

Since 1967, Protecting Everyone’s Right to Breathe Clean Air

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www.cleanair.org

Staff Profile

Augusta Wilson

Meet Augusta Wilson, a staff attorney at the Council. Augusta received a bachelor’s degree in Biochemistry from Case Western Reserve University, and her law degree from Cornell law School. Before joining the Council Augusta worked for several years for a law firm in New York City, however she always knew she ultimately wanted to pursue public interest environmental work and is very happy to be working with the Council.

Augusta works primarily on natural gas pipeline systems and other related infrastructure. Her major goal for the next year is to increase the Council’s involvement with proposed natural gas pipeline projects that will affect our members throughout Pennsylvania. This means actively providing legal and technical comments as proposed projects go through their permitting process. It also means appealing permitting decisions where appropriate. Getting agencies to do the type of rigorous environmental review that these pipeline projects merit is certainly a challenge, but with the help of our members and the Council’s excellent team of lawyers she believes we can make significant headway.

Augusta can be reached at 215-567-4004 ext. 106, or by email at awilson@cleanair.org.



HOW I SEE IT: JOE’S CORNER

Earlier this summer, the EPA proposed limits on CO2 emissions from coal power plants. Shortly after, the heads of the EPA that served under the last four Republican presidents went before Congress to testify that immediate action was needed on climate change. As this took place, coal lobbyists, climate change deniers and their supporters in the U.S. Congress were spreading gloom and doom. After 35 years as an environmentalist, I’ve noticed a pattern. The EPA proposes important regulations. Industry and its supporters argue that the sky will fall. The regulation takes effect, and none of their dire predictions come true.

Americans are already seeing the effects of climate change. Water shortages, flooding rains, wildfires and heat waves are becoming more commonplace. The National Assessment of Climate Change warns that our area will continue to see increases in torrential rains that could lead to the type of flooding caused by Hurricane Sandy. The EPA estimates that climate change related damage cost the American economy more than \$100 billion in 2012.

Pennsylvania is only behind Texas and California in carbon dioxide emissions.

For Pennsylvania, the EPA rule proposes a 32% reduction in carbon dioxide from a 2005 baseline. Keep in mind that from 2005 to 2011 Pennsylvania already reduced carbon dioxide emissions from coal burning power plants by 12% on its own with no EPA mandate.

The EPA’s approach ensures that states have the opportunity to reach their carbon reduction goals by creating good American jobs, increasing the state and the nation’s energy security, and protecting public health. Making power plants more efficient, promoting modern building codes, and increasing the amount of electricity generated by solar and wind can be an industrial driver for Pennsylvania and the country.

If the ultimate goal is to curb the effects of climate change, the new standards can’t phase out coal and promote the use of natural gas. Natural gas is methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas – far worse than coal over a 100-year timeframe.

Pennsylvania is already off to a bad start. The state looks poised to try and avoid any meaningful greenhouse gas reductions. Switching one dirty fuel for another will not make a difference, and such an approach will deny Pennsylvania cleaner air, healthier communities, and good paying green collar jobs. Pennsylvanians deserve better.

Joe Minott is the Executive Director of Clean Air Council

News and Information for Members of Clean Air Council

September 2014 Number 20

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Staff Profile
Joe’s Corner

The Clean Air Council is a member-supported, nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to protecting everyone’s right to breathe clean air. The Council works through public education, community advocacy, and government oversight to ensure enforcement of environmental laws.



Pictured above: Robby Grote, frontman of The Districts at Earth Jam 2013.

Last year’s Earth Jam at Greenfest featured 4 big Philly bands. This year’s Earth Jam continues that tradition, featuring some of the area’s best upcoming bands; West Philadelphia Orchestra, Ron Gallo (frontman of Toy Soldiers), Pine Barons, and No Stranger.



The Region’s Largest Environmental Festival Returns to Philladelphia.

Clean Air Council’s Greenfest Philly is the region’s largest environmental festival and features all things sustainable in the Philadelphia area.

Sunday September 7, 2014
Headhouse Square, 2nd & South Streets
www.GreenfestPhilly.org

Over 20,000 people enjoy the festival each year because it has something for everyone: live music, a kid’s corner with eco-friendly crafts and activities, organic food and drinks, a beer garden, handmade goods, innovative green businesses and products, a celebration of local sustainability

innovators, ways to take action for clean air, and much more. Alongside that fun, the festival engages audiences and shows ways to make their lives and consumer choices more environmentally sustainable.

Greenfest is the perfect destination for Clean Air Council members and friends to make socially conscious purchases, supporting local businesses and the environment. Whether you are in the market for upcycled handcrafted jewelry, eco-friendly household products, organic soaps and beauty products, vegan clothing, or even a new hybrid vehicle, Greenfest

brings together over 100 of the most sustainable products and businesses to one scenic outdoor marketplace. Just imagine visiting all your favorite local Enviro-Etsy shops live in person!

While adults browse the vendors, young environmental activists can play in the MOM’s Organic Market Kids’ Corner. MOM’s Organic Market Kids’ Corner is the place for young festival goers to learn about the environment from local museums and organizations, make eco-friendly crafts, play games, and more. The first 200 lucky kids to visit MOM’s Organic Market Kids’ Corner will get a free Greenfest t-shirt made out of recycled material.

No festival is complete without delicious food and drinks and Greenfest features sustainable farm-fresh fare from the most popular food trucks and vendors. Grab a bite and enjoy the festival’s live music from the beer garden. Victory Brewing will be serving their award winning local beers alongside the many food options. Festival-goers can save on food and drinks, get an official Greenfest tee shirt (made from recycled plastic bottles!), and other eco-friendly swag, by purchasing the festival package – the Green Card. The package is valued at over \$55, but can be purchased online at www.GreenfestPhilly.org for \$30.

Learn more about the 9th annual Greenfest Philly at www.GreenfestPhilly.org.



Council Works with Communities to Respond to Gas Pipelines

As the Pennsylvania gas boom hits full tilt, companies are looking overseas to get a better price for natural gas products. The only issue for them is how to get it from here to there. Their answer: pipelines.

This year, in the Delaware River Watershed alone, there are twelve proposed natural gas pipeline projects. Each of these would carry products from the shale fields of Pennsylvania to export facilities along the east coast.

The pipeline projects are currently waiting for certificates of “public convenience and necessity.” While it sounds harmless enough, these certificates would grant the companies the right of Eminent Domain. The pipeline companies would then be able to proceed with the projects overriding concerns of local residents and conflicts with local zoning laws.

On July 30th, a panel of Administrative Law Judges issued a decision that Sunoco is not a public utility corporation under Pennsylvania Law. Council attorneys are preparing to see the case through the appeals process.

While the industry claims these projects are necessary, impacted communities are demanding a greater say in what happens their community. Many landowners along the pipeline routes see the benefits going overseas while the health and safety impacts are felt locally.

Compressor and pumping stations are spaced out along the pipelines every twenty miles or so, and have provoked consistent community complaints about ev-

erything from air pollution to noise issues. For people living next to compressor stations, the chemicals emitted are powerful enough to impact their health and quality of life.

To ensure that communities are well informed about the health and safety impacts of proposed pipeline projects, the Council is currently conducting community meetings along the proposed pipeline routes. In working with landowners and local residents, the Council’s goal is to educate people about the potential effects of pipeline projects as well as help residents organize to make their voices heard in the decision-making processes.

The Council’s legal team has submitted technical comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) on numerous pipeline projects in the Delaware River Watershed. Council attorneys are working to ensure that these projects do not continue without community approval and best operating practices. The Council encourages anyone who is interested to submit a comment to FERC and the PUC on the pipeline projects. It is simple and only requires a few moments of your time.

To learn more about the Council’s work on pipeline projects, or to file public comments on the pipeline projects: contact Sam Koplinka-Loehr, Shale Gas Organizer. skl1@cleanair.org or call 215-567-4004 ext.115

I See Smoke: Reporting Wood Burning in Your Community

Human beings have been burning wood for fuel for thousands of years. It remains a leading source of fuel for cooking and heating around the world. In most developed countries, wood’s use is declining. Some see it as an environmentally sound alternative to fossil fuels, and others think of it as an iconic romantic activity.

But burning wood creates air pollution. If not properly controlled or sited it can have a significant negative impact on the health and quality of life of neighbors. Particulate matter and noxious gases from wood burning penetrate deep into lungs and exacerbate breathing problems. Long-term exposure to these emissions can increase cancer risks, hospitalizations due to respiratory issues, and can even interfere with the reproductive system.

Exposure to wood smoke spikes in early fall, as people start bonfires to burn leaves and cool temperatures lead to greater use of fireplaces and outdoor wood-fired boilers. Many municipalities have regulations designed to protect public health and well-being. However, most of these regulations have poor reporting mechanisms, and are not effectively enforced.

The Council launched the I See Smoke PA campaign earlier this year to directly address these issues. The first stage in the campaign has focused on direct advocacy working towards a no-burn alternative in Allegheny County, educating health officials, and building a strong foundation for a broader campaign. These efforts have resulted in the launch of the website ISeeSmokePA.org – a resource for information and materials on the health effects of wood smoke and current laws across the state.

This fall, the Council is launching the I See Smoke PA web application as the next stage in the campaign. The web app is designed to make it easier for residents to report wood, trash, and other forms of burning to local and state officials. Concerned citizens can login to the app via the web browser on their phone, tablet or computer, and report the time, location, and kind of burning as it is occurring. The map-based interface also allows users to attach a photo of the incident. The app then generates a report that goes straight to local officials, the regional office of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Council.

This reporting mechanism will make it easier for local officials and the Council to track burning across the state. This information can then be used to craft better regulations, implement better enforcement policies, and target the Council’s advocacy work on the issue. The app provides an excellent tool to support the Council’s on-going effort to protect everyone’s right to clean air, and ensure the safety, health, and well-being of the region. For more information, contact Matt Walker at mwalker@cleanair.org, or call 215-567-4004 ext. 121.



Leaving a diesel truck idling creates unnecessary air pollution, wastes fuel, and is illegal. Yet it is pervasive throughout the nation, especially in urban areas. Many people are unaware that an idling vehicle still produce significant air pollution, including greenhouse gases, soot, smog, and carcinogens. In some cases, leaving a vehicle idling is worse than driving it because the engine isn’t hot enough to break down the most dangerous chemicals.

Despite the clear harm to public health, and the existence of laws against idling, the law usually has little effect in Philadelphia. The Police Department refuses to enforce anti-idling laws. Air Management Services (AMS) –a division of the Philadelphia Department of Health that enforces air pollution laws in Philadelphia– simply does not have adequate resources to do so.

That’s why the Council has, over the past few years, aggressively pursued programs to address idling. The Council runs IdleFreePhilly.org to encourage reporting idling to AMS. Thanks to the reports of concerned residents, the website has helped AMS identify a number of idling “hot spots” in the city. The Council has also successfully applied for grants under the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA), to install anti-idling technology on numerous Diesel-powered vehicles serving Delaware port facilities.

To support these current efforts, the Council has added a new program. The Council now works directly with city government fleets to make them aware of anti-idling laws and the cost to taxpayers from fuel wasted through idling.

In this pilot program, the Council is using citizen monitors to help get the word to these agencies when their trucks are idling. Using Textizen, real-time reports are sent via text message to the agency so they can contact the vehicle operators directly. Council employees and volunteers have used it to report idlers during their commute to work, on their lunch break, and whenever they see idling city owned-trucks around the city of Philadelphia.

With a greater volume of reports, the companies are starting to see how prevalent this problem is. The Council is also working with the participating agencies to develop anti-idling policies and employee training programs.

This program has the potential to significantly cut Philadelphia’s automobile-based pollution, and we’re looking for more volunteers. If you’re interested in taking part in the reporting system, all it takes is a short training session and a cellphone. The training is only 30 minutes, after which you’re free to report vehicles from all around the Philadelphia area.

To sign up, please contact Logan Welde at lwelde@cleanair.org, or call 215-567-4004 ext. 126. For more information about idling, please visit ildefreephilly.org.

LiveWELL Lancaster Honors Clean Air Council Smoke-Free Programs

On May 30, 2014 Lancaster General Hospital and the Tobacco Free Coalition of Lancaster County recognized the Council during its celebration of World No Tobacco Day. For over 10 years Clean Air Council has been working on numerous smoke-free initiatives for the County from smoke-free workplaces to the Young Lungs at Play tobacco–free initiative.

The Council’s latest initiative is to promote smoke-free multi-unit housing in Lancaster County. The Council worked closely with Housing Development Corporation (HDC) Mid Atlantic on policy change and cessation referral as the organization took over 800 units smoke-free in the County. The new policy enables HDC to offer a cleaner, healthier environment for its employees and residents.

For more information on the program contact Thurm Brendlinger at brendlinger@cleanair.org or 215-567-4004, ext. 104.



Protect Our Children: Council Assists Mars Parent Group in Protecting Children from Fracking Near School Campus

The Mars Parent Group is dedicated to protecting their children from fracking. Specifically, in Butler County Rex Energy Company is proposing to build a fracking site about a half mile away from the local school. The Mars Parent Group is a member of the Protect Our Children Coalition, a campaign led in part by the Clean Air Council. The campaign supports all efforts to keep shale gas drilling and infrastructure at least one mile away from schools.

After a successful petition signed by over half of the school district parents, a rally in front of the school, and packing a school board meeting with speakers, the parent’s group convinced the Mars Area School Board to vote against leasing the school property for drilling for over \$1 million. Not only did the proposal fail, it was unanimously rejected. The Board’s 9-0 vote in March 2014 ended Rex Energy’s second unsuccessful bid to purchase school district mineral rights - the last being in 2009. In announcing their decision, one Board member cited the fact that the lease agreement could not compete with the value of protecting the health and safety of students.

Rex Energy later came back with a new well permit just outside of the school campus property. The Mars Parents Group, working with Clean Air Council, continued organizing parents to oppose the new wells. Parents requested a meeting with Rex Energy and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to negotiate the placement of the well. Clean Air Council staff attorney Aaron Jacobs-Smith and Outreach Director Matt Walker were invited to attend. Rex Energy representatives would not agree to move the well one inch. They came to the meeting thinking they could convince the parents that the fracking would be done safely. They left with every parent still firmly opposed to any fracking operation near the school. While DEP spun the meeting as a success in which parents and the company compromised to develop permit conditions, the parents remained clear that they fully oppose fracking near the schools.

Meanwhile, Middlesex Township is in the process of attempting to change their zoning ordinance to allow gas drilling in an agricultural-residential district. The proposed well would have likely been illegal in the current location, so this move would remove this legal obstacle for the company. Council attorneys are closely involved in researching this issue and plan to attend an August hearing on the zoning change.

The Council will also be facilitating a strategy session in late July to assist the Mars Parents Group in their desire to increase pressure on Rex Energy outside of the regulatory and legal process. If you have any questions or would like more information, call Aaron Jacobs-Smith at 215-567-4004 ext. 109, or email ajs@cleanair.org.

Clean Air Commuter of the Year

Calling all commuters! Transportation is one of the largest contributors to air pollution in the Philadelphia region. Does your commitment to the environment mean you (or another Clean Air Council member you know) brave snow, blocked bike lanes, early morning small talk, and/or uncomfortable proximity to your fellow public transit riders? Clean Air Council is looking for nominees for its inaugural Clean Air Commuter of the Year award. The Clean Air Commuter of the Year will be profiled in our next newsletter and get an award at next year’s 5k Run for Clean Air to bring glory to your cubicle and inspire your coworkers. Depending on your preferred clean commute mode, the winner will also get a one-month SEPTA TrailPass, a \$150 gift certificate to your local bike shop, or a green car-detailing to make your workplace ride pristine and coffee stain free.

Examples of Clean Air Commuter behavior:

- You leave early each morning to collect your coworkers for a carpool
- You persuaded your employer to install bike-friendly facilities
- A master of SEPTA’s bike racks, you’ve worked out a multi-modal, car-free commute
- A comprehensive knowledge of SEPTA schedules lets you hop from train to trolley, bus to subway to get to work
- Not even blazing heat, blizzards, or torrential rain can keep you off your bike!

Are you or a fellow CAC member a commuter extraordinaire? Nominate yourself or someone else online at cleanair.org/program/transportation/sustainable_commute. Entries close March 31st, 2015.

Clean Air Commute Employer of the Year

We’re also seeking nominations for a Clean Air Commuter Employer of the Year. If your company or employer promotes commutes that are healthy for both employees and the environment, let us know! Visit the Sustainable Commute section of Clean Air Council’s website to learn more about this award.

Questions? Contact Coryn Wolk at cwolk@cleanair.org or 215-567-4004 ext. 107 for more information.

M E M B E R S H I P F O R M

Join Clean Air Council, the most active locally-based environmental organization in Pennsylvania and Delaware with 8,000 members committed to the region’s clean air future.

Send this form along with your tax-deductible contribution to:

Clean Air Council

135 South 19th Street, Suite 300

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☐ \$120 Sponsor

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☐ \$75 Friend

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