

Sierra Club of Pennsylvania, Southeastern PA Group Executive Committee Meeting

Meeting

ExCom Members Attending: Ken Hemphill, Dave Moscatello, Margaret Nersten, Prasad Ramnath, Dennis Winters, JimWylie

Attending by Phone: Pat Beaudet, John Butler, Alexa Manning,

ExCom Members Absent: Gerald Brown , Mathew Himmelein,

Other Members Attending: Sue Edwards, Karen Melton, Pratima Agrawal, Emily Davis

The Meeting was called to order by Jim Wylie who presented the [agenda](#).

Secretary: Minutes were approved as emailed.

Treasurer: (Dennis Winters)

C4 beginning balance \$6029

Expenditures: Coho rent: \$200

Income: \$450 (reimbursement, coho rent

C4 ending balance: \$7331

C3 balance: \$3665

Chapter allocation is \$3040 for each account.

Treasurers report was accepted as presented

Standing Committee Reports

Conservation Committee: (Jim Wylie)

Future Energy Committee – Dave Moscatello

Sierra Club of SEPA is finally an official members of the Green Justice Philly Coalition.

Future Energy - Conservation Subcommittee Report September 2017 - DKM

Northeast States Just Delivered A ‘Major Victory’ Against Climate Change.

Alexander C. Kaufman, HuffPost August 23, 2017.

<https://verizon.yahoo.com/news/northeast-states-just-delivered-major-205319067.html>

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the country’s only interstate cap-and-trade market, announced new, stricter targets for reducing climate-altering emissions from power plants. The states in the nonprofit program — Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont — agreed to cap emissions at about 75 million tons in 2021, a number which would decline by 2.25 million tons every year until 2030, resulting in a total decline of 30 percent.

SEPTA Campaigns:

Karen asked that we support 350.org in their campaign for a Fossil Free SEPTA. Dennis moved that we sign [the letter](#). ***The motion was seconded and passed.***

Karen also asked that we as an organization sign the petition on Change.org against the Proposed Gas Plant. Dennis moved that we sign [the letter](#) as presented on Change.org. ***The motion was seconded and passed.*** It was also suggested that we all sign this petition as individuals

<https://www.change.org/p/protect-the-air-prevent-a-polluting-power-plant-in-philly>

Ready for 100

Two boroughs in Chester Count have resolutions on their dockets

Dave’s Links [to Articles about energy](#)

Political Committee:

Our endorsements for Fall 2017 were all approved by the chapter. They include:

Chester County

Dianne Herrin - Mayor of West Chester Borough

Nate Craig - Mayor of Phoenixville Borough

Mary LaSota - Supervisor, West Goshen Township

Robin Stuntebeck - Supervisor, West Goshen Township

Bret Binder - Magisterial District Judge, 15-1-01 (covering East Bradford, West Bradford, and Wards 3, 6, and 7 of West Chester Borough)

Delaware County

John Butler - Council, Marple Township

Bucks County

Ann DiCompello - Supervisor, Bristol Township

Kris Ballerini - Supervisor, Upper Makefield Township

Newsletter/Communications: (Ken Hemphill)

Ken will send a call for articles out. The deadline for article for the Fall newsletter is October 10. It will be sent on October 17. The newsletter will include the endorsements and the ballot for the SPG executive committee members.

Ken plans to use the facebook boost feature to promote hot-button issues

Education Committee: (Karen Melton)

The next education program is on September 25. Joanne Kilgore will present an update about what is happening in Harrisburg. She will send post cards with all three dates to those without email addresses.

October: Chari Towne – Schuylkill River Clean-up

November: Energy Coordinating Agency (Mat)

Nomination Committee: (Alexa Manning)

The committee still has not found a 3 member. It was suggested that they go ahead without a third member. Since the names of nominees and their bios must go in the next newsletter, it is too late to continue the search. Biographical statements should be no more than 200 words long. Since it is no longer required to send a printed ballot, it was suggested that we might send a postcard to members for whom we have no email address. The postcard would have the names of those nominated and links to biographical information and the on-line ballot. Dennis said that the response to previous ballot mailings has been very low (6 last year) and that the cost of printing and mailing newsletters was high.

Member Engagement: (Margaret Nersten)

Margaret received very little response to her telephone calls to new members. She will return to just the email letter.

Old Business

Middletown Coalition for Community Safety:

There were a number of issues discussed about the request for \$250 to be used to obtain C3 status including the actual cost of the process and the fact that the coalition has 4000 members and there was no indication that they had been asked for support. Amy Kamerdze was supposed to get back to Alexa but had not. It was suggested that we request a copy of their mission statement.

County Reports:

Jim said he was looking for a new leader for the Delaware County group. Drew Melman has volunteered to lead the Montgomery County group. [Jim Kaff](#) and [Sharon Furlong](#) sent reports on activities in Bucks County.

[Jim](#) also submitted a report for Chester County Activities. The Fund Raiser “Paint Chester County” will be on November 4th from 12:00 to 6:00 at the Galer Winery. Funds will be used to support open space. 25 artists have signed up. The winery will donate \$1 for each glass of wine purchased and we will receive a percentage of the sales.

New Business

NorthEast PA group funds: Dennis

When the Northeast Group disbanded its funds revert to the Chapter. Now a group in that area is fighting a methane power plant and would like financial support from Sierra Club. It was agreed that we should support like-minded groups but that this might mean making a change in the bylaws.

Announcements:

Meeting Call-in Number:

1-866-501-6174, PIN is 1004100#.

Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Approval of [August](#)**
- **Announcements**, agenda updates
- **Treasurers Report** – [spreadsheet here](#) (only ExCom members can see)
 - This is the one we've been waiting for – C3/C4 annual contributions are in
- **Middletown Coalition**
 - The ask is for \$500 to support the creation of a C3 non-profit org (**ExCom VOTE**)
- **All Electric Bus Fleet for SEPTA**
 - Karen is asking that SPG sign on to this [350/Philly letter of support](#) (**ExCom VOTE**)
 - Karen is asking that SPG sign on to this [Energy Justice Network letter](#) to oppose the Nicetown gas power plant. (**ExCom VOTE**)
 - Tom Torres has pointed out this possibly controversial language in the EJM letter:
"If necessary, the City may need to seize SEPTA's dilapidated Midvale property, using Eminent Domain, and lease it back to SEPTA with stipulations that prohibit a polluting fossil fuel-burning power plant"
- **ExCom NomCom**
 - Call for nominees. Notice was in summer newsletter
 - Send suggestions to Alexa.
 - Need final list and decision of current ExCom members on whether they will be running again by Oct 1 (?)
- **Volunteer Leaders**
 - [Spreadsheet](#) building with new (and old) volunteer leaders
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ruS1tVBPiPVezMg9AphNezmr9IKOHdweC1jdt-ArCJo/edit#gid=0>
- **Politics**
 - All of SPG nominations were approved by PA ExCom. [List of endorsements](#).
 - Gearing up for campaign assistance
- **Member Engagement**
 - Welcome New Members Letter – ~100 since Aug 1 reported
- **Communications**
 - Summer Newsletter
 - [Sent on Aug 14](#).
 - Feedback?
 - Fall Newsletter
 - Call for articles
 - Submission deadline –
 - Send date
 - Web
 - New Education page(s)
 - Social Media
 - Communications planning meeting – held

- **Educational Programs**
 - [Email Blast](#) on Aug 28
 - CCP – Sep 25 – A view From Harrisburg – Joanne Kilgour
 - WCU – Sep 14 – “Unacceptable Levels” – film viewing
 - Mini-program – Sep 12 – Clean Energy – What’s New? – Dave Moscatello
 - Mini-program – Sep 26 – Pipeline Update – Bernie Goldberg
 - WCU – Spring Theme – “Food”

- **Outreach**
 - Tabling Coordinator – Emily

 - Greenfest – RF100 theme. Should be all set. [Task list, table schedule](#)

- **Outings**
 - Outings Calendar
 - Sep 8 [Camp Elk Tannery](#) for Vets
 - Sep 13 [Tidal Marsh Cleanup](#), John Heinz
 - Sep 21 [Kayak Tour of Refineries](#)
 - Sep 24 [Bike Tour of West Phila Gardens](#)
 - Sep 29 [Tent Camping In Ridley Creek SP](#)

- **Ready For 100**
 - Philadelphia – all hands on deck for Sep 28 Launch Event
 - Speakers from Mayor’s Office, several Councilpersons, Solar industry president, Sierra Club
 - 15+ volunteers contributing for this business casual gala – organizing leader – Sue Edwards
 - Chester County -
 - 2 boroughs working seriously on RF100 resolutions. Passed by committee.
 - Working on an “energy transition leadership conference” for municipal officials

- **Conservation Committees**
 - [PA Nuclear Bailout](#) – position paper 1-pager available from chapter experts
 - Resurrection of PA Northeastern Group? Or just a conservation cmte? Or helping out a non-sierra activist group?
 - See other info in reports section

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County Reports

Bucks County – Sharon Furlong

we put on an Activist Picnic on sunday, August 13th. the weather was clear and hot and sunny but i had rented out the entire pavilion #1 in Peace Valley Park so there was plenty of shade. unfortunately, we only had 16 people who came up to the picnic, food and plates and cups in hand but many groups were represented. we had a grand time eating and talking to each other and even made a small speech about our groups and the activities and issues involved. I am sorry more folks didnt come....but i adored being able to eat my own leftovers for the rest of the week!

i was able to meet with brian fitzpatrick, one of the lucky ones, at his open house conducted the Saturday after his highly restricted town hall held that tuesday. after grilling me when i walked in the door about CCL and the entire fee/dividend idea i stopped the grilling and asked my question which had to do with how was he going to deal with the cognitive dissonance sure to be experienced as he had to figure out how to live with his pro environment protection stance (and his voting record so far supporting that stance) and the budget that has the EPA, the Dept. of Interior and the Dept. of Agriculture squarely in its crosshairs to defund and defang. he responded after jokingly complaining about the complexity of the question, that the white house budget is “dead in the water” and that he has been working with Charlie Dent and two others on an alternative idea: for every increase in defense spending there needs to be an increase in discretionary spending and that each of the four folks working together were to select three agencies that needed to be protected from cuts. for him, the three agencies were: the EPA, the NIA, and the NEA. we talked about this (does it have a chance? nahhhh.....) and how to get 12 departments into a final 3 or 4 and how to sell other MOC's on this and he said he was willing to work with his feet and his voice. he also stated he is against reversion of federal lands handed back to the states because “the States will promptly sell them off”. in addition, we talked a bit about Red Rock Wilderness legislation and cosponsorship and i said to him i will be back on that one, one that his brother made a splash at a sierra club meeting years ago when he publicly became a sponsor and how this would be a nice and easy fruit for him to pick. and finally, we got into a good conversation about plastic in the environment because one of his aides, Sean, is dead set against single serve plastic bags. so i ran with that, quickly filled them about my conversation with Rep. Frank Farry on that one, added the disaster with degrading plastic attracting wildlife in the oceans because it smells like food and lots of turtles and other creatures dying of hunger and the finally, the three Pacific garbage “floating islands”. he did not know about those things, or at least he said he didnt. oh, and i also threw in trump's rollback of the Obama-based regulations beginning the process of changing lead bullets and fishing sinkers to non-lead ones and how our own local male breeding eagle of core creek park died of having 22 pieces of heavy metal, including lead objects, in its belly.

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Bucks County – Jim Kaff

Regarding political endorsements, both candidates that BCSC presented to SPG and the Chapter were endorsed. I spoke on behalf of the candidates during the Chapter call. The endorsements were communicated to the candidates, they have been advised that they can hold themselves out as endorsed by the Sierra Club. I need to possibly speak with you and or Wylie or Melton to establish any next steps in terms of press releases or anything else. There was a state level candidate for superior judge that the SPG declined to endorse as they felt it the office had little bearing on SC issues. Also, a state level candidate approached us regarding endorsement but it was for the 7th district, primarily Lancaster and Montgomery, so I passed this off to SPG to establish who would want to work on it.

Regarding outings; the scheduled kayak outing was held as planned, ‘Kayak on the Giving Pond’. Only three registrants showed up, so in that sense it was too lightly attended to consider it a success. But the event itself was very nice. The same DCNR contact that ran the full moon hike also ran this event. At least one of the participants had come to a former outing that I had held in Tyler back last year, so some recurring participation is good it might build a base for the future. One of the other participants is an acquaintance of mine through another Meetup group. So I hope I can form a sort of base or people who will be likely to participate at outings as we move forward. Unfortunately, no one from BCSC was able to attend. I need to look at scheduling outings our actual members can come to as it is a little strange that I run these events as Sierra Club events and no one from BCSC comes to them (some SPG area people

came to the hike). Amy Kwasnicky had been exploring some kind of a paywall feature for certain events, and I think for things like kayak outings, where there are a very limited amount of boats available, and we want to make sure the people that register are committed to showing up (12 people were registered for the kayak event the week prior, half of them cancelled their RSVPs, leaving 6, and then only half of those showed up), that a paywall with a small fee is a good idea. The fee in this case could go to something like the PPF, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation. The DCNR runs these events for free, but they are not inclined to run an event for the amount of people that were at my outing (4 including me).

The next outing has already been approved, it is a night hike on the Delaware Canal toe path to a covered bridge, also run by the same contact at the DCNR. It has already been up on Campfire and Meetup for several weeks. I do not know time frame but I plan on doing several things regarding future outings: contacting Tyler State Park regarding clean ups, establishing contact with the Fish and Game employee whose office is at Tyler, contacting the Bucks County Audubon Society about an outing (I am dealing with them regarding their annual fund raiser and will pursue an outing discussion with someone at some point), and some other opportunities. I have been cycling through the programming that the DCNR offers so it has made it kind of easy to do these outings this year. I do plan to put together these and other outings also.

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Chester County – Jim Wylie

Unity in Community picnic in West Chester. Organized by Don't Spray Me volunteers with contributions from RF100, WC Food Co-op, some bat-house person. Jim spoke about the need for environmental education. 5 Sierra Club endorsed candidates or current officials were in attendance. About 35 attendees at this pot-luck event.

Working with WC and Phoenixville boro volunteers on language for RF100 resolutions. Everyone is optimistic it will pass. Has passed subcommittees in both boros.

Looking forward to organizing for the Paint Chester County art show and fundraiser on Nov 4.

I made this [dining room table](#) in August from the cherry tree that fell on my house in 2015. What did you do, Pat?

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Why Energy Traders Got the Eclipse So Wrong

By Naureen S Malik **Bloomberg Markets** August 23, 2017, 6:00 AM EDT

<https://www.bloomberg.com/amp/news/articles/2017-08-23/eclipse-failure-how-energy-traders-misread-the-market-so-badly>

- So many Americans were outside that electricity demand fell
- ‘The people who tended to be short tended to make money’

DOE Supports Cutting-Edge Grid Technologies. But They’re Missing from Its Major Reliability Analysis. The study ordered by Rick Perry comprehensively details sweeping market changes. But it pays little attention to the most distributed resources that can improve grid reliability and flexibility.

by Jeff St. John Greentech Media August 24, 2017

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/grid-edge-technologies-are-missing-from-its-reliability-analysis>

Comcast gets into the solar panel business

The carrier will advertise Sunrun units to its customers — and might get a stake in the company.

By Bob Fernandez STAFF WRITER The Philadelphia Inquirer Saturday August 26, 2017 pA7

Chanje enters e-truck niche

Medium-duty vehicles recharge via clean rooftop solar power.

By Russ Mitchell LOS ANGELES TIMES The Philadelphia Inquirer Sunday August 27, 2017, pF7

Cummins Beats Tesla to The Punch, Unveiling Heavy Duty Electric Truck

Joann Muller, FORBES STAFF **Forbes AUG 29, 2017.** Autos / #Industrials

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joannmuller/2017/08/29/take-that-tesla-diesel-engine-giant-cummins-unveils-heavy-duty-truck-powered-by-electricity/#15d5956878f1>

The Phila. School District earns a green ribbon for its work to give back to the environment.

By Kristen A. Graham STAFF WRITER The Philadelphia Inquirer Monday August 28, 2017 pB1

It started nearly four years ago as an idea: What if one of the nation’s largest school districts tackled — in a serious and systemwide way — reducing its environmental impact?

...The district won a 2017 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon for its efforts, driven by GreenFutures, the school system’s five-year sustainability plan that has goals for conserving resources, decreasing consumption and waste, creating healthy indoor environments, and more. It was one of just nine school systems in the country to win the prize, which is given annually.

GreenFutures, released in 2016, identified 65 actions the district pledged to take by 2020, from starting a composting program to increasing the number of students who walk or bike to school. The district wants to decrease its energy consumption by at least 20 percent, drop what it deposits in landfills by 10 percent, and transform with green spaces an average of five schoolyards a year.

Its leaders point to work already underway or completed: rain gardens in some schools; nine schoolyards greened; a plan to install more energy-efficient LED lights at schools throughout the city; \$1 million spent to install hydration stations for safe, clean water; decluttering projects to reduce asthma triggers at every school; and school-led recycling projects.

In 2009, the district spent \$65.4 million on electricity bills. By the end of this fiscal year, it will spend \$35 million.

NUCLEAR Duke Energy to Invest \$6B for Solar, Batteries and EVs, Scrap Nuclear Plant Plans

A settlement over the Levy nuclear plant will bring PV, batteries, EV charging, smart meters and grid modernization. by [Jeff St. John](#) Greentech Media August 29, 2017

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/duke-energy-plans-6b-for-solar-batteries-and-evs>

Florida is set to get a lot more solar power and grid batteries -- in exchange for losing a future nuclear power plant. On Tuesday, Duke Energy Florida filed a revised settlement that lays out a **four-year, nearly \$6 billion investment** into 700 megawatts of solar PV, 50 megawatts of energy storage, 500 electric-vehicle chargers, and smart meters and grid modernization across the state.

Tidal turbines in firth 'set world record' for production

August 31, 2017 BBC From the section [Highlands & Islands](#)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-41107521>

Two turbines in the Pentland Firth set a world record for monthly production from a tidal stream power station, according to the project's developer. Atlantis said its MeyGen scheme in the Inner Sound of the firth off the Caithness coast produced 700 MWh of electricity.

Harvey's Devastation Shows the Need for Distributed Energy, Microgrids During Disasters

While floodgates and on-site generators have helped hospitals and stores stay open, a backup power system's failure has put a chemical plant in jeopardy. by [Jeff St. John](#) Greentech Media September 01, 2017

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/harveys-devastation-shows-the-need-for-distributed-energy-microgrids-during>

Despite EPA's Insistence, Clean Power Plan Remains 'The Law of The Land,' Democratic State Officials Insist. Ken Silverstein, Forbes SEP 1, 2017.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenilverstein/2017/09/01/despite-epas-insistence-clean-power-plan-remains-the-law-of-the-land/#1b76fc27a974>

Poll: Even Ohio's coal country supports more use of clean energy

Midwest Energy News **September 1, 2017** By *Kathiann M. Kowalski* Photo By *Tom Hart / Creative Commons*

<http://midwestenergynews.com/2017/09/01/poll-even-ohios-coal-country-supports-more-use-of-clean-energy/>

Why Efficiency Is Becoming Increasingly Important in Solar Energy

Major solar companies are working to increase module efficiency because it will be key to their survival in 2017 and beyond. Travis Hoium (TMFFlushDraw) The Motley Fool Sep 2, 2017 at 8:46AM

<https://www.fool.com/investing/2017/09/02/why-efficiency-is-becoming-increasingly-important.aspx>

Solar Cars Are (Almost) Here. Cars could soon power themselves without any outside fuel at all.

Travis Hoium ([TMFFlushDraw](#)) The Motley Fool Sep 2, 2017 at 10:32AM

<https://www.fool.com/investing/2017/09/02/solar-cars-are-almost-here.aspx>

Solar power deal will lower social tenants' energy bills. BBC 2 September 2017 From the section Business

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-41122433>

Solar panels are to be installed in 800,000 low-income homes across England and Wales over the next five years, as part of a new government scheme.

Drumpfs of the Month:

MARKETS & POLICY

The Solar Industry's Biggest Fear About Trump May Come True: 'I Want Tariffs'

The protectionist president issues his decree. by [Stephen Lacey](#) GreenTech Media August 28, 2017

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/the-solar-industrys-biggest-fear-about-trump-may-come>

After Harvey, the Trump administration reconsiders flood rules it just rolled back

By [Juliet Eilperin](#) The Washington Post September 1, 2017.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/after-harvey-the-trump-administration-reconsiders-flood-rules-it-just-rolled-back/2017/09/01/c3a051ea-8e56-11e7-8df5-c2e5cf46c1e2_story.html?undefined=&utm_term=.12a1e83316cb&wpisrc=nl_most&wpmm=1

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SEPTA Sign on Letter

If your organization would like to sign this letter, please email 350philadelphia@gmail.com.

To: SEPTA General Manager Jeffrey Knueppel, Members of the SEPTA Board of Directors, Philadelphia Mayor James Kenney, and Members of Philadelphia City Council.

We, the undersigned organizations from across Southeastern Pennsylvania, request that SEPTA immediately commence the technical planning required to achieve the following:

- Transition to an all-electric bus fleet by 2030;
- The existing contract for 525 diesel-hybrid buses over the next five years should be modified to include a significant number of electrics in the later years;
- Transition to renewable energy for all electric buses by 2030;
- Give first priority for electric bus deployment to environmental justice neighborhoods; and
- Conduct the planning and implementation effort in an open and transparent manner.

We commend SEPTA for ordering 25 electric buses to arrive in late 2017 and for the solar installation contract awarded in 2017. SEPTA should build on these initial steps by planning a swift transition to an all-electric bus fleet powered by renewable energy.

A rapid switch to electric buses will bring cleaner air and better health to communities across our region and help to avert catastrophic climate change. The procurement of renewable energy to charge those buses will further protect people's health and protect a livable climate.

According to SEPTA, the 25 all-electric buses due to be delivered in late 2017 will have no tailpipe emissions, while the 525 diesel-hybrids on order between now and 2022 are each expected to generate 221,760 pounds of greenhouse gases per year as well as black carbon and particulates.

Fossil fuel pollution causes serious harm to people in our region, with a 31% childhood asthma rate in some neighborhoods. Pollutants such as Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and particulate matter emitted by SEPTA's diesel and diesel-hybrid buses contribute to and exacerbate asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other health problems.

In addition to direct pollution from buses, there is significant upstream pollution and leakage throughout the fossil fuel production lifecycle that impacts health and contributes to climate change. The local impacts of unchecked climate change are far reaching, from floods and sea level rise to heat-related health risks, loss of indigenous species and crops, insect-borne illnesses and more. In order to prevent much greater harm in the coming years, we need to move as quickly as possible to replace all fossil fuels--including coal, oil and gas--with clean renewable energy sources like wind, water and solar. SEPTA should not build new fossil fuel power plants to power electric buses, but rather should make plans to obtain renewable energy for this purpose.

Other transit agencies in the U.S. are already planning or implementing a rapid shift to electric bus fleets.

- Los Angeles Metro has already ordered dozens of electric buses and is planning to operate an all-electric bus fleet by 2030. LA Metro has the second largest bus fleet in the U.S.
- [King County Metro](#) (home of Seattle) plans to operate an all-electric bus fleet, powered by renewable energy, as early as 2034. They currently have the fifth largest bus fleet in the U.S. at more than 1,900 buses.
- [Long Beach](#), [Antelope](#) and [San Gabriel Valley](#) transit systems in Southern California have all committed to implement electric bus fleets.

SEPTA should join these industry leaders.

Renewable energy creates many more jobs than fossil fuels and is already cost competitive and in some regions less expensive than fossil fuels. Energy economists project the downward trend of renewable energy prices will continue, with the Department of Energy targeting 3 cents per kilowatt/hour for solar-generated electricity by 2030. Meanwhile, the price of fossil fuels, finite and increasingly dependent on expensive unconventional extraction methods, is expected to rise.

Some communities in Southeastern PA are disproportionately harmed by air pollution, as a result of high rates of poverty, the health impact of racism, and the presence of power plants, refineries, highways, and other pollution sources. We ask that SEPTA's transition plan prioritize electric bus deployment to these neighborhoods.

Finally, we call on SEPTA to plan its electric bus and energy strategies in an open and transparent manner. SEPTA stakeholders who advocate for clean energy are committed allies of public transit, and will strongly support SEPTA if it chooses to become a clean energy leader. They include the signers listed below.

Signers as of September xx, 2017

1. 350 Philadelphia
2. Penn Environment

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[Change.org Petition](#) started by Lynn Robinson of Philadelphia

Petitioning Mayor Jim Kenney and 30 others to:

STOP A POLLUTING GAS POWER PLANT IN PHILADELPHIA!

Philadelphia's air quality needs to be cleaned up, not made worse. A power plant, which will burn natural gas, piped in from fracking wells, in N.W. PA, is planned for construction in a neighborhood where nearly 1/3 of children already have a diagnosis of asthma! (City average is 1/5.)

The selection of the site can be easily classified as environmental racism. Over 92% of people in the Nicetown Neighborhood are African American. 37,000 people live within 1 mile of the site, including me. As a teacher, I have felt helpless watching students suffer from asthma attacks. We can not afford to live in more pollution. For the city to commit to 20-30 years of burning a fossil fuel, and add to climate change, is inexcusable, when other cities are choosing renewable alternatives!

The Southeastern Transportation Authority (SEPTA) has applied to build this plant, to generate electricity, even though it already has adequate supply of power from PECO to run its regional rail train lines. Why? SEPTA has caved into funding threats, from certain politicians, connected to the gas industry in PA. (See article from Philadelphia Inquirer on this link: subchat.com/buschat/read.asp?Id=262383) Since a few politicians put the pressure on to build this plant, we have to voice opposition, and demand that other politicians reverse that pressure.

SEPTA's plant does not yet have a permit from Air Management Services. The timing of this petition letter, and your response is key! Please see the letter to elected officials below, sponsored by Energy Justice Network, (www.energyjustice.net and please sign on!

Dear Mayor Kenney, City Council Members, Local State Senators and Representatives:

We are joined together in opposition to SEPTA's application to build a polluting gas power plant in Nicetown, at their Midvale Complex, bordering East Falls, Germantown, and Tioga. Please act decisively to prevent this unnecessary project, which would add no benefit to our city's residents or to our economy, and would result in serious environmental degradation. The Midvale plant is a test case. SEPTA has plans to build additional plants in Powelton Yards near 30th St. Station, and near 69th St. It has also floated plans in South and Central Philadelphia, making this a citywide policy issue.

1. The Midvale plant would harm human health, placing complex physical, mental, and emotional burdens on victims and their families, and would strain health clinics and hospitals serving the area. According to the World Health Organization, gas-fired power plant emissions of particulate matter, nitrogen oxide compounds, volatile organic compounds, and carbon monoxide, contribute to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, preterm delivery and the risk of low birth weight babies, eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, skin problems, and premature mortality, especially among the elderly and other vulnerable populations. Recent studies have found that ultrafine particles emitted from gas plants directly enter the bloodstream through the lungs, travel to tissues, and create plaque in the blood vessels and brain, leading to heart disease, and cognitive dysfunction among children and older adults.

a. Pollution levels from the plant would be unpredictable, because there is no plan to install equipment to continuously monitor pollutants as they are emitted. SEPTA is only obligated to estimate monthly average gas usage, which means different amounts can be burned unpredictably from day to day. Spikes in usage can increase asthma attacks.

b. Emission tests are only required once every 8760 hours, or every three years, whichever comes first, according to SEPTA and Air Management Services documents. That is wholly inadequate.

c. Tanks of ammonia will be positioned at the plant, and ammonia sprayed in the stack, to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions. Ammonia fumes were not listed in SEPTA's application to AMS.

2. We remember the June 15, 2016 explosion at Veolia gas plant in Grays Ferry. There is a risk of an explosion at the Midvale plant, which would sit adjacent to a CSX crude oil railroad route. Oil train derailments can lead to powerful explosions, fires and toxic spills.

3. The choice of Nicetown for SEPTA's gas plant is egregious, because Nicetown, a predominantly African American, low income neighborhood, sits in a topographical bowl. Nearly one third of children in the 19140 ZIP code have been diagnosed with asthma (Philadelphia Health Management Corporation 2012). Air pollution in Nicetown is above the city's average, due to SEPTA's Midvale bus depot, the Roosevelt Expressway, and freight trains carrying oil to the South Philadelphia refinery. The area needs relief, and it can be easily argued that choosing Nicetown is environmental racism. Our city is only as strong as its weakest link.

4. As a long-term financial investment, gas-burning plants would be unwise for our transit system, and therefore the city as a whole. The cost of wind and solar energy has fallen dramatically, and many analysts expect the cost of gas to rise significantly over the next two decades. It would be fiscally very risky, and irresponsible for SEPTA to sign a long-term contract for electricity generated by gas.

5. Gas burning plants in residential neighborhoods would erode the property values and attractiveness to small businesses. A downgrade in air quality would affect quality of life and make it less desirable to reside or visit in impacted neighborhoods, some of which are currently marked for real estate improvements.

6. In June, Mayor Kenney pledged to move Philadelphia towards 100% renewable energy. New gas plants would be counter to the pledge, and shift Philadelphia away from being a world-class city. We see no acceptable reason for SEPTA to commit to gas for the next 20-30 years, when municipal transportation systems in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, India, Chile, and China are transitioning to 100% renewable energy solutions. It is also unacceptable that toxic gas plants were planned as a way to prop up PGW, and appease the Marcellus Shale Coalition, which seeks permits for pipelines to our city.

7. Battery storage technology has advanced and can replace power plants. San Diego and western Los Angeles are building a 100 MW battery storage system that can power the energy needs for these giant metropolitan areas. During daylight and at nighttime, solar and wind energy will replenish these battery systems. Both BART in the Bay area and the Netherlands have committed to powering their trains with renewable energy. The technology is available to move toward a cleaner energy power source. SEPTA should carefully study how other transit systems are using battery technology and renewable energy sources to power their trains for the long term future. In conclusion, we encourage the City of Philadelphia to do everything within its power to prevent the permitting and building of SEPTA's Midvale gas plant, and we appreciate your swift attention to this matter.

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