



The Jersey..... SIERRAN

SUPPLEMENT
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Guest Editorial

New Jersey Chapter Review

By Jane Tousman (jdtous@aol.com)

In addition to serving at large on the Chapter's Executive Committee, Jane is our Chapter Delegate to the Club's national Council, which meets annually in San Francisco. Jane prepared this summary for the Club's national Board of Directors, and leaders of other Chapters.

The New Jersey Chapter is a vibrant entity, with an Executive Committee that meets monthly in all-day sessions, in different parts of the State. Ken Johanson, our Chapter Chair, organizes our agenda that produces lively discussions of the environmental problems of the day. The ExCom includes many professionals who contribute their knowledge and expertise.

Our quarterly newsletter, The Jersey Sierran, is one of our main voices for getting our messages out to the public. The newsletter also contains Group News, describing the meetings and activities of our 12 regional Groups, and our five statewide Sections, and schedules of our outings. We maintain an office in Trenton with a "par excellent" paid Director and Assistants who have been very successful in lobbying our legislators and educating the public through testimony, press events, and action alerts to many of our 20,000 members. It is fair to say that they are the most quoted, and most sought after, environmental advocates of the dozen or so who represent the State's many other environmental lobbying groups.

Our Political Committee, under Rich Isaac, has been highly successful in backing endorsed candidates at local, State and National levels - with 100% success in the November 2008 congressional election. Candidates are interviewed before being recommended to the ExCom for endorsement.

Our Conservation Committee, under Laura Lynch and Gina Carola, provides a forum for rectifying many of New Jersey's land use abuses. Many solutions are debated, voted and carried out, sometimes (when all else fails) by means of lawsuits. The Committee is currently preparing a Guide for NJ citizens who wish to make presentations to planning boards, or challenge planning board decisions.

Our Chapter Chair is a lawyer who also chairs the Legislative Committee. We are constantly updating our opinions of proposed legislation, and in some cases, such as the "Smart Container (Recycling) Act," have actually drafted bills to be considered by the Legislature. Some other current efforts include clean car legislation similar to that of California, stopping builders' remedies that fast track the permitting process, frequent bond ordinances to fund open space purchases, and maintaining the budgets that keep our parks open and managed. We recently failed to stop a permit extension bill which extends by six years expired building permits.

We host several gatherings each year to reward special donors and honor legislators who have been strong contributors to good environmental legislation. We also honor our own achievers. New Jersey is the site of several CANVASSING campaigns each year, in which new members are solicited door-to-door. One of our strengths, as a volunteer organization, is the capacity to bring greater awareness to the public of our power to solve controversial environmental problems through our skilled leadership.

Report from Trenton (from a Press Release)

Corzine's Highlands Sell Out

By Jeff Tittel and Kara Seymour, Chapter Staff

Despite requests from a coalition of environmental organizations, Gov. Jon Corzine will not veto the minutes of the June Highlands Council meeting. At this meeting, amid ethical and conflict of interest issues, the council approved the Susquehanna-Roseland Transmission Line, which violates the Highlands Act and the state's Global Warming Response Act.

"Governor Corzine could have done the right thing and invalidated the council's vote, which was an outrageous abuse of power and breach of public trust, but chose not to," NJ Sierra Club Director Jeff Tittel said. "Instead, he will let shameful record stand."

By not vetoing the minutes, Gov. Corzine took the side of polluters, corruption, and dirty power, instead of siding with integrity and clean energy.

On June 25, the Highlands Council voted 8 - 2 that the 500-kv Susquehanna-Roseland Transmission Line, which will import dirty power from Pennsylvania while harming one of Jersey's most environmentally-sensitive areas, was consistent with the Highlands Plan. The determination appears to have been based not on consistency with the Regional Master Plan, but on an \$18.6 million "gift" from the applicant.

In December, the Highlands Council said the proposed power line conflicted with the Highlands Act and identified 56 determinations of inconsistency. The Highlands Council later reversed course once PSE&G offered an \$18.6 million donation for mitigation, raising serious ethical concerns.

Corzine

(Continued from page 1)

In the wake of a sweeping federal corruption probe, Gov. Corzine said the state must stand up against corruption. "\$18.6 million dollars is more money than any of the crooks who were arrested last week got," Tittel said. "The fact that the Governor won't veto the minutes of this meeting shows that he is supportive of actions that invite bribes and undermine the environment.

In light of this outrageous decision, a coalition of a dozen environmental organizations, including NJ Sierra Club, Highlands Coalition, Stop the Lines, and the Pequannock River Coalition, formally requested that the Governor veto the minutes of the meeting. As the basis for their position, the groups cited issues with the council members standing, conflicts of interests, inconsistencies with the Highlands Regional Master Plan, and a violation clean energy policies.

This transmission line will import dirty power from coal-fired plants in Pennsylvania, drastically increasing the amount of coal-generated electricity in our grid and undermining New Jersey's Global Warming Response Act.

"Gov. Corzine's inaction shows he supports a power line that puts an ugly scar through the Highlands and undermines our clean energy efforts," Tittel said. "He may talk about clean energy but his actions show he's not willing to stand up for it."

While the Highlands Council offers rationale that the \$18.6 million will be used to mitigate the impact of the proposed power lines, you cannot mitigate the removal of trees, pollution of wetlands, and disruption of steep slopes. You cannot mitigate the effects on global warming that will result from importing more and more dirty coal power from Pennsylvania. Those are direct onsite impacts that cannot be mitigated offsite.

"Governor Corzine had a test. He could be on the side of clean energy and integrity and against corruption and bribes. He failed that test and now we know where he stands on these issues," Tittel said.

Kara Seymour, Program Assistant

Issue Coordinator's Report

(Electric) Cart Before the Horse Rides Again

By Sunil Somalwar, our Global Warming Issues Coordinator (Sunil.Somalwar@gmail.com)

A few more billions of taxpayer funds were thrown at the plug-in electric car industry in August for, amongst other things, building manufacturing plants for actual vehicles. The news items was accompanied by the usual warm glow of great reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that are sure to follow.

The ability to hold two contradictory thoughts in one's head may be good for mental health, but it is no basis for sound public policy. If we want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we have to consume less petroleum on our roads and less coal in electric generating plants. But plug-in electric cars take us in exactly the opposite direction. They increase electricity consumption and also promote higher energy consumption on the road - by substituting coal-electricity for petroleum.

Coal generates more than 80% of American electricity. Its future is secure for decades because it is cheap and plentiful, and the cost of replacement technology is high. Plug-in electric cars increase electricity demand at a time when we need to be removing dirty sources of electricity from an electric grid that is running at capacity. It is like going on a spending spree (using more electricity) when you want to reduce the hefty monthly interest payments on your maxed out credit cards (electric grid) because some day, the aunt (clean energy) is going to leave you an inheritance. Coal just got a brand new best friend in the plug-in car.

Economics 101 gives us sensible policies to reduce greenhouse emissions without sacrificing living standards. Any form of gradual pollution-pricing, done in a tax-neutral fashion by refunding pollution revenues back to the people, will do the job. Our reliance on dirty fuels will go down, people will conserve by increasing efficiency, and the right energy mix will evolve on its own. It is one thing for the government to set broad policies with long time horizons and then stay out of the way; it is another to pick favorite solutions and shower subsidies on them. Plug-in electric cars follow in the footsteps of corn ethanol: feeding at the public trough without delivering a dime of environmental benefit.

Despite the subsidies and regulatory gifts showered upon them, plug-in electric cars are not that efficient. Laudatory articles about them rarely include any numbers. In fact, plug-in cars are no better than my 15-year old Honda Civic or a Ford Focus - when emissions at the coal-fired electricity plant are taken into account. Yes, the very same coal plants that we supposedly want to retire pronto. Plug-in cars will remain substantially less efficient than their gasoline-driven hybrid cousins for decades to come.

Plug-in cars are not alone in this dreamy clean-future scenario. Billions of taxpayer dollars are being thrown around to initiate a high-speed train network. Rail excels at carrying freight efficiently, but not at transporting passengers. Intercity express luxury buses are far more environmentally efficient (and cheaper) at carrying people between cities such as New York and Washington DC, or Chicago and St. Louis. (See Laura Lynch's Eco-tip on this subject: p.X.) For distances beyond 350 miles or so that buses can ply conveniently, even planes tend to be more efficient than trains. When there is already a good network of highways, and the nation is drowning in debt, is there a need to start from scratch on a new fast train network that is neither cheap nor environmentally efficient? Would it not make more sense to learn from the superefficient "Chinatown" bus coaches that handily beat Amtrak in price and in greenhouse emissions (while providing free internet access onboard)? Those entrepreneurs survive just fine without any government subsidies, thank you, but they could use some good stopping stations on the interstate highway system.

I guess contradictions are to be expected from the hodgepodge of regulations and wasteful subsidies that masquerade as our energy policy. The folks who brought us corn ethanol are still at work.

Issue Coordinator's Report

National Protection for Wilderness Areas

Supplied by John Kashwick, our Utah Issues Coordinator (jkashwick@optonline.net)

On Aug 5th the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in San Francisco, affirmed protection for over 40 million acres of wild national forests and grasslands from new road building, logging, and development. The decision puts an end to the Bush administration's efforts to open these last great natural areas to development. The ruling protects the majority of national forest roadless areas in the country.

National Protection

(Continued from page 2)

The ruling also frees the federal government to pursue President Obama's pledge to "support and defend" the 2001 Roadless Rule - including appealing an adverse ruling from a Wyoming federal court, ending the roadless protection exemption for Alaska's Tongass National Forest, and refraining from endorsing state-based roadless plans, like one just proposed in Colorado.

The Sierra Club's Executive Director, Carl Pope, noted that, "this decision is a victory for campers, hikers, hunters, anglers, and all Americans who enjoy the wild forests that make our nation unique."

"Deep public support for roadless area protection and hard fought battles helped us keep the majority of our roadless areas safe despite attacks from the Bush administration. We are proud that only seven miles of roads were built and 535 acres of trees logged in roadless areas since 2001. We now look forward to securing permanent protection for these areas."

For more information, contact Kristina Johnson in the Club's San Francisco office: (415) 977-5619.

Conservation Report

Election Time means ...the Route 55 Extension is back on the table

By Douglas Jewell, Chair of our Cape May County Conservation Committee

Just like a summer heat rash that won't completely go away, the proponents of the Route 55 Extension keep bringing that ill-conceived project back to life. With state elections just a few months away, Cape May County politicians - as usual - are being pressured to throw their support to the 20-mile extension which would negatively impact seven wetlands for a total of five miles.

The four-lane divided highway would traverse pristine land from the current end of Route 55 in Port Elizabeth (Cumberland County) to the Garden State Parkway in Clermont (Cape May County). The project would take 20 years, so it's hardly the quick solution that Cape May County business people think will solve the 200 hour per year problem. That's right! Shore traffic currently using Route 47 is backed up on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons between Memorial Day and Labor Day. That's all!

The cost of \$483 million in 1991 dollars escalated to \$615 million in 1996 and \$747 million in 2000. The current cost is now estimated to be \$2 billion. That figure is seven times the entire yearly budget of NJDOT.

The superhighway would displace 62 homes (1995 NJDOT figure) and negatively impact 19 businesses in Dennis Township and 17 in Maurice River Township on Routes 47 & 347, and another 27 on Route 9 between Clermont and Swainton. That's 63 businesses that would be struggling to survive.

Environmentally, the waterways negatively impacted would be the Manumuskin River, Muskee Creek, Little Mill Creek, West Creek, East Creek, Willis Run, Old Robin Branch, Dennis Creek, and Sluice Creek. Secondary impacts would affect the Maurice River and Delaware Bay. Vast tracts of land impacted include the Dennis Creek Wildlife Management Area and Belleplaine State Forest.

The Shore Connection Committee (SCC) of the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) studied the Route 55 Extension and released its report in November, 1998. The report said ...

"It would increase volume on the Garden State Parkway, taxing the ability of the roadway to serve its existing demand and the new demand from the completion of Route 55."

"The need for a major highway project with year round impacts to address problems that occur during a limited summer season is questioned."

"This project would involve the construction of a new roadway through environmentally sensitive areas and public lands. It would face extreme environmental problems, particularly wetlands impacts, which would make it difficult to permit and costly to mitigate. It would also be very costly to build."

The report was full of similar warnings against construction of the Route 55 Extension - too many to list in this article - yet proponents have somehow concluded that the SJTPO report is in favor of the project. Go figure.

The SCC laid out a laundry list of improvements that would ease traffic congestion. Amongst them were four Garden State Parkway improvements, five intersection improvements on Routes 55, 47 & 347, four corridor improvements including a reversible third lane on Route 47, and five travel management suggestions. Of those 18 suggestions made 11 years ago, just five - all travel management - have been implemented. Incredibly, the suggestion to increase access to the Garden State Parkway from Route 9 has actually seen the Parkway Commission release plans to decrease access by eliminating two vital exits.

The Route 55 Extension would be the most environmentally destructive project to hit Cape May County since the 1950's. The time to fight this behemoth is now. Let's put it to rest and promote implementation of the less costly alternatives.

To be heard on this issue, contact State Senator Jeff Van Drew, State Assemblymen Matt Milam and Nelson Albano at 21 North Main State, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210 or call 609-465-0700 or fax 609-465-4578.

For more information, call local Sierra Club chair Douglas Jewell at 609-780-7129 or email jewellrea@comcast.net.

Issue Coordinator's Report

A Global Warming Policy that Republicans can (and should) Support

By Sunil Somalwar, our Global Warming Issues Coordinator (Sunil.Somalwar@gmail.com)

OK, you are a red-blooded Republican and don't believe that the globe has been warming, or that humans are responsible, or that it could be a major problem, or that earth won't fix itself. At the same time, you are also a conservative, and conservatives aren't supposed to favor massive uncon-

Global Warming

(Continued from page 3)

trolled changes, even if their friends assure them that there won't be any problems. After all, wouldn't you call me a mad scientist if I proposed an experiment to double the atmospheric carbon dioxide to test my theory of climate?

On the other hand, maybe, just maybe, in a corner of your mind you are worried about the possibility of rising sea levels and the fun the Congress and the Army Corps of Engineers (of New Orleans fame) are going to have unleashing massive new flood control schemes at your expense. Maybe all you want is to stop the regulatory nightmare that is unfolding in the name of energy policy, along with wasteful subsidies that are being thrown at energy "solutions." Maybe you are just worried about becoming the party of "no," that opposes action on global warming just as it opposed action on tobacco and smoking.

What should you do when your core conservative principles offer the only solution for a problem that you don't really believe in? You can stay on the sidelines and laugh at the party in power as it throws around billions, if not trillions, of your tax dollars in pursuit of false solutions, damaging the body fabric of the country you love in the process. Or you can hedge your bets and outmaneuver your ideological opponents in the other party while making sure no skin comes off your nose. This is how:

1) Agree to a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50%, and no more, over a period of thirty years or so. After all, the Europeans and Japanese emit half as much as we do and they are not exactly bankrupt - nor has their industry vanished. If you really believe in American entrepreneurial ingenuity as you say, this should not be difficult. There will be an absolute sunset to the legislation at the end of thirty years and that is it. Leave it to the next generation to evaluate the threat of global warming and the effectiveness of the policy that is set sail today.

2) Absolutely no new taxes. All policies have to be overall tax-neutral. Whatever form of pollution pricing is implemented must be accompanied by a full refund. Carbon tax is perhaps the best solution, but it won't happen unless both Republicans and Democrats give each other political cover. Cap-and-trade is a bit crazier, but is more likely to pass because it hides the emission fees. No matter what scheme is implemented, the important point is that the money has to go back to where it came from. Send Christmas checks to the consumers every year, and use the corporate emission revenues to reduce corporate tax. Set up a separate Climate Policy Trust whose job is to make sure that every penny of the emission fee that is collected goes back. Don't tangle the emission fee revenues with the income tax code. Money will disappear before you know it.

3) Protect your turf. Red states tend to have more emissions. Don't let the emission fee revenue flow from the red states to the blue states. Require that the Climate Policy Trust must refund the money on a state-by-state basis. Doing so has no impact on the emission reduction goals. Climate policy should not be a mechanism for wealth transfer.

4) Require zero government influence once the policy is set in motion. No government sponsored solutions and no subsidies for pet solutions. Subsidies for solar, electric car, corn ethanol and all that stuff have to come from the discretionary funds in the general exchequer, not from the Climate Policy Trust money.

5) No rewards for "good" behavior and no penalties for "bad" behavior. My neighbor driving his Hummer is as OK as my European vacation to sip French wine because we both paid the emission fees. Isn't this what liberty means?

6) Require that the regulatory regime is dismantled as emissions go down. No more CAFE automobile efficiency standards and goodbye to California efficiency standards. Don't hobble automakers by forcing them to make products people don't want. In any event, when people buy efficient cars and gasoline is cheap, they just drive more. When emission fees increase gasoline prices, people will buy more efficient vehicles if they want to.

7) Require market certainty. Put the Climate Policy Trust in charge of setting the pollution pricing levels. All changes in pollution pricing have to be gradual and announced seven years or so in advance. Markets need the certainty over a long time horizon to adjust their investment and business plans. But once they do, they come out ahead. Didn't Dupont make money when the CFC's, which were out of patent, were replaced by HFC's?

Think you can handle it?

Conservation Eco-tip Fireworks Pollute!

By our Chapter Conservation Chair, Laura Lynch

Now that the Fourth of July holiday is over we can tell you something about the holiday you probably wouldn't have wanted to hear. We're going to give you a year to get used to the fact that fireworks pollute.

There are two methods of propelling fireworks into the sky: compressed air, which is harmless, and gunpowder, which isn't. Add accelerants to the gunpowder, and the heavy metals that give us those bright colors, and we're looking at a cocktail of particulate matter than can stay in the trees and contaminate surface water for weeks. One metal, used to make fireworks bright green, is barium, which is radioactive. Dioxins are combined with copper compounds to give us blue colored fireworks and cancer. Other special effects are created with cadmium, lithium, antimony, rubidium, strontium, and even lead. These heavy metals all have respiratory consequences.

A major pollutant in fireworks is perchlorate, which can interfere with thyroid gland function. Contaminating perchlorate can last as long as several months in the water supply, but it is eventually broken down by microbes.

The federal Clean Air Act regulates the release of toxins. Responsible municipalities should contract for pyrotechnics that comply with the rules by limiting the amount of airborne toxins released during a fireworks display. Unfortunately, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection does not regulate fireworks.

Sorry, folks, to have ruined your holiday retroactively, but all is not lost. The Walt Disney Corporation, famous for its fireworks displays at its amusement parks, has been using compressed air instead of gunpowder. Replacements for perchlorate are also being developed; these compounds use nitrogen instead. Removing perchlorate removes the smoke as well. Using nitrocellulose instead leaves only carbon dioxide, water, and nitrogen in the air. If you went to the fireworks display in Philadelphia this year you would have seen a perchlorate-free display.

We have a year to contact our municipalities and ask them to color 2010's fireworks green (but without the barium). Let's get to it.

For more information on firework toxins, see <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2008/07/fireworks-perchlorate-poison.php>, http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/06/fireworks_fun_environmental_contaminant.php, http://www.treehugger.com/files/2006/07/the_prettiest_p.php, and <http://www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/15954/>. More optimistic information can be found at <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es0700698> and <http://www.livescience.com/environment/080630-greener-fireworks.html>. A news report on a local environmentally-conscious pyrotechnic company is at http://www.philly.com/inquirer/business/homepage/20090704_Pa_company_works_to_make_fireworks_greener.html. To learn more about sustainability, go to <http://sustainablelawrence.org>.

Issue Coordinator's Report

A Home Energy Audit Saves Money and the Environment

By our Environmental Education Coordinator, Leia Simms (Leia@brightalt.com)

Energy audits are the first step to determine efficiency upgrades for your building. It is comprehensive testing for benchmarking current energy consumption in a building and determining recommendations for reducing that usage. We examine and test all systems in the building, as they interact with each other. All buildings can benefit from a whole-building energy audit.

In addition to the energy savings and reduction in utility bills, energy audits will locate problems causing buildings to be uncomfortable, i.e. drafts, inconsistent temperatures (hot/cold rooms), improved indoor air, solutions to moisture/mold problems, improved health and safety.

Upgrades based on an energy audit result in: Reduced energy use by 50% or more, maintenance and capital costs, environmental impact. Increased occupant comfort and health. Energy audits provide a plan to work with when upgrading a building. We often find upgrades that pay for themselves the first year. Currently funding for upgrades is available through New Jersey Clean Energy Program (NJCEP) and Home Performance with Energy Star.

Single-Family Home Energy Audits performed by a certified auditor generally includes the following services:

Interview with homeowner - As the building occupants, you are most familiar with what you are experiencing and can point your auditor to specific problem areas.

Air quality/Safety/ Efficiency tests -Gas Leak test ,Combustion analysis, Backdraft test, Carbon Monoxide test. These are imperative to maintain healthy, safe living conditions.

Visual Inspection - A certified energy auditor's trained eye is a necessary tool for identifying deficiencies.

Blower door test - Professional energy auditors use blower door tests to help determine a home's air-leakage. Leakage testing and remediation address moisture/condensation issues, uncomfortable drafts caused by cold air leaking in from the outdoors and will reduce energy waste due to air leakage.

A blower door is a fan that mounts into an exterior door. The fan pulls air out, lowering the air pressure inside. The higher outside air pressure then flows in through all cracks, exaggerating air-leaks. These tests determine the air infiltration rate of a building. Most buildings have at least 1.5 times the recommended leakage amount resulting in significant energy loss. Older buildings are often 4x leakier than recommended!

Infrared Analysis - An infrared scan can be done in combination with a blower door, and can help locate the source of the air leakage.

HVAC duct leakage test.

Lighting and appliance analysis and recommendations

Energy analysis with EPA-approved energy modeling software

Detailed report with pictures including:

- Energy saving recommendations
- Estimated cost-savings and Return On Investment data to help analyze the cost-benefit relative to other investments
- Information on qualifying equipment rebates and state/federal incentive programs

Upon completion of the audit by a BPI certified contractor in New Jersey you will become eligible for a free \$1,000 toward air sealing and 50% rebate up to \$10,000 toward other recommendations, as well as monthly energy savings.

Commercial buildings will also benefit from Audits. Energy costs can be 25% or more of an organization's expenses - energy efficiency significantly improves profitability.

Leia Sims is a CEM, certified energy auditor with the Building Performance Institute and the NJ Clean Energy Program. Bright Alternatives, provides energy consulting, auditing and presentations. Visit www.BrightAlt.com or contact Leia@BrightAlt.com. Other accredited Auditors can be found on NJCEP.com.

Issue Coordinator's Report

You Can Help Save an American Icon: Utah's Red Rock Canyonlands

Supplied by John Kashwick, our Utah Issues Coordinator (jkashwick@optonline.net)

The red rock canyonlands of southern Utah is one of our nation's most magnificent wild landscapes. It is an area dominated by towering buttes and red sandstone plateaus, where the great Colorado and Green Rivers have sliced deep, winding canyons. Seasonal streams have cut slot canyons so narrow you can touch both sides with outstretched arms. The land is a layer-cake of sedimentary geology, where ancient solidified sand dunes have been wind-sliced to form massive cliffs, and domes are layered in colors from white to deep, brick red.

This was the last place in the lower 48 states to be mapped, and it remains a remote area where the human imprint on nature is at a minimum - the largest unprotected network of wild lands outside of Alaska. If you've been there, you know that the vast landscapes and ancient Native American cultural sites feel like a connection to eternity.

The bad news is that leftover policies from the Bush administration still allow devastating damage by ORVs, and efforts to explore and extract the minimal amounts of oil and gas or the potentially larger amounts of oil shale may do worse. The U.S. Geological Survey has cited the dust caused by both activities as key factors complicating the damage caused by climate change to the southwest's dwindling water supply. The Obama administration needs to stand and deliver on the opportunity to reverse President Bush's "No More Wilderness" policy.

Red Rock Canyonland

(Continued from page 5)

In Congress, "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act" has been re-introduced in the Senate (S 799) by Richard Durbin of Illinois and in the House (HR 1925) by Maurice Hinchey of New York. (Co-sponsors include Senators Lautenberg and Menendez, and Congressmen LoBiondo, Smith, Pallone, Lance, Pascrell, Rothman, Payne, Holt, and Sires - all except Congressmen Andrews, Adler, Garrett and Freylinghuysen.) It would protect 9.4 million acres of wild lands in southern and western Utah. A small portion of these lands was protected by the "Omnibus Public Lands Bill," which passed Congress in January, 2009. It is time to finish the job.

For more information and to email your Congressman to ask him to cosponsor "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act" please go to www.sierra-club.org/utahwilderness/ or contact the Sierra Club's National Utah Wilderness Team via Bob Jordan at bobjord@earthlink.net or Clayton Daughenbaugh at claytonhd@xmission.com).

You can also help by sending a letter to the Interior Department asking them to revoke President Bush's "No More Wilderness" policy which prevents the Bureau of Land Management from providing additional wilderness protection for the wild lands under its jurisdiction. Send your letters to: Deputy Secretary David Hayes; U.S. Dept. of the Interior; 1849 'C' St., NW; Washington, DC 20240.

Sustainable Life-style Background, from a Member The Problem of Electronic Waste

By Tamanna Mohapatra, a member of our Central Jersey Group (tmohapatra@yahoo.com)

Ten thousand years ago, the agricultural revolution brought about settled life, with such new forms of pollution as sewage and broken pottery. Three hundred years ago came the industrial revolution, and pollution in the form of coal slag and carbon dioxide. We're now thirty years into the electronic revolution, and throwing away cell phones, computers, televisions, pdas etc.

The United Nations' Environment Programme estimates that approximately 2.5 million tons of e-waste is generated annually, with North America responsible for 80% of it. (According to the EPA, 100 million cell phones were discarded in the US in 2006.) Although e-waste accounts for only one to four percent of municipal waste, it may be responsible for as much as 70 percent of the toxic heavy metals in landfills, including 40 percent of all lead, and much mercury and cadmium. Some municipal waste is incinerated, so these metals also pollute the atmosphere. And of course much mining pollution (and energy use) would be reduced if the metals, including gold, palladium, silver and copper, could be recycled.

Many communities offer or even require the recycling of e-waste. What usually happens is that the combined wastes are sent in containers to China or India or African countries, where children and other low-wage workers pick out the valuable metals, at great cost to their health. A 2002 documentary showed Chinese workers using hammers and chisels to pry copper and aluminum from computers, burning PVC-coated wires to get at copper, and swirling acids in buckets to extract gold. Then the computer carcasses and waste sludge are dumped in fields and streams. Soil and water tests in the e-waste-processing town of Guiyu, China, for instance, revealed levels of chromium, tin and barium hundreds of times higher than allowable in the United States.

The European Union leads the world in responsible electronic recycling, requiring that manufacturers accept all of their discarded products. The USA is at the opposite extreme. For 20 years the Basel Convention, recognized in 172 countries (but not the USA), has banned rich countries' dumping of e-wastes into poor countries.

In January, 2006, Maine became the first state to require manufacturers of computer monitors and televisions to pay for their recycling and disposal. Since 2004, 19 states and New York City have approved laws that make manufacturers responsible for recycling electronics, and similar statutes are being put into effect in 13 other states this year. The newest laws tend to require recycling of a broader range of items, including printers and fax machines.

New Jersey recently passed a law, which is not yet in effect, to specifically ban residents from dumping electronics into the regular trash.

At the federal level, a bill was introduced in May of this year to improve the regulation of e-waste, which was last touched in the Clinton presidency of 1992-2000. It will standardize e-waste treatment across all states as well as restrict how we export e-waste out of our country: where it goes, how it goes, and what's done with it. At issue is whether consumers or manufacturers would pay for the programs. A strong argument holds that when producers must manage their own discards, they have a strong incentive to design equipment that's nontoxic and easy to recycle.

What you can do: (1) Buy less (or not at all!): resist the urge for the latest model cell phone, computer or plasma screen. (2) Buy only from a dealer that offers a recycling service for your discarded items. (3) Inquire of your trash hauler about programs for e-waste. Some county utility authorities offer such services. (4) As a general rule, librarians are the most knowledgeable reference sources in a community. (5) Pester (lobby) your legislators (federal, state, county and municipal) to report (and move) on provisions for responsible e-waste recycling.

(Tamarra Mohapatra is an Information Technology Professional, living in North Brunswick. She supplied a 3170-word version of this article, complete with many citations for her facts. Contact her if you'd like an electronic copy.)