**Reports for Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting – September 18, 2022**

Injection Wells.

On September 14 I met (virtually) with Megan Hunter, an attorney with Earth Justice, which is a law firm, not an advocacy or lobbying organization. Her firm is organizing a legal petition which they will file on October 3, 2022 to recommend that the U.S. E.P. A. revoke the primacy of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to administer the permitting and to monitor Class II injection wells in the state. The video testimony that I gave on April 10, 2021 will be part of that petition. Earth Justice is working with the Sierra Club, Buckeye Environmental Network, and several other organizations on this petition. Megan asked me to write a letter to the USEPA to be included as an attachment to the petition; she also asked if I could ask Bob Lane, the oil & gas producer in Washington County, who is filing a law suite against several disposal companies, to write a letter. I offered to draft such a letter for Bob. He agreed and consented to my draft. He is checking with his lawyer about whether sending such a letter would impact his legal case in any way. I have already sent my draft letter to Megan.

I asked Megan what the probability of getting the USEPA to revoke primacy in this case really is. She was quite honest in admitting that it is a long shot, but it is quite likely that USEPA will place some conditions on ODNR to change their ways, and USEPA will likely ask ODNR to address the concerns expressed in the petition and give them a time line to respond. Megan will give me some edits on my letter, then I’ll sign it, send to USEPA and to Megan for inclusion in the petition.

On August 22 there was a meeting on injection wells at a church in in Reno. The meeting was called by Glenn Newman, a former resident of Little Hocking who attended the June 2 meeting sponsored by ODNR. Since I was on vacation on this date, I was not able to attend this meeting, but I learned second hand that there were many concerns expressed about injection wells, and no one spoke in support of wells for brine waste.

The lawsuit that has been filed by attorneys for Bob Lane and Bob Wilson (local oil & gas producers) has been moved to a court in Perry County because the Washington County judge recused himself for conflict of interest. The disposal companies who are the targets of this suit are pressing for the judge to dismiss the case; he has not yet ruled on this request (he is not expected to rule for dismissal).

Citizens Climate Lobby

Dave Ballantyne, Bob Chase (petroleum engineer and natural gas supporter), and I met with Sam Hattrup, Congressman Bill Johnson’s staff member on September 7 ( I have a more detailed report than I’ve provide here on this meeting if anyone wants to receive it). Basically, Mr. Hattrup said that the Inflation Reduction Act puts the government in the position of picking winners and losers when it comes to energy policy. He also said that there is no legislation that the Congress can pass which addresses climate change (he and the congressmen are not climate change deniers) because it is an international problem that needs a concerted global response. We did find some common ground on the idea of re-purposing coal bi-products to make construction materials and the idea of plugging abandoned and orphaned oil & gas wells.

CCL is still celebrating the passage and signing of the Inflation Reduction Act. CCL National is asking local chapter not to mention the IRA to Republican members of Congress because it is a sore and recent wound for them. CCL does ask chapters to promote secondary asks such as the Growing Climate Solutions Act, RISEE (Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies and Ecosystems) and NCARS (National Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategy). All three of these bills have bipartisan sponsorship.

Our local CCL chapter is next meeting on Monday, September 19 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Reimagine Appalachia

I am still trying to connect with local officials and opinion leaders about how to “re-imagine Appalachia” in our own county. I have contacted the President of the Washington County Commissioners, some business people I know, and the director of the southeast Ohio Port Authority. No response yet from any of them. I was encouraged that Charlie Schilling, President of the Washington County Commissioners, mentioned to me that the issue of plugging orphan wells is one that can help the economy and create jobs in the county. Encouraged by that comment, I submitted an op ed for the Climate Corner series in the Parkersburg News & Sentinel on that topic. This article is to be published in their September 17 edition.

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