and inject it, repackage the industrial poison and send it to municipal solid waste landfills, or spread it over farmland. All of these disposal methods are hazardous to human health and the environment.

According to federal and state regulations, hazardous waste has special ways it has to be handled and disposed. It can be very expensive for companies to dispose of hazardous waste on a consistent basis. It can cost \$200 per ton to dispose of hazardous waste according to Therese Vick, environmental researcher with BREDL. But the fracking industry has a legal pass from our government regulators to get around this. The "repackaging" process of this hazardous fracking waste mixes or dilutes the hazardous waste with sawdust or other substances. Exploration & Production waste is exempt from federal laws regulating hazardous waste. ⁽²⁾ The industry can dump it in our landfills at a greatly reduced rate of around \$40 per ton instead of the average \$200 per ton for hazardous waste.

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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 Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

Grassroots Campaigns

Nothing creates hopefulness out of helplessness like a successful grassroots campaign - and our chapters have a history of winning. For over twenty-eight 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 prevented a multi-state ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator, a southeastern nuclear waste dump and a national nuclear waste dump. In the 2000's, our coordinated grassroots citizens' campaigns have had further victories. We won a legislative victory with the passage of the NC Solid Waste Act, effectively blocking at least four multi-state mega-dumps. Our Person County chapter convinced their Board of Commissioners to reject expansion of the Republic Services landfill. Our Cascade, Virginia, chapter shut down a huge hazardous waste incinerator. We eliminated mercury waste from the Stericycle incinerator, shut down a tire incinerator in Martinsville, won the landmark environmental justice court decision in Greene County, NC. Further, with our chapters we have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. 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. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is the most effective strategy for lasting change. ■

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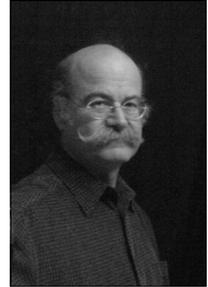


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LEAGUE LINE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 2014

Louis A. Zeller, Executive Director



The Rachel Carson Amendment

The great environmental pioneer Rachel Carson wrote that "If the Bill of Rights contains no guarantee that a citizen shall be secure against lethal poisons distributed either by private individuals or by public officials, it is surely only because our forefathers despite their considerable wisdom and foresight, could conceive of no such problem." (Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1962, page 7)



The year 2014 marks forty since Carson's death, yet the parable she relates in the opening of *Silent Spring*, "A Fable for Tomorrow," is no less trenchant:

There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings. The town lay in the midst of a checkerboard of prosperous farms, with fields of grain and hillsides of orchards where, in spring, white clouds of bloom drifted above the green fields. In autumn, oak and maple and birch set up a blaze of color that flamed and flickered across a backdrop of pines. Then foxes barked in the hills and deer silently crossed the fields, half hidden in the mists of the fall mornings.... So it had been from the days many years ago

when the first settlers raised their houses, sank their wells, and built their barns.

Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours.

Of course, Rachel Carson wrote largely about pesticides, which she renamed "biocides" because of their lethal impact on forms of life other than insects. And she recognized the threat of ionizing radiation from nuclear energy: "Radiation is no longer merely the background radiation of rocks, the bombardment of cosmic rays, the ultraviolet of the sun that existed before there was any life on earth; radiation is now the unnatural creation of man's tampering with the atom."

The public outcry created by *Silent Spring* led to a ban on DDT from agricultural use in 1972. However, today the industrial use of poisonous substances continues almost unabated, based on regulatory risk assessments and legally acceptable death rates. For example, retail shops are still permitted to dry-clean cloths with perchloroethylene, a carcinogenic solvent, even though

non-toxic alternatives are available. Household hand cleaners laced with toxic Triclosan contaminate wastewater and sewage sludge deposited on farm fields as fertilizer. Nuclear power plants routinely spew radioactive Tritium into the air and water. And chemical giant Monsanto sells the weed-killer Roundup to farmers and homeowners—components of which are carcinogenic and known to damage the liver, kidney, brain and lungs. The list goes on.

How can it be that after the passage of two generations we have let this continue? Worse, a new natural gas extraction industry—cracking underground rock with high-pressure chemicals and water—exempts itself from the few environmental, public health and safety laws still on the books. It is indeed a strange blight creeping over the land.

The Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution states, "No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." The Fourteenth Amendment adds that the States may not, "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Rachel Carson's Fable for Tomorrow painted a grim picture, but it was meant to prompt action. In part, she succeeded. But it remains to us to ensure that the next forty years complete the changes necessary so our legacy to future generations is not a silent spring. Either the fundamental principles established under the Constitution mean what they say, or Rachel Carson's admonition should become the 28th Amendment to the Constitution.

“Call It What You Want, It’s Still Fracking Waste!”

By Pastor Cary Rodgers

(continued from Page 1)

Even though the fracking industry can legally mix up the lethal poison with saw dust and change the name, one can still see that the poison lethal character has not changed. It is still the same. It is still hazardous waste that can wreak havoc on our health in our local communities, especially those who live around the landfill.

Each fracking well can generate approximately 4147 cubic feet of E&P waste. To put that in perspective, a typical tandem dump truck can hold approximately 30 cubic feet per load. How many trucks or loads would you need to pick up 4147 cubic feet of E&P waste? ⁽³⁾Now imagine thousands of trucks dumping this poisonous E&P waste in your landfill.

As you can see, E&P waste can be a very serious risk to every city or county that has a landfill, especially if it is privately owned. Even though fracking has not started in North Carolina, it is at high risk of becoming the fracking industry's E&P dumping ground. For example there are several national solid waste companies that own landfills throughout the US that accept or want E & P waste as a part of their business model. Many of these companies own landfills in North Carolina such as Republic Services, Inc.(Person, Montgomery, Mecklenburg, Bertie, and Caldwell Counties); Waste Connections, Inc. (Anson County); Waste Industries (Sampson County).

In the spring of 2013, BREDL's chapter in Anson County, Pee Dee W.A.L.L was instrumental in helping the county pass a five year moratorium on fracking in Anson County. But during the same county commissioners meeting in which the fracking moratorium was unanimously passed,

representatives from Waste Connections were asking the county for permission to double daily waste capacity in its Anson County landfill. They also asked to extend its operation for another 20 or 30 years. Many of the residents were against this. Waste Connections was asked if they would be accepting fracking waste. They said no. Because the industry does not call it fracking waste, it's called E&P waste. This issue kind of blindsided them. The focus was getting the fracking moratorium, the landfill request caught them by surprise. Why was the company asking for more dumping capacity when the local population is not growing? The state reports it would take appropriate 50 years or more to fill up Anson County's landfill at the current rate.

What does Waste Connections have up their sleeves in Anson County? Well, Ron Mittelstaedt CEO from Waste Connections gives us a good idea in a recent online interview with Waste 360. ⁽⁴⁾ He says, “We are the largest player in the US comfortably in the E & P space, on solid disposal site from the drilling (fracking) operations.” He continues, “That represents about 15% to 16% of the company today. We see that growing to 20% over time.” Mittelstaedt believes that the E & P waste sector will accelerate in 2014 and that his company is in the position to be the industry leader. There is no doubt that NC is poised to be a fracking dumping ground. Denise Lee, Pee Dee W.A.L.L president says, “Anson County is at major risk with E&P waste.” Referring to Waste Connections she says, “The landfill is self-monitored. That is like a fox guarding the hen house.”

There are many questions needing answers. Are NC landfills already accepting E&P waste without

knowing it? What are the hazardous chemicals mixed in the waste? Is there radioactive material in that waste? How would we know? Are the landfills equipped with ways to screen for radioactive E&P waste? Are there safeguards in place to ensure that E&P waste is not contaminating water and air? What are the long term health effects of resident living near these E&P waste dumping landfills?

Even though E&P waste is exempt from federal regulations, the harm is still the same. We must not rest until we get answers. It will be a challenge, but we are going to get them. This summer BREDL will release a report on fracking waste disposal. In the meantime, local communities can be active in getting local governments to put environmental safeguards and ordinances in place to protect its citizens from E&P waste. We must not sit quietly on this one.

(1) SRBC June 12, 2008 Elmira, New York presentation PDF:

<http://www.srbc.net/whatsnew/docs/MarcellusShaleandGasWellDrillingPowerpoint061208.pdf>

page 19: "The fracturing process uses an average of 2 to 9 million gallons of fresh water per well"

(2) US EPA "exemption on Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Wastes from

Federal Hazardous Waste Regulations .

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/industrial/special/oil/oil-gas.pdf>

(3) Drilling 101; <http://shaleshock.org/drilling-101/>

(4)CEO Ron Mittelstaedt Waste Connections Video Interview: <http://waste360.com/videos/wasteexpo-2013-interview-waste-connections-ceo-ron-mittelstaedt>

Freedom by the Hour: Charging for Public Records

By Therese Vick



The communities BREDL works in depend on the ability to request and review public records at a reasonable cost. The McCrory administration's decision to increase the cost for obtaining the records that belong to the public is a restrictive policy and troubling on several levels. The new policy will allow state agencies to charge by the hour for any request that takes over thirty minutes to "locate, copy, and refile" records. This rate will be determined by who the holder of the records is, and is many times minimum wage.

This new policy flies in the face of the intent of North Carolina's public records law. Attorney General Roy Cooper has stated that, "*Government agencies may not charge fees for inspecting public records. Under certain circumstances, fees may be charged for copies of public records. In general, the law says that copies of public records may be obtained free or at actual cost...*"¹

If unchallenged, the policy will result in hundreds of dollars in costs for access to information that belongs to every resident of this state and discourage requests for those records. Among other things, researching environmental problems will be more costly, perhaps prohibitively so, for organizations like BREDL and our chapters who work to protect public health and the environment, as well as the communities who are threatened by the siting of or live with polluting facilities.

One of the excuses given by the administration was that large requests were very time consuming and took staff away from other duties. The need for large requests is necessitated by having to play the find-a-record game with state agencies. Public information officers at these

agencies are supposed to facilitate the flow of information, access to which is in the public interest and required by law.

Although generally helpful, public information officers do not provide a road map for those trying to piece together the facts on a particular issue. Obtaining access to the necessary documents can be frustrating and time consuming for the reviewer and it is not for the fainthearted. Navigating the maze of inconsistent agency filing systems, deciding what records are pertinent, identifying record holders and determining the location of the necessary files are largely left up to the requester, which contributes to the scope of the request.

Having made many such requests, here is a typical file appointment at the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources: making an appointment at some central file room, either at the Raleigh Central Office or in one of the regions. There, you will be provided with some, but not nearly all, of the information related to a facility. In order to assess a permitting decision or enforcement action, you must review individual staff files – what is available in one of the central file rooms and possibly emails and memos relating to these activities. Too many times trips are made to state agencies only to discover that you were not given all that you asked for, that documents referenced in the materials provided are not present or that entire files are missing.

On July 27, BREDL made a substantial records request for documents in reference to any potential involvement members of North Carolina's Mining and Energy Commission might have had with the end-run around the fracking chemical

disclosure rule. It had been

passed out of two committees then stopped dead in its tracks. It took DENR almost three weeks to comply with that request. According to the DENR website, the new policy-advising members of the public that they would be charged by the hour for records to be compiled was posted July 28. The timing was probably an interesting coincidence; however, review of those records revealed that a member of the Mining and Energy Commission had indeed met with international gas and oil giant Halliburton's representative after his appointment to the commission.

Access to our records is vital and should be held dear by every North Carolinian. Any attempt to inhibit the flow of information by making the cost of obtaining it prohibitive flies in the face of transparency and is a sign of a bureaucracy run amok.

Contact Governor McCrory and tell him that North Carolinians should not have to pay for the records that belong to the people!

Governor Pat McCrory, Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center,
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301
Phone: (919) 814-2000
Fax: (919) 733-2120**Email:**
governor.office@nc.gov

Twitter @PatMcCroryNC

¹ "North Carolina Guide to Open Government and Public Records." North Carolina Department of Justice and the North Carolina Press Association. 2008. <http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/academics/communications/ncopengov/agncppapub.pdf>

ANTI-NUKE CROWD OVERWHELMS CHARLOTTE HEARING

by L. Zeller



Photo by Paul Palmer

The large ballroom at the Charlotte Hilton was packed. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission had to bring in extra chairs to accommodate the hundreds of people who had come from Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina to speak their minds about the risks of nuclear power. The subject of the hearing was an environmental impact statement for the so-called waste confidence rule, a regulatory band-aid which, until it was overturned, supported all nuclear power plant licensing in the United States (10 CFR §51.23). (See the Summer 2012 *League Line* for the legal story.)

According to the NRC staff, turnout was perhaps the largest of the dozen hearings held across the country. Public testimony began shortly after 7 PM and continued until well after 10 PM. The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League rented a hospitality suite adjacent to the hearing room, a sanctuary with plenty of food and coffee. It offered escape from the

pro-nuclear ambiance elsewhere in the hotel, away from power company public relation's staff and other nuclear defenders, some from North America's Young Generation in Nuclear, an astroturf organization of nuclear employees.

Before the hearing, a large anti-nuke demonstration was held outside the hotel, organized by many organizations: Sierra Club chapters from South Carolina and Tennessee, Greenpeace, Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Environmentalists Inc., and others. BREDL chapters there included Neighborhood Environmental Watch, SAFE Carolinas, Pee Dee WALL, Save Linville Gorge Wilderness, and Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff. The rally signs read: Don't Waste America! Radiation Knows No Boundaries! No Fukushima!

The decision on waste confidence is supposed to be completed by September 2014. But a real solution to the long-term disposal of highly radioactive used nuclear

fuel may still lie decades in the future. There was a period of twenty years—from 1982 to 2002—from the passage of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to the US Department of Energy's recommendation of Yucca Mountain as a suitable site for a high-level nuclear waste dump. This finding was itself overturned in 2010. The Gordian Knot presented by nuclear power plants which must be unraveled by the NRC involves the management of an intractable waste problem with severe environmental justice impacts.

It took a ruling from the second-highest court in the land to force the NRC to address the risks of nuclear waste disposal at power plant sites. The huge turnout at the November public hearing, held on a weeknight, in a city with the headquarters of the largest investor-owned utility in the world—Duke Energy, was testament to the broad public mistrust of nuclear power.

Celebrating



30 Years!

In March of 1984, fifty merchants and homemakers, farmers and teachers met at the Mission House of the Holy Trinity Church to organize the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. Today we are a league of more than sixty local chapters that have served communities in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee. Our work continues to be guided by the founding principles of earth stewardship, public health protection, environmental democracy and social justice.

To celebrate the history of BREDL's chapters, victories, and campaigns of the past thirty years, we are collecting stories and compiling a history, of the people, by the people. This year, we ask you, BREDL members of present and past chapters, to share your story with us through interviews, articles, memoirs, journals, and photographs. Please help us capture the stories of BREDL's community organizers over the years, whose visionary leadership, determination and dedication to justice have guided the way for those still forging the work of environmental justice and public health protection today.

Please submit stories, testimonials, articles, or other documentation to BRED's thirtieth anniversary campaign committee, including DVDs, video or audio tapes. These can be converted to digital and uploaded to our website. We also ask that you design a "BREDL moment" with a photo and caption for our anniversary website, to be displayed online all year long. To see examples of "BREDL moments," as well as the new 30th anniversary BREDL logo, visit <http://www.bredl.org/bredl30/index.htm>.

Send your pictures, news articles, quotes, cartoons and stories to katedunnagan@gmail.com. All stories submitted before March 1 may appear in our 2014 Anniversary edition of the League Line newsletter. Stories, photos, recordings, tapes and interviews will be accepted all year. We hope you will contribute and help us collect your community's story.

All members, past and present, who would like to work with collecting and documenting BREDL's thirty year history are invited to join the anniversary campaign committee. We are planning an exciting campaign, with a traveling road

show tour and other fundraising events.

Please consider making your annual membership dues, or a tax deductible donation, for \$30, \$60, or \$90 to BREDL this year, in honor of thirty years of community-based action.

Donations can be made online at www.BREDL.org or by check, mailed to the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, PO Box 88, Glendale Springs, NC 28629. Thank YOU for being part of the legacy of grassroots victories that we celebrate in 2014!

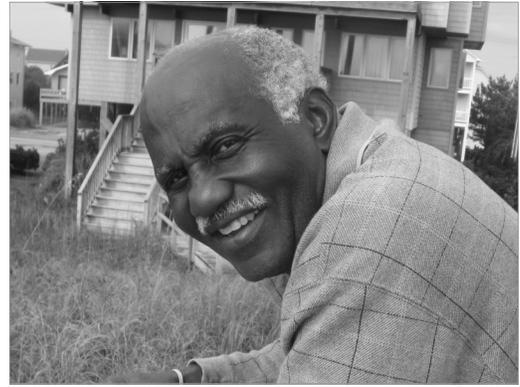
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By Kate Dunnagan



Update on the Relocation of the Residents of Hyde Park, Augusta, GA



By Charles Utley, Community Organizer and Campaign Coordinator

The residents of Hyde Park have begun to see their dreams fulfilled, Mr. Lou Zeller, Executive Director of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, best describes this community when he says “This community has been past being shovel ready”. It has been 15 years that this community has been looking forward to the day when they would be moving to a new location free from pollution and contamination. Relocation is a process that has taught this community that persistence is a venture. Therefore, I would encourage any community who is seeking relocation to realize that everything is not equal when it comes to relocation. There are many factors that a community needs to be aware of. Many members have passed on without seeing this dream come true, but their fight and legacy will not go unrewarded. Relocation has ignited a new element of pride in the

community, because what they were fighting for has begun to come to fruition.

Environmental Justice has played a major role in this community, the book *“Polluted Promises”*, written by Dr. Melissa Checker, is now available in bookstores across America. Students who desire to earn a degree in Environmental Justice are now required to read this book in many major colleges and universities. The reason is because of the injustice that was experienced by this community. An Environmental Protection Agency Documentary *“Despaired but Determined”*, was developed with the assistance of Lou Zeller, Executive Director of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, just one of the many contributions provided by this organization. There have been numerous studies on health effects, soil and water contamination, and hearings on Capitol Hill and

visits to other polluted communities who have faced these same types of environmental injustices. It all comes down to “Environmental Justice being equal and equitable for all communities”. It is a sad thing to say that the money that was spent by the government on trying to prove this community was safe for the residents to stay could have moved this community ten times over with funds to spare.

Although the process has begun the progress is moving slowly, there are still many obstacles to overcome. We hope through the efforts of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League Environmental Justice Programs, we will prepare other communities a pathway, a blueprint to follow. There is a beacon of hope that through this process it will serve as the gateway for other communities to follow.



Citizens from across Virginia stood up and said, "No, Virginia Uranium Mining"

Letter to the editor from Anne Cockrell

I do realize — and am very grateful — that the Danville Register & Bee supports Virginia's continued moratorium on uranium mining. The editorial board has made that clear with several wonderful, insightful editorials on the subject.

What's galling to me is that the No. 1 story for 2013 should have been about citizens from across Virginia who stood up and said, "No, Virginia Uranium Inc., a financially backed Canadian company (to the tune of millions of dollars, spread far and

wide), is not coming to Virginia and making an environmental mess, regardless of the so-called 'new and improved' ways utilized in the mining and milling of uranium."

The No. 1 story is not that VUI has seemingly suffered a temporary setback and is now having to regroup. A picture of VUI's Patrick Wales using a Geiger counter was on the front page, along with the Dan River Region's No. 1 story for 2013: "Mining Halt" (Jan. 1).

Because VUI lost (thus far), why weren't the victors' pictures on the front page? It could have been a photo of jubilant Keep The Ban supporters taken at the General Assembly last January, when one of four proposed bills to tax uranium "severed from the earth" and to keep the mining industry to only within Pittsylvania County died a swift death

due to a lack of legislative support. A snapshot of the KTB billboards on local roads would have been more appropriate than Wales measuring radioactivity at Coles.

The No. 1 story for the region is that the efforts of mostly unpaid citizens (for six-plus years, and counting), who organized, rallied, lobbied state legislators and even caught the governor-elect's ear, culminated in keeping an industry out of Virginia that could potentially harm people, air and waterways. That's the true, No. 1 story — the resilience of Virginians and North Carolinians who share life sustaining waterways and those from across the region, who said, "No" to an industry with a terrible environmental track record, one that is looking to set up business in Virginia.

<http://www.godanriver.com/o>

Piedmont Residents in Defense of the Environment (PRIDE)

Virginia chapter of BREDL



BREDL Brings “No Toxic Trespass, No Fracking Way!”

Tour across NC with Lois Gibbs

By Kate Dunnagan



In a show of strength and solidarity, BREDL brought a barnstorming tour through the shale basin regions of North Carolina in November. The purpose of the four-day tour was to show support for the people in communities who would be harmed by the natural gas industry, should fracking come to NC. Bringing a clear voice of experience from communities on the front-lines of fracking and other sites of hazardous pollution was the renowned grassroots leader Lois Gibbs, founder and Executive Director of the national environmental justice non-profit organization Center for Health, Environment, and Justice (CHEJ).

Speaking about the impacts of hydrofracking, Gibbs said, “What I’ve witnessed in fracking areas were wrecked communities which mirrored the broken rock out-of-sight and underground.” She blamed the boom-town phenomenon created by natural gas and other fossil fuel industries for the social ills and added, “Rising levels of crime and disease come to town with the drilling rigs.” Gibbs cited an independent study of rural communities before and after hydrofracking revealed a 62% rise in gonorrhea and chlamydia, two sexually transmitted diseases. She concluded, “We don’t need it. We don’t want it!”

Therese Vick, the League’s community organizer most familiar with North Carolina’s ongoing decision-making on fracking, spoke about the timing of this campaign. She said, “We must act now to alert those communities most at risk, a region which spans the state from the Virginia line to South Carolina. Our goal is to simply block fracking in North Carolina.”

The four-day *No Toxic Trespass—No Fracking Way!* tour included press conferences, community meetings, school

presentation and public forums, and covered the Triassic Shale Basin, visiting Germanton, Sanford, Raleigh, Pittsboro and Wadesboro, all prime targets for the fracking industry. Many people attended the events in each of these locations, along with reporters and government officials, to hear Lois Gibbs and to share their own thoughts, stories, and strategies. One of the key concerns for people who live in these communities is the hydrofracking industry’s seizure of landowners’ rights. Lou Zeller, BREDL Executive Director, spoke about the injustices of forced pooling and split estates, and said, “We know that mineral rights under hundreds of homes in North Carolina have been severed and retained by developers hoping to cash in on hydrofracking.”

At a press conference at the Lee County Courthouse, the League called upon Governor McCrory to defend the state’s rural and suburban communities from fracking. In a letter to the Governor delivered on November 19, the League requested a meeting with him to determine what his administration is prepared to do to protect residents living in the potential fracking zones of North Carolina, asking: “Will you take action to protect the property rights of citizens of this state?”

Zeller concluded the conference with a call to action: “Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is now working with landowners in the identified shale basins, as well as those in unexplored areas. We help them find out if the mineral rights to their property have been severed. If you want help, give us a call.”

Despite the dangers to ground water, soil and air contamination, and the controversial violation of personal and property rights brought by U.S. gas companies, Governor McCrory and

industry-oriented lawmakers in North Carolina want to bring fracking to North Carolina. Although state rules and regulations have not yet been written into policy, lawmakers in NC are aggressively pursuing exploration of shale across the state—from the Blue Ridge mountains to the coastline. Shale basins, porous strata of rock containing pockets of natural gas roughly 7,000 feet underground, have already been identified in fourteen counties across the Piedmont of North Carolina, and state authorities are searching for more. Communities in these fourteen counties are organizing with the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and our allies to protect their land, water, air, livelihoods and families from the dire environmental and public health consequences that have already devastated communities in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Texas.

Lois Marie Gibbs founded the Love Canal Homeowners’ Association in 1978 near Niagara Falls, NY, and CHEJ in 1981 with the vision of providing critical organizing and technical assistance to communities engaged in their own environmental struggles. Their missions states, “CHEJ mentors a movement, empowering people to build healthy communities, and preventing harm to human health caused by exposure to environmental threats” (www.chej.org). As partners and allies, CHEJ and BREDL have worked together since 1984 to protect people and communities from harmful and polluting industries and build capacity in these communities to organize themselves. Lois’s leadership and the work of CHEJ on the front lines of the modern grassroots environmental movement are inspirational to many people, and it was a great honor for the BREDL members, volunteers, and staff to co-host with Lois a series of events across the shale basin area in North Carolina.



**No Toxic Trespass—No Fracking Way!
2013 Tour Schedule**

November 18

Community meeting, Germanton United Methodist Church, Germanton, NC, organized by No Fracking in Stokes! Winston Salem Press Conference.

November 19

Press conference, Lee County Courthouse, Sanford, NC. Candlelight vigil and community meeting, Cumnock Union United Methodist Church, Sanford, NC, organized by Cumnock Preservation Association.

November 20

Press Briefing, Raleigh, Pullen Community Center. Informational Meeting with NC State U students, Harrelson Satellite Student Center. Public Forum Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro, NC.

November 21

Press conference, Wadesboro, NC, Hampton Allen Library Luncheon at the library for public and media representatives provided by Pee Dee WALL.

"It was very surreal meeting and speaking with Ms. Gibbs, especially since I wrote a 20-page paper on her in high school. She emphasized the power of the student body to affect public opinion about the issue. At the end of the day, people can think about how bad fracking is, but it's really action that makes things happen. Co-heading this event will always be a highlight in my N.C. State career." -Amy Thai, sophomore, student organizer, Fossil Free NCSU

When standing in the mile-long shadow of such a looming "Goliath" as the gas industry, it is encouraging to receive a visit from such modern day 'David's, as giant-slayers Lois Gibbs and the good folks of BREDL. In their hard fought battles, clearly they have gained some important insights into corporations and communities and the balance of power we will need to find in order to rescue our fate. I feel inspired and encouraged by their presence here and I look forward to working with them, and the many other people they are bringing together around this vital issue. -Travis Cohn, Siler City

Thanks to Lois Gibbs for coming to share in our fight . I thank BREDL and everyone involved for working so hard to help NC people fight fracking from coming . Bringing an American Icon like Lois was inspiring ! I have posted a video blog from the press conference at the Lee Co. Courthouse, a link to the Sanford Herald , "Protesters condemn fracking at rally" Even a few pictures of a local Commissioner & a Gasman. - Terica Luxton, Sanford



Lois Gibbs inspired us in Germanton with her clear spoken and passionate advocacy for human rights in the face of greed: fracking must not be allowed. She said that NC has the chance to stop the insanity -- a chance she did not have at Love Canal. We, the people, must persevere to keep our environment clean, our communities cohesive, our infrastructure stable, and the health of our children uncompromised. We can do it. - Martha Hartley, Stokes County



My home was Pennsylvania and I still have ties there; a best friend lives in Amity and she talks about people and animals getting sick, disrespectful behavior of gas workers, and division created between neighbors, when one signs a lease and the other doesn't. When I went to hear Lois Gibbs speak in Wadesboro, I attended with a heavy heart; my adopted state of NC looking like it may also be fracked. But Lois's light is so bright--- I left the meeting feeling uplifted. Her efforts, along with PeeDee Wall and BREDL, have rekindled my hope once again. - Trish Little, Stanly County

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**North Carolina No Toxic Trespass—No Fracking Way!
2013 Tour with BREDL and Lois Gibbs of CHEJ**



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-six 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.

It’s easier than ever to **join, renew and donate** online.

Check out our secure online donation forms at www.bredl.org.

Yes, I support BREDL’s work! Send your check to: BREDL PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 28629 or use your credit card at www.BREDL.org. For more information contact BREDL at 336-982-2691.

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