



## Reforming how we deal with Toxic Chemicals

Reform is in the air everywhere-- and there are lots of activities at the federal level and at the state level. A comprehensive bill, The Toxic Chemical Safety Act has been introduced in the House and the Senate and we need every Representative and Senator to sign as co-sponsors. Call or write our Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and your US representative and ask them to co-sponsor these bills (S.3209 & HR.5820). At the state level the Child Safe Product Act has been debated, and we are hoping for its passage this year in New York. Please ask your state legislator to support this legislation. The *National Conversation on Public Health & Chemical Exposures*, a multi-agency effort involving many parties, has produced 6 workgroup reports and hopes to develop a clear action agenda [www.resolve.org/nationalconversation/](http://www.resolve.org/nationalconversation/) CEC submitted detailed comments on 3 of these reports—see them at [www.ceptoxic.org](http://www.ceptoxic.org) The US Environmental Protection Agency has been moving forward with its effort to identify priority chemicals of concern. Many states are engaged and supporting chemical policy reforms.

### Thirteen States established Principles for Chemical Policy Reform:

California \* Connecticut \* Illinois \* Maine \* Maryland \* Massachusetts \* Michigan \* New Hampshire \* New Jersey \* New York \* Oregon \* Vermont \* Washington

- Require Chemical Data Reporting.
- Demonstrate Chemicals and Products are Safe.
- Prioritize Chemicals of Concern.
- Protect the Most Vulnerable.
- Promote Safer Chemicals and Products.
- Address Emerging Contaminants.
- Strengthen Federal Law & Preserve States' Rights.
- Fund State Programs.



Many non-profit organizations are involved in pushing for safer solutions to toxic chemicals. Follow developments by going to [www.saferchemicals.org](http://www.saferchemicals.org)

### VOTE, Democracy needs YOU!

Choosing intelligent, rational leaders who will vote in ways that benefit the majority of New Yorkers is an important task. We urge you to educate yourself on the issues most important to you. Don't let ads and sound bites guide your voting decisions--they often misrepresent the actual position of a candidate. In coming years critically important issues will be decided in Congress and at the State level that will affect our environment and our health. Our leaders could do nothing at all on Climate Change, and nothing to eliminate the toxic chemical soup that surrounds all of us, causing cancer and other adverse health effects--or everything to ensure a promising future.

**Action:** Ask the candidates where they stand.

**Vote strong environmental leaders into office. Environmental protection should not be optional.**

## Zero Waste News

There are lots of developments on the Zero Waste front -- both positive and negative.

CEC submitted final comments on the State Solid Waste Plan, called *Beyond Waste* in Mid-August. Next up will be revisions to the regulations and recommended legislation. Those of you dealing with solid waste problems should consider recommending regulatory changes. The Industry is currently largely self-regulated and this is very problematic. Staffing cutbacks and limited funding will make it very difficult to reach ambitious goals for waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, even though all these options are far more cost-effective than incinerators or landfills.

### Watch for the rollout of Electronics Recycling in New York!

#### WALMART

WALMART has pledged to divert all organics from disposal from its stores in 50 states and has adopted a Zero Waste Goal for 2025.



#### San Francisco

San Francisco has shattered its 2010 landfill diversion goal of 75% and now has the highest recycling rate of any city in the country. The Mayor says the current rate of 77% shows that "doing good for our environment also means doing right by our economy and local job creation. The recycling industry trains and employs men and women in local environmental work that can't be outsourced and sent overseas, creating ten times as many jobs as sending material to landfills." The primary recycling company for the City employs over 1000 people.

#### Students

College students at campuses across the country are composting dining hall food scraps and other organics, turning them into valuable garden soil amendments, saving money and reducing the carbon footprint of their colleges. NY campuses that are engaged include SUNY, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and Le Moyne College, both in Syracuse, NY.

## DEC facing Major Staff Layoffs!

It's not too late. Please call the Governor and Budget Director today.

**Environmental Protection sinks to a New Low in New York State.** There is a legacy of staffing cutbacks at our Environmental Protection Agency from the Pataki years. The current budget crisis has severely exacerbated the situation. However, Governor Paterson earlier this year recommended the largest agency cuts to only the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) - 35%. In the last month, many senior staff have taken early retirement leaving a leadership gap at the Agency. Now the Governor has ordered New York's DEC to lay off 209 employees by the end of the year, more than any other agency. Added to the hundreds of staff who have taken up the Governor's early retirement incentives and those lost due to the hiring freeze over the past four years, **New York's environmental agency has lost nearly one quarter of its entire workforce since 2007.**

The DEC monitors air and water quality and cleans up oil and toxic chemical spills—but only if it has the staff to do so. All of this work affects the public health. These cuts leave the DEC with its lowest staff levels since the 1980's, despite an increase in responsibilities.

**Underfunding leads to more environmental contamination, more pollution and greater ultimate costs.**

If you care about the agency that protects our air and drinking water, **please call Governor Paterson and Budget Director Megna and tell them that cutting 209 staff from New York's environmental agency will hurt our families and our shared environment.**

**Governor Paterson:**

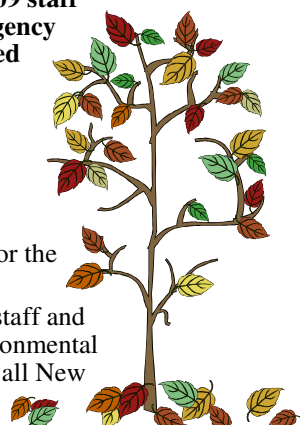
**(518) 474 - 8390**

**Budget Director Megna:**

**(518) 474 - 2300**

Tell them to:

- Cancel their layoff plan for the DEC; and
- Give the agency enough staff and resources to uphold environmental laws for the wellbeing of all New Yorkers.



## Nuclear Power & Radioactive Waste

Many of you are reading in newspapers that we have to build nuclear power plants in order to address climate change, because nuclear plants don't produce greenhouse gas emissions. This is absolutely wrong and we recommend you read the discussion below on Climate Change. New York could soon be hosting a new nuclear power plant.

Over a half century ago nuclear power was sold to Americans as a peaceful way to use nuclear energy. We were told that nuclear power would be "too cheap to meter". Activists were concerned about the generation of radioactive waste that would be dangerous for millions of years, but the government assured us that radioactive waste would be an easy problem for scientists and technology to solve. This year a new Blue Ribbon Commission has been appointed to solve this nuclear waste problem, because the nuclear industry wants our government to fork over \$50 billion in subsidies to build new nuclear power plants. Now \$50 billion is a lot of money and I imagine many of us could come up with a lot of good ways to spend our taxpayer money, that would generate jobs in the US, educate our children, reduce toxic chemical use and stop runaway global warming, etc.

The Blue Ribbon Commission, realizing that actually dealing with the issue of nuclear waste would make it next to impossible to spin a positive future for nuclear power, decided their focus would be on a Nuclear Future. A nuclear future opens the door for more nukes and more waste, while focusing on the immense problems posed by waste that is dangerous for millions of years could close the door to new nukes. Nuclear Waste, the Achilles heel of the industry and the original mandate of the Commission, will likely be shuffled to the sideline in a march toward a positive report and bountiful subsidies for the industry. You can watch the testimony of industry reps as well as environmentalists on their website [www.brc.gov](http://www.brc.gov)

CEC looks for sustainable solutions and nuclear power cannot be made sustainable for the following reasons: Sustainability involves 3 spheres- environmental, social and economic—that affect society.

Irretrievable and irreparable harm is not consistent with sustainability. A nuclear accident at a power plant could kill thousands of people and cause permanent health damage to thousands more in addition to permanently contaminating large land areas and water bodies.

A technology that has significant technical problems, that cannot be solved, is not sustainable. Radioactive waste is the significant technical problem associated with nuclear power. Hundreds of sites around the country are contaminated with radioactive waste, many are leaking into the environment, impacting drinking water and the public's health. Radioactive waste produced from nuclear power must be stored at secure locations, that do not leak, that are guarded from intruders for millions of years. The US has not been able to identify a site that is acceptable for long term storage of high level waste, so instead it is stored on-site at nuclear reactors.



The economic costs of nuclear power are extraordinary and Wall Street will not invest any longer in these plants. The economic costs of nuclear power exceed all other electric power supply options, even with significant taxpayer subsidies, and ratepayers foot the remaining bill through their electric rates. Sustainable solutions offer cost savings or are cost-effective compared to other options. Opting for Nuclear Power requires the shifting of costs onto the public.

Nuclear provides almost no social benefits and few jobs. The record of the industry includes significant health and safety issues for workers and long term health damage from overexposure to radiation. Investing the same amount of money that a single reactor would cost-- \$8 billion-- in a national program of energy efficiency and renewables would generate far more jobs and energy, while providing enormous environmental benefits.

### Hydrofracking

Here at home, while the state has been supporting policy reforms related to toxic chemicals, New York wants to allow hydraulic fracturing or horizontal gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale. The technology involves injecting hundreds of known toxic chemicals underground to facilitate the release of natural gas. The inconsistency in these two positions has not stopped the state from proceeding. Thousands of individuals and groups around the state are joined in opposition. EPA has launched a study of the potential effects on drinking water. See our comments to EPA at [www.cectoxic.org](http://www.cectoxic.org) The NYS Assembly still needs to vote on a moratorium on this new type of gas drilling.

The BP Gulf Oil spill disaster illustrated vividly the irresponsible chemical policies of our nation. First BP was trying to collect and gather oil with booms and boats. At the very same time BP was spraying dispersants on the oil which cause it to break up into tiny droplets and disperse. Experts explained that it made no sense to do both of these actions. In addition BP chose a dispersant shown to be less effective and more toxic than other dispersants, then sprayed millions of pounds of the stuff in the Gulf. Even the experts have no idea what the effect of these chemicals will be on the wetlands and ecosystem.



## West Valley Nuclear Waste Site

New York groups are very attuned to the nuclear waste problem and oppose building new nuclear power plants, such as the one proposed for Oswego, NY. West Valley simultaneously demonstrates the failure of nuclear waste reprocessing. Unlike ordinary recycling, nuclear reprocessing manages to generate increased quantities of waste, contaminating a large area and exposing workers to high radiation. After 7 years in business the private company involved walked away when it realized that it would have to comply with stricter standards. Thirty-eight years later the federal government has difficulty finding adequate funds to clean-up the site. As a result their solution for 99% of the waste could be to leave it in place on site. Recently, the US Dept of Energy ignored the comments of thousands of individuals, groups and elected officials, who called unanimously for a complete exhumation of the waste and cleanup of the site. DOE is now proceeding to cleanup 1% of the waste on site over the next 10 years.

Not cleaning up radioactive waste, and not spending the money to do so means that the true costs of nuclear power are not on the balance sheet. We continue to watchdog the cleanup at West Valley, follow this at [www.cectoxic.org](http://www.cectoxic.org)

### Stay in Touch with CEC!

Send us your contact info and email address and we will inform you of important news and opportunities to take action.  
E-mail us at: [cectoxic@igc.org](mailto:cectoxic@igc.org)



Green Chemistry is a key way that safer alternatives are being developed. If you are interested in learning more we recommend going to the Great Lakes Green Chemistry Network [www.glgc.org](http://www.glgc.org) and viewing the schedule of upcoming green chemistry speakers. These are free presentations and are all excellent. If the time doesn't work out for you, don't worry you can access the entire presentation afterward from the website.

## Climate Change

A NYS Climate Action Plan that supposedly will get us 80% greenhouse gas reductions by 2010 is being developed and will be available for public comment in November. Public hearings should occur in January. We urge everyone to comment on the plan. It is highly likely that the plan will be inadequate, that unsound ideas like burning garbage and new nuclear power will be part of the plan.

A great new report, *Beyond Business as Usual* by Synapse Energy Economics tells us we can close all coal burning power plants in this country and close 28% of nuclear capacity. Carbon dioxide emissions would fall 55 billion tons, 82% relative to 2010 levels by 2050 due to expanded energy efficiency and use of renewables. We would save money and generate jobs. We have prepared factsheets on this report, [www.cectoxic.org](http://www.cectoxic.org) The full report is at [www.synapse-energy.com](http://www.synapse-energy.com)

This year we experienced a great crossover-- costs for Solar photovoltaics are now lower than for Nuclear Power. Which would you rather have in your backyard?