



Clean Water Action News

March/April 2001

Pennsylvania Newsletter

STOP THE ROLLBACK!

No More Arsenic In Our Drinking Water!

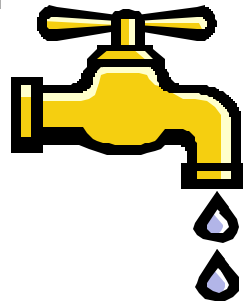
A recent decision by the Bush Administration will allow more deadly arsenic in our drinking water. **We need to act now to tell them NO — no more arsenic in our water, and no more attacks on public health and environmental standards!**

According to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), arsenic is a potent carcinogen that causes bladder, lung and skin cancer, and may cause kidney and liver cancer. It can also damage the central nervous system and may cause birth defects.

The current standard for arsenic in drinking water was set in 1942 at 50 parts per billion. At this level, 1 in 100 people could develop cancer, much higher than EPA's normal goal of a 1 in 1 million cancer risk. The NAS said several years ago that the 50 ppb standard does not protect public health, and should be lowered as promptly as possible.

EPA started a process ten years ago to review the arsenic standard. After an extensive rule-making process, including a comment period during which thousands of Clean Water Action members sent letters, **EPA announced it would lower the arsenic standard to 10 ppb.** This was officially issued by the Clinton Administration late last year. While Clean Water Action supported an even stricter standard of 3 to 5 ppb, 10 ppb is a step in the right direction in protecting public health.

However, when President Bush took office, the new arsenic standard was one of the many rules he suspended. And then, late last month, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman announced that the Bush Administration was withdrawing the arsenic standard, leaving the current (inadequate) 50 ppb standard in effect.



The science is clear: 50 ppb is unsafe. But instead of listening to public health experts, the Administration listened to mining companies and wood preservative manufacturers. The Administration put corporate profits ahead of our health!

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Write to President Bush and EPA Administrator Christie Whitman and urge them to put public health first! Tell them not to weaken the 10 ppb arsenic standard for drinking water!

Their addresses:

President George Bush, The White House, 1600 Penna. Ave. NW
Washington DC 20500

Administrator Christie Whitman, EPA, 1200 Penna. Ave. NW Washington DC 20460

Help stop the public health rollback! Write the President today!



School Pesticide Bill Re-Introduced

The Pesticide Notification Bill is back! And we need your help to get it passed.

Our legislation to protect school children from pesticide use was re-introduced as SB 705 and HB 1289. A record 21 Senators and 99 House members co-sponsored the bills.

The list of cosponsors of the bills follows. If your legislator is listed, drop him/her a note to say thanks. If not, send a short letter urging him or her to support the Pesticide Notification Act when it comes to a vote.



Senate Co-Sponsors: Greenleaf, Bell, Boscola, Conti, Costa, Dent, Gerlach, Holl, Hughes, Kasunic, Kitchen, Kukovich, LaValle, Logan, Schwartz, Stack, Stout, Tartaglione, Tilghman, Tomlinson.

House Co-Sponsors: Rubley, Adolph, Allen, M. Baker, Bard, Bastian, Bebko-Jones, Belardi, Belfanti, Blaum, Browne, Caltagirone, Cappabianca, Cappelli, Casorio, Cawley, Civera, Clark, L. Cohen, M. Cohen, Colafella, Cornell,

Costa, Coy, Cruz, Curry, Daley, Dally, DeLuca, Dermody, DeWeese, Diven, Fairchild, Fichter, Flick, Frankel, Freeman, George, Grucela, Harhai, Harper, Hennessey, Herman, Horsey, Josephs, Kaiser, Keller, Laughlin, Lederer, Leh, Levdansky, Lynch, Manderino, Mann, Marsico, Mayernik, McCall, McGill, McIlhinney, Melio, Michlovic, R. Miller, S. Miller, Myers, Nailor, Orié, Petrarca, Pippy, Pistella, Readshaw, Robinson, Rooney, Ruffing, Samuelson, Santoni, Schroeder, Scrimenti, Shaner, Solobay, Staback, Steelman, Steil, T. Stevenson, Sturla, Surra, Tangretti, EZ Taylor, Thomas, Travaglio, Trello, Vitali, Walko, Wansacz, Watson, C. Williams, Wojnaroski, Wright, Youngblood, Yudichak.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

If your legislator is not listed above, write and urge him/her to support the Pesticide Notification Act. Tell them to make sure that all parents are notified before pesticides are sprayed in school.



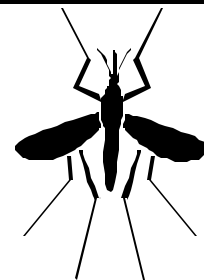
Their address is Main Capitol, Harrisburg PA 17120.

West Nile Virus Is Back

As we head into summer again, Pennsylvania is gearing up to deal with the West Nile virus. This is the mosquito-borne virus that sickened 62 people in New York City in 1999 and about 20 people in the New York-New Jersey area in 2000.

CWA staff recently met with DEP officials to make sure that the state mosquito control plans would not rely heavily on pesticide spraying. Last year, the state focused primarily on surveillance, using biological controls like Bti to control mosquito larvae, and educating the public about ways to reduce mosquito breeding grounds. We are pleased to see that the state has a similar plan this year as well, focusing on testing, habitat reduction and education.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: As we head into summer, check around your house and yard to make sure that you're not providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Clogged gutter pipes are one area to watch, along with swimming pools, bird baths and even small containers in which mosquitoes can breed. Don't let stagnant water accumulate, even in small containers or areas.



Water Resource Hearings

The state DEP will be holding a series of hearings around the state to gather public input on issues related to water quantity.

Meetings will be held:

- ◆ **May 3** Chester County: Best Western Hotel Conference Center, 815 N. Pottstown Pike, Exton
- ◆ **May 16** Butler County: Days Inn Conference Center, 139 Pittsburgh Road, Butler
- ◆ **May 17** Westmoreland County: Greensburg Garden & Civic Center, 951 Old Salem Road, Greensburg
- ◆ **May 23** Erie County: Ramada Inn, 401 W. Plum Street, Edinboro
- ◆ **May 30** Allegheny County: Ramada Plaza Suites Conference Center, 1 Bigelow Sq, Pittsburgh
- ◆ **May 31** Philadelphia: Hampton Inn, 1300 Race Street.



Meetings will begin at 7 PM and run until roughly 9 PM. They will include a presentation from DEP staff about water quantity issues.

The basic purpose of the meetings will be to gather public input on the topic of how we ensure adequate water supplies in Pennsylvania — now and in the future.

There are new threats all the time to ensuring an adequate supply of clean water for the future... from new housing developments or bottled water plants depleting aquifers and causing wells to run dry...to new power plants consuming huge amounts of water from our rivers and streams. Come and tell the state what you think it should do to make sure that there is enough water remaining for future generations. For more information or suggestions, call the CWA office nearest you.

No Pollution Trading Without Safeguards

Clean Water Action is continuing to recruit support for our statement listing 12 Safeguards for Clean Pollution Trading. As the state moves forward with regulations for a pollution trading program, we want to make sure that any such program will actually reduce pollution and improve water quality.

Our 12 Safeguards will help ensure this happens. So far, our position has been endorsed by Sierra Club PA Chapter, Citizens for PA's Future, PA Organization of Watersheds and Rivers, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Western PA Watershed Protection Program, PA Trout Unlimited and more!

If you belong to a watershed or environmental group, ask them to endorse our Safeguards. Call Becky at 215-640-8800 to get a copy of the Safeguards and the endorsement form.

Bad EV Bill Introduced

Rep. Jim Lynch has introduced his bill to weaken the state's Exceptional Value waters program, making it difficult or impossible to classify any new streams as EV. EV streams are the best, most pristine in the state.

HB 1027 would allow any property owner in a watershed to veto an EV classification, require certified mail notices to all property owners, and prevent a stream from being protected as EV until the full designation process is completed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Write your Representative and urge him/her to oppose HB 1027. Tell them to protect our state's best waters!





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Clean Water Action is a national citizen's organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health threatening pollution, creation of environmentally safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well being and community quality of life. This update was prepared for our Pennsylvania members who contribute at the sustaining member level of \$60 or more.

Protect Your Right To Know

Pennsylvania is now considering regulations that would change the way the public is notified when our drinking water is unsafe to drink. We need your help to protect our right to know about our drinking water.


know, other parts would weaken existing rules. They would reduce the number of activities utilities have to do to inform consumers. And they would give utilities more time to notify consumers about violations. We think that's wrong.



The state is adopting new regulations that spell out how and when a utility must notify customers when it violates a Maximum Contaminant Level. That's the health-based level allowed for a contaminant in drinking water.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
 Write to DEP Secretary David Hess and urge him not to weaken the Public Notification Rule for drinking water. Tell him we need strong regulations to inform the public about drinking water problems. His address is DEP, PO Box 2063, Harrisburg PA 17105.


While some of the changes would strengthen our right to



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