**Reports for Green Sanctuary Meeting– March 19, 2023**

Injection Wells

There was a misunderstanding about the meeting of county commissioners in my communication with Roxanne Groff of the Ohio Brine Waste group. The meeting on Thursday morning was of the Athens County Commissioners. They were to discuss the proposal from Washington County Commissioners about the tax revenue from injection wells. When I discovered this, I called Kevin Ritter, President of the Washington County Commissioners, to find out about the proposal.

The Washington County Commissioners have come up with a proposal to lift the tax limit on barrels of brine waste. The current tax assesses $.05/barrel for Ohio brine waste and $.20/barrel for brine waste from outside the state. This tax applies up to 500,000 barrels. The proposal the commissioners are presenting is that the limit of 500K barrels be lifted and that the resulting additional revenue be sent to the counties of southeast Ohio (ten counties) and that these funds be used for cleanup and community projects. The commissioners have sent this proposal to the relevant 10 county commissioners and have heard from 6-7 in support. Once they receive a favorable response from the ten counties, they will submit the proposal to Jay Edwards, who is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee (Ohio legislature). This proposal is based on the assumption that the state will continue to issue permits for injection wells, and that there is nothing that can be done about this situation. I told him that the opposition to injection wells in the county is widespread and deeply felt and that those who oppose injection wells may not agree with this assumption of resignation to continued permitting. Roxanne Groff is lobbying the Athens County Commissioners not to support this proposal.

Citizens Climate Lobby.

At our February 20 meetings members from the Youngstown chapter joined us.

On March 3 Rebecca Phillips, Bob Chase and I met with Sam Hattrup. Legislative Director for Congressman Bill Johnson. We expressed gratitude for the congressman’s bipartisan support of relief for the people of E. Palestine in the wake of the derailment there. In discussing permitting reform, Sam mentioned that serious compromise will be required if permitting reform is applied to both fossil fuel projects and renewable energy projects. On the issue of economic development, we asked Sam if the congressman supports projects of renewable manufacturing, such as the new battery plant in Weirton WV and the electric school bus plant in Charleston WV. He replied that the congressman does support this kind of project including hydrogen-energy projects. In a follow-up message, I asked Sam if the congressman knows how many people in his district are employed in the coal industry and how many are employed in the solar industry. He replied that he did not know.

ReImagine Appalachia.

At its February 28 meeting RA had a presentation by Grace Blanchard from the National Association of Counties about the program, Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities ([gblanchard@naco.org](mailto:gblanchard@naco.org)).

There is a Webinar on March 23, “From Fridge to Furnace,” for religious organizations to learn about energy conservation (contact Natalia Rudiak for information (local@reimagineappalachia.org).

I also learned about an excellent summary of the E. Palestine derailment done by the Ohio Rive3r Valley Institute (https://ohiorivervalleyinstitute.org/?s=E+Palestine.).

George Banziger