



Catoctin News

Newsletter of the Catoctin Group
Serving Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties

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Why Such a Big Reaction from Environmental Groups about the TPP?

by Betsy Johnson & Veronica Poklemba

Greenpeace, Natural Resource Defense Council, U.S. Climate Plan, Food and Water Watch, Sierra Club: All are identifying a major concern regarding the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP will allow corporations to sue governments over any laws or regulations that affect the corporation's expected future profits. These suits are not adjudicated in a court of law, but they are arbitrated by a secret tribunal of trade lawyers. Just defending against such suits is expensive and losing can cost billions of taxpayer dollars. There is language in the agreement that makes it seem like this provision does not apply to laws and regulations that are "in the public interest", but analysis by trade lawyers show that the provision is full of loopholes and exceptions that could make the environment a prime target. The Sierra Club is concerned that this provision will affect a country's attempt to address climate change, an issue that will be prominent in the years ahead as the effects of climate change worsen. There are more than 9000 corporations in the 12 countries that comprise the signatories of the TPP that have subsidiaries in the US, so the number of such suits in this country would mushroom if the TPP is adopted.

The TPP would also require the US Department of Energy (DOE) to automatically approve any facility for the export of liquified natural gas (LNG) once it passes muster with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Currently the DOE has to determine if such facilities are in the public interest. In the United States exporting LNG would result in a huge acceleration of fracking around the country and the rise in natural gas prices for our citizens. Studies have shown that the life cycle of LNG produces more global warming gases than coal and the effect on our already fragile planet would be severe.

The TPP will also increase the volume of imported food coming into the U.S. while at the same time weakening the inspection process for these foods. This will ultimately interfere with strengthening U.S. food safety standards. And the TPP would also weaken the financial regulations that were passed to address the flaws in the system that allowed the 2008 financial crisis to occur.

When it comes to limiting destructive behavior around the world such as commercial whaling and shark finning in Japan and Singapore, the TPP only requests or suggests that certain actions be taken, as opposed to creating any real requirements for change. Provisions for enforcement are lacking.

The point of a democracy is that people have a mechanism to influence actions by their government. The TPP takes that ability away from people in our country in several areas. That alone is sufficient reason to take action to see that this treaty is not passed by Congress.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

THE POPE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

by Lew Sherman

Environmentalists are encouraged by Pope Francis' May 2015 Encyclical that focuses on man's despoilment of the planet. Other Vatican letters and teachings have broached the subject, but not with the depth and passion of the recent edict. On the surface, it seems that the environmental movement has a large and influential new partner, but cautious optimism is suggested.

The Encyclical Letter "*Laudato Si'*, On Caring for Our Common Home," covers the gamut of global environmental concerns from water pollution to planetary warming. The Pope talks at length about massive air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, global warming, overuse of resources, misuse of technology, out of control growth of cities, deforestation, desertification, and resultant health impacts. He broadly addresses the responsibility for the mess the world is in and asserts that "our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience." A sobering reality indeed, but the Encyclical is not about assessing blame. Rather, it is an appeal to mankind to recognize what it has done to the earth and to consider what must be done to repair the damage.

Pope Francis focuses much of his discourse on the poor, and the disproportionate burden they suffer from environmental destruction. An example, pollution spewing power plants in cities are often located near poor neighborhoods. With global warming emerging as the existential threat to all humanity, the plight of the poor is magnified. Such circumstances have spawned the term (outside the Church) "Environmental Justice" wherein the poor suffer higher health, safety, and economic problems than the rest of society.

The letter is neither a scientific or political guideline, nor does it prescribe a specific course of action. As with Encyclicals in general, it is a teaching letter that appeals to the conscience and love of God and fellowman for answers to the problems described. It is an appeal for "a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet" and a call for changing lifestyles and consumption habits, by living more simply and with less impact on the natural environment. There also is urgency in his message when he writes, "we know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay." He emphasizes that man's wanton environmental destruction and overuse of resources is a sin and repeatedly asks us to consider what we are leaving to future generations unless we change course.

Whether widespread environmental programs will be spawned by the Encyclical remains to be seen, but there are hopeful signs even with some apparent resistance among the faithful. The President of Catholic Charities has said the

Encyclical will inspire the work of his organization for years to come. Also, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, a think tank, recently hosted a meeting in Rome of worldwide experts to engage in a dialogue about the Encyclical and whether free markets can be effectively involved. Locally, the Archdiocese of Baltimore has undertaken two partnerships that reflect their commitment to the Encyclical: a 5.4 Megawatt solar project with Constellation Energy and a tree planting project with Baltimore Tree Trust. Finally, there is reason for optimism because of news accounts and Catholic media reception as reflected in the Knights of Columbus, "Columbia" magazine.

Carroll County Forestry Board 2016 Winter Workshop "Reforesting Your Neighborhood"

How to capture the spirit of the forest when designing a woodland garden.

Saturday, January 16, 2016
8 AM to 4:30 PM
VFW Post 467, 519 Poole Road
Westminster, MD 21157

Registration includes: Morning refreshments / Lunch/ Course Materials

Learn how to create healthy residential woodland ecosystems using the sustainable landscaping principles of woodland gardening. Speakers from University of Maryland Extension, Carroll County Forestry Board and Maryland Forest Service will show you how to improve wildlife habitat and pollinator diversity, protect water quality, develop usable woodland crops such as medicinal plants and edibles, select native plant species appropriate for your area, and identify and combat non-native invasive plants.

The brochure and registration form can also be viewed on the Carroll County forestry board webpage at carrollcountyforestryboard.org.

Hope to see you there!

The Year In Review

Dear Catoctin Group - Sierra Club,

I've compiled a list of our activities throughout this past year. Please read them and see what our wonderful group volunteers have accomplished, and if you so desire, consider attending one of our monthly meetings or events to get involved. As always, we'll try to make our/your work enjoyable.

Weed Warriors of Carroll County

The Catoctin Group, the Carroll County Forest Conservancy District Board, and the Carroll County Master Gardeners sponsor the Weed Warriors of Carroll County, a group of volunteers that remove invasive exotic plants from county nature centers.

January thru November

The Weed Warriors held 46 weeding sessions, involving 442 volunteers devoting 1364 volunteer hours. In addition, in 2015 we trained 153 new Carroll County weed warriors and 18 Frederick County volunteers planning to establish their own weed warrior program. On October 4, 35 volunteers installed a native plant restoration demonstration site at Piney Run Nature Center where the weed warriors had removed all the invasive exotic plants.

General Group Activities

January thru December

- ~ Held twelve monthly group meetings, with a lunch social gathering afterward
- ~ Sent out four (4) electronic informative newsletters

February

- ~ Testified in Annapolis in support of Resource Recovery Park legislation
- ~ Sponsored a Dancing Rabbit sustainability presentation
- ~ Tabled the "Best of the Fest" movie night at the Weinberg Theater
- ~ Hike: Catoctin Mountain Park - 5.5 miles

March

- ~ Hike: Annapolis Rocks on the Appalachian Trail - 5 miles

April

- ~ Tabled the Carroll County Hospital Earth Day event
- ~ Hike: Washington Monument on the Appalachian Trail - 6 miles

May

- ~ Tabled the Boonsboro Green Festival
- ~ Catoctin Group annual picnic at Walkersville Community Park
- ~ Hike: Sugarloaf Mountain - 6 miles

June

- ~ Awarded two John Muir Scholarships at Catoctin High School

August

- ~ Sponsored and tabled the "Wild" movie presentation at Carroll County Arts Center

Late Summer

- ~ Sponsored Complimentary Earth and Space Science Lab movie tickets for students
- ~ Presentation to our group about the need for a terrapin exhibit expansion at the Frederick Earth & Space Science Lab
- ~ Sponsoring the Frederick County "Seed of Life" school garden project for 2016

September

- ~ Tabled the "In the Streets" event in Frederick City
- ~ Hike: Catoctin Trail, Frederick City Watershed - 8.5 miles

October

- ~ Our volunteers helped with the Statewide Sierra Club Jamboree in Catoctin Mountain Park

December

- ~ Presentation to our group about the upcoming 2016 proposed Bottle Bill
- ~ Hike: Maryland Heights from Harpers Ferry, WV - 3.5 miles

Dan Andrews
Catoctin Group Chairman

Solid Waste Public Forums

As many of you know, the citizens of Frederick and Carroll Counties struggled for ten years to prevent the building of a waste incinerator in Frederick County. They were successful and now Frederick County is holding meetings throughout the County seeking input from residents regarding how to manage waste (i.e. trash, resources).

The hope is that the County will move in a zero waste direction with measures including, but not limited to: increased recycling (we still don't recycle from businesses and multifamily dwellings, there's plenty of ways to improve), composting, and resource recovery parks.

A resource recovery park involves locating reuse, recycling, compost processing, manufacturing and retail businesses in a central facility; and can create new business opportunities and jobs. This type of facility would help our society use our discarded resources to their "highest and best use."

What we want to avoid is a costly technological approach (typical of past approaches to resolve waste issues) which also puts health damaging elements into our environment — our lungs, water, land, flora and fauna.

A volunteer citizen committee is part of this process, and now is the time to increase input from the community by attending one of the community outreach meetings and making your desires known. Please consider attending one of the upcoming meetings.

Forum Schedule

Monday, January 11 — 7:00 p.m.
Urbana High School, 3471 Campus Drive, Ijamsville

Saturday, January 23 — 10:00 a.m.
Thurmont Town Hall, 615 East Main Street, Thurmont

More info: www.FrederickCountyMD.GOV/WhatsNext

Did You Know?
by Veronica Poklemba

- A dairy cow drinks 40 gallons of water each day.
- It takes 250 gallons of water to create one pound of beef for human consumption.
- The number one reason the Amazonian Rainforest is being cut down is to create more space for grazing.

AND

- Cows create more methane than emissions from cars and coal plants put together.

The film "Cowspiracy" is the source of the above information. If you are curious you may want to take a look at this film.

Outings

Check the Catoctin Group website for information on upcoming hikes.

<http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catoctin-group>

Officers/Committee Chairs

Chairman & Energy

Dan Andrews

Treasurer

Anthony Iacovelli

Secretary & Outreach/Social Media

Amy Andrews

Conservation

Lew Sherman
Anthony Iacovelli

Invasive Plant Removal Stewardship

Carolyn Puckett

Outings

Harry George
Anthony Iacovelli

Membership

Patti Fredericks
Teresa Baker

Newsletter

Teresa Baker

For further information visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catoctin-group>

The next Executive Committee/General Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 2, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the C. Burr Artz Public Library , 110 East Patrick St., Frederick, Maryland 21701 in Frederick County.

Executive Committee/General Meetings are usually held the first Saturday of every month. Location varies.

All are welcome, members and non-members alike.

Contact Dan Andrews at dooze@qis.net for exact date, times and location.