



West Virginia Environmental Council's

Green

Legislative

Update

Published Weekly During West Virginia's Legislative Session

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Under the Dome

*By Donald S. Garvin, Jr.
WVEC Legislative Coordinator*

Week 8 – The Light in the Tower

Late this session while driving toward the Capitol I noticed a white beacon beaming brightly from the tower on the Capitol dome. I had never seen or noticed it in the previous years I've been down here lobbying.

I'm told this light in the tower is a signal to the citizens of the state of a public emergency or disaster. Was this light turned on after Sept. 11, 2001, or was it just recently turned on as a result of the winter storms that have blasted the state? I just don't know.

Whatever the reality of the situation is, the switch for this light should have been flipped into the "on" position on Jan. 8 – WARNING, CITIZENS OF WEST VIRGINIA, YOUR LEGISLATURE IS IN SESSION!

Among other things, the elected leaders in this Seventy-Sixth Legislature seemed intent on bringing you: 120,000 pound over-weight coal trucks subsidized by your tax dollars; limits on the amount of money you may receive in compensation when your doctor transplants the wrong organs in you; regulations of all-terrain-vehicles that would allow these unsafe machines to be driven on public roads and highways; water quality standards designed and written by the Farm Bureau and the Timber Association; and a total rollback and weakening of environmental regulations for the coal industry.

And they haven't even begun to get into your wallets yet to solve the state's ballooning budget deficit.

There is, however, an antidote to this severe case of "legislative malpractice," and that is to find better candidates and elect them at the very next opportunity. We need to begin this process on Sunday, March 9, the day after this disastrous session ends.

In the meantime, don't forget to feed the birds this week.

Green Legislative Update

Killing Them Softly With Truth

By Rick Eades

The ugly attempt (HB 2717) to move all water quality rules to a new Water Quality Board was appropriately dealt a slow death. In House Gov Org, WV Rivers called a Public Hearing, where on Monday, the legislators heard:

- The new board would include no one with per se technical expertise to deal with complex drinking water quality standards (hence an amendment passed later to add at least the Bureau of Public Health).
- The new board would have people with serious conflicts, such as Agriculture, Forestry, and Highways who must advance their agendas to have strong business and roads which could easily cause conflicts in passing stringent rules to protect safe drinking water.
- The new board would not have bi-partisan political balance, as at least 6 members would be political appointees, who could also be playing musical chairs (i.e. 4 DEP heads in 5 years).

The public hearing produced amendments that passed in committee Tuesday, and one that did not by a close 11-8 vote. Though Gov Org moved the bill, it died on its second reference in House Judiciary, when Chairman Amores refused to put the bill on his agenda.

God Bless several Delegates who raised important issues, offered amendments, and then voted against the bill in Gov Org, including Delegates Manuel, Martin, Frich, and Perdue who asked that their votes against it be recorded.

After the bill left his committee, Gov Org Chairman J. D. Beane also acknowledged that we raised several good points. Obviously, Judiciary Chairman Amores took several of our concerns seriously too.

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A quick glimpse of E-Day



Lobby Team members: Don Garvin, John Taylor, Dot Henry, Allan Tweddle, Conni Lewis, Rick Eades and Chuck Wyrostok are recognized during E-Day! at the Capitol, Tuesday, February 25th. Outside of frame: Denise Poole



Bob Hamburg, at the Spring Creek Natural Foods Display

E-Day! went off like a charm, with an estimated 150 or more citizens attending during the day, and 200 joining us at The Brick Cellar in the evening.

Thanks so much to all the organizations, groups, sustainable businesses and concerned citizens who traveled to the capitol to participate!

Congratulations to all the WVEC award recipients; Judy Bonds, Janice Nease, Don Gasper, Delegate Mike Caputo, Chip Chase, Laurie Little and Norm Steenstra.

A special thank you to the musicians who helped relieve a little legislative tension - Steve Hill, Ammed Solomen and all the members of 'Big Rock & The Candy Ass Mountain Boys'!

We will have all the wonderful "E-Day! details" in the *Legislative Wrap Up*, (scheduled to go out the end of March).

Meanwhile, suffice it to say, the Lobby Team keep busy (to say the least) balancing their time between committee meetings, floor sessions, media interviews, answering a multitude of questions from citizens, helping with the exhibits, and keeping an eye on all those other lobbyists and bills still active at this point!

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Water Bills Roaring - One Clear, One Muddy

By Rick Eades

Two separate water protection actions have passed the Senate and await the House next week. One action is a resolution, the other a statute. Wow!

SCR 27 – Resolution establishes year-long, detailed water policy study in interims supported by monthly technical/citizen task force. Excellent work by Senator Unger, augmented by work from Senator McCabe, supported by 21 co-sponsors on the Senate side, passed the Senate and moves to the House. The resolution appears to be in excellent shape. Proactive discussions prompted by House Leadership suggests they will move this resolution to better protect our greatest resource in the 21st century.

SB 650 – Water Quantity Law was created and reworked throughout the week by Senate attorneys. The bill was originated in the Senate Health and Human Resources Committee on Tuesday (sponsored by Chairman Prezioso, Vice Chair Unger and 5 other committee members). It passed on the Senate floor 33-1 on Thursday. Whew! **SB 650 would be the first direct statute to supposedly protect West Virginia's water quantity in our state's 139-year history.**

Is borders on unreal, that largely within the past 1.5 weeks, the collective awareness at the Legislature pertaining to risks of water export and sale (without protection) has become so heightened.

Unfortunately, after the reworking of a very short bill during the week, SB 650 doesn't appear to provide protections that were hoped for at its outset. A minor amendment may be needed in the House, to clarify what is a little muddy about how easily private landowners may be able to exploit waters connected to those waters of the state.

We suspect industry may have subtly turned straightforward definitions of states' waters into sausage. The bill now defines states' waters in a "negative" or backward fashion that mostly says what is *not* the states' waters. The way this definition of what is not protected now reads, could be perceived as so broad that the question is begged, "What waters does this bill protect?"

Fortunately, key players – Senator Unger and several colleagues on that side of the aisle, and House Leadership including Majority Leader Staton and Judiciary Chairman Amores – all recognize the value of getting something basic and useful on the books now.

Everyone grasps the gravity of pending actions in March, specifically that President Bush may approve international treaty requests from the European Union. Those requests are to **open United States' water supplies**

sector up to international treaties, where anything we do later could be challenged as creating a barrier to trade. And worse, those future challenges could come from behemoth French and German water corporations who may become the Enrons of the 21st century, with legal and eco-political resources that dwarf the imagination.

Call any and all elected representatives to support a good water quantity law now.

News Flash! EIM Passes “No more stringent than” Resolution

As we are going to press, the EIM (Energy, Industry & Mining) committee met and passed the resolution – our friend, Senator Jon Hunter, attempted to amend into it that WVEC would be involved in the process.

Chairman Sharpe referred to Sen. Hunters amendment as “making this political” – completely ignoring the fact that a huge special interest group (guess who) already is specifically named as a participant. Typical. One Senator on the committee was shaking his head. The WV Coal Association is as usual named as a participant without question.

Heaven forbid there should be any citizen input!

Timber Reform ~ Fell

By Conni Gratop Lewis

It appears that all timber reform legislation is dead for the year. But we have made some progress. For instance, we did have legislation introduced in both houses this year.

We did get one bill, SB602, which required adjacent landowner notification prior to beginning a commercial timber job - onto a committee agenda. Senate Natural Resources did put it on the agenda this week, but then tabled it.

I wasn't surprised - just disappointed. The good news is that four forest industry representatives, and two forestry officials felt the need to be present at the committee meeting. That is quite an impressive array. We also know that many of you called your legislators about the bill. Thank you.

We **will** return next year. **Keep reporting all the bad timber jobs you see to the Division of Forestry and (this is really important) to your legislators.**

Bringing A Bill To Life: HB 2961 To Date

By Allan Tweddle

You might wonder what we do up at the Capitol all day. It's simple: we just introduce Bills, see legislators, track events, attend Committee meetings, try to find out what the competition and/or opposition are doing, and determine a counter strategy. That's "all".

Here's the chronology of one bill - a **simple straight forward bill to save WV money through the reasonable practice of "Turning It Off" when not driving diesel School Buses:**

1. **Research** practices and laws from other States, read the published literature and studies, and confirm that the concept is do-able technically, operationally and politically.
2. **Review** with WV Department of Education's Director of Transportation, who discusses it with Dr. Stewart, who expresses verbal approval of the concept. The director offers a version of the CT law for our bill.
3. **Introduce** the premise to Dr. Howard O'Cull, Association of School Boards, and to the Association of Counties.
4. **Meet** with the House Majority leader, Rick Staton, to seek his support. He agrees with the concept, and asks us to forward a draft to him and to Chairman Mezzatesta of the House Education Committee.
5. **Speak** at the hearing of the House Education Public Hearing on the \$4.6 million financial shortfall about the cost saving potential of "our bill", with at least 10 County Board Superintendents and 20 legislators in attendance.
6. **Re-strategize** our focus to concentrate on the economic benefits, and discuss the environmental/health benefits only with certain legislators who are so focused.
7. **Draft** the bill.
8. **Seek** the bi-partisan support of Committee members through notes, follow up phone calls, offers to answer questions, be available, and share our research.
9. **Celebrate** as the Chairman introduces the Bill in the house with Lead Sponsor Perry (D Fayette) and three others...all Democrats. The Bill is single referenced to Education Committee.
10. **Testify** for the Education subcommittee on transportation, and the bill is voted back to Committee.
11. **Deliver** a presentation to the Committee, and report



Allan Tweddle, with his favorite bill - "Turn It Off"

HB 2961, pictured here during E-Day!

It passed the House with a vote of 61-34 late Friday!

to the Dept. of Education.

12. **Breathe** a sigh as Bill moves to the Floor for its first reading. House Bill 2961 is put on the Consent Calendar for potentially "clear" sailing!
13. **Introduce** a Senate version to Senate sponsors, where it is entered, enthusiastically, in two versions: SB559 & SB590. Both Sponsors are on the Senate Education Committee.
14. **Re-strategize** when we get notice that the Chairman of the Senate Educ. Comm. will not move the Senate bill!
15. **Stop breathing** when HB2961 comes up for second reading and sponsoring Delegate Perry suggests a problem. Delegate Ennis (D Brookes) requests that it be taken off the consent calendar—our first hint of opposition in the House.
16. **Re-strategize!** Meet with Delegate Ennis at an evening reception to hear his concerns that his bus drivers "back home" would not stand for this, saying it is hard on the buses! (It isn't.) He has NOT read the Bill, but will vote against it.
17. **Revisit** Ennis after he reads the bill—still against it because of his "drivers", but he is sure that it will pass.
18. **Sit** in the gallery of the House in the morning session, where Chairman Mezzatesta's assistant (and wife) informs me that the bill has been pulled off the calendar before the 3rd reading. No explanation.
19. **Learn** that Chairman Mezzatesta is told that the school superintendent, the school service employees, and school bus drivers oppose it, and is warned by the Majority whip that there were enough votes to kill the bill. Wanting to somehow save it, he pulled it.
20. **Talk** with Dr. Stewart's office, Wayne Clutter, Director of Transportation, and confirmed that they were not opposed; asked him to confirm in writing!

Bills Flowing, High Water Rising

By Rick Eades

To grasp how much is happening, and how fast, please read Allan Tweddle's article chronicling *just one bill*, the "Turn-It-Off" school bus bill, HB 2961.

The following key bills, and their progress or demise, and what awaits in the final week of the Legislature replaces and adds some detail to our prior bill tracking lists:

HB 2493 – Del. Caputo's good coal truck bill is dead, though we hope the House could amend it into the taxpayer crushing Senate bill SB 583. Everything awaits in the House on SB 583.

HB 2528 - Flood task force bill moves to Senate. The law would create an excellent task force, chaired by Office of Emergency Services and Natural Resource (Soil) Conservation Service folks, with reps from every scientific and regulatory entity.

HB 2603 – ALL DEP environmental rules (regulations for air, water, mining, sludge, oil & gas, etc) goes to Senate and referred to Senate Judiciary Committee. We need to *protect mining flood rules*, which we're told the coal industry will not oppose on the Senate side. That type of promise means we will watch this even more closely.

HB 2717 – Remove EQB and create Highly Politicized Water Quality Board, to set all water quality standards for surface and groundwater (see separate story), is dead.

HB 2870 - Power plant siting bill, that was pretty much decided before the session with strong support from one of our critical coalition interests – labor – is full of issues we wish we could say would be changed. It's passed the House and off to the Senate.

HB 2833 – Timber landowner notification is dead (though companion Senate bill did get brought up into their committee process, however was tabled there).

HB 2880 - Underground tank fee bill (increase from \$25 to \$75/year) passed the House and goes to Senate, where it needs passed without amendment.

HB 2881 - Coal surface mining bill, technically corrected to federal Rahall Amendment (water quality provision for bond releases is removed from one section of law, as it exists in another) goes to Senate. Though, this is one we will watch as it offers a vehicle for the coal industry to amend whatever they want into it.

HB 2882 - Mining penalties and appeals loophole corrected, goes to the Senate where it needs passed without amendment. As OSM required, no more "unjust hardship" claims to delay or avoid paying penalties for mining violations.

HB 2956 – House version of gutting mining regs is dead (see Coal Resolution story).

HB 2961 – School Bus "Turn-It-Off" bill, a true beginning for energy conservation (see Allan Tweddle's article).

HB 3033 – Medical Monitoring bill may have died. Late Thursday, we heard that the House Judiciary Committee would NOT be taking up the bill. If that position survived our deadline, that's great news. The bill was intended to undo a Supreme Court ruling that companies pay for medical monitoring costs, when people are exposed to known releases of known toxic chemicals.

HB 3155 - Confidential Business for Polluters, a possible "hide and seek" bill, makes it harder to force a company to reveal their "trade secrets" (amazing that language is in the bill after Bill Moyers' PBS program titled "Trade Secrets," for transcripts go to pbs.org). The bill add a step in the process where they can force citizens to go through the Air Quality Board before going to State Circuit Court. We must assume it will pass the House after our deadline, and arrive in the Senate next week.

HB ?? – Expanding authority to award energy conservation contracts originated Thursday (!) in House Gov Org Committee, would add all public buildings to existing authority to do energy conservation contracts in schools, and was on the House floor at our deadline.

SB 144 – Flood Thy Neighbor may still be alive.... Though in subcommittee, it could move out in a second and fly via Senator Ross at any time Friday.

SB 214 – Senate companion bill for EQB replacement with Water Quality Board, not moved as Senate awaits House action where the companion was killed (HB 2717).

SB 480 – Coal's rollback of all mining (environmental) regs, the no more stringent than federal level omnibus bill has apparently died, being replaced Friday morning by a resolution to study the issue in interims (see separate story).

SB 559 and 590 – Senate companion bills for Turn-It-Off, introduced but not moved on the Senate side as they await the House bill HB 2961.

SB 583 – Overweight coal trucks, ensures billions of dollars of damages to roads and bridges will be paid by your tax dollars, and virtually guarantees the narrow southern coalfield roads will continue to be a death-defying public gauntlet for citizens. Amendments by Senators Hunter and Webster were defeated last Thursday night on the Senate floor, and the bill undoubtedly passed out of the Senate on Friday, headed for the House.

SB 602 – Timber landowner notification, brought up in committee this week, but laid over (companion to HB 2833) and thus dead for this year. But, it is significant that the bill was even brought up in committee, a step forward from last year.

SB 631 – Dumbed down fast-track mine permitting bill, that Senator Snyder had introduced is dead. It was a further echo of the industry mantra of "no more stringent," that frankly had provisions that were so dumb it provided comic relief.

Guts and Glory

By Rick Eades

Guts and Glory. Sylvester citizens and their attorneys deserve our greatest respect, particularly Pauline Canterbury and Brian Glasser. They've won in Boone County courts, proving that Elk Run dust damaged their community and homes - requiring major new dust control steps to eliminate the horrors residents have lived with for years.

Guts. On the anniversary of the Buffalo Creek disaster, two senators delivered eloquent speeches on the Floor.

Excerpts:

Sen. Jon Hunter - "tidal wave of rampaging water and sludge... Over 125 People perished immediately... over 4,000 survivors, but their 1,000 homes were destroyed... a few hundred of the 4,000 survivors banded together to sue the coal company, to make the company admit its responsibility, to make the company pay... to make sure something like this would never happen again, to them or anyone else living at the mercy of the coal companies."

Sen. Randy White - "Black mud was caked over their faces and bodies (quote from Arley Johnson)... Today (2/26/03) we remember this day in history, because should we ever forget, then history could repeat itself. And let us remember one reason why we regulate industry - to avoid man-made disasters. More recently, our regulations still don't always protect us, as with the big slurry pond failure in Martin County, Kentucky... or the recent Lyburn valley fill failure - 1 of 49 in the last five years... why regulations are necessary, to protect and keep safe the citizens of West Virginia."

Gut-shot. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers offered the quote of the week straight to Bill Raney, WV Coal Association. Regarding the overweight coal truck bill (SB 583), a BLE lobbyist effectively said the bill is so greased (slick), it makes Teflon seem like sandpaper.

"Only after the last tree has been cut down; only after the last river has been poisoned; only after the last fish has been caught; will you find that money cannot be eaten."

Cree prophecy

A Tale of Penny Pinchers.... (or) Better Than Coal In the Christmas Stocking

By Chuck Wyro

Those big spender coal boys showed up 'right proud-lookin' at the Senate Finance Committee's Wednesday meeting, right in the front row. Like kids waiting for the candy store to open. First in line, gonna get mine. Each held a shiny penny at ready (conveniently donated to them by about-to-be-fleeced-by-this-amendment citizen).

Coal was offering to pay one cent per ton toward the state's road repair bills...the roads they would be able to legally chop, grate, juice, maim and otherwise pulverize if SB 583 passes (the Crush Thy Neighbor With Thy Overweight Coal Truck bill). Of course, they're already doing it illegally now. But the senators were in denial about that right now and were tossing the issue around, as if it were a proposal worthy of consideration and all that.

I fantasized about one of the senators asking the coalies if they would pay cash, or would the state have to accept company scrip redeemable only at the company store.

Fred VanKirk, Department of Highways chief, sat behind the coalies in the second row, in the long shot chance that the committee would want him to reveal the awful dollar figures it would take to fix and maintain the coal-hauling roads (\$10 Billion over ten years, he testified to House Judiciary last year). What are the odds of HIM being called to testify? None, you say? But, lo, he didn't go away empty-handed. Chris Hamilton, coal honcho, in a gesture of unbridled generosity, finally turned around to VanKirk and offered his shiny penny, as the first of many. Maybe they would do a bake sale, too, he did not say.

VanKirk graciously accepted the coin, probably thinking that he'd better take what he can get. After all, when would these sailors be in town again, throwing THIS kind of money around!?!?!?

If you don't want to be part of the bail-out team making up the other 9+ billion dollars (that's BIL-LION!), and don't want to see your neighbors in the coal fields suffering the blight of raging macho crusher trucks, you might want to call your senators and delegates and urge them to stop this insanity.

News Flash: At 3:50 Friday as we go to press, SB 583 passed the Senate with a 21 to 11 vote (2 not voting). So, it now goes on to the House - call your delegates!!!

Slow Poison Replaces SB 480

By Rick Eades

Late this week, a resolution was developed and apparently will pass the Senate after our deadline to **replace** the shamelessly broad-reaching proposed bill by the Coal Association to rollback all WV mining regs to their absolute minimum under federal law. Hence, SB 480 and companion HB 2956 are dead.

Before you go into a chorus of “Ding, dong,” the resolution sets up an interim study that will require coal and DEP to develop and analyze a list of every regulation, policy, procedure for variations between state and federal mining rules.

Hence, coal interests will have month after month access to legislators and the media to chant their new mantra, “no more stringent.”

Hopefully, undertaking this study will offer ample opportunity to also document how coal fails to meet federal standards. However, several levels of documentation must be accurately and fully developed to demonstrate this. In that this has happened very fast, at week’s end, we are considering amendments on the House side, since this resolution is guaranteed to pass the Senate by the time you read this.

Wonder how the coal corporations would like to see their sorry history of post-mining land uses potently and accurately described?

One Last Shameless Plea

Next week will be the final week of this grueling legislative session. Your lobby team has endured snow storms, high water, freezing temperatures, and the usual cold reception from legislators, to be your voice for the environment in Charleston. I can’t begin to tell you how proud I am of this lobby team and what we have accomplished so far.

But I *must* tell you, sad to say, that we still need more support from WVEC members to insure that we can make our final payroll and fulfill our final commitment to the team.

Please help if you can. That’s the plea. Simple as that. You know how much we appreciate the contributions you make. Please let these dedicated lobby team members know you appreciate them as well.

Don Garvin
WVEC Legislative Coordinator

Green Legislative Update

Bringing A Bill To Life: HB 2961 To Datecont. from page 4

21. **Talk** with Kenneth Legg, Executive Secretary of the WV School Service Personnel Association (WVSSPA) who confirmed that they were neutral.
22. **Meet** with WVSSPA Lobbyist Gordon McClannahan who restates that they were not opposed to HB2961 and will confirm in writing to the leadership.
23. **Convey** this intelligence to Majority Leader, the Chairman of the Education Committee, and the Majority Whip. Majority Whip still claims that he had surveyed the “entire membership” and determined that the votes were not there to pass the bill on third reading Thursday.
24. **Seek** out several other Delegates who verify that the bill is “dead.” Delegate Christopher Wakim goes to the floor, after the bell calling all members, and seeks out members to get a fresh perspective on the reported intelligence—a noble, but futile, effort.
25. **Go** to House clerk’s office to get the status of the bill, and learn that, except for a rescheduling of the bill in House Rules meeting that evening after the Session, the bill is lost for this year.
26. **Attend** the Rules meeting in Speaker Kiss’ office and work to get the bill returned to the calendar for a final reading at Friday’s session.
27. **Wait** for the next bomb to fall....

And this is just a straight-forward, simple “no-brainer” BILL! Whether we prevail or fail this year, you can’t imagine how many people we owe thanks for the valiant efforts of getting us this far!

Sincerely, Allan Tweddle

QUIDVIS RECTE FACTUM QUAMVIS HUMILE
PRAECLARUM

Sir Henry Royce 1924

Urgent Action Alert!

Please find time early next week (March 3) to call **Senate Education Committee Chairman Robert Plymale (304-357-7937) and Vice-Chairman Larry Edgell (304-357-7827)** and tell them you **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 2961, the “Turn It Off” Bill!!!**

Passed the House Friday about 4:30 pm!!!

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ATV Bill Appears Dead

By Conni Graptop Lewis

If you have difficulty keeping up with convoluted story lines, you might have gotten lost following the adventures of the ATV bill in the last two weeks.

As you may recall from last week's episode, conferees had been appointed and meetings had been scheduled, then rescheduled.

The conferees finally met this past Monday, **approved** a conference committee report that didn't include items both houses agreed upon, and generally upset everyone.

Safety and children's advocates were appalled. The conference committee reports were reported to their houses and not taken up quickly.

Plots were hatched, trial balloons floated and leadership clearly scurried for votes. What happened in the House was that Del. Trump led a valiant effort to scuttle acceptance of the conference committee report. He lost on a 74 to 25 vote. Mostly Republicans voted with him.

The House voted to pass the bill and then it was the Senate's turn. The Senate passed a stricter bill to begin with and there is even less support for a foolish bill there.

So, when the Senate tried to take up the conference committee report (remember it gutted the Senate's version of the bill), Sen. Snyder moved to lay it over for one day.

This Just In.....Friday afternoon at 12:15 on the Senate Floor, the Conference Committee Report on the ATV Bill was rejected.

On Thursday, the Judiciary committee originated a bill (SB 656) that simply requires helmets on children under 18, no matter where they are operating ATVs, bans children from operating ATVs with passengers, and permits counties and cities to regulate or ban them.

That's all the governor's bill should have done in the first place. On first reading today, the Senate failed to suspend the rules that require the bill be read on three separate days. At this point it looks like an ATV bill this session, in **any** form, is dead. However, there's still 8 hours left in this day!

When the legislative process is compared to sausage making, sometimes the sausage makers should sue for slander.....

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood - and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."
Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Bottle Bill Battle Has Just Begun

By Linda Mallet, linda@wvcag.org

SB 552 and HB 2926, the **West Virginia Bottle Bill**, did not make it onto committee agenda's this week which means they are dead for this session. This sounds like bad news but, in reality, we made it farther this session than we had planned! We made great progress and this session is just our first step! We have agreements from at least two committee chairs to study the bottle bill during the interims. We knew this would be a multi-year effort. It has taken other states several years to get legislation passed.

However, it's never too late to call your legislators but now our message needs to be: **Please encourage House Judiciary Chair Jon Amores and House Finance Chair Harold Michael to insure the West Virginia bottle bill gets serious consideration during the upcoming interims.**

Until the next Legislative Session, we will continue with our petition drive, getting resolutions of support passed in communities and spreading the word! Thanks for your support this session!

NO TO RAISING THE WEIGHT LIMIT ON COAL TRUCKS

RALLY, Noon, Tuesday March 4

Two Senate committees have rammed through a bill that will raise coal truck weight limits to 120,000 pounds (with at least a 5 percent variance). We haven't much hope to stop this bill in the Senate, but we may influence the House if we have a HUGE outcry. So, we need a massive **turnout at the State Capitol at noon on Tuesday. We'll meet inside the State Capitol, just outside the Governor's Office** (go in the doors nearest the Governor's Mansion).

If you work in Chareleston, please come to this rally during your lunch hour. If you can't make it, do you have a friend you can ask to come in your place?

In the meantime, please continue to contact your legislators and ask friends and family to do the same. We need the same HUGE public outcry - **NO weight limit increase for coal trucks** - as last year.

To find your legislators' numbers go to:

www.ohvec.org/issues/overweight_coal_trucks/index.html

and fill in you zip code in the blue "Contact your legislators" box. **Or call:** 1-877-565-3447

Please spread the word.



Calendar of Events



March 8: Last Day of Legislative Session. Stay tuned for up to date information from the capitol, and any environmental legislation active till the stroke of midnight!

March 21-23: Spring Equinox Weekend. Opossum Creek Retreat in Fayette County. Sponsors: Natural Lifeways Inc., United Natural WV, WV Eco-Tourism Assoc. & Opossum Creek Retreat. **For more information:** John Williams, 269-7902

April 19: Building Your Natural Home #1. Introduction to Building a Cob Home. Slide Show and Tour. Hands on cob building weather permitting. 10 to 4 pm. Cost is \$25 with complimentary lunch. Sustainable Development for WV & La Paix Herb Farm. **Pre-registration required to:** La Paix, 3052 Crooked Run Rd., Alum Bridge WV 26321.

April 19 & 20: Stanley Heir's Foundation 14th Year Easter Kick-Off Celebration! Kayford Mountain. Picnicking, Easter egg hunt and more. Open to the public. **For more info & directions:** Larry Gibson, 542-1134.

April 26: "Artists for the Environment" Fund-raiser. Perfater Law Office lobby ~ 1311 Virginia Street East, Charleston. From 1:00 ~ 7:00 pm. Artists from around the state are donating their talent in support of WVEC! Items for sale; Silent auction of artwork; Live music; Poetry; WV Wine & Home Brewed beer; Refreshments; Raffle drawing for Mark Blumenstein sculpture! Join us for this post-Earthday event - support the Arts and the WV Environmental Council's environmental efforts! **For more information or to participate contact:** Denise Poole, 346-5905 or deniseap@earthlink.net.

April 26: Propagation of Lavender Workshop, La Paix Herb Farm. Cultivation & Harvesting. Essential Oil Distillation. 10 am - 4 pm. Cost is \$55. and includes complimentary lunch. **Pre-registration required to:** La Paix - 3052 Crooked Run Rd., Alum Bridge WV 26321 or e-mail: lapaix@iolinc.net.

May 17: Let's Celebrate Basil! Workshop, La Paix Herb Farm. Propagation of Culinary Herbs, & Uses. 10 to 4 pm. Cost is \$55 including complimentary lunch. **Pre-registration required** (same as above listing).

May 24 & 25: Natural Home Building #2. We will finish cobbing a bench started Fall 2002. Learn the basics of cobbing. Workshop on rammed earth tires as foundations will be focus Sunday with Mark English, WisIn Wheels. 10 to 4 pm both days with complimentary meals & camping: \$75. **Pre-registration required** (same as above listing for La Paix Herb Farm).

June 14: Identifying Medicinal Herbs - Making Salves & Tinctures. La Paix Herb Farm, Alum Bridge WV. 10 to 4 pm. Tour all gardens; wood & field walk identifying medicinal herbs and uses. We will make a salve & tincture to take home with you. Cost is \$55 including complimentary lunch. **Pre-registration** (same as above La Paix listing).

July 12: First Lavender Fair in West Virginia! 10 to 4 pm. Admission: \$5 or \$10 family. Tour gardens of over 1,000 lavender plants at La Paix Herb Farm - 3052 Crooked Run Rd., Alum Bridge WV. **For more info:** lapaix@iolinc.net or www.lapaixherbaljourney.com

Support the West Virginia Environmental Council

1324 Virginia Street East, Charleston WV 25301

Phone: (304) 346-5905 Fax: (304) 414-0629 www.wvecouncil.org

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Please Note: This will be the last **Legislative Update** until after the session (ending March 8). We will be publishing our **"Legislative Wrap Up"** Newsletter in April. You may check our WVEC web-site and watch for Action Alerts online until then!
Thank you, WVEC Lobby Team

The West Virginia Environmental Council
 1324 Virginia Street East
 Charleston, WV 25301



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 Please Rush
Thanks!

www.wvecouncil.org