



Winter 2017

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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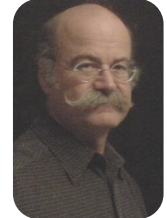
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The Way Forward

Director's Report

Louis A. Zeller

January 10, 2017



Do clean air and water have a price? Can we place a dollar value on good health? Should the things we hold most dear be subject to a marketplace?

The answer to these questions forms the backbone of an argument against the commodification of things which ought not to be bought and sold. In the *Wealth of Nations*, even Adam Smith recognized the inherent flaw of the "invisible hand," which extended privileges unfairly to some parts of society at the expense of others.

Some things simply should not be bought and sold. The air we breathe and the water we drink are part of the commons, entities owned by none and shared by all. We don't own the commons.

Subjecting things which are priceless to market forces is immoral. Cap-and-trade, pollution credits and market-based solutions are concepts which attach price tags to pollution, allowing it to be exchanged for a fee. Such schemes have become a reversal of fortune for polluters, turning an illegal activity—like filling in wetlands or emitting pollution from a smokestack—into an authorized and

profitable enterprise. In a similar way, so-called informed consent applied to the acceptance of radioactive waste puts a for sale sign on a community.

The Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and other environmental laws are legislative landmarks which have served the country well. Although they are imperfect instruments, they nevertheless hold polluters accountable and require strict reductions in waste and pollution, and have provided models for other nations.

If America truly aspires to be an exceptional nation, then let us determine what it is that is remarkable and worthy of imitation. In his book, *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates says, "I propose to take our countrymen's claims of American exceptionalism seriously, which is to say I propose subjecting our country to an exceptional moral standard." Part of the moral high ground should certainly be the elimination of poverty caused by the ruination of communities by polluting industries and energy production.

Valerie Williams, a leader of our chapter Halifax-

Northampton Concerned Stewards, coined the phrase "predatory exportation" to describe what she is fighting in her community: the seizure of homes and farms by the pipeline industry under the deceitful use of eminent domain. Indeed, the destruction brought by hydrofracking for natural gas is a form of predatory violence against both natural and human communities.

This institutionalized form of eco-violence must be countered by non-violent means. Destruction of private property by an impersonal agency cannot be allowed to devolve into counter-violence on our part. Jonathan Schell, in *The Unconquerable World*, states, "Violence is the method by which the ruthless few can subdue the passive many. Nonviolence is a means by which the active many can overcome the ruthless few."

Finally, "Tis not in numbers but in unity that our great strength lies: yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world" wrote Thomas Paine in *Common Sense*. This is truly exceptional, worthy of imitation and I believe points the way forward. ■



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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.

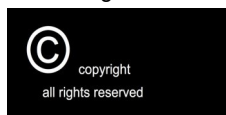
Moving into the future

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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(BREDL)**

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BREDL Chapter
Concern for the New Generation (CNG)
Vows to Continue Fight Against Compressor Station



by Sharon Ponton, Community Organizer

BREDL has two Virginia chapters along the path of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Most of my work in the last several months has centered around Buckingham County, VA assisting in any and all ways possible with the efforts of Concern for the New Generation (CNG) to persuade the Board of Supervisors to deny a special use permit application for a 57,000 horsepower compressor station.

The compressor station is slated to be built on the remnants of a 1700's era plantation. The original land grant to Col. William Harding Perkins by King George II was completed in 1747. Col. William Moseley built Variety Shades and gave it to his daughter, Marcia Louis upon her marriage to Thomas Moseley Bondurant. A community of African-Americans was built surrounding the Variety Shades plantation after the Civil War by freed slaves. The surnames of some of those families are Gooden, Perkins, Mosely, and Laury. Today, descendants of some those freed slaves still live in what is known as the Union Hill/ Union Grove community.

Among CNG activities held to support their cause were community-wide dinners, fundraisers, strategic planning sessions, the placement of radio and print ads, and members of CNG attending every meeting of the local Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors since August. Kathie Mosley, CNG's co-chair, presented a Community Veto Resolution to the Board of Supervisors in November. CNG members

John & Ruby Laury presented studies proving the propensity of toxic industrial projects being located in low-income and/or communities of color. Their testimony regarding environmental racism was sound and moving. Ruby Laury told the Board of Supervisors, "While the descendants of a plantation owner rake in millions and live somewhere else, we are left to face the health and safety risks of their folly." Other topics covered by CNG members centered on the noise and air pollution they would be forced to endure if the compressor station is ever built.

The ACP FERC filings claim there is no cultural or historical significance in this community. CNG members and BREDL believe the opposite. On January 5, 2017, the Buckingham Board of Supervisors ignored its citizens, its own ordinances and laws when it shamelessly approved a Special Use Permit for the compressor station. CNG and BREDL plan to move forward to prove to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency and FERC, that the siting of the proposed compressor station in the center of a Civil War reconstruction-era African American community, including its historical churches and burial grounds is a significant environmental injustice. The Union Hill/Union Grove community will continue to fight to stop Dominion from every breaking ground for the proposed compressor station. ■

Farm Aid Funds for BREDL

By Carolyn Reilly, VA Community Organizer and co-owner of Four Corners Farm



Each year, Farm Aid accepts grant applications from organizations working to help small scale, family farmers. Through their mass fundraising efforts, including the annual Farm Aid concert as well as ethically made products (t-shirts, hats and posters, etc.), Farm Aid raises hundreds of thousands of dollars to distribute to a variety of other non-profits who are on the ground in communities working with farmers. The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is proud to announce that a grant from Farm Aid has been given to further the organizing work already happening in rural communities; from North Carolina to Virginia, the funds received will help empower and equip family farmers fighting proposed fracked gas pipelines. As a small-scale family farmer myself, I know the struggle of making a living while living on the land. That's why in early 2016, I reached out to Farm Aid when I heard that they would be having their yearly concert here in Virginia. After making contact with their farm advocate, I was grateful to be able to share our struggle and fight to protect our farm from the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline. My husband and I decided to attend the concert event in September 2016, and we were fortunate to go back stage, meet several performers

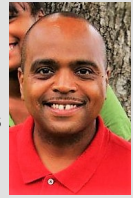
as well as be interviewed on Willie Nelson's XM Radio Station. A connection was also made with Hilde Steffey who is the Program Director and handles grants for non-profits. We exchanged business cards and Lou Zeller had a follow-up conversation with Hilde; then BREDL took steps to submit a grant application! The complete list of grants given by Farm Aid was published mid-December and BREDL was included under the section: "TAKING ACTION TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM: Working to promote fair farm policies and grassroots organizing campaigns to defend and bolster family farm centered agriculture." Indeed, the \$5,000 grant from Farm Aid will allow BREDL to continue its work to organize farmers and rural residents in North Carolina and Virginia against natural gas pipelines and to develop local government resolutions. ■

Learn more about grants given by Farm Aid at
www.farmaid.org/our-work/grants/

Learn more about Carolyn's family farm at
www.fourcornersfarm.com

Six out of Eight And Growing to Stop the ACP

By Pastor Cary Rodgers



Duke Energy and Dominion, partners of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, propose to lay 554 miles of a methane leaking and potentially explosive pipeline bomb close to breathing, living souls who care for the health of their families, clean water, a healthy environment and the right to protect their land. This natural gas pipeline is proposed to come from the fracked Marcellus Shale in West Virginia through Virginia to North Carolina. In North Carolina the ACP would bulldoze through at least 800 private citizens' land. Add to that those who live within a two mile radius and the blast zone of the pipeline and the number in North Carolina grows between 50,000 to 100,000 living breathing souls! Not one of these precious souls should be harmed or killed because of a private company's greed to grow more profit shares. Not one piece of private property should be stolen through eminent domain from hard working Americans for a company's private use. This is UN-American, unjust, and a violation of property rights.

This ACP disaster will not benefit the private landowner or the community. Duke and Dominion have put a lot of perfume on a stinky project. They are trying to convince

landowners to sign away pieces of their dreams, plans, hard work, legacy, and rights for an easement agreement that offers limited use, headaches, worry, and legal liability on property that they still have to pay taxes on.

There are many landowners and community citizens in North Carolina who already smell the putrid antics of the ACP. With the organizing work of BREDL, many have taken a bold stand in unity to establish community action groups along the ACP to fight against this disaster. In the past year and a half BREDL has worked hard to organize community group chapters in six of the eight counties in North Carolina that are on the proposed route to fight against the ACP. These counties include Cumberland, Johnston, Wilson, Nash, Halifax, and Northampton. With BREDL's assistance, these groups are very active and successful in organizing the power of the people, educating the community, and implementing strategies to stop the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Their hope and faith are strong and they are moving forward in unison every step of the way. To learn more about these chapters in North Carolina fighting the ACP go to www.pipeline.net.



**Cumberland County Caring Voices (C3V)
is the first chapter organized to stop the ACP in North Carolina.**

In North Carolina, Lee County Wins Key Coal Ash Struggle



By Therese Vick

In mid-November 2014, Chatham and Lee County residents were stunned to find out that they had been targeted for the disposal of millions of tons of coal ash. The ash would be coming primarily from Duke Energy impoundments across North Carolina, but nothing would prevent it being transported from anywhere. EnvironmentalLEE was already a BREDL chapter, and had been fighting the possibility of fracking in Lee County. In neighboring Chatham County, Chatham Citizens Against Coal Ash Dump was formed.

In December 2016, a little over two years later, Lee County residents were given an early Christmas gift- Duke Energy announced that the proposed coal ash dump was now considered a "contingency". This was welcome news for the community and BREDL chapter EnvironmentalLEE, although as member Marsha Ligon stated in the Fayetteville Observer, "We are absolutely thrilled, but we also know we have to be guarded at the same time, we have to be vigilant and

watch every move Duke Energy makes."

Duke's decision not only reflects ELEE's work and resolve, it is a testament to grassroots organizing. There have been many ups and downs in this struggle against the energy giant, and often morale was low. There were new challenges- including the discovery that wells in the Colon community were contaminated by hexavalent chromium. ELEE responded quickly to this public health threat, organizing donations of water for the community, arranging donations and purchasing filters that reduced the hexavalent chromium and other pollutants in the water. They didn't stop there- EnvironmentalLEE has continued to advocate for local government to provide the residents in the Colon community with access to clean water. In fact, the controversy in Lee County over hexavalent chromium was instrumental in breaking the story of the interference that officials in the McCrory administration brought to

bear concerning "do not/do drink" advisories to residents living near Duke Energy's coal ash impoundments in North Carolina. For background information see BREDL Between the Lines blog post: <http://bredlbetweenthelines2.blogspot.com/2016/04/deqs-weird-science.html>

Through it all, EnvironmentalLEE maintained the ethical position that no community should be dumped on. They work closely with and support their sister chapter in Chatham County, and remain firm for a safer solution for coal ash disposal. Monitoring the leachate coming from the Brickhaven coal ash dump and the sludge being spread on Chatham County fields are also on their radar. ELEE also turned fundraising for legal and other expenses into "funraising"- including hosting a Bigfoot Festival in late September 2016.

Although the struggle against Duke Energy is not over, there are things that communities can take away from this victory:

- * Organize and stay active because you never know what is down the road
- * Never give up
- * Be creative and remember to have fun
- * We only have to last one day longer than they do



Lee County elementary student



EnvironmentalLEE meeting at Mt Calvary Baptist Church in the Colon Community

The following letter on pages 9, 10 ,and 11 serves as a League Line update
on the nuclear campaign at Vogtle
and also provides a snapshot of the Alice-in-Wonderland
(otherwise known as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.)



Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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December 2, 2016

Stephen G. Burns, Chairman

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

RE: Docket Nos. 52-025-LA-2 and 52-026-LA-2, Vogtle Electric Generating Plant

Dear Chairman Burns:

On behalf of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and our chapter Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff, I write to request that the Commission consider the conditions under which we have had to work in the ongoing matter. As you may know, we have filed an appeal from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board order LBP-16-10 denying our petition to intervene. I will not repeat here the arguments which are in the record of this proceeding and which are certainly available to you. Rather, I would like to put before the Commission the tendentious manner in which the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has conducted the proceeding which led to our appeal.

On August 3, 2016, the Board heard oral arguments on standing and contention admissibility via online video conference. As a *pro se* litigator, I have appeared before several ASLB panels, and did represent the petitioners on that day. Only designated representatives were permitted to present oral arguments.

The hearing was anticipated to take two hours; however, it went much longer. The immediate issues properly posed for discussion by the Board were standing and contention admissibility. But it soon veered into the wilderness of technical issues, which were relevant to the case but which we were preemptively prohibited from presenting by the format of the hearing and the decisions of the ASLB panel. The transcript of the oral argument details the attempt to divine technical issues without the participation of an expert, one whom we made available.

JUDGE TRIKOUROS: Is this a 3D mixing analysis of some sort? I don't understand it.

MR. ZELLER: Well, that's an engineering question, and I think that is precisely what is lacking here. I mean, these are technical questions which we would hope to bring up, with the assistance of our technical expert and nuclear engineer....¹

Of course, I was prepared to present and argue the issues of standing and contention admissibility. I did so. However, the nature of the questions went beyond the scope of 10 CFR § 2.309 and into nuclear engineering issues.

¹ Oral Argument Transcript at 21, line 9-15

(continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

JUDGE TRIKOUROS: But, Mr. Gundersen, then, or whoever could answer this question, would it -- does it make sense that an analysis would result in telling you to put igniters further away from the IRWST or further in the IRWST? I don't understand -- where there already are other igniters. I don't understand that point.

MR. ZELLER: You don't understand why there is a problem -- I'm sorry, Judge Trikouros.

JUDGE TRIKOUROS: Well, what I don't understand is what this analysis is that you're referring to that might tell you to put the igniters either further away from the IRWST or further into the IRWST.²

As stated in the ASLB order establishing the August 3rd oral arguments, "The argument is not an evidentiary hearing, and the participants therefore should not attempt to introduce evidence during the argument."³ Yet non-legal questions requiring technical expertise continued to be raised by the judges throughout the hearing. I had taken the precaution of having our technical expert, Arnold Gundersen, enter an appearance so he could be available to answer these very questions. However, even after being apprised of this, ASLB Chairman Spritzer prevented his expert testimony.

MR. ZELLER: Computer analysis is done on a routine basis, and so I would call upon our technical expert at this point, Mr. Gundersen, to point out what other type of analysis might actually be done. In fact, I believe that the outfit he works for has investigated such scenarios.

CHAIRMAN SPRITZER: Mr. Zeller, if you want to talk with him, as I suggested, that's fine. But we want to hear from you. We don't want him testifying. As we said, this is not an evidentiary hearing.⁴

Nevertheless, the technical questions continued at length along a line of inquiry appropriate for an evidentiary hearing, not a preliminary hearing for standing and contention admissibility.

JUDGE TRIKOUROS: Now, so, I still don't understand the analysis that Mr. Gundersen is referring to. We never did get that cleared up in this hearing so far, or in this oral argument so far.

CHAIRMAN SPRITZER: All right, well, maybe you can address that in rebuttal. We're already past 11:00, so we've gone from a half hour for your presentation to an hour and a half.⁵

In addition to the nuclear engineering questions which dominated the hearing, a novel proposition was raised during an exchange between Judge Arnold and NRC Counsel Marcia Carpentier. At the crux of the matter was our contention that rather than performing a rigorous gaseous diffusion and flame propagation analysis as required under

² Oral argument Transcript at 22-23, lines 17-25 and 1-4

³ ASLBP Order Scheduling Oral Argument, June 29, 2016

⁴ Oral Argument Transcript at 29-30, lines 24-25 and 1-9

⁵ Oral Argument Transcript at 63-64, pages 19-25 and 1-2

(Continued on next page)

10 CFR § 50.44, the licensee chose to place two hydrogen igniters in a “likely area” by relying upon the personal “engineering judgment” of its engineers. The issue of relative safety was raised by Judge Arnold:

JUDGE ARNOLD: Contention one states, quote, the proposed modifications by the Southern Company creates an extremely dangerous situation rather than mitigating it. Is there any rule stating that all proposed license amendments must increase safety? ⁶

NRC’s representative cited from the power plant design certification—10 CFR Part 52, VIII, No. 4—which states that the Commission would deny a request for an exemption from Tier 1 requirements under certain circumstances. Judge Arnold persisted in this line of inquiry, whether a decrement or reduction in safety is permitted by the NRC:

JUDGE ARNOLD: Okay. So, if it's significant degradation to safety, it will be rejected. But, that's suggests that there's no clear requirement that a license amendment not decrement safety in any way. You could hypothesize a situation in which there would be a slight decrement in safety and still approve a license amendment? ⁷

After a brief consultation with the NRC staff on whether a reduction in safety margin could be permitted, the answer was “yes, if it’s not significant.” ⁸ This statement is now part of the record. Will the Commission allow this to stand?

In their license amendment request, the licensee said that they used engineering judgement, which violates the requirement for “analysis” in 10 CFR § 50.44.” After our petition, they claim after the fact that they did use analysis. They are using the ASLB process to submit a modification to their license. And if the addition of two hydrogen igniters was within the current licensing basis, why was a license amendment necessary?

The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board order LBP-16-10 should be overturned by the Commission. The proper venue for presentation of the technical arguments only glimpsed during oral argument is an evidentiary hearing, one denied by the ASLB’s ruling on our petition to intervene and request for hearing.

Respectfully,



Louis A. Zeller, Executive Director
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
LETTER TO CHAIRMAN BURNS
filed through the NRC Electronic
Information Exchange system
this 2nd day of December, 2016

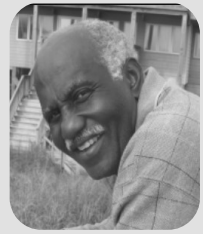
⁶ Oral Argument Transcript at 114, lines 1-6

⁷ Oral Argument Transcript at 115, lines 5-12

⁸ Oral Argument Transcript at 115, lines 14-15

The Fight for Justice Continues

by Charles N. Utley, Associate Director and Environmental Justice Coordinator



There is a growing movement to protect our environment from those who fail to see the beauty of our land, lakes and mountains. Our work in Georgia, particularly The Shell Bluff Community located in Burke County Georgia, is where our beautiful land, lakes, and streams are threatened daily by those who only see an opportunity to contaminate, disturb and destroy our natural beauty. The Shell Bluff Community has the beautiful Briar Creek stream flowing through its farm lands. This is a place of calm and tranquility, but it is threaten by nearby Plant Vogtle and Savannah River Site pollution. Shell Bluff is bordered by Plant Vogtle and Savannah River Site. The Savannah River which flows through the north boundaries of the community, carrying all the known and unknown contaminants from nearby International Paper, Olin Corporation and run-off from nuclear waste water from the Savannah River Site, makes the living conditions for the residents almost unbearable health wise. There is no sense of care for the residents and their farm land, not to mention the children and the elderly. Therefore, as we travel through the community, there is always something new that is being forced on the residents, making them hostage in their own community, such as this pipeline below. This gas pipeline pictured below exploded in Perkins, Georgia, on the south boundary of Shell Bluff located between Waynesboro and Midville. Snuggled under the powerline of Plant Vogtle makes this a double concern for the residents and the environment.

The commitment that we have through the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League and the Concern Citizens of Shell Bluff is to make sure that we don't abandon this community. Therefore, we will push forward with our Potassium Iodide Workshops throughout the community. This is to make sure that every household has an opportunity to be supplied with this life supporting pill. We can't afford to see such injustice go without a fight. Although, it may sometimes seem useless, if lives are being lost, streams threatened and land destroyed, not to fight would be a greater injustice.



Briar Creek flows through the farm lands of The Shell Bluff Community in Georgia.



This pipeline **exploded** in Perkins, Georgia, on the south boundary of Shell Bluff, located between Waynesboro and Midville.

How to Save the World—Join the North Carolina Climate Solutions Coalition

January 4, 2017

By Dr. Harvard Ayers

In a soon-to-be released book about climate change, *Train Wreck Earth*, co-authors Dave Harman, of Climate Voices US, and I, a retired Appalachian State University professor, did interviews of leading scientists Drs. Michael Mann (Penn State), Robert Howarth (Cornell), and George Woodwell (Founder, Woods Hole Research Center), and writer/activist Bill McKibben (350.org).

After the interviews were completed, we realized that we had more than just four highly respected climate experts talking about their life's work, we had strong prescriptions for the best ideas on how to solve the existential challenge that is climate change.

Dr. Woodwell, Dean of American Climate Studies, took the perspective of the importance of forests in absorbing the leading greenhouse gas, CO₂.

Continuing destruction of forests by humans must be reversed in large acreages over the globe. Drs. Mann and Howarth and writer McKibben argued that the best way to quickly stop climate change would be to adopt the plan generated by Dr. Mark Jacobson at Stanford U. and other scientists and engineers at Stanford and UC-Berkeley: The Solutions Project, which calls for 100% clean renewable energy in all energy sectors by 2050 or sooner for the United States and the world.

This consensus of several top scientists on how to stop climate change led to our decision to form a coalition of grassroots North Carolina organizations. We called leaders of NC nonprofits and invited them to the organizational meeting of

the North Carolina Climate Solutions Coalition (NCCSC). The meeting took place on Dec. 6, 2016, and today, we have 16 nonprofit members and a five-member Advisory Board consisting of Bill McKibben, Michael Mann, Robert Howarth, George Woodwell and Mark Jacobson.

The nonprofits who have become part of the NCCSC are: Climate Voices US, Justice Action Mobilization Network, HipHop Caucus, The Climate Times, Sustainable Sandhills, The Canary Coalition, Beyond Extreme Energy, Divestment Student Network, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, the Temple Emanuel Environmental Movement, Appalachian Voices, Longbranch Environmental Education Center, Dogwood Alliance, Mountain True, National Religious Coalition of Creation Care, and 350 Triangle.

The NCCSC has begun implementing the Jacobson Solutions plan to be a model for other states. Our initial action was to get resolutions passed by North Carolina communities to endorse the Jacobson plan. We have resolutions prepared for Winston-Salem, Lewisville, Clemmons, Boone, Watauga County, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Sylva, Pittsboro, Raleigh, Wake County, Chatham County, and Asheville. On December 15, 2016, in the Town of Boone, we got our first resolution passed, 5-0. All of these communities have been contacted by our nonprofit partners, and many more are to come. ■

Divestment, A History and Strategic Overview

Currently 90 companies are releasing over half of the emissions driving climate change creating record droughts, flooding our coasts, killing our food, and driving the largest mass extinction since that of the dinosaurs. These are not secret entities. We know the companies putting us at risk and we have their names and addresses. The most powerful companies get their influence from money. Similarly we show our support for companies, ideas, and products either through our purchases or our investments. On the other hand, when we do not like a product we do not buy it and we do not support it through investments. This is the basis of the Divestment movement. Divestment is the opposite of investment. Divestment involves removing all stocks, bonds, and monetary support for an industry that is unethical or morally ambiguous. This tactic targets a company at its roots: its bottom line.

Divestment campaigns exist to target universities, religious institutions, pension funds, and charitable foundations. There are currently over 400 divestment campaigns at campuses worldwide. Forty educational institutions have already chosen to move their endowments away from coal, oil and gas companies because they recognise that fossil fuels carry ethical and financial risks. Such universities include Stanford, University of Massachusetts, and the first University in the South to divest - the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Similarly, many religious institutions have made commitment. The entire Unitarian Church divested from fossil fuels and, more recently, so did the World Council of Churches. In all, over \$5.2 trillion has been divested from the fossil fuel industry over the past several years

Historically divestment targeted tobacco companies, casinos, companies funding violence in Darfur and, most notably, as a tool to protest apartheid in South Africa. The

modern day fossil fuel divestment movement is the fastest growing divestment movement in history. The United Nations has pledged support and activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu has stated that “people of conscience need to break their ties with corporations financing the injustice of climate change”. Recently, campaigns have emerged targeting investors of specific pipeline projects. In particular the water protectors fighting back against the Dakota Access Pipeline have targeted major banks invested in the pipeline such as US bank and Wells Fargo. Major Norwegian Bank DNB divested from the Dakota Access Pipeline. Banks yet to make such commitments have suffered the consequences. In the city of Seattle, consumers removed \$3 Billion from Wells Fargo and thousands closed their accounts with the bank.

So what is the effect of running a divestment campaign? Divestment challenges the status quo through several statements.

- First and foremost it challenges the point of production at its bottom line - the source of their power. Divesting sends the blatant statement ‘this company must change its practice or it will lose your monetary support’. If it is immoral to pollute the climate, then it is also immoral to profit off of that pollution.
- Second, we challenge our own consumption. When we look to our church, bank, university or government and demand they align their investments with their moral guidelines we also also work to align our own values with our associations. Divestment practices such as closing bank accounts or moving investments is similar to efforts at driving less or eating less red meat. It allows us to walk the walk of our ideologies. We tell universities ‘as institutions preparing us for our future it is immoral to simultaneously be invested in

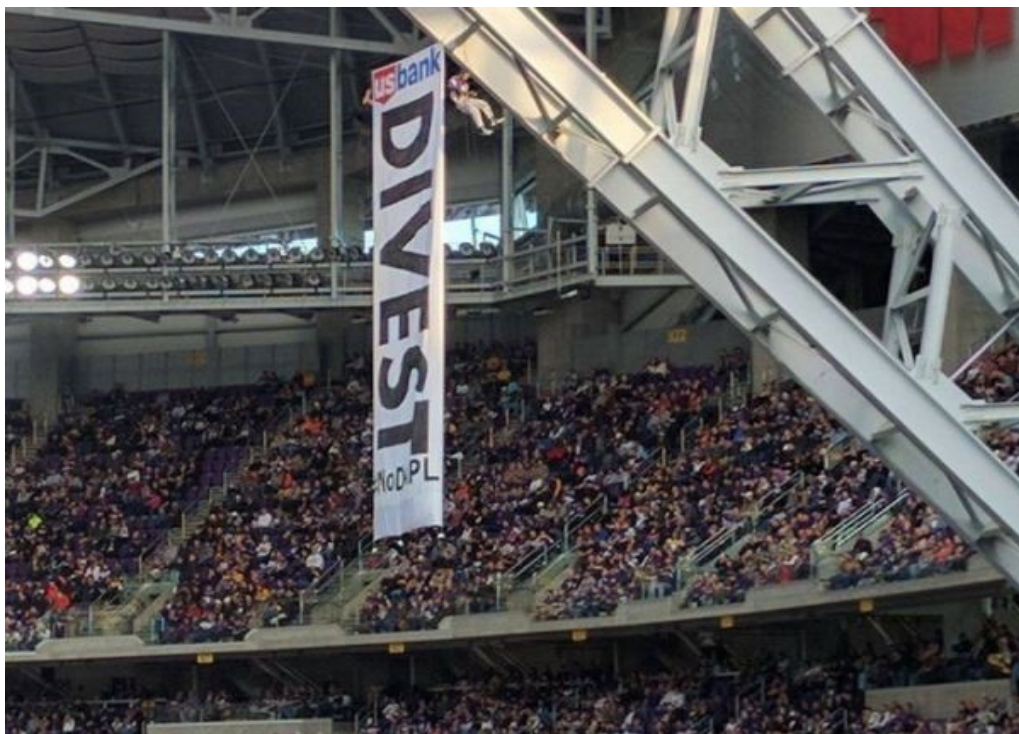
companies endangering that future.’

- Third, we challenge legislation by setting a precedent whereby moral demand takes precedent over monetary gain. Local institutions divesting paves the way for larger scale reallocation of funds and resources and can be spotlighted when engaging with politicians.
- Finally we challenge society through cultural reproduction. This is a challenge of the ideals that govern our economy and thus how we live our lives from the community level up to that of a global player. Fossil fuel industries and extractive companies are able to justify the desecration of our earth, our air, and our water because they are ingrained in our economic system. With extraction, polluting infrastructure and climate change built into the process of the fossil fuel industry they rely on the exploitation of people with communities bearing the costs and industry seeing the profit. The idea that climate change and its threat to humanity can continue despite full knowledge of its cause due to profit motive is inherently flawed. Divestment challenges our economic structure to embrace a bottom line that puts humanity first.

Cutting ties to morally bankrupt institutions gives way to reinvestment in communities. Investing in local community programs, education, and sustainability empowers communities to have power over their lives, rather than corporate interests. By advocating for an economy that invests in community empowerment we envision a more just world. ■



By Michael James-Deramo



Activists unfurl banner at Vikings football game calling for
Divestment of Dakota Access Pipeline



Virginia Students Call on University of Mary Washington Board to
Divest from Fossil Fuels

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