



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & POLICY NEWSLETTER

The Stroller Brigade: Grassroots voices for common sense chemical reform

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Stroller Brigade in front of the US Capitol

On October 29, WE ACT members and other partners in the Safer Chemicals Health and Families Campaign stormed the U.S. Capitol to participate in the Safer Chemicals’ Stroller Brigade to demand reform of the 30-year old Toxic Substances Control Act. Over 25 WE ACT members and volunteers visited Congressional offices to ensure that the proposed legislation to reform the 30-year old Toxic Substances Control Act otherwise known as (TSCA) will include environmental justice considerations. The Chemical Safety Improvement Act (CSIA), S. 1009, that is currently being discussed in committee, falls far short of what vulnerable populations need. As currently written, S. 1009 does not define vulnerable populations, such as: pregnant women, developing children, people of color with respiratory illnesses, Indigenous peoples with compromised immune systems, or others with chemical sensitivities. It also does not address the cumulative risks in communities of color (i.e. the multiple and aggregate exposures residents are subject to), as well as the need to help eliminate toxic hot spots. WE ACT members and volunteers spent the day visiting Senate offices to share personal stories with the staffs of Sen. Gillibrand and Sen. Schumer to talk about the importance of comprehensive chemical reform that is so needed in New York communities and beyond. Read more

About the Stroller Brigade at: <http://www.saferchemicals.org/2012/05/national-stroller-brigade-today-at-us-capitol.html>



WE ACT members and volunteers in the Hart Senate Building in Washington, DC.

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

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Events & Meetings

FUELING ENERGY, FINANCE, AND PUBLIC SERVICE: COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND RESILIENCY MEETING AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Earth Institute and the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia hosted a conference titled, "*Fueling Energy, Finance, and Public Service: Collaborative Solutions for Environmental Protection, Energy Efficiency, and Resiliency*". Dr. Frederica Perera of the Children's Environmental Health Center at Columbia (a long-time research partner of WE ACT) and WE ACT's Federal Policy Analyst, discussed with students and faculty how poor air quality and other exposures contribute to poor human health, and how policy can better address concerns of environmental justice communities.



TRANSLATING RESEARCH POLICY: STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING SERIES

The Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health and WE ACT presented a stakeholder briefing series entitled, "Translating Research to Policy" at the Mailman School of Public Health. Stakeholders, ranging from community members, researchers, faculty, environmental groups and government employees attended the meeting to learn about the research partnership and how the research can translate into the policies WE ACT's DC office advocates for in the clean air sector. WE ACT's federal policy analyst described some of the major campaigns around clean air and presented several policy considerations for the audience.



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY MINORITIES IN ENERGY KICK-OFF EVENT

The Department of Energy (DOE) hosted a Minorities in Energy Kickoff, in coordination with Hispanic Heritage Month, titled "STEM Education, Climate Change, Energy Economic Development: Serving and Leading Our Nation with Pride and Honor" on September 24, 2013. This is one of the initial efforts by DOE to link representatives from diverse community organizations, academia, business and industry, to provide perspectives and challenges to address STEM education, climate change, energy and economic development. One of the break-out sessions addressed climate change and discussed its impacts in addition to how it influences opportunities in the energy sector. An environmental justice perspective, specifically as it relates to the recovery efforts from hurricane Sandy, was shared by Mr. Eddie Bautista, Executive Director of the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance.



WHITE HOUSE CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

Photo courtesy of American Lung Association

On Tuesday, July 9th, the White House honored 11 people as "Champions of Change" who are working on the front lines to protect public health in a changing climate. These Champions were selected for raising awareness about these health consequences and helping their communities prepare for climate-related health impacts. From doctors and educators helping communities cope with poor air quality worsened by carbon pollution, to a patient who has suffered from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease advocating for clean air protections, each of these Champions are leading the way on climate and health. WE ACT's Federal Policy Analyst participated in a reception and roundtable discussion, hosted by National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) & the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about how to protect public health, the environment and take action on climate change.

2013 Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference



The CBCF Annual Legislative Conference was held this year from September 18-21, 2013. On Friday, Rep. James E. Clyburn (D- SC) hosted an Environmental Justice Braintrust discussion on “A Historical Review of Executive Order 12898”. The purpose of this panel was to focus on the implementation of the Executive Order 12898, assess how far we have come and how far we still have to go.

Dr. Mildred McClain of Harambee House, Inc. and a member of our Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change, was a speaker on the diverse panel. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy also made a surprise appearance after her speech at the National Press Club earlier that morning.

Rep. Clyburn and Admin. McCarthy speaking at panel

In her comments, Administrator McCarthy reiterated her commitment and the agency’s commitment to environmental justice, and that the EPA is here to serve every family and child. “Environmental Justice is going to be front and center over the next few years”, she said. She also restated the fact that former Administrator Lisa Jackson left a legacy and “if I don’t kick butt on EJ, she will kick mine”.

Rep. John Conyers (MI) and WE ACT Federal Policy Analyst



Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome and Ms. Laureen Boles of E4Progress, LLC, and member of the



Forum members: Michelle Robinson, Jalonne L. White-Newsome, Dr. Mildred McClain



Rep. John Conyers (MI) and WE ACT Federal Policy Analyst

AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE ON IMPROVING KIDS HEALTH



Improving Kid’s Environment, a non-profit organization with the mission of protecting children from environmental hazards, convened their annual meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana. WE-ACT’s Federal Policy Analyst participated as

a keynote speaker at the IKE Conference in early October, which is Children’s Health Month. WE ACT’s federal policy analyst gave a key note address about environmental Justice and the eight Indicators of a Healthy Community and also presented a workshop on community organizing. The conference focused on creating healthy environments where children can live, learn and grow. Over 100 public health leaders, child care workers, local government employees and environmental justice community leaders were in attendance. Improving Kids’ Environment (IKE) was in a non-profit organization with the mission of protecting children from environmental health hazards through advocacy, education and initiatives that create environmentally healthy homes, schools and communities

Website: <http://www.ikecoalition.org/index.html>

USING RESEARCH ON HEALTH DISPARITIES TO DRIVE POLICY

The 2013 National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, Translational Health Disparities Course: Integrating Principles of Science, Practice and Policy in Health Disparities Research that took place August 5-16, 2013 in Bethesda, Maryland. Over 100 scholars were convened to learn about the latest research on health disparities and offer potential policy solutions. While the focus of this course was very limited in its coverage of environmental exposure and environmental justice, EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice staff and other participants used this venue to highlight the need for more research within the NIMHD to acquire more data and targeted research that affects environmental justice communities – from both the chemical and non-chemical exposures – that can better inform on the ground advocacy and ultimately, policy development.



Ms. Sherri White, EPA OEJ; Dr. Irene Dankwa-Mullan, National Institutes of Health; Dr. Joan Packenham, NIEHS; Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, WE ACT-DC

On The Hill & Beyond

HEARING UPDATES:

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES

The Energy and Power Subcommittee on September 18, 2013, chaired by Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY), held a hearing on "The Obama Administration's Climate Change Policies and Activities." The purpose of the hearing was to examine the details of the President's Climate Action Plan and the full scope of federal climate change-related activities and their impacts on the economy and the environment. According to the Congressional Research Service, climate change funding was approximately \$77 billion across the federal government between 2008 and 2013. The subcommittee invited 13 federal agencies to testify, but only Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy accepted the invitation. Both Sec. Moniz of Department of Energy and Admin. Gina McCarthy did a great job responding to the committee's questions. However, many of their responses – as it relates specifically to carbon capture and sequestration and other key issues are cause for concern within the Environmental Justice community.

CLIMATE CHANGE DISCUSSIONS HEATING UP

In an effort to emphasize the importance of climate change, on September 17, 2013 the Safe Climate Caucus convened a forum to hear from individuals who have experienced first-hand the serious impacts of climate change. Several speakers shared their stories, including a Texas rancher who discussed the impact of the extreme drought; a New York resident who lived through Superstorm Sandy; an Iowa farmer who is struggling with rapidly changing temperatures and precipitation levels; and two residents of the Gulf Coast who have witnessed the effects of severe hurricanes and rising sea levels. The Safe Climate Caucus, comprised of 28 members of the House, is a group of Democratic members who highlight the need for action on climate change through daily floor speeches and other activities. (<http://waxman.house.gov/issues/safe-climate-caucus>)



SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY JOINT HEARING: EPA POWER PLANT REGULATIONS: IS THE TECHNOLOGY READY?

The Subcommittees on Environment and Energy will hold a joint hearing entitled *EPA Power Plant Regulations: Is the Technology Ready?* on Tuesday, October 29th, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2318 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing explored the technological basis for concluding that carbon capture and storage (CCS) is adequately demonstrated as a technology for controlling carbon dioxide emissions in full-scale commercial power plants. See witness testimonies at the following link: <http://science.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-environment-and-subcommittee-energy-joint-hearing-epa-power-plant-regulations>

SPEAKING OUT: WE ACT TESTIFYING AT PUBLIC HEARINGS ON CARBON POLLUTION STANDARDS



Ogonnaya Dotson-Newman, WE ACT at Public hearing held EPA's Region 2 Office Building in New York.

WE ACT's Environmental Health Director, Ogonnaya Dotson-Newman and federal policy analyst testified on October 23 at the 2nd public listening session hosted by EPA in New York. They talked about the importance of the Environmental Protection Agency moving forward with new guidelines to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants and refineries. As the only environmental justice organization in the room, their testimonies in front of the EPAs Region 2 Regional Director were well received.

WE ACT discussed the importance of impacts of these emissions on communities of color, how it exacerbates the impacts of climate change and how guidelines should consider the cumulative impacts of such policies. We encourage others to share their voice at the EPAs upcoming listening sessions across the country.

Check out this link for more details. <http://www2.epa.gov/carbon-pollution-standards/public-listening-sessions>



Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change

The Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (EJLFCC) was formally organized in 2008 with the goals of *mobilizing and facilitating a national working group of environmental justice advocates who will interact with identified scientists/academics and representatives of mainstream environmental groups to catalyze and inform state and federal, political and legislative action that will result in the development of just policies and mechanisms that equitably reduce carbon emissions in all communities.*

Please contact the DC office if you know of organizations working on environmental justice issues and that might be interested in joining in on the work of the EJLFCC. We want to expand our reach and have the opportunity to elevate issues that can be moved forward at a national level. The membership application can be downloaded on our website: www.ejleadershipforum.org/get-involved.

For more information, please contact:

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Cleaning the Air

Clean air is something that we all have the right to breathe. One of the ways that we can help clean the air is to make sure that the most polluting industries are regulated and held accountable for meeting their emission standards. Over a certain period of time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to review certain emissions standards to ensure that they are meeting the goals of the Clean Air Act. Right now, the EPA is exploring the rules for existing and new power plants that generate energy. So the time is now for us to make our voices heard.

The Present: Existing Power Plants

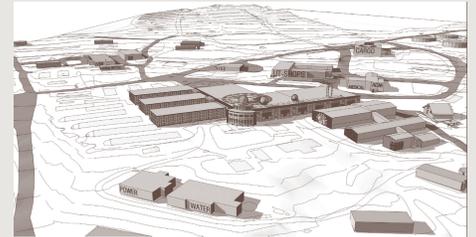
- The energy sector is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide.
- The EPA is being tasked to establish guidelines for technology and take suggestions about the best ways to reduce carbon emissions.
- Currently, the EPA is hosting listening sessions across the country to gather ideas.
- See this link to make your voice heard: <http://www2.epa.gov/carbon-pollution-standards/public-listening-sessions>

EPA Public Listening Sessions for Existing Power Plants

Boston, MA November 4, 2013	Dallas, TX November 7, 2013
Lenexa, KS November 4, 2013	Seattle, WA November 7, 2013
San Francisco, CA November 5, 2013	Philadelphia, PA November 8, 2013
Washington, DC November 7, 2013	Chicago, IL November 8, 2013

The Future: New Power Plants

- New standards will ensure that power companies invest in new fossil fuel power plants that use technology to limit emission of carbon pollution.
- A hearing was held on October 29th to discuss future power plants and potential technology that could be used to capture carbon. (See this link for hearing recording: <http://thomas.loc.gov/video/house-committee/hsif00>). WE ACT and many others do not feel that Carbon Capture and Sequestration technology, otherwise known as CCS, is a good option for low-income communities of color. (See WE ACT's paper on this topic: <http://www.weact.org/Portals/7/CCS%20White%20Paper%20Final.pdf>)
- The EPA process allows for the public to provide comment and testimony on the proposed guidelines.



Why Should I Care?

- Carbon pollution stays in the atmosphere and contributes to climate change
- Carbon in the atmosphere contributes to rising global temperatures, rising sea levels, changes in weather patterns, ecosystems, habitats and species diversity
- Carbon pollution increases the public health risks due to heat waves, smog (ground level ozone), and intensity of extreme weather events.

How do I learn and what can I do ?

- EPA Clean Air Act Rulemaking and Permitting Training, March 18-20, 2014 in Durham, NC.
- Contact WE ACT's federal policy analyst for talking points to help prepare testimony
- Read the EPA website at the: <http://www2.epa.gov/carbon-pollution-standards>

Announcements

EJ FORUM MEMBERS RECEIVE GRANTS FROM US CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Congratulations to our environmental justice colleagues that received a sub-grant from the US Climate Action Network. Out of 173 proposals received, about 10% were funded. We want to congratulate WE ACT as well as members of our Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change that received funding. Descriptions of the projects are below.

Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy Minnesota

The Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy will hold local events to focus public attention on the need for federal climate action. The project will draw links between the President's Climate Action Plan and the current Minneapolis Climate Action Plan, which includes housing, public health, racial and economic justice components and participation from a diverse cross-section of the community.



Little Village Environmental Justice Organization Illinois

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization will organize a high school youth summit to increase awareness of climate change and to promote environmental STEM careers among high school students in Little Village. The project will also engage Latino students on climate change through an introductory in-school assembly, a bilingual website page, a social media outreach campaign, and a phone application.



WE ACT for Environmental Justice National

WE ACT plans to launch an intensive EJ Forum Climate Action Plan Campaign to support moving forward with administrative rules to reduce harmful emissions (new and existing power plant emission sources), and to ensure that mitigation and adaptation efforts by the Administration (both through the Climate Action Plan, and the regional EPA Climate Implementation

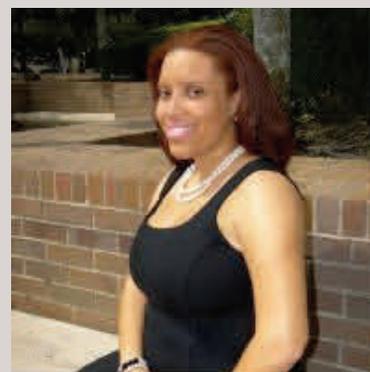


DC STAFF UPDATES

WE ACT-DC Office's first intern, Laetitia N'Dri, celebrated her last day at WE ACT at the end of August. Laetitia was a great support to the office in many ways as we sought to increase our engagement inside the Beltway. She will be applying to graduate school to pursue toxicology, while working as a research lab assistant at Johns Hopkins. There is no doubt that she will be a great toxicologist, keeping in mind all of the things she has learned about environmental justice, health and the importance of using our voice to make changes in policies that affect us all.



Ms. Alaura Carter is WE ACT's new communication intern. She is a graduate of Florida A&M University, where she received her bachelors degree in public relations. She has past experience working with several environmental non-profits and grassroots organizations Alaura has a passion for environmental justice and education. She will be working on outreach with the Presidents Climate Action plan.



Ms. Mayra Cruz is WE ACT's new federal agency accountability intern. She is currently a public health student at George Washington University. She is also President of Green GW, GWU's premier environmental organization on campus.



We are actively looking for dynamic, young people in the DC Metro area that would be interested in gaining some environmental justice policy experience.

Please contact jalonne@weact.org if you know of individuals that are passionate and capable of supporting the efforts of our office.



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