**Reports for Green Sanctuary Meeting of February 20, 2022**

Letter to County Commissioners & ReImagine Appalachia.

In my cover message to the Green Sanctuary Committee that included my draft letter to the Washington County Commissioners, I explained the background leading to my drafting of the letter. One piece of advice I got from ReImagine Appalachia was to get additional signatories to the letter. So far seven people from the GSC have agreed to sign the letter. I am seeking other signatories from representatives of other groups in the county. Two researchers from the Ohio River Valley Institute were very helpful in providing feedback on the draft letter, particularly on the case study of Centralia WA. After the February 20 meeting I am hoping that other members of GSC will agree to sign the letter. I anticipate sending the letter on Monday, February 21. During the week leading up to this meeting I have received some additional minor edits in response to comments from some people on GSC and others.

On February 15 I attended the (virtual) meeting of the ReImagine Appalachia group. The major portion of the meeting was devoted to a presentation by two officials from the U.S. Department of Energy, who described several funding programs available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. There are grant programs to provide assistance for revitalizing the economy in economically distressed areas that have relied on fossil-fuel industries I have followed up with one of the DOE officials to ask her about these grants. This opportunity relates to the letter to the commissioners because these grants might be a chance to rebuild the economy in our county along the lines of the Centralia WA model.

This meeting also touched upon the issue of hydrogen as a renewable energy source since the two DOE officials mentioned a public comment period on this topic. ORVI has published a quite skeptical article about the limits of hydrogen as an energy source. The major issue with hydrogen is that 95% of its production for energy use is derived from natural gas (methane), which is not renewable. I can share this publication with any GSC members who are interested.

Injection Wells

In addition to the two letters published on this topic previously in the Marietta Times (written by Maggie Meyer and by me), Vic Elam wrote an excellent LTE on this topic which was published in the Times on January 31. Dave Ballantyne told me he is drafting a letter as well—I sent him some background materials for “some grist for his mill.” Ben Hunkler of the ORVI has drafted a one-page summary of brine waste from fracking wells that he developed for the group, Fresh Water Accountability Project. It addresses that group’s concern about waste barging of brine waste, but it relates to injection wells as well. I have placed this one-page PDFile in a separate attachment.

Meagan Niebler of the Fair Shake group, an organization committed to environmental justice, will be a visitor to our GSC meeting on February 20. I think she will be interested in the brine waste issue because of her organization’s concern for those affected by fossil-fuel waste & emissions, such as people in our area impacted by leaks, spills, and other problems associated with injection wells in eastern Ohio, many of which are located in low-income areas.

I am still waiting for the news about the filing of the legal suit against injection well companies by the independent owners oil & gas production wells. Bob Lane, who is leading this legal effort, told me that he will let me know when the case is filed.

Citizens Climate Lobby

Citizen Climate Lobby continues to encourage its members (and others) to urge Democratic senators to support a carbon fee & dividend in whatever form the Build Back Better will take in the near future. The legislative efforts of CCL have recently been complicated by the initiative of some Democratic senators to waive the gasoline tax (an assumption of the carbon fee has been to make fossil fuels like gasoline more expensive in order to discourage its use). Some in CCL have made the point that gasoline accounts for only a small portion of greenhouse gas emissions. I assume that this effort by Democratic senators is designed to reduce the impact of inflation.

Our local chapter of CCL will meet on February 21 and will discuss, among other items, an agenda for our meeting with Congressman Bill Johnson’s staffer, Sam Hattrup, on February 23.

Muskingum Watershed Plan

I have heard nothing from Senator Sherrod Brown’s office or from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers since Senator Brown’s letter to the head of the USACE asking him to attend to the concerns about the plan expressed by Ted Auch, Randi Pokladnik, and me.

George Banziger