



West Virginia Citizen Action Group

Capital Eye

Volume 9, Number 1; January 2016

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New Year, New Legislative Session

by: Gary Zuckett

The New Year is finally here and the West Virginia Legislature is in town for their 60-day session setting our public policy for the next year and beyond. At WV Citizen Action, our three lobbyists – Julie, Emmett, and I – have been busy making preparations for the ordeal. The new conservative leadership has lots of unfinished business on its wish list, and we’re hearing that several major bills are expected to be taken up during the early days of the session in anticipation of having to override any vetoes from Governor Tomblin.

Another wrinkle this session is the unusual number of legislators that have already resigned or have given notice that they will not run for reelection. The most noteworthy being the resignation of Daniel Hall, the Senator who switched to the Republican party the day after the 2014 election to give Republicans majority control of the Senate. His seat is now being contested at the WV Supreme Court with the majority control of the Senate at stake – stay tuned!

Labor and plaintiffs’ lawyers will again bear the brunt of this session. Right to Work (for less) is now being promoted as “Workplace Freedom” by supporters at the Business and Industry Council (BIC) as they roll out their Koch brothers agenda. “Workplace Freeloading” is a better term for this policy that allows workers to enjoy

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the benefits of union representation without having to chip in to help pay for it. See the AFI-CIO's page for up-to-date info: wvaficio.org.

Consumer attorneys warn us of continued efforts to weaken the state's Consumer Protection Act with 'tort reform' proposals that aim to shut the courthouse doors to citizens who are harmed by marketing scams, defective products, negligence, or unsafe workplaces. WV CAG will be working with the progressive legal community to protect our 7th amendment constitutional rights to the civil justice system.

Environmental advocates are watching out for more of the same from the polluters' lobby – the endless attrition of existing policy that is supposed to protect the air, land, water, and people from the "external" costs of industry using our air, water, and land to dump the toxic by-products of their trades. Oil and gas drillers are challenging the newly drawn "zones of critical concern" to prevent spills upstream of public water intakes. WV CAG is joining with WV Rivers Coalition to intervene on behalf of clean water. See Julie's articles for details on this and other oil & gas issues we expect will be in play at the legislature.

Other rules bills concerning water protection are expected to be targeted for increasing the amounts of dissolved toxins such as aluminum and selenium permitted in our streams and rivers. We've also heard that the oil & gas lobbyists are working to increase tenfold the allowable radioactivity levels in our waterways. Yuck!

One of the more concerning efforts coming out of the national conservatives is the 'Trojan Horse' proposal of convening a full-blown constitutional convention of the states – supposedly to enact a "balanced budget" amendment to the US Constitution. Regardless of where you come down on forcing DC to work under a balanced budget, this is a convention that has never in our history been tried and many constitutional scholars feel that, once convened, such a convention could do just about anything it wants to our founding document. This is a very alarming situation. It's actually more alarming considering that only a handful of states are now needed to cross the 2/3 threshold that would mandate such a convention. West Virginia is on the short list of states that outside interests have targeted to pass such a resolution. See this [posting from WVCBP](#) and watch out for movement of such a resolution in the next two months.

We're actually for some things too!

We are expecting to support many new proposals this session. On top of the list is the effort to enact a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to help lower-

income families make ends meet. We are part of the Invest in Working Families Coalition who is leading this campaign to have West Virginia join the majority of other states who have this income tax credit as a percentage of the federal EITC. This was also one of the [ten top policy issues](#) of the Our Children, Our Future campaign, of which WV CAG is a co-sponsor.

We'll continue the push for more energy efficiency programs with a proposal that would allow counties to help finance building upgrades on their tax rolls. For more on these programs, see Emmett's LEEP article.

We'll also be supporting common sense progressive policy in many areas, working with allies in the labor, legal, social justice, faith, and environmental movements. Such radical efforts as expanding broadband and farm-to-table options for consumers, juvenile justice reforms, and getting reformed adult offenders back to work. The list is too long to include them all.

Your support is needed now!

First, a BIG THANK YOU to all our members and supporters who have already renewed and donated to invest in a better West Virginia! Next, a plea for your support by becoming a WV CAG member or making a tax-deductible donation to our WV Citizen Action Education Fund (WV CAEF). The foundation of our success at the Capitol is you, our supporters, and we'll continue to fight the special interests and support consumer and citizen friendly policy with your help. Please go to wvcag.org and sign up for our action alerts and renew your membership!



MORGANTOWN ADVOCACY TRAINING

**January 20, 2016; 6-8 pm
Mountainlair, Hatfield's B
West Virginia University
RSVP: bit.ly/MotownAT16**



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Get tips on speaking with elected officials.

Learn about progressive organizations and issues in West Virginia.

Our Children, Our Future Campaign Update

by: Ciera Pennington

Our Children, Our Future (OCOF) is a statewide campaign of over 150 organizations – WV CAG included – working to end child poverty in West Virginia. Each year the campaign accepts a variety of policy proposals, five of which will go on to be the campaign's primary focus during the legislative session.

During September 2015, citizens all across the state voted on the 27 policy proposals and choose their top issues. Based on these votes, the 2016 OCOF platform includes the following issues:

1. Mental Health Matters: Develop a Statewide Strategy to Reform Children's Mental Health Care
2. Protecting Quality Child Care Centers
3. Right to Work is Wrong
4. Second Chance for Employment Act & Driver's Licenses
5. Tax Reform to Protect Roads, Children, Seniors, and Jobs
6. Juvenile Justice: Redirect and Reinvest
7. Stop Meth Labs
8. Increasing Local Food Access and Profitability
9. Afterschool Opportunities for All
10. Expand Broadband Access

To learn more about each of these issues and how you can help support the policy teams, visit ocofwv.org.

Looking beyond the 2016 Legislative Session, OCOF brought a wide range of statewide organizations together last fall to host four, day-long, non-partisan candidate trainings – targeted at everyday citizens who want to run for office. The day-long trainings included interactive sessions on Stump Speech and Communications, Asking for Money, and more. They also included panels with experienced leaders about the resources that are available to candidates and with legislators about what they have learned from their own races. The trainings were a great success with over 100 people attending one of the four trainings across the state.



Delegate Pushkin speaking at the 2015 Fall OCOF Policy Summit.

Rules Matter

by: Julie Archer

Last August, the WV Surface Owners' Rights Organization (WV SORO), which was co-founded and is staffed by WV CAG, was one of several organizations that filed a legal notice with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) demanding regulations to stop oil and gas companies from dumping drilling and fracking waste in a manner that threatens public health and the environment.

WV SORO joined the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Earthworks, Responsible Drilling Alliance (PA), San Juan Citizens Alliance (CO), and the Center for Health, Environment and Justice in filing the notice, calling on the EPA to comply with its long-overdue obligations to update waste disposal rules that should have been re-

vised more than a quarter century ago.

We were notified by our attorneys in December that they had not been contacted by the EPA in response to our notice and that they were moving forward with filing a formal complaint. At that point, the agency could offer to start settlement discussions and provide information regarding their plans to update its regulations for oil and gas wastes. However, for now, the suit is moving forward and we are asking a federal court to order the EPA to finally make the revisions it determined were necessary back in 1988 with regard to these rules.

The groups notified the EPA that they will file a lawsuit in 60 days unless the agency complies with its duty under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to review and revise the federal regulations governing how oil and gas waste must be handled and

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disposed. RCRA requires that EPA review the regulations at least every three years and, if necessary, revise them. The agency determined that such revisions of the regulations were necessary to address specific concerns with oil and gas wastes more than 25 years ago, yet has failed to meet its legal responsibility to act. If EPA does not act within 60 days of today's notice letter, the groups intend to ask a federal court to set strict deadlines for EPA to complete this long-needed update and strengthening of its regulations for oil and gas wastes.

Although the EPA has failed to fulfil its duty to review and revise federal regulations governing how oil and gas waste is handled and disposed of, we're pleased to report that the agency has proposed new rules to curb methane and other harmful air pollution from oil and gas development. In September, [Dave McMahon testified at a public hearing in Pittsburgh](#) on behalf of WV SORO and the West Virginia Environmental Council (WVEC) in support of the rules. We also co-signed a [letter submitted by more than 125 organizations](#) around the country asking that the rules be strengthened to ensure that they are sufficiently strong to protect public health and tackle climate change.

Among the improvements we asked for in the rule was a provision to include affected communities in the pollution-detection process. A citizen complaint system is needed to allow communities living near oil and gas facilities to alert the EPA if they detect odors or air pollution events nearby. We also urged the EPA to regulate existing sources of methane pollution under the Clean Air Act to safeguard communities living with the burden of existing oil and gas development and to meet President Obama's Climate Action Plan goal of reducing oil and gas methane emissions.



An un-reclaimed drilling waste pit at a well site in Upshur County.

In addition to these rules, WV SORO and WV CAG collaborated with our allies on several occasions last year to submit detailed, technical comments on a number of rules proposed by the WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), including revised rules governing horizontal drilling, aboveground storage tanks, and water quality standards. In particular, the revisions to the horizontal well rule proposed a number of improvements.

The most significant changes had to do with the use of pits for storing drilling waste. In its draft the DEP Office of Oil and Gas (OOG) proposed eliminating the use of pits associated with a specific well work permit and mandating the use of closed loop systems. Centralized pits subject to more stringent design and construction standards and operational criteria could still be used to store wastewater off-site for use.

In our comments we commended the OOG for proposing additional safeguards for centralized pits that store waste generated by natural gas drilling operations and the steps taken in this rule to reduce the use of pits and the problems associated with them. We also urged the agency to eliminate the use of pits for the storage of drilling and hydraulic fracturing fluids and other drilling waste. Unfortunately, OOG accepted the industry's argument that the Horizontal Well Act contemplated the use of pits and backed down on the closed loop mandate.

When the rule was taken up by the Legislative Rule-Making Review Committee in November, WV SORO addressed this specific issue and highlighted the troublesome findings from a pit and impoundment study mandated by the Act to make the case for the closed-loop system requirement. In response to our presentation, Delegate Barbara Fleischauer offered an amendment to restore the closed-loop provisions. The amendment was not adopted but the committee's co-chair, Delegate Kelli Sobonya, left us an opening to bring the issue back up when the rule considered during the 2016 legislative session, which we intend to do.

Besides restoring the closed-loop provisions to the horizontal well rule, WV SORO's other legislative priorities for 2016 include implementing the recommendations of the studies mandated by the Horizontal Well Act with regard to noise, dust, and other air emissions from horizontal drilling sites; ensuring that important provisions to protect surface owners remain in the forced pooling legislation if it advances; and giving surface owners a chance to own any interest in the minerals under their land when these mineral rights are sold for unpaid taxes.

Stay tuned for more information on these issues and visit wvsoro.org for updates.



**WEST VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
and
WVCAG**

LEGISLATIVE KICK-OFF BLAST

**TUES. Jan 19th
at the
CHARLESTON WOMAN'S CLUB
7 to 10**

**Music by
That High Country Revival**

**Admission \$15
\$10 for Students**

**FOOD - FUN - MUSIC
Please come and support your
Environmental Lobby Team**

Local businessman could LEEP into energy savings

by: Emmett Pepper

Shane Wilson is an attorney and an up-and-coming real estate professional who lives a few steps from the WV CAG office. Shane has perhaps the broadest view of the real estate market in Charleston, as he works full-time for West Virginia Commercial Real Estate, one of the largest commercial real estate companies in the area, and is also a landlord of several residential rental properties in the city.

Recently, Shane purchased an 11-unit property on Charleston's East End neighborhood. He plans to honor the rich history of the property and make the property an attractive place for young professionals to live. The East End of Charleston has been described as the closest thing that West Virginia has to the hipster-filled Brooklyn, NY. There are the perks of city life: walkable restaurants, coffee shops, and a hip record store. But, like most of the state, it is not far from fantastic natural places such as the New River Gorge. The neighborhood has some historic homes and apartment buildings, some of which have fallen into disrepair and/or have outdated fixtures.

Shane's property, called Jackson Terrace, was built in the 1940s by Mr. Drasnin, a Jewish immigrant from France, fleeing anti-Semitic sentiment in Europe at the time. The building has much of the original fixtures, though some have been covered over the years. One thing that has not changed much is that building has not gotten much more efficient since the 1940s. This is one of the important upgrades that Shane wants to make; he wants to be able to let his tenants know that, while they will live in a historic building, they will have modern efficiency measures in place to keep them comfortable and energy bills low.

For responsible landlords like Shane, it can be daunting to figure out how to finance the improvements. To modify an old cliché, "you gotta spend money to save money!" One option is for Shane to use his own savings to make the upgrades, but that can be an impediment on him being able to invest in other, new properties, that can give a greater return than he can get on energy efficiency upgrades in this one building. The other option that Shane has is to go to the bank and borrow, using his own credit, to make the upgrades. But borrowing money can affect his credit. Depending on his current financial position, that may be the best option for him, but for many investors, it would be more attractive to let the energy savings take the debt load. In other words, to have energy savings be the "backing" for the debt, without having to impact the personal equity. In most states, he would be able to do so through a funding mechanism being considered by the West Virginia Legislature.

The Local Energy Efficiency Partnership (LEEP) Act is modeled after legislation enacted by 30 states, plus the District of Columbia. From Shane's perspective, the bill would allow him to make energy efficiency upgrades and repay them on his tax ticket. From a private financial institution's perspective, it would allow them to make money by charging interest for bonds backed by energy savings. Here's how it could work for Shane, if the bill passes and the local government chooses to participate in the program: First, Shane would get an investment-grade energy audit. The audit would identify the energy efficiency upgrades that will be most cost-effective and would save more than they would cost, if repaid over a time period that Shane identifies. Then, Shane would take the audit results and an application fee, and submit them to the City of Charleston or Kanawha County.

As is alluded to above, this is all assuming that the City of Charleston and/or Kanawha County chooses to participate in this program; local governments have to choose to make this option available to their commercial building owners. The local government would take the application and turn it into a bond, for sale on the bond market, likely bundling it with other properties making similar upgrades, to be sold together. The bonds are backed by the energy savings, not by the local government's credit. Then, the bonds are purchased by investors, the funds are used to make the upgrades, and Shane pays for the upgrades when he pays his taxes. The payments are required to be lower than the amount of energy savings Shane gets from them.

At a recent summit of energy efficiency leaders and businesses, the LEEP Act was identified as the top priority for helping facilitate energy efficiency upgrades in the state. In 2015, the bill received strong bipartisan support in both the West Virginia House and Senate. Energy Efficient West Virginia (EEWV) believes that there is excellent momentum for the bill going into this session, but could use your support and assistance. Please [sign up](#) for our email list and consider joining EEWV as a member.



Charleston building owner, Shane Wilson in front of his recently purchased property.

With Blankenship Conviction, We Must Remember Fuller Legacy on the State

by: Julie Archer & Natalie Thompson

With [the unprecedented conviction of former Massey Energy CEO, Don Blankenship](#), the public should take comfort that Blankenship has been served a small measure of justice for his actions.

Those with the power to do so, should use this opportunity to push for what still needs to be done — to, [as Senator Manchin put it](#), "not allow the prioritization of production and profits over the safety of our workers."

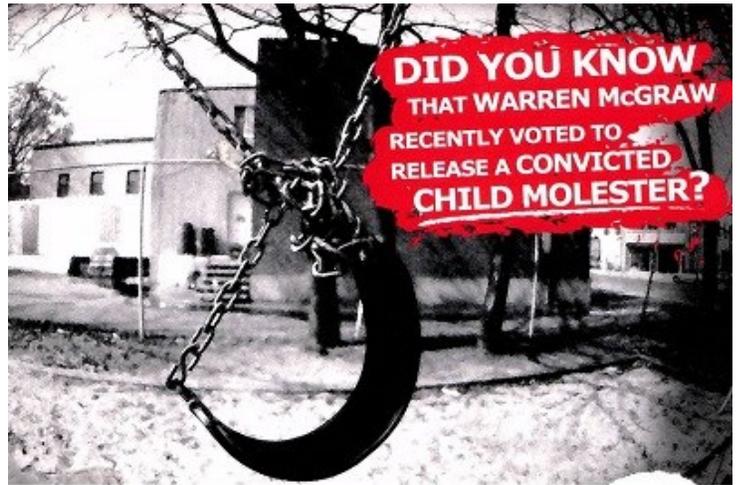
This means greater enforcement of existing coal regulations and [stiffer penalties for mine safety crimes](#) to ensure this never happens again.

But we also must remember Blankenship's fuller legacy on the state and the effects his prioritization of profit had elsewhere — namely our elections.

While Blankenship's \$3 million investment in now-Justice Benjamin's Supreme Court race led to judicial public financing in West Virginia (and since even made Benjamin a convert, now that he is planning to use public funds to run for reelection next year), the influence of money in our state elections is still too high.

During the 2015 legislative session, the ironically named Coal Jobs and Safety Act passed, which rolled back mine safety. Another bill made it more difficult for miners to sue employers if they are injured by deliberate violations of safety regulations. In the 2014 election, sponsors of these bills benefited from more than \$70,000 in political advertising paid for by a Super PAC funded primarily by the coal industry, and over \$40,000 in direct contributions from donors associated with the industry. These figures do not include contributions that were not disclosed to the Secretary of State. Unfortunately, the current disclosure laws in West Virginia allow contributors to hide their identity while influencing our elections. We cannot allow this lowly form of campaign cowardice to continue. West Virginians deserve to know who is trying to influence our votes and buy our public officials.

Without more robust disclosure of third-party political spending, permanent funding for the public financing program already in place for judicial elections and public financing for legislative races, our government will continue to be subject to the undue influence of the coal



2004 mailer against sitting WV Supreme Court Justice by Blankenship "secret money" group, "And for the Sake of the Kids".

industry and other special interests. Throughout the 2016 legislative session, Citizens for Clean Elections will continue to educate and build support for these policies aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in West Virginia elections. To help with this effort, sign up for our alerts at wvoter-owned.org so we can keep you informed about important events and actions you can take.

Public financing and transparency of political spending are important safeguards for democracy. The corporate elite, millionaires, and billionaires shouldn't be able to convince our elected officials to care about them more than welfare of the average citizen. They shouldn't be dictating what happens in our state by giving secret money groups six-figure checks for mud-slinging TV and other ads. In a democracy everyone's voice should be heard. Donors who contribute to a candidate's campaign or spend millions of dollars on political ads shouldn't have more access to and influence over our government.

A version of this article appeared [in the Charleston Gazette-Mail on January 7, 2016](#).

Sign the petition!

Tell the WV Public Service Commission to not let WV American Water off the hook for their chemical spill response in January 2014!

Sign now: bit.ly/PSCpetition

Important Energy Efficiency Cases at PSC

by: Emmett Pepper

The Public Service Commission (PSC) only had two of the three mandated commissioners for most of 2015, but there have been some very important cases, not to mention approving large rate increases. WV CAG's Energy Efficient West Virginia (EEWV) program intervenes at the PSC to promote energy efficiency programs at the electric utilities.

EEWV has been continuing to fight for better programs at both major utilities in the state. With the EPA's Clean Power Plan in the process of being implemented, utilities have a strong incentive to begin planning to increase energy efficiency greatly to meet these mandates in the most cost-effective manner.

In 2014, the legislature tasked the PSC and utilities to create Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs) for meeting energy needs, considering demand alongside generation. The PSC issued an order in March of 2015, telling the utilities that they must issue IRPs and leaving open the possibility that they may have to revise those IRPs in light of the Clean Power Plan. The utilities will initiate new PSC cases for their plans by the end of 2015.

In the first half of 2015, EEWV intervened in Appalachian and Wheeling Power's (AEP's) recent energy efficiency case. EEWV negotiated in the 2014 purchase of the Mitchell Power Plant that AEP would request an increase in funding to \$10 million annually in its 2015 energy efficiency case. EEWV asked the PSC to order several improvements of AEP's efficiency programs, but it turned out that the previously negotiated increase in spending was the only concrete improvement to AEP's program. There was some silver lining in the final order at the PSC, however. The PSC specifically did not preclude the possibility that it may act in the future on certain issues. It said it is willing to consider a joint natural gas and electric efficiency program and/or allowing participation in all of AEP's electric utility programs for those who heat with natural gas, and did not rule out the possibility of having an energy efficiency case after the utility issues its integrated resource plan.

In August 2015, FirstEnergy's West Virginia utilities, Mon Power and Potomac Edison, filed for another rate increase of approximately 12.5%. Most alarmingly, FirstEnergy sought to actually reduce its spending on energy efficiency. Unlike AEP, which is now spending \$10 million each year on energy efficiency, FirstEnergy is slated to spend less than \$2.6 million, despite having more customers than AEP. EEWV advocated for better efficiency programs at FirstEnergy's West Virginia utilities, which lag far behind AEP, and utilities in bordering states.



Unfortunately, certain parties in the case successfully argued against EEWV being able to increase energy efficiency spending in this particular case, so that delayed the issue until a case that FirstEnergy will file in March of 2016. EEWV was, however, able to negotiate two small improvements. The first being that in 2016, FirstEnergy will hold stakeholder meetings to allow input from the public and parties that are affected by its efficiency programs. This will empower EEWV to be engaged in the process and offer suggestions early.

Additionally, FirstEnergy will now participate in an important energy efficiency study being conducted by Marshall University and the West Virginia Home Builders Charitable Fund. This study will determine how home builders across the state are following the energy code. While EEWV was unable to increase efficiency spending by FirstEnergy, we are planning to be active participants in FirstEnergy's case in March of 2016, and advocate for much stronger increases in spending than FirstEnergy currently plans to spend.



HUNTINGTON ADVOCACY TRAINING

January 26, 2016; 6-8 pm
Memorial Student Center, Rm. TBD
Marshall University
RSVP: bit.ly/HuntingtonAT16



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Water Policy Continues to Be Focus of Legislative Advocacy Efforts

by: Julie Archer

During the 2016 legislative session, we will be working with the West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WVRC), West Virginia Environmental Council (WVEC), and other allies to support the following initiatives to protect our drinking water supplies:

- Defend against any roll backs of the Source Water Protection Plan requirement included in the Public Water Supply Protection Act passed in response to the Freedom Industries chemical spill, which contaminated the drinking water of 300,000 West Virginians in nine counties;
- Implement the recommendations from the Public Water System Supply Study Commission, including clarifying what information the Commission and public water systems (PWSs) can release to the public regarding potential sources of contamination, and improving spill notification requirements to ensure timely and accurate information is provided to the appropriate authorities, including PWSs;
- Adopt Aboveground Storage Tank (AST) rules that promote adequate staffing to administer the new AST program, require public notice of tanks seeking to be excused from the AST Act's requirements, and place responsibility on tank owners' to cover potential liabilities; and
- Oppose water quality standards revisions that weaken the standards for aluminum and selenium, and defend "Category A" public water supply use protections.

Prior to the start of the session, we will be participating in a public forum focused on source water protection being organized by WVRC. The forum will be held from 3-5 pm at the Culture Center in Charleston on January 9, 2016 in conjunction with the second anniversary of the Freedom Industries spill and the subsequent water crisis. We hope you can join us.

WV CAG, WV Rivers Coalition Intervene in Appeal Targeting Aboveground Storage Tank Act

Last fall, the Independent Oil and Gas Association of West Virginia (IOGA) and several oil and gas companies filed an appeal with the Environmental Quality Board challenging the delineation of the zones of critical concern (ZCCs) and zones of peripheral concern (ZPCs) that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) uses in determining and designating which aboveground

storage tanks are Level 1 and Level 2 tanks regulated under the Aboveground Storage Tank (AST) Act.

These zones are corridors along streams within a watershed that warrant detailed scrutiny due to their proximity to public water supply intakes and the intakes' susceptibility to potential contaminants within that corridor. Level 1 tanks are those tanks that pose the highest risk to public health and the environment in the event of a spill or leak based on the tank's contents or location within a ZCC. A Level 2 tank is any tank located in a ZPC for a public water supply that is not a Level 1.

Many provisions of the AST Act, which was initially passed in the wake of the Freedom Industries spill, were rolled back last year when oil and gas and other industries convinced the legislature to exempt tens of thousands of tanks from the new law and weaken inspection and other requirements for tanks that remain covered by the Act. Now the industry is trying to further delay implementation of the AST Act by challenging the delineation of the ZCCs and ZPCs. As a result of the appeal, the development of source water protection plans (SWPPs) mandated by the Public Water Supply Protection Act, which was also passed in response to the 2014 water crisis may also be delayed. This requirement that public water water systems write and periodically update SWPPs may be the most important response to the contamination of the water supply for Charleston and the surrounding area.

WV CAG and the WVRC are intervening in the appeal to preserve the integrity of the AST Act, defend the process DEP used to delineate the zones, and support the agency in its effort to move forward with implementation of the Act. An initial hearing in the case is scheduled before the EQB on January 14, 2016.

We are hoping to raise at least \$2,500 to help cover the cost of scientific and technical experts. You can contribute to this effort by making a donation at wvcag.org or sending a check to 1500 Dixie Street Charleston, WV 25311. Please include a note indicating your donation is in support of the "EQB Appeal."



MCHM storage tanks.

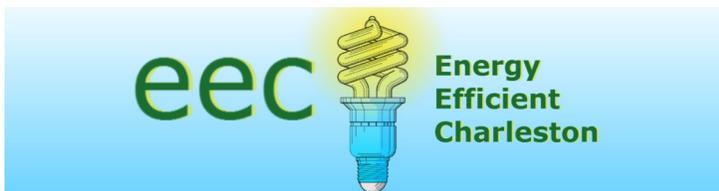
Competitions Inspiring Energy Savings for ApCo Customers

by: *Andy White*

WV CAG's Energy Efficient West Virginia (EEWV) project has been hard at work recently preparing for two new energy saving competitions in West Virginia: The Non-Profit Efficiency Engagement Program and Energy Efficient Charleston. Energy efficiency can help improve a number of problems facing our state, such as high unemployment and lowering bills for people struggling in today's economy.

While EEWV is always working to create new efficiency programs and policies, we also need to raise awareness about existing programs. While there are not many programs for customers of FirstEnergy's utilities (Mon Power or Potomac Edison) to participate in, AEP/ Appalachian Power customers have some programs that could use greater participation.

In EEWV's experience, the easiest path to becoming more energy efficient is to gain knowledge about the best first steps. That's why we have focused our community engagement programs on taking advantage of AEP's free home energy assessments. For a home energy assessment, an expert goes through a customer's home and recommends the most cost-effective efficiency upgrades. This gives homeowners a list of priorities, so they can make upgrades as it is convenient and within their budget. Unfortunately, too few AEP customers are aware of this program or just how effective it can be.



To grow awareness about energy efficiency and help increase participation in the energy assessments program, EEWV has been moving forward with the two competitions: Energy Efficient Charleston (EEC) began in December of 2015 and is going until November of this year. It is a citywide, yearlong competition to see which neighborhood can save the most energy.

For the past two years, EEWV held a block-vs.-block competition in the East End. For that competition, blocks saved up to 30% on their energy use! Now residents can unite to compete against the other neighborhoods in Charleston such as the South Hills, West side, Kanawha City, and East End to see who can save the most energy. Being part of the competition allows us to give participants energy savings tips, as well as discounts on efficiency upgrades from our partner contractor, [Mr. Handyman of the Kanawha Valley](#).

If you live in Charleston, take 90 seconds to sign up to be part of the competition, or if you know someone who lives in Charleston, send them the sign up info! There's no long-term commitment; signing up just means you get counted with your neighbors in the energy saving competition. EEWV encourages every participant to at least get their free energy assessment and will help connect people to resources, advice, and ways to save!

To sign the pledge to save energy, go to bit.ly/eecsignup!

One of the keys we have found to effectively save energy at home is to get a home energy audit for free from Appalachian Power Co. This helps you itemize what it is you need to do to start saving, create a plan for moving forward, and start to save take control of your energy bills.

Our other competition, The Non-Profit Efficiency Engagement Program, deals specifically with getting more people to have their home energy assessment. EEWV negotiated to have AEP take part in this competition as a part of the settlement in the Mitchell Power Plant transfer case. (See CAG Newsletter XXXX) This program helps nonprofits that own their buildings by giving them \$10 credit when people participate in the HomeSMART energy audit. So, a non-profit signs up to participate, encourages members and friends to get a free home energy audit from Appalachian power, and can use the \$10 credits it collects to make energy upgrades to its building. All participating nonprofits will get their \$10 credit per participant, but the winning non-profit with the most participants over 100 will win a \$10,000 energy efficiency upgrade.

Go to takechargewv.com to sign up for your FREE home energy Audit today!

Let us know how we can help you in your effort to reduce energy bills. Wherever you live in the state, we're here to help you cost-effectively save energy! Contact us by phone at 304.346.5891 or by email at andy@eewv.org.

Come by our office each month (except holiday weekends) from 5-8 pm for our First Friday Progressive Happy Hour!

Good food and great conversation with like-minded people.

Feel free to bring your favorite dish and your preferred Friday night beverage!



West Virginia Citizen Action Group

We need your support, we can't do it without you! Please renew your membership or send a donation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please select your donation amount:

\$25 \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Please renew my membership.

Return this form along with your check to:

West Virginia Citizen Action Group
1500 Dixie St., Charleston, WV 25311

You can also donate online: www.wvcag.org

This newsletter was published by WV-Citizen Action, a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1974 and dedicated to increasing citizen participation in economic and political decision-making.

Our members work for progressive changes in federal, state, and local policies by educating people about key public interest issues ranging from environmental protection and consumer rights to good government. Learn more about us at www.wvcag.org.

Women & Water 2.0 Update

by: Ciera Pennington

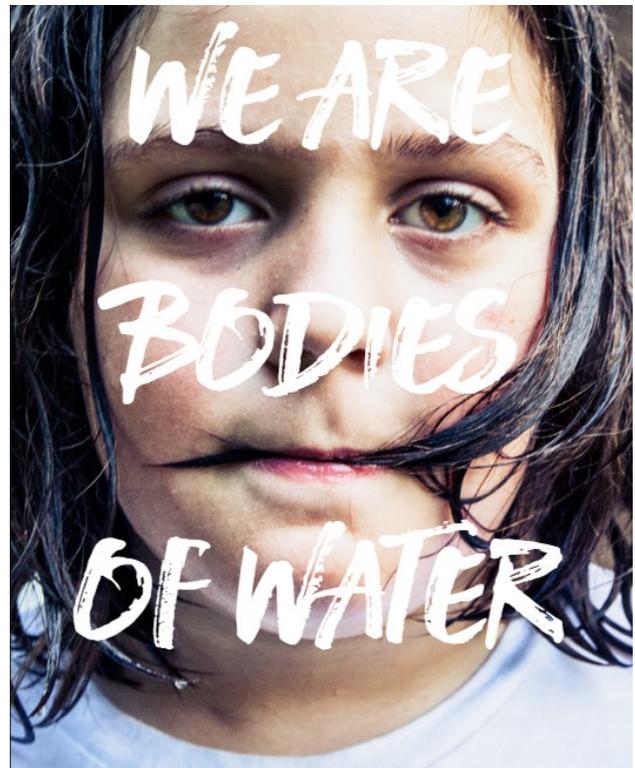
As mentioned in our Fall 2015 Newsletter, once again, WV CAG has joined the Women and Water campaign - a joint campaign through WV FREE, in partnership with other leaders in the fight for social, reproductive, and environmental justice. The goal of the campaign is to shift the public conversation around environmental and reproductive issues and to effect positive change through grassroots mobilization and engagement.

Late last year, WV CAG began our grassroots engagement through a phone canvass. We were able to make over 2,400 calls, contacting 275 people. Out of those we spoke to, 94.92% said they strongly or somewhat support stronger protections for their drinking water to prevent another water crisis like Charleston's in 2014, with only 0.72% saying they somewhat or strongly disagreed.

Throughout and briefly after session, we will be engaging community members and legislators through a variety of grassroots activities, such as tabling and door canvassing. If you see us out, be sure to grab some of our revamped materials!

To learn how you can get involved with Women & Water 2.0, email me at ciera@wvcag.org.

To learn more on how you can make a difference for clean, safe water for West Virginia, [sign up](#) today with [WV Rivers Coalition](#), a Women & Water 2.0 campaign partner, for e-updates on the most important policy issues affecting our water.





West Virginia Citizen Action Group
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Charleston, WV 25311

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Join us at the Capitol!

- **January 26th, WV Environmental Council Day:**
wvecouncil.org/calendar/
- **January 26th, Local Foods Day:** wvfoodandfarm.org/dfd/
- **January 28th, OCOF Kids & Families Day:** bit.ly/KFD_16
- **January 29th, WV EITC Awareness Day:**
on.fb.me/1RkshOm
- **February 1st, Women's Advocacy Day:**
wvfree.org/2016LOBBYDAY/
- **February 3rd, WV AFL-CIO Day:** wvaflcio.org
- **February 9th, Fairness WV Day:** on.fb.me/1KbZYdb
- **February 24th, Try This WV Day:** trythiswv.com
- **March 2nd, Domestic Violence Awareness Day:**
facebook.com/WVCADV