

NY State Zero Waste Alliance

Newsletter January 2009

Happy New Year! We are wishing for Less Waste degrading our environment via landfills and incinerators and More Waste being prevented, reused, recycled and composted.

Thanks to all of you who made our Zero Waste Conference a success. We hope you find our newsletter informative and inspiring as we report to you the victories and success stories on zero waste around the state and elsewhere.

Please remember to share news with us and we would love to hear about what is happening with waste where you live.

Sincerely,

The NY State Zero Waste Alliance Steering Committee and
Citizens' Environmental Coalition

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VICTORIES AND SUCCESS STORIES IN THE LAND OF ZERO WASTE

SAVE THE PINE BUSH - HUGE TURNOUT AT LANDFILL EXPANSION HEARING DEC 3RD IN ALBANY

Hundreds of people turned out for the Department of Environmental Conservation's Hearing on the proposed expansion of the Rapp Road Landfill located in the Pine Bush Preserve, a unique ecological area. The proposed plan calls for expanding 13 acres and would extend the dump's life through 2016.

Save the Pine Bush members did a tremendous job organizing people to attend the hearing and provide comments. Several took the opportunity to advocate for Zero Waste strategies including a recycling industrial park for Albany. CEC Board Member Tom Ellis was quoted saying "Albany has earned a failing grade on its landfill, and it is time for DEC to issue it." Albany Times Union. For more information see http://www.savethepinebush.org/NewsArt/2008-12-05_TU.html

STPB members are now working on the City's Long Term Waste Management Plan. Despite the environmental disaster known as the Albany ANSWERS Incinerator, the City's consultants are still angling for a new incinerator.

NEW ZERO WASTE TASK FORCE IN DUTCHESS COUNTY

Joel Tyner, a Dutchess County legislator, attended our ZW Conference and is making waves in Dutchess County. He was recently appointed to head a Task Force to green waste management and increase recycling and composting. Joel is inviting Dutchess County residents to participate in the ZW Task Force. If you are interested in joining email Joel at email countylegislators@co.dutchess.ny.us

NEW ZERO WASTE GROUP FORMS IN THE FINGER LAKES AND A GASIFICATION PILOT PROJECT TAKES CENTER STAGE

So called new technologies for burning garbage include gasification, pyrolysis and plasma arc. Their operating records so far are pretty damning. Opposition to a pilot gasification plant proposed by Casella in Canandaigua NY has spurred the creation of the Finger Lakes Zero Waste Coalition. This pilot project claims to be a waste-to-fuel project that will turn garbage into alternative fuel. Local residents have expressed many concerns and questions about the viability of the plan, the company's finances, and the environmental impacts. Citizens' Environmental Coalition has also added its name to a letter of groups and individuals opposing the plan.

After mobilizing many community members for a Supervisors meeting it appeared that Casella would pull out of the project. The Dept of Environmental Conservation will be investigating the project more thoroughly also. However, the Canandaigua Solid Waste Committee has recently decided to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the pilot move forward. Obviously this project is still alive and will require continued vigilance This waste-to-fuel project brings up many concerns and we will continue to monitor the situation.

The Finger Lakes Zero Waste Coalition faces many battles in a region of the state that houses two mega landfills. Seneca Meadows processes 6000 tons waste a day and is the largest in the state and the Ontario Landfill processes 3000 tons a day and sits on 300 acres. These plants take trash from all over the northeast including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the New England States. The landfills are within 10 miles of two lakes and many large wetlands.

If you live in the Finger Lakes region and would like to be involved with the coalition please email 0waste@earthlink.net

NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

NJ Incorporates Zero Waste in Climate Change Plan

The Climate Change Plan promotes waste reduction strategies, including advanced recycling and composting, toward a goal of zero waste production by 2050

Oregon Electronic Waste Recycling-

Oregon has a new "E-Cycles" program that started January 1, 2009. This program comes out of the Electronics Recycling Law passed in 2007. It is a FREE program, financed by manufacturers, that allows anyone to recycle as many as seven items at any one time: computers and monitors, laptops and televisions at no charge! And participating recyclers must meet environmentally sound management practices!

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ecycle/index.htm>

*We are hoping NY Legislators are paying attention because we need an e-recycling law.

Small Town Adopts Zero Waste Plan

Boone NC <http://www.townofblowingrock.com/supdoc/waste04-07.htm>

In 2006 the Boone Town Council, with the support of the Boone Zero Waste Task Force, voted to unanimously pass a Zero Waste resolution. This plan will move this small mountain town towards a more sustainable community that reduces waste, improves soil through composting, and makes better use of materials through recycling and reuse. The resolution states significant waste stream reductions are possible, including composting of 80% of organic materials. We will be paying attention to the outcomes of this plan as an example for other small communities.

LOOKING FOR A SAMPLE ZERO WASTE RESOLUTION FOR YOUR TOWN?

It is possible for local towns and cities in New York to begin their own movements towards zero waste plans just like the above mentioned ones have done. For a sample plan see <http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/zwmodel.html> and stay tuned in to the NY State Zero Waste Alliance's listserv for announcements and upcoming workshops.

See the Grassroots Recycling Network's list of other Zero Waste Resolutions throughout the U.S.

http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/resource_zw.html#Public

NEW REPORT FROM MA DEP TRASHES NEW KINDS OF INCINERATORS (GASIFICATION & PYROLYSIS)

A study released by the Tellus Institute, which was paid for by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, has found that "gasification and pyrolysis facilities are unlikely to play a major role in MSW management in Massachusetts by 2020." "Key issues informing this conclusion include: the lack of experience in the U.S. with large-scale alternative technology facilities successfully processing mixed MSW and generating energy; the long lead times to plan, site, construct, and permit such facilities; the significant capital costs required and the loss of solid waste management flexibility that is associated with the long-term contractual arrangements that such capital-intensive facilities require; and the relatively small benefit with respect to greenhouse gas emissions compared to diversion or landfilling."

One Conclusion from the study: "From a lifecycle environmental emissions and energy perspective, source reduction, recycling and composting are the most advantageous management options for all (recyclable/compostable) materials in the waste stream."

For More Information

<http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/priorities/dswmpu01.htm#recycling> or
<http://www.no-burn.org/article.php?id=610>

GREEN JOBS

Van Jones, founder and president of the non profit *Green for All*, based in Oakland California, has written a new book on green jobs titled "The Green Collar Economy" that has taken the environmental community by storm. Jones takes the idea of a green job and explains that it is not just a way to create a cleaner environment but also a way to reduce poverty by providing jobs that pay good wages and that allow for upward mobility as a career track. This could mean well paying jobs that also improve the environment for thousands of people who have traditionally worked in blue collar, industry jobs that we now longer have in this country and that were not always the best for the environment. Jones wants to include all peoples in the green economy movement, including people of color, low income, and those who have been incarcerated.

"To solve our global problems, we need to engage and unleash the genius of all people, at all levels of society. Some of the minds that can solve our toughest problems are undoubtedly trapped behind prison bars, stuck behind desks in schools without decent books, or isolated in rural communities. A green economy that is designed to pull them in—as skilled laborers, innovators, inventors, and owners—will be more dynamic, more robust, and better able to save the Earth."

The "Green Collar Economy" also explores ideas in zero waste, advocating for the very same things the NY State Zero Waste Alliance is calling for. Namely taking materials out of our traditional landfill waste stream and reusing or recycling them, giving them a second life. He connects this with people as well, stating throughout his book that the green job movement could give many a second chance to have a meaningful, well paying job that provides for themselves and their families.

-For further reading go to the CEC website at <http://www.cectoxic.org/greenjobs.html>