Reports for August 20,2023 Green Sanctuary Meeting

**Citizens Climate Lobby**

Congress is currently in recess until right after Labor Day. The Agricultural Bill is being held up by the Freedom Caucus for their insistence on further budget cuts. Appropriation bills, especially in the House, are in jeopardy for a similar reason—it’s likely that there will be a continuing resolution for three months or so for the House & Senate to work out their differences.

CCL is focusing this month on the legislation, Technical Service Providers Bill (S1400 & HR 3036). This bipartisan bill will support additional TSPs that are experts who help farmers adopt conservation practices.

There is a lot of suffering under the extreme weather most are experiencing in the U.S., but these events do offer the opportunity to connect these phenomena to human-caused climate change. I have asked CCL members locally, and I ask GSC members also to make that case in letters to the editor.

**ReImagine Appalachia**

On August 9 I attended an open house of the new heat-exchange project being developed just south of Marietta. The project is an initiative by SAI Tech, a Singapore-based company, and its non-profit, Organization of Clean Energy & Climate (OCEC). The technology, basically, involves capturing heat from high-end computers, which conduct mining for crypto currency and training for artificial intelligence, and transferring this heat via water to places that require heat for agricultural purposes, manufacturing, and recreational needs. The Executive Director of OCEC is Dr. Tao Wu. Dr. Tao has asked me to serve on the advisory board to OCEC. This kind of facility, which would replace natural gas as a source of energy, is exactly the kind of energy-development project that ReImagine Appalachia has been recommending. This facility in Washington County is a research center, which will provide about 50 jobs when fully operational; it will also have an educational component affiliated with Washington State CC Dr. Tao is looking at an initial project that will support growing vegetables for addressing food insecurity using the greenhouse which is part of the development of the project.

On July 25 I attended a webinar sponsored by RA called “Targeted Employment.” Major take aways from this session were: Central Appalachia (eastern OH, WV, and easter KY) has a higher proportion of disconnected workers than the U.S. at large; Appalachian OH and WV have a lower portion of prime-age employment than the U.S. at large. This may be due to dislocation from fossil-fuel industries, the opioid epidemic, and involvement with the criminal-justice system; two states with considerable fossil-fuel industries, ND and WY, have trust funds provided by the fossil-fuel industry to support employment in other industries in the event of decline of those industries.

RA has a report, “Turning Liabilities into Opportunities,” which describes how waste products like coal ash can be used to extract rare-earth elements, iron oxide for artisan paint, and “ecobricks” for construction. I can send a summary of this report to any who would like it.

**HB 507, Fracking Public Lands in Ohio**

Everyone in Ohio who is concerned about this issue is encouraged to send comments on the “nominations,” i.e., requests for permits, for fracking sites to the Ohio Oil & Gas Land Management Commission. Forms for these comments can be accessed at saveohioparks.org.

Another issue that came up in this context, which was raised by Randi Pokladnik, is SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Particpaton). This issue is used by corporations to silence activists whom they regard as excessively critical. Ohio does not have any anti-SLAPP legislation. WV does.

George Banziger