EPA REGION III

Office of Public Affairs

PM Headlines

Thursday, March 15, 2012

*** PM HOT LIST ***

Official challenges Bay cleanup group's lobbying role

VIRGINIAN-PILOT Since taking office, Gov. Bob McDonnell's administration has looked at the Chesapeake Bay cleanup program, as led by the federal government, with a critical and uncomfortable eye. Officials have questioned the accuracy of computer models that drive many decisions. And they have criticized the timing of adding new requirements to cut pollution that could cost billions of dollars in the middle of an economic recession and budget crisis. Now comes an unusually blunt letter from McDonnell's secretary of natural resources, Doug Domenech, that calls out the clubbiness of the cleanup program, which mostly involves like-minded environmentalists, scientists and government officials. In his letter last month to the regional director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Domenech said the program's Citizens Advisory Committee took "inappropriate action" in "lobbying" for stricter catch limits on menhaden, an important fish species in the Bay. "It is Virginia's opinion that the CAC does not, or at least should not, have the independent authority as a body to lobby other organizations," Domenech wrote to Shawn Garvin, the EPA's regional head.Domenech also took aim at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, a leading advocacy group. One of its top managers in Hampton Roads, who serves on the CAC, had urged fellow members to read foundation literature on menhaden before sending a letter in favor of new restrictions."At the very least," Domenech wrote, "it creates the appearance the CAC was being used by a separate organization to advance the position of that organization." His letter has confused and baffled environmentalists and others involved in the cleanup. The CAC, they say, has been a benign arena for citizens to let their voices be heard and for years has recommended policy options to help the Bay's recovery. ...He said he hopes the EPA lays out better rules for this and other advisory groups that offer input to the governors of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania and the mayor of Washington, D.C., on Bay matters.The EPA regional office in Philadelphia said it has received the letter but had no further comment.

River commission OKs more drilling water use

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.) HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- Demonstrators disrupted another meeting of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to protest the approval of more water use by Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling companies. The five Susquehanna River Basin Commission members approved 50 applications Thursday over the demonstrators' chants of, "We pledge to protect the Susquehanna."Commission executive director Paul Swartz says they're careful about the timing and location of the water withdrawals to protect smaller waterways from going dry or getting too low. But the demonstrators, including landscaper Alex Lotorto from Pike County, say the water withdrawals enable what they call a dangerous and polluting industry.

DIM0070389

State searching for cause of methane in Franklin Twp. water wells

SCRANTON TIMES-TRIBUNE FRANKLIN TWP. - State regulators are investigating the cause of high methane levels in three Susquehanna County water wells after residents reported gray or black sludgy water, and one home's well began to erupt water through its cap. The Department of Environmental Protection has not yet determined if natural sources, nearby natural gas drilling operations or some other cause has mobilized methane and metals into drinking water supplies. Inspectors were in the township hamlet of Franklin Forks on Wednesday to take a second round of samples from water wells. Analyzing the stable carbon isotopes - a form of chemical fingerprinting of the gas - "could prove fruitful" in this case because Salt Springs is so well documented, DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said. The department also is considering the potential impact of nearby Marcellus Shale drilling on the water supplies. "Everything is still part of the investigation," she said. "We're not ruling anything out." DEP cited WPX Energy for defective casing or cement in two of the natural gas wells closest to Franklin Forks last year.

Commentary: Gov. Corbett budget cuts weakening environmental protection

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL Gov. Corbett's proposed budget would further weaken the state Department of Environmental Protection and drain funds from valuable environmental programs.The governor's proposed fiscal year 2012-2013 budget would cut an additional $10.5 million from the DEP general fund appropriation, reducing it to $124 million. The DEP state appropriation was cut $10 million last year, and its state appropriation has been reduced by $65 million since 2006. The department cannot perform its mission reasonably with a budget below $170 million, according to former DEP secretary John Hanger. There has been about a 10 percent cut in DEP personnel since 2006. Nonunion staff have not received a salary increase in four years. Noncompetitive salaries, combined with increasing workloads due to these staffing cuts, have made it difficult for the DEP to attract and retain quality people. "We are hemorrhaging jobs to the oil and gas industry, "one former DEP senior staffer told me. Corbett's budget would also take money from at least three popular and successful environmental programs: the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation fund; the Farmland Preservation program; and the Alternative Fuels Incentive Grand program. Money from these programs would be transferred to the general fund to balance his budget. ... -- *Greg Vitali is a Democratic state representative from Delaware County and serves on the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.*

Potomac Riverkeeper appeals EQB decision on North Mountain Shale permit

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL Potomac Riverkeeper announced March 14 that it has appealed the state Environmental Quality Board's approval of North Mountain Shale's water pollution discharge permit.The state Department of Environmental Protection permitted North Mountain Shale in January 2011 to quarry shale from a 100-acre site in Gerrardstown, in Berkeley County.The Potomac Riverkeeper appeal, filed in Kanawha County Circuit Court, is based on sediment discharges. The organization is concerned that sediment levels allowed by the permit into Mill Creek violate the Clean Water Act and ignore state law that requires turbidity limits for discharges to trout streams.Mill Creek is part of the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Load program, which is seeking to reduce sediment discharges in Potomac tributaries, the organization wrote in a media release. "Instead of performing the site-specific analysis required by the Clean Water Act, DEP illegally relied on the TMDL report to set a generic sediment limit for this permit," said Potomac Riverkeeper Upper Potomac River Manager Brent Walls in the release. "Since federal regulations do not impose nationwide sediment limits for quarries, DEP was required to conduct a site-specific analysis using their best professional judgment. They didn't do that for North Mountain Shale's discharge permit."

Maryland zip codes among nation's most polluted

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Md.)BALTIMORE - A new report says the Curtis Bay and Brooklyn areas outside Baltimore are among the nation's most polluted zip codes. A report released Thursday by the Environmental Integrity Project says that despite improvements made to two nearby coal-fired power plants, Curtis Bay was the top zip code in Maryland for toxic air pollution from local facilities in 2010. And it was among the top 100 nationwide. The group says the rankings are based on data from the most recent National Air Toxics Assessment by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The group is calling for increased air quality monitoring in the area.The group also says port officials should work with state environmental official to develop a plan to reduce pollution from trucking and shipping.

Lakes cleanup: The White House plan keeps the status quo

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE Great Lakes states like Pennsylvania can take some comfort, but not a lot, from President Barack Obama's proposed budget. It calls for $300 million next year to remove contaminated sediment from harbors and streams. If the budget passes as is -- and Congress says it won't -- money to clean up the Great Lakes will not increase from the previous two budgets. Maintaining the status quo isn't enough to remove long-embedded toxic materials from North America's most valuable freshwater resource. An unchanged allocation would be easier to accept if the administration were not also proposing nearly a 20 percent cut in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The government uses that to help local communities pay for improvements to their water and sewerage systems.America's failure to maintain water quality has cost it dearly in illnesses related to lack of sanitation. Outbreaks of toxic algae are not solely attributable to insufficient sewage treatment, but they are costing the nation jobs in tourism and other sectors of the economy, as the Lake Erie region can attest.The Great Lakes region needs not just a renewal but an increase in federal spending on sediment removal. Washington should invest more in the region's water-and-sewerage infrastructure. The EPA budget also must include a stronger commitment to research of childhood cancer clusters. But it's uncertain how much the administration is making that issue a priority. Mr. Obama comes from Illinois, a Great Lakes state. The region deserves more from its Great Lakes president.

Nine Delaware communities to upgrade drinking water via loan program

DELAWARE WAVE The Delaware Division of Public Health Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program announced today that nine Delaware municipalities will benefit from a grant awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency last fall. Funds will be loaned to cities and towns throughout the state to help finance drinking water infrastructure improvements. The projects will help improve drinking water for over 150,000 Delawareans. "The mission of the Office of Drinking Water is to protect the health of Delawareans by assuring safe drinking water through comprehensive monitoring, technical assistance and public education," said Thom May, DPH Health Systems Protection section chief. "The DWSRF is an important part of DPH's on-going commitment to high quality drinking water."The communities that will upgrade their drinking water infrastructures through the low-interest loans are Wilmington, Selbyville, Milford, Seaford, Georgetown, Middletown, Delmar, Blades, and Greenwood. Projects will begin construction work in the summer of 2012 and, depending on the level of complexity projects, duration is estimated to be from 12 to 24 months.

Chambersburg schools meet Obama's energy reduction requests early

CHAMBERSBURG PUBLIC OPINION CHAMBERSBURG -- The Environmental Protection Agency has recognized Chambersburg Area School District for its ongoing efforts to reduce energy costs in the district. The EPA announced last month nearly half of the organizations recognized as Energy Star Leaders have improved the energy efficiency of their building portfolios by 20 percent or more, meeting a goal set by President Barack Obama last year."The EPA's Energy Star program and President Obama teamed up on a mission to see that schools become more modernized and energy efficient," said Connie Kelley, CASD energy manger. "Any schools that achieve that level have already met or exceeded expectations of at least 20 percent efficiency. Here we are in little

Chambersburg, and we're an example of a model school of what the EPA would like to see from other schools around the country."Obama's 2011 plan requested buildings across the nation improve their energy performance by 20 percent by 2020.All school buildings but Marion Elementary have earned three Energy Star labels, while Marion has earned two. To date, district school buildings have earned 49 Energy Star labels.CASD is one of 11 districts considered Energy Star leaders in the state.

*** MORNING HOT LIST ***

DN Editorial: When the earth moves... ask where the fracking is

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS STRANGE THINGS often start happening soon after hydraulic fracturing for natural gas - known as "fracking" - comes to an area. Drinking water become undrinkable (Wyoming, among other places) or erupts into flames (Pennsylvania). And places not known to have earthquakes suddenly start to feel tremors, including Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma - and our neighbor, Ohio. Why should we be surprised that forcing great amounts of water and chemicals into the earth - and then disposing of the wastewater by using high pressure to inject it deep into underground wells - might possibly affect the environment? Only months after the opening of an injection well in northeastern Ohio - not exactly the San Andreas fault - the Youngstown area experienced a dozen minor earthquakes. But suspicion that the events were connected were dismissed, laughed at, and termed a liberal plot to ... it's never been explained who is supposed to be profiting from identifying safety and environmental hazards. Even though the Ohio Department of Natural Resources ordered the well closed pending investigation, it said in January that it saw no "direct correlation" between the earthquakes and the injection well. The fact that the state's Republican governor and Legislature strongly support fracking (and oppose government regulation of the environment) had nothing to do with it, of course. Last week, though, the Ohio regulators changed course, reporting that, upon further scientific review, that the well had indeed caused the earthquakes: there was a previously unidentified fault in the bedrock. To prevent a recurrence, the state imposed the toughest regulations in the country on new wells. To be clear, the injection wells are different from actual fracking - the former disposes of the waste from the latter. But with nearly every aspect of this technique, scientific investigation confirms after the fact that environmental damage has resulted from hasty, uninformed and politically motivated decisions. The key words here are "after the fact": supporters of fracking continue to oppose doing the science beforehand.

Feds outline federal aid for reducing water pollution

EASTON STAR-DEMOCRAT (Md.) PHILADELPHIA As local governments grapple with staggering cost estimates for pollution reduction strategies, federal officials Tuesday announced financial help. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, is calling for proposals for $4 million in water pollution reduction grants for local governments. Talbot County officials already are working on an application, said Sandy Coyman, county planner. The largest cost here is for urban stormwater strategies, although Coyman didn't have final numbers. Septic upgrades, however, could cost at least $40 million. "Septics are relatively small compared with urban stormwater," Coyman said. "We're really hopeful that first scenario with huge costs, we'll be able to find alternative ways." One such alternative could come in the form of a grant from the funds announced Tuesday. "Now more than ever, the Chesapeake Bay needs the creativity, innovation and ingenuity of local governments," said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. "This new EPA funding will enable local governments to implement the best solutions to on-the-ground challenges they face in helping to restore the Bay, and share those approaches with other towns throughout the entire watershed." Tuesday's announcement is for the Local Government Green Infrastructure Initiative, which provides grants of up to $750,000, for the design and implementation of green infrastructure projects. Those projects include capital improvements, road maintenance programs, flood plain management and other projects that produce measurable water quality improvements.

Reed takes on EPA: Chemung County would face $30M bill to clean up watershed

ELMIRA STAR GAZETTE (NY) Legislation will be introduced next week to stop the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from forcing New Yorkers to spend money unnecessarily, U.S. Rep. Tom Reed said Wednesday. The legislation is in response to the EPA's planned implementation of the total maximum daily load standards for nitrate and phosphate levels intended to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The standards are impractical and unduly penalize the 29th Congressional District, Reed, R-Corning, said during a news conference at the Chemung County Wastewater Treatment Facility in Elmira. "What they're doing is a one-size-fits-all approach," he said. "They're not taking into consideration the efforts and the changes of operations that we've already done in New York state. They're just saddling us with those costs." It would cost $30 million to outfit the county's two wastewater treatment facilities to meet the new standard, plus about $750,000 in annual operational costs, County Executive Tom Santulli said. The new regulations also would kill economic development prospects, he said. The legislation to be introduced in the House of Representatives next week would limit the EPA's ability to modify existing permits so permit holders would not be impacted by the EPA unilaterally changing standards, Reed said."We actually have a letter from a high-ranking official in the EPA that says if the other six states that feed the Chesapeake Bay had our water quality, the Chesapeake Bay wouldn't be polluted," Santulli said. He referred to a May 24, 2011 letter to Reed signed by Arvin Ganesan, deputy associate administrator of the EPA, who was responding to questions from Reed. "If all jurisdictions had the same aggregate delivered loading rate per acre as New York, using estimated 2009 loading rates, the total loads to the bay would be below the (total maximum daily) loads," Ganesan wrote.

Lancaster city plans porous paving to cut water flow into sewers

LANCASTER NEWSPAPERS Under federal pressure to reduce the amount of stormwater running into its sewer system — and raw sewage ultimately running into the Chesapeake Bay — Lancaster city has been looking for ways to have rainwater soak into the ground. But roughly 44 percent of the city's surface area is covered by buildings and pavement that the water can't penetrate. Of that area, nearly a third is asphalt parking lots. So, city officials are beginning the monumental task of eliminating a billion gallons of sewage overflow with some of the smallest projects. On Wednesday, city Controller Bill Andrews opened bids to rebuild four small city-owned parking lots this spring. When completed, the lots will no longer allow rainwater to run off their surface into the city's combined storm and sanitary sewers. Instead, rain that falls there will soak through porous asphalt and concrete and be channeled to "rain gardens" where it will feed trees and plants. The lots have been designed to have a greater impact as basins to accept stormwater runoff from surrounding streets. Charlotte Katzenmoyer, city public works director, said parking lots comprise 32 percent of the impervious surface covering Lancaster city. "If you look at that, 32 percent, that's a lot of stormwater that could be treated on site," Katzenmoyer said. The city is attempting to lead by example, she said. The four lots will serve as demonstration projects to show how "green infrastructure improvements" can be done. She hopes to convince private parking lot owners to follow the example. The four lots are at Mifflin Street, between South Plum Street and East End Avenue; South Plum Street, between Dauphin and Green streets; Dauphin Street, with entrances on Dauphin and Juniata streets; and Penn Avenue, between Green and Dauphin streets

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PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

From Early Bird Blog: Book of the Week: "Frozen Planet" It's big and it's beautiful. It's got polar bears, wolves, whales, seals, foxes, albatrosses, the aurora and ice bergs the size of New York skyscrapers. This is the world of the planet's two poles. An exploration, "Frozen Planet," starts this Sunday on the Discovery Channel, as the third

installment in the BBC Earth series. Firefly has published a companion book, by "Frozen Planet" executive producer Alastair Fothergill and Vanessa Berlowitz, who produced some of the episodes. "No part of planet Earth is more hostile to life than the snow-and ice-covered regions thattlie around its two poles," writes naturalist and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough in the foreword. "Yet animals of many kinds -- land-living mammals in the north, birds in the south and sea mammals in both places - have over many thousands of years evolved extraordinary ways of surviving there."

From Early Bird Blog: And now...an egg in the Franklin Institute hawk nest Yesterday, there was news of one or more chicks in the Tinicum eagle nest. Now comes the first egg in the nest of the hawks who have taken up residence on a ledge of the Franklin Institute. So viewership of the webcam feed, popular well beyond the region, is bound to skyrocket.

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

From Early Bird DN Editorial: When the earth moves... ask where the fracking is STRANGE THINGS often start happening soon after hydraulic fracturing for natural gas - known as "fracking" - comes to an area. Drinking water become undrinkable (Wyoming, among other places) or erupts into flames (Pennsylvania). And places not known to have earthquakes suddenly start to feel tremors, including Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma - and our neighbor, Ohio. Why should we be surprised that forcing great amounts of water and chemicals into the earth - and then disposing of the wastewater by using high pressure to inject it deep into underground wells - might possibly affect the environment? Only months after the opening of an injection well in northeastern Ohio - not exactly the San Andreas fault - the Youngstown area experienced a dozen minor earthquakes. But suspicion that the events were connected were dismissed, laughed at, and termed a liberal plot to ... it's never been explained who is supposed to be profiting from identifying safety and environmental hazards. Even though the Ohio Department of Natural Resources ordered the well closed pending investigation, it said in January that it saw no "direct correlation" between the earthquakes and the injection well. The fact that the state's Republican governor and Legislature strongly support fracking (and oppose government regulation of the environment) had nothing to do with it, of course. Last week, though, the Ohio regulators changed course, reporting that, upon further scientific review, that the well had indeed caused the earthquakes: there was a previously unidentified fault in the bedrock. To prevent a recurrence, the state imposed the toughest regulations in the country on new wells. To be clear, the injection wells are different from actual fracking - the former disposes of the waste from the latter. But with nearly every aspect of this technique, scientific investigation confirms after the fact that environmental damage has resulted from hasty, uninformed and politically motivated decisions. The key words here are "after the fact": supporters of fracking continue to oppose doing the science beforehand.

From Early Bird City Howl Help Desk: Mind your pees and phews: Dump here and urine good company THE WATER bottles lying in a pile on Buttonwood Street were not filled with water. Their contents were a mysterious, yellow liquid - one closer to brown, the others the color of lemonade. Like Cris, the Callowhill resident who told us about the bottles, we assumed it was urine. But in the name of journalistic integrity, we had to be certain. Yes, readers, we opened the bottles and smelled them. Fortunately (or unfortunately), it took only one whiff: definitely urine. But let's start at the beginning. Last month, Cris, who keeps us updated on quality-of-life issues in Callowhill, let us know that there was a big pile of "urine bottles" on Buttonwood Street near the Reading Viaduct. The pile, about 10 half-liter bottles deep, had been there for at least a month, he said. He also alerted 3-1-1 via Twitter. More than a week later, the urine bottles were still there.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

From Early Bird Marcellus pipeline to be built in townships A six-mile pipeline for gathering natural gas extracted from Marcellus Shale is planned to span two Washington County townships and cross beneath local streams. MarkWest Liberty Midstream and Resources LLC of Cecil plans to build the pipeline in Robinson and Mount Pleasant townships, according to MarkWest's engineering and consulting firm, Tetra Tech Inc. of Green Tree. Plans include approximately 32,600 feet of 12-inch and 20-inch pipes within a 100-foot-wide right of way on

multiple properties. Some pipes would be installed along the Panhandle Trail and underneath streams, including Robinson Run and unnamed tributaries of Robinson Run and Cherry Run. The project lies in northwestern Washington County, within 10 miles of west communities such as McDonald, Oakdale, North Fayette, South Fayette and Findlay. The pipeline is planned in Mount Pleasant, which includes the village of Hickory, and Robinson, a rural township not to be confused with the same-named Allegheny County community containing the mall. The name of the project -- Imperial Lands Pipeline -- apparently refers to Imperial Land Co., whose Robinson property contains well pads operated by Range Resources Appalachia LLC. Robinson Supervisor Brian Coppola said Monday the project would involve the first major Marcellus pipeline in Robinson, but the township does not have authority to regulate pipelines under the new state law that limits local control of the industry. "It's significant, and it's going to be pre-empted under Act 13," said Mr. Coppola, chairman of the supervisors board. Tetra Tech notified township supervisors and Washington County commissioners in February that its client, MarkWest, intends to apply to the state Department of Environmental Protection, Pittsburgh Regional Office, for a water obstruction and encroachment permit and an erosion and sediment control permit for earth disturbance related to the Imperial Lands Pipeline.

From Early Bird Peters considers lawsuit Peters council members on Monday began discussing strategic options to challenge the state's new law that would strip municipalities of most authority in regulating where Marcellus Shale gas wells could be located. Included in the discussion was reviewing a preliminary draft of a lawsuit expected to be filed by local municipalities in about two weeks. Township Solicitor William Johnson updated council members on discussions he's had with other local solicitors about challenging the new law, Act 13, which also establishes impact fees for gas well drilling. Although the lawsuit is still in the conceptual stage, Mr. Johnson said a group of municipalities, including perhaps Peters, Cecil, Robinson and South Fayette, will likely band together to challenge the law on several constitutional fronts. Mr. Johnson said Act 13 may be unconstitutional because it gives the state Legislature police powers; it was enacted to benefit one specific industry; it violates the separation of powers between the judicial and legislative branches of government; and it usurps the right of local governments to regulate the location of facilities that could seriously impact the environment. Under the law, municipalities also would have little authority over the locations of gas well infrastructure, such as pipelines and compressor stations. Signed by Gov. Tom Corbett Feb. 13, the new law is set to take effect April 13 and will require municipalities with conflicting ordinances, such as Peters, Cecil, South Fayette and Robinson, to amend their drilling regulations to reflect new state laws within 120 days.

Speakers line up for hearing in Homer City (yesterday) Thirty-three people are signed up to speak at today's state Department of Environmental Protection hearing on a proposal to install $700 million air pollution controls at General Electric Co.'s coal-fired Homer City Power Plant, long one of the biggest and dirtiest in the nation.The 5 p.m. hearing, in Homer-Center High School, will focus on a permit application by Edison Mission Energy, the plant's operator, to add the emissions controls on two of the 43-year-old power plant's three units. A third unit built in 1977 already operates with a stack "scrubber" to control sulfur dioxide pollution.EME, a subsidiary of California-based Edison International, said the new controls it first proposed in January will reduce emissions of sulfur by 84 percent, mercury by 90 percent and soot by 57 percent, and allow the power plant to meet federal health-based pollution limits.But a February Sierra Club report said the plant released more sulfur dioxide than any other power plant in the U.S. last year, and questioned whether the proposed controls will enable the power plant to meet federal and state emissions limits.The report also found the plant was in violation of its state operating permit from 2008 through 2010, but wasn't cited because the DEP lacked downwind monitors to measure the emissions. Sulfur dioxide pollutants, which contribute to acid rain, have been linked to respiratory illnesses, heart disease, and asthma.

Lakes cleanup: The White House plan keeps the status quo
Great Lakes states like Pennsylvania can take some comfort, but not a lot, from President Barack Obama's proposed budget. It calls for $300 million next year to remove contaminated sediment from harbors and streams.If the budget passes as is -- and Congress says it won't -- money to clean up the Great Lakes will not increase from the previous two budgets. Maintaining the status quo isn't enough to remove long-embedded toxic materials from North

America's most valuable freshwater resource.An unchanged allocation would be easier to accept if the administration were not also proposing nearly a 20 percent cut in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The government uses that to help local communities pay for improvements to their water and sewerage systems.America's failure to maintain water quality has cost it dearly in illnesses related to lack of sanitation. Outbreaks of toxic algae are not solely attributable to insufficient sewage treatment, but they are costing the nation jobs in tourism and other sectors of the economy, as the Lake Erie region can attest.The Great Lakes region needs not just a renewal but an increase in federal spending on sediment removal. Washington should invest more in the region's water-and-sewerage infrastructure.The EPA budget also must include a stronger commitment to research of childhood cancer clusters. But it's uncertain how much the administration is making that issue a priority. Mr. Obama comes from Illinois, a Great Lakes state. The region deserves more from its Great Lakes president.

YORK DAILY RECORD

From Early Bird Lancaster city plans porous parking lots Under federal pressure to reduce the amount of stormwater running into its sewer system - and raw sewage ultimately running into the Chesapeake Bay - Lancaster city has been looking for ways to have rainwater soak into the ground.But roughly 44 percent of the city's surface area is covered by buildings and pavement where the water can't penetrate. Of that amount nearly a third is asphalt parking lots. So city officials are beginning the monumental task of eliminating a billion gallons of sewage overflows with some of the smallest projects. On Wednesday city Controller Bill Andrews opened bids to rebuild four small city-owned parking lots this spring. When completed the lots will no longer allow rainwater to run off their surface into the city's combined storm and sanitary sewers. Instead rain that falls there will soak through porous asphalt and concrete and be channeled to "rain gardens" where it will feed trees and plants. The lots have been designed to have a greater impact as basins to accept stormwater runoff from surrounding streets. Charlotte Katzenmoyer city Public Works director said parking lots comprise 32 percent of the impervious surface covering Lancaster city. "If you look at that 32 percent that's a lot of stormwater that could be treated on site" Katzenmoyer said. The city is attempting to lead by example she said. The four lots will serve as demonstration projects to show how "green infrastructure improvements" can be done. She hopes to convince private parking lot owners to follow the example. The four lots are at Mifflin Street between South Plum Street and East End Avenue; South Plum Street between Dauphin and Green streets; Dauphin Street with entrances on Dauphin and Juniata streets; and Penn Avenue between Green and Dauphin streets. The Dauphin Street lot the smallest of the four is expected to capture 435000 gallons of water annually. The Plum Street lot is expected to capture the most water - 748000 gallons per year.

LANCASTER NEWSPAPERS

From Early Bird Lancaster city plans porous paving to cut water flow into sewers Under federal pressure to reduce the amount of stormwater running into its sewer system — and raw sewage ultimately running into the Chesapeake Bay — Lancaster city has been looking for ways to have rainwater soak into the ground. But roughly 44 percent of the city's surface area is covered by buildings and pavement that the water can't penetrate. Of that area, nearly a third is asphalt parking lots.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

From Early Bird Most of Pa. Marcellus drilling in 11 counties PITTSBURGH (AP) — Headlines suggest that Pennsylvania is covered with drilling wells that are tapping into the gas-rich Marcellus Shale. But data from the state shows that many counties don't have a single well — and they may never have one. U.S. Geological Survey maps indicate the shale formation doesn't exist in the heavily-populated southeastern portion of the state. The Marcellus Shale is a rock formation thousands of feet underground in large parts of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. Almost 90 percent of the almost 5,000 shale wells drilled in the last six years are located in just eleven counties, according to state data compiled by the Powell Shale Digest, a specialty industry newsletter. Bradford County in northeast Pa. has the most, with 1,008.

TRIBUNE-REVIEW (DAILY COURIER)

Zoning, impact fees concern Fayette residentsFayette County residents voiced their concerns about impact fees and zoning regulations approved by the Pennsylvania Legislature under Act 13, a new law governing Marcellus shale gas operations.During a public meeting Wednesday night at Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, attorney Steven A. Walton of Rothman Gordon PC of Pittsburgh explained the law to approximately 50 Fayette County Marcellus Shale Taskforce members and concerned citizens."This is a law that will impact all of us," said Walton, who also serves as chairman of the task force's Legislative Committee. "Citizens can get informed and stay involved."Fayette County Commissioner Angela Zimmerlink, who chairs the task force, said the purpose of the forum was to provide an overview of the law."It affects all of you, the county, municipalities and townships," Zimmerlink said. "We need to find out how much money will be coming into the county and townships. We also need to investigate how the law will impact the lack of local control through zoning ordinances."

JOHNSTOWN TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

Officials say plant's pollution upgrades poised for approval HOMER CITY — State environmental officials on Wednesday reassured hundreds of power plant workers and their families that $700 million scrubbers were poised for approval, saving their jobs.Department of Environmental Protection officials said the application looks good for the pollution controls to be installed at the Homer City Generating Station.“The permit as it stands right now is able to be issued,” Mark Wayner, DEP air quality manager, told 400 people packing the auditorium at Homer-Center Junior/Senior High.DEP engineering manager Mark Gorog agreed with his colleague.“Basically, by us publicizing this (public hearing), we are saying we can approve this under the conditions proposed,” he said.
The panel consisted of three DEP officials and three managers representing the coal-fired plant, which employs 265 workers and generates enough electricity for 2 million homes.

SCRANTON TIMES-TRIBUNE

State searching for cause of methane in Franklin Twp. water wells FRANKLIN TWP. - State regulators are investigating the cause of high methane levels in three Susquehanna County water wells after residents reported gray or black sludgy water, and one home's well began to erupt water through its cap. The Department of Environmental Protection has not yet determined if natural sources, nearby natural gas drilling operations or some other cause has mobilized methane and metals into drinking water supplies. Inspectors were in the township hamlet of Franklin Forks on Wednesday to take a second round of samples from water wells. Analyzing the stable carbon isotopes - a form of chemical fingerprinting of the gas - "could prove fruitful" in this case because Salt Springs is so well documented, DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said. The department also is considering the potential impact of nearby Marcellus Shale drilling on the water supplies. "Everything is still part of the investigation," she said. "We're not ruling anything out." DEP cited WPX Energy for defective casing or cement in two of the natural gas wells closest to Franklin Forks last year. The nested strings of steel casing and cement are meant to protect aquifers from gas and other fluids in the wells, but flaws in the barriers have caused methane to migrate into water supplies throughout the region, most notably in Bradford County and Dimock Twp. 15 miles south. DEP inspectors also found gas bubbling from between the casing strings on three more WPX wells on the same two well pads - the DePue and Hollenbeck - although those wells were not cited for violations. Bubbling is often viewed by state regulators as an indication of a leak or defect in a well's construction.

FUELFIX

DEP tracking source of more methane in wells
MONTROSE, Pa. — State environmental officials are investigating the source of methane detected in three northern Pennsylvania water wells.The Department of Environmental Protection says the gas could be coming from nearby gas drilling operations or a natural methane seep documented for more than a century at nearby Salt Springs State Park.A DEP spokeswoman says regulators are comparing the unique chemical signature of that leak to a trio of wells in Franklin Township, Susquehanna County. Tests of one well in December showed the methane posed an explosion risk.The Times-Tribune of Scranton reports the operator of two nearby wells was cited last year for

defective casings or cement meant to protect aquifers. Residents in nearby Dimock are suing a gas driller, claiming their wells were contaminated by methane from drilling.

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Commentary: Gov. Corbett budget cuts weakening environmental protection

Gov. Corbett's proposed budget would further weaken the state Department of Environmental Protection and drain funds from valuable environmental programs.The governor's proposed fiscal year 2012-2013 budget would cut an additional $10.5 million from the DEP general fund appropriation, reducing it to $124 million. The DEP state appropriation was cut $10 million last year, and its state appropriation has been reduced by $65 million since 2006. The department cannot perform its mission reasonably with a budget below $170 million, according to former DEP secretary John Hanger. There has been about a 10 percent cut in DEP personnel since 2006. Nonunion staff have not received a salary increase in four years. Noncompetitive salaries, combined with increasing workloads due to these staffing cuts, have made it difficult for the DEP to attract and retain quality people. "We are hemorrhaging jobs to the oil and gas industry, "one former DEP senior staffer told me. Corbett's budget would also take money from at least three popular and successful environmental programs: the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation fund; the Farmland Preservation program; and the Alternative Fuels Incentive Grand program. Money from these programs would be transferred to the general fund to balance his budget. ... -- *Greg Vitali is a Democratic state representative from Delaware County and serves on the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.*

TOWANDA DAILY REVIEW

State Sen. Gene Yaw: Guest Column: Yaw corrects record on new 'Impact Fee' law

On Feb. 14, 2012, Governor Tom Corbett signed House Bill 1950, commonly referred to as the "Impact Fee" bill, into law. This new law, Act 13, enacts a fee and distribution structure on natural gas companies operating in the state, strengthens environmental regulations and implements added environmental safeguards to the state's long standing Oil and Gas Act. Unfortunately, in recent days, there have been many misleading and factually incorrect statements published, most of which are based on a complete misunderstanding of the new law. I would like to correct some of this misinformation.First and foremost, it is important to recognize the economic climate of the gas industry. Three years ago, natural gas was selling for $12 per thousand cubic feet. Today, that same gas is selling for $2.60 per thousand cubic feet, mainly due to an oversupply in the market. Moreover, the dry gas in northeastern Pennsylvania is not as valuable as the wet gas in southwestern Pennsylvania. The result of these factors, especially the low price, is a leveling of operations in our areas of the state. Those factors are global in nature and far beyond the control of our counties and our state. Secondly, it is also important to acknowledge some of the background support and input into this legislation. While not everyone agrees with all aspects of the new law, general support comes from organizations such as the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) and the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities. In addition, leading industry organizations recognized that some sort of fee structure was appropriate. All of these interests, along with the Legislature, the governor, statewide environmental organizations and many state agencies, had input into the bill that became Act 13.

Tioga County gives nod to impact fee on gas drilling On Tuesday, the Tioga County commissioners passed an ordinance which imposes an impact fee on Marcellus natural gas drilling, said Erick J. Coolidge, Tioga County commissioner.It's been estimated that a total of $5 1/2 million to $6 million of impact fee revenue will be distributed to Tioga County and its municipalities during the first year that the impact fee is in place, Coolidge said.The vote to pass the ordinance was unanimous, he said.Under Act 13, which was signed into law last month by Gov. Tom Corbett, counties have an option of levying an impact fee on gas drilling.While gas drilling companies are already addressing some of their impacts through road work and donations, those expenditures don't cover other areas where impacts are occurring, such as housing and human services, he said.For example, if a family moves to the area to work in the gas industry and one of its children has special needs, that will have a financial impact on the area, he said.And if someone who moves to the area has a drug or alcohol abuse problem, that can impact the

police, counseling services, and the courts, he said. Companies in the gas industry had been planning all along for some sort of fee on Marcellus gas drilling, he said. And companies in the gas industry had a lot of representation on the Gov. Corbett's Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission, which recommended that an impact fee be established, he said. Act 13 provides accountability on how the county and its municipalities use the money from the impact fee, he said. Coolidge explained that the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission will perform audits to make sure that revenue from the fee is spent in compliance with Act 13's guidelines.

Sullivan County enacts impact fee on gas drilling

CHAMBERSBURG PUBLIC OPINION

Chambersburg schools meet Obama's energy reduction requests early CHAMBERSBURG -- The Environmental Protection Agency has recognized Chambersburg Area School District for its ongoing efforts to reduce energy costs in the district. The EPA announced last month nearly half of the organizations recognized as Energy Star Leaders have improved the energy efficiency of their building portfolios by 20 percent or more, meeting a goal set by President Barack Obama last year."The EPA's Energy Star program and President Obama teamed up on a mission to see that schools become more modernized and energy efficient," said Connie Kelley, CASD energy manger. "Any schools that achieve that level have already met or exceeded expectations of at least 20 percent efficiency. Here we are in little Chambersburg, and we're an example of a model school of what the EPA would like to see from other schools around the country."Obama's 2011 plan requested buildings across the nation improve their energy performance by 20 percent by 2020.All school buildings but Marion Elementary have earned three Energy Star labels, while Marion has earned two. To date, district school buildings have earned 49 Energy Star labels.CASD is one of 11 districts considered Energy Star leaders in the state. The district will apply for the distinction again this year.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Pa.)

River commission OKs more drilling water use

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- Demonstrators disrupted another meeting of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to protest the approval of more water use by Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling companies. The five Susquehanna River Basin Commission members approved 50 applications Thursday over the demonstrators' chants of, "We pledge to protect the Susquehanna."Commission executive director Paul Swartz says they're careful about the timing and location of the water withdrawals to protect smaller waterways from going dry or getting too low. But the demonstrators, including landscaper Alex Lotorto from Pike County, say the water withdrawals enable what they call a dangerous and polluting industry.

Most Pa. counties are gas well-less

PITTSBURGH — Data from the state show that many counties don't have any gas drilling wells tapping into the gas-rich Marcellus Shale formation and may never have any despite the proliferation of them elsewhere. U.S. Geological Survey maps indicate the Marcellus Shale, a rock formation thousands of feet underground in large parts of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and West Virginia, doesn't exist in the heavily populated southeastern portion of Pennsylvania.Almost 90 percent of the 5,000 shale wells drilled in the last six years are located in just 11 of the state's 67 counties, according to state data compiled by the Powell Shale Digest, a specialty trade newsletter. Bradford County, in the northeast part of the state, has the most, at 1,008, followed by Tioga, also in the northern region, with 693.In the southwestern part of the state, Washington County has the most wells, with 560.Most of the wells were drilled in the last two years: 2,046 last year, and 1,644 the year before. But the Shale Digest notes the number may drop this year."Given that Marcellus drilling activity in Pennsylvania is slowing in 2012 in response to depressed natural gas prices, it will be most interesting to see how this year stacks up compared to the others," the March 12 issue noted.

3/15/2012: SRBC votes over protests; Ohio unveils higher shale taxThe Susquehanna River Basin Commission met in Harrisburg this morning, resuming its consideration of water withdrawal requests by gas drillers that were tabled

due to disruptions at its last meeting. A half-dozen of the activists in attendance stood to chant, "I pledge to protect the Susquehanna!" while the commission continued with the meeting.More on that to come, but here's a brief summary and some background from our friends at **StateImpact Pennsyvlania**.- Another impact fee update: Butler County commissioners on Wednesday approved an ordinance that will allow the county to collect millions in fees from Marcellus shale gas drilling. (**Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**)- Fayette County residents voiced their concerns about the new state shale law during a Wednesday evening meeting, particularly in regard to its zoning provisions. (**The Daily Courier**)- And neighboring Ohio Gov. John Kasich has unveiled his proposal to tie higher taxes on oil and gas drilling to an eventual reduction of the statewide income tax, which was met with opposition on multiple fronts. (**Associated Press**)

WASHINGTON, DC

WASHINGTON-POST

The Federal Eye : Report: Agencies poorly track FOIA
Eleven of 17 Cabinet-level agencies fail to fully comply with federal law requiring complete inventories of public records requests, and most large agencies earn a subpar grade for records management, according to a new congressional report. The report, set for release Thursday by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, is meant to draw attention to government transparency issues during this year's Sunshine Week, an annual event designed to raise awareness about access to public records.... "A number of agencies demonstrated that they are able to track basic information about requests, while others either would not or could not provide such information as requested," the report said. The fact that several agencies "struggle to demonstrate transparency about very basic information is troubling and necessitates greater scrutiny." Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) (Stephen Morton - Bloomberg) Among Cabinet-level departments, six earned an A grade or better: the departments of Education, Energy, Labor, Transportation, Treasury and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Editorial: Sending natural gas abroad
(yesterday) IN AN OTHERWISE gloomy economic time for the United States, the boom in natural-gas production has been a dazzling bright spot. Thanks in large part to expanded production of previously inaccessible shale gas, the United States has passed Russia as the world's largest gas producer, with an output of more than 23 trillion cubic feet in 2011. As the price of natural gas has plummeted, consumers have benefited from lower electricity rates, the cost of manufacturing in the United States has gone down, and thousands of jobs have been created. ... That prospect has some people worried. Environmental groups such as the Sierra Club fear that increased "fracking" for shale gas would harm groundwater. But most of the pushback comes from certain segments of the business community that fear that diverting U.S. gas into world markets would raise prices for everyone from steel companies to electric utilities. Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) has proposed a bill that would prohibit any new LNG export facilities until 2025.

DELAWARE

DELAWARE WAVE

Nine Delaware communities to upgrade drinking water via loan program
The Delaware Division of Public Health Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program announced today that nine Delaware municipalities will benefit from a grant awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency last fall. Funds will be loaned to cities and towns throughout the state to help finance drinking water infrastructure improvements.

The projects will help improve drinking water for over 150,000 Delawareans. "The mission of the Office of Drinking Water is to protect the health of Delawareans by assuring safe drinking water through comprehensive monitoring, technical assistance and public education," said Thom May, DPH Health Systems Protection section chief. "The DWSRF is an important part of DPH's on-going commitment to high quality drinking water."The communities that will upgrade their drinking water infrastructures through the low-interest loans are Wilmington, Selbyville, Milford, Seaford, Georgetown, Middletown, Delmar, Blades, and Greenwood. Projects will begin construction work in the summer of 2012 and, depending on the level of complexity projects, duration is estimated to be from 12 to 24 months.

DFM

National sea level rise forecast 'on the same page' with Delaware New projections on rising sea levels around the U.S. coast are consistent with those already produced for Delaware by the state's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), a DNREC official said Wednesday. The new report, entitled Surging Seas, predicts that ocean levels will rise nationally by one to eight inches by 2030 and by four to 19 inches by 2050, increasing the chances of flooding and endangering the lives and property of 3.7 million people who live less than one meter above the high-tide line across the country's contiguous 48 states. (Read full Surging Seas report here) In Delaware, the new projection translates to a 14-inch rise by 2050, and that's in line with the scenario of a one-meter rise by 2100 that's being used by DNREC, said Susan Love, a planner in the department's Coastal Programs unit.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

From Early Bird Conference explores shale potential The first-ever West Virginia Marcellus to Manufacturing Ethane Development Conference, scheduled next Wednesday and Thursday at the Civic Center, is aimed at attracting companies that can use the resources made available by the natural gas-rich Marcellus shale. Fred Clark, corporate secretary and chief executive officer of IVS Hydro Inc., said he came up with the idea for the conference last summer when the West Virginia Manufacturers Association formed the Marcellus to Manufacturing Committee. Clark said that although his company has grown since 1973 from one employee to 260 and is headquartered in Institute, "at least 70 percent of our work is outside of the state. Manufacturing in West Virginia has declined from 85,000 jobs 10 years ago to 50,000 jobs - those are the numbers I keep hearing. "I want to see manufacturing grow in our state. Horizontal drilling in the Marcellus Shale will produce methane, which can be used to make ethane, polypropylene and other things that are in turn used to make many of the products we use every day.

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

From Early Bird Who's Taking Rental Space? WHEELING - Marcellus Shale gas drillers may be patronizing local lodgings, restaurants and stores, but their presence could cause concern for Section 8 residents. At the Wheeling Housing Authority Board of Commissioners meeting Wednesday, Section 8 Coordinator Francine Catlett said fewer rentals are available for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-eligible residents. Throughout the city, 382 homes are available. Executive Director Randall Geese said the number is down by about 10 from a year ago. He added the possibility of finding new units is dropping due to an influx of gas and oil company employees who can pay an inflated amount for rent. "We're having a lot of problems," Catlett said of finding local landlords who will work with Section 8. Geese said concern about the issue has been rising for six to eight months as the number of shale workers has been increasing in the Ohio Valley. With high demand from gas

and oil employees for long-term living, Geese said some landlords who have had Section 8 voucher holders move out have no obligation to the housing authority and can lease to whomever they please.

ArcelorMittal Will Subdivide Properties The Weirton Planning Commission approved what ArcelorMittal officials say is the first step in delivering on a promise to help replace some of the jobs lost when it idled the majority of the city's steelmaking facilities. In a 5-0 vote Wednesday, commission members John Porco, Eli Dragisich, Bud Dalrymple, Nathan Mazur and Chief Code Official Rod Rosnick said the Luxembourg-based steel company can consolidate the hundreds of parcels it owns and subdivide them into 13 plots, thus providing a clear distinction between the property it needs for its tin finishing operations and that which it plans to sell for prospective redevelopment. There were few seats empty in a crowded council chambers at the City Building for the meeting, as residents turned out in hopes of learning more about ArcelorMittal's future plans. According to Arcelor Mittal USA's General Manager of Environmental Affairs and Real Estate Keith Nagel, the redrawing of parcel boundaries is necessary for tax identification purposes and represents the first major step in fulfilling the commitment - known as "Project Weirton" - it made to return the land to productive use after ceasing steel production in 2007 to focus on making tin plate, leaving about 1,000 people working where there once were more than 14,000.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

Potomac Riverkeeper appeals EQB decision on North Mountain Shale permit Potomac Riverkeeper announced March 14 that it has appealed the state Environmental Quality Board's approval of North Mountain Shale's water pollution discharge permit. The state Department of Environmental Protection permitted North Mountain Shale in January 2011 to quarry shale from a 100-acre site in Gerrardstown, in Berkeley County. The Potomac Riverkeeper appeal, filed in Kanawha County Circuit Court, is based on sediment discharges. The organization is concerned that sediment levels allowed by the permit into Mill Creek violate the Clean Water Act and ignore state law that requires turbidity limits for discharges to trout streams.Mill Creek is part of the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Load program, which is seeking to reduce sediment discharges in Potomac tributaries, the organization wrote in a media release. "Instead of performing the site-specific analysis required by the Clean Water Act, DEP illegally relied on the TMDL report to set a generic sediment limit for this permit," said Potomac Riverkeeper Upper Potomac River Manager Brent Walls in the release. "Since federal regulations do not impose nationwide sediment limits for quarries, DEP was required to conduct a site-specific analysis using their best professional judgment. They didn't do that for North Mountain Shale's discharge permit."

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

Drilling creates HUD rental shortage in WheelingWHEELING, W.Va. -- An influx of Marcellus shale drilling workers is creating a housing shortage in Wheeling for residents who are eligible for federal rental assistance. The Intelligencer and Wheeling News Register reports that Wheeling Housing Authority officials discussed the problem Wednesday at a meeting of the agency's Board of Commissioners. Wheeling has 382 rental units available for residents who are eligible for Section 8 vouchers from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Authority Executive Director Randall Geese says that's down by about 10 from a year ago.

Crews clean up illegal W Va. dump site
HUNTINGTON, W.Va. -- Efforts are ongoing in Huntington to cleanup a massive illegal dump that includes tires, mattresses, old furniture and piles of roof shingles. The dump below an overpass of U.S. 60 has been described by West Virginia environmental officials as being among the worst open dumps that it has cleaned up in its 23-year history. Contractors for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan Program spotted the illegal dump last week.

W Va. grower part of 'Know Your Farmer' initiative
INWOOD, W.Va. (AP) - A farmer from West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle helped launch a new U.S. Department of Agriculture initiative to connect consumers with the farms that feed them. The Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Compass website offers an interactive map and shows the USDA's support for local food projects.Users can

also learn about careers in agriculture, environmental stewardship, local meat and poultry suppliers, and access to healthy food. ... Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglass says he hopes the program will help make urban residents more aware of where their food comes from.

HUNTINGTON HERALD-DISPATCH

Groups talk W. Va. energy HUNTINGTON -- When it comes to the cost of energy and the means to supply it, one group is finding resources to make sure both customers and utility companies get the biggest bang for their energy buck. The presenters of the "Real Solutions to Rising Electric Rates" forum focused on electric utilities in West Virginia, the rising rates and approaches to energy efficiency that will benefit energy companies and their customers by cutting down energy consumption and cost, said Bill Howley, the spokesman for the Coalition for Reliable Power, who presented during the event at the Cabell County Public Library. The coalition is a statewide grassroots citizens group that has extensive experience advocating for electric customers and landowners on energy issues throughout West Virginia. Wednesday's meeting was sponsored by the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

From Early Bird Local governments can get grants of up to $750000 to help clean Bay Municipalities could potentially have a new source of funding available to help them reduce pollution going into the Chesapeake Bay. The US Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with the National Fish and **...**

Obama: Drilling alone not enough
LARGO —— President Barack Obama told a crowd at Prince George's Community College Thursday that U.S. oil production has reached an eight-year high — but drilling alone won't meet the nation's energy needs. As he has during several recent appearances, Obama stressed an "all of the above approach" — extracting domestic oil and natural gas while investing in solar, wind, biofuels and other emerging technologies — to achieving both energy independence and economic development."We can't allow ourselves to be held hostage to events on the other side of the world," he said, to cheers. "That's not who we are. In this country, we control our own destiny."President Barack Obama told a crowd at Prince George's Community College Thursday that U.S. oil production has reached an eight-year high — but drilling alone won't meet the nation's energy needs.

EASTON STAR DEMOCRAT

From Early Bird Feds outline federal aid for reducing water pollution PHILADELPHIA As local governments grapple with staggering cost estimates for pollution reduction strategies, federal officials Tuesday announced financial help. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, is calling for proposals for $4 million in water pollution reduction grants for local governments. Talbot County officials already are working on an application, said Sandy Coyman, county planner. The largest cost here is for urban stormwater strategies, although Coyman didn't have final numbers. Septic upgrades, however, could cost at least $40 million. "Septics are relatively small compared with urban stormwater," Coyman said. "We're really hopeful that first scenario with huge costs, we'll be able to find alternative ways." One such alternative could come in the form of a grant from the funds announced Tuesday. "Now more than ever, the Chesapeake Bay needs the creativity, innovation and ingenuity of local governments," said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. "This new EPA funding will enable local governments to implement the best solutions to on-the-ground challenges they face in helping to restore the Bay, and share those approaches with other

towns throughout the entire watershed." Tuesday's announcement is for the Local Government Green Infrastructure Initiative, which provides grants of up to $750,000, for the design and implementation of green infrastructure projects. Those projects include capital improvements, road maintenance programs, flood plain management and other projects that produce measurable water quality improvements.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Md.)

Maryland zip codes among nation's most polluted

BALTIMORE - A new report says the Curtis Bay and Brooklyn areas outside Baltimore are among the nation's most polluted zip codes. A report released Thursday by the Environmental Integrity Project says that despite improvements made to two nearby coal-fired power plants, Curtis Bay was the top zip code in Maryland for toxic air pollution from local facilities in 2010. And it was among the top 100 nationwide. The group says the rankings are based on data from the most recent National Air Toxics Assessment by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The group is calling for increased air quality monitoring in the area.The group also says port officials should work with state environmental official to develop a plan to reduce pollution from trucking and shipping.

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Official challenges Bay cleanup group's lobbying role

Since taking office, Gov. Bob McDonnell's administration has looked at the Chesapeake Bay cleanup program, as led by the federal government, with a critical and uncomfortable eye. Officials have questioned the accuracy of computer models that drive many decisions. And they have criticized the timing of adding new requirements to cut pollution that could cost billions of dollars in the middle of an economic recession and budget crisis. Now comes an unusually blunt letter from McDonnell's secretary of natural resources, Doug Domenech, that calls out the clubbiness of the cleanup program, which mostly involves like-minded environmentalists, scientists and government officials. In his letter last month to the regional director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Domenech said the program's Citizens Advisory Committee took "inappropriate action" in "lobbying" for stricter catch limits on menhaden, an important fish species in the Bay. "It is Virginia's opinion that the CAC does not, or at least should not, have the independent authority as a body to lobby other organizations," Domenech wrote to Shawn Garvin, the EPA's regional head.Domenech also took aim at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, a leading advocacy group. One of its top managers in Hampton Roads, who serves on the CAC, had urged fellow members to read foundation literature on menhaden before sending a letter in favor of new restrictions."At the very least," Domenech wrote, "it creates the appearance the CAC was being used by a separate organization to advance the position of that organization." His letter has confused and baffled environmentalists and others involved in the cleanup. The CAC, they say, has been a benign arena for citizens to let their voices be heard and for years has recommended policy options to help the Bay's recovery.

INSIDENOVA.COM

Stormwater fee increase on tap for Prince William residents

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, Va. --For an average of $9 more in residential stormwater management fees, Prince William County should start to come into compliance with federal Chesapeake Bay regulations. The Public Works Department presented its fee increase plan to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors on Tuesday. One of the keys to meeting these goals by the federally designated 2025 date is to raise fees on individual homeowners and businesses by anywhere from 37 percent to 52 percent, starting in fiscal 2013.Currently, businesses pay an annual average of $12.80 per 1,000 square feet, while single family home and townhome residents pay $26.36 and $17.78, respectively, per structure. If approved this spring, the fee will increase to $36.10 for single-family homes, $27.10 for townhomes and $17.54 for non-residential.Minor increases based on a

projected 3 percent per year inflation adjustment will occur after 2014, according to county documents. The county raised its stormwater management fees by 27 percent in fiscal 2007 and 15 percent in 2002.Because the fees are typically wrapped in homeowners' tax bills, residents will not see separate bills for these increases. The additional $2 million in revenue would pay for an environmental compliance inspector, a best management facility inspector and an environmental engineer. The county currently has two engineers but no inspectors. Consequently, the engineers have to do inspections on a complaint basis, said watershed management branch chief Marc Aveni.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Va.)

Virginia Environmentalists Urge Wind Power Speedup RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Environmentalists are urging Dominion Virginia Power to speed up development of offshore wind power. The Chesapeake Climate Action Network says environmental leaders delivered a petition containing the signatures of more than 10,000 Virginians to the company's headquarters in Richmond on Wednesday. The petition supports an aggressive development of offshore wind power. Leaders of the group and the Sierra Club's Virginia chapter say a potential 2,400 megawatts of electricity could be generated by wind turbines in the 112,799 acres off Virginia's coast identified by the federal government for lease sale.

Company proposes wind turbines on Va landfill STAUNTON, Va. (AP) -- The Augusta County Regional Landfill could become a wind power site if a company's proposal to place turbines there is approved.Charlottesville-based Apex LLC wants to place 20 to 30 wind turbines on and around the landfill.The Daily News Leader (http://bit.ly/ycqEWr) reports that the Augusta County Board of Supervisors approved a lease with Apex on Wednesday. The landfill's other owners, Waynesboro and Staunton, also would have to approve the lease before the company could begin a feasibility study. The project also would require a zoning change by the county board to allow private use on public land.

MISCELLANEOUS

WBNG-TV BINGHAMTON, NY

From Early Bird DEP: No Permit Required For Dimock Water Delivery The daily delivery of water from Montrose Borough to Dimock Township by a Susquehanna County man does not require a state hauling permit. That's according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, which launched an investigation Wednesday into the actions of Craig Stevens. Stevens, who lives in Silver Lake Twp., has been delivering water for several weeks to residents living along Dimock's Carter Road. Those residents have claimed for months their water was polluted by natural gas drilling. Although Stevens is not from Montrose, he owns and pays for water from a hydrant, which is located along Jessup Street in the borough. At issue with the DEP was whether Stevens was delivering water to more than 25 people, which requires a state permit. A spokeswoman from the DEP said the investigation was launched after the office received a call from "a concerned resident." She declined to provide the resident's name. After three hours, though, the investigation was complete. It was determined Stevens, who delivers water to four or five families each week, was within his legal rights. "Today, we were made aware of the fact that Mr. Stevens was hauling water to residents in Dimock, and that he had been doing so for a month or so," said Colleen Connolly, of the DEP. "So we did our investigation and he did start doing it within the past few weeks. And we determined that he doesn't fall under our regulations." Action News uncovered the tension the water deliveries caused among the Montrose Borough council. The investigation found members of the borough council were not only concerned about the hydrant, but also resorted to name-calling and enacting regulations for its meetings that were later determined overly restrictive. The conversation among five members of council, as well as its solicitor, Marion O'Malley, which took place Feb. 6-7, includes colorful language. In one exchange, Councilman Sean Granahan refers to Stevens and others as "thugs" and "lake poachers." In a Feb. 7 response to Councilwoman

Julanne Skinner, Granahan writes: "I cannot speak for the rest, but I for one did not anticipate the Dimock thuggery from last night." He said Dimock residents are "looking to pirate our water and pocket the proceeds from their royalties and settlements."

From Early Bird EPA Encourages Saving Water During Fix a Leak Week American households waste more than 1 trillion gallons of water each year due to leaky pipes, toilets, showerheads and other fixtures, but fixing leaks can be easy and inexpensive.During the 4th annual Fix a Leak Week, March 12-18, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program is educating Americans about the importance of fixing leaks around the home, which could save water and nearly 10 percent on utility bills. WaterSense's 2011 Manufacturer Partner of the Year, Delta Faucet Company and its partners are retrofitting more than 140 households in the Philadelphia-area including two Ronald McDonald Houses, with toilet flappers, faucet aerators and WaterSense labeled showerheads. The average American home leaks more than 10,000 gallons of water per year, which is equivalent to the water needed to wash 280 loads of laundry, take more than 600 showers or meet the average family's water needs for a month. "Fix a Leak Week is a time for us to highlight the benefits of finding and fixing residential leaks," said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. "So we're urging everyone to take three basic steps – check, twist and replace."

ELMIRA STAR GAZETTE (NY)

From Early Bird Reed takes on EPA: Chemung County would face $30M bill to clean up watershed Legislation will be introduced next week to stop the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from forcing New Yorkers to spend money unnecessarily, U.S. Rep. Tom Reed said Wednesday. The legislation is in response to the EPA's planned implementation of the total maximum daily load standards for nitrate and phosphate levels intended to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The standards are impractical and unduly penalize the 29th Congressional District, Reed, R-Corning, said during a news conference at the Chemung County Wastewater Treatment Facility in Elmira. "What they're doing is a one-size-fits-all approach," he said. "They're not taking into consideration the efforts and the changes of operations that we've already done in New York state. They're just saddling us with those costs." It would cost $30 million to outfit the county's two wastewater treatment facilities to meet the new standard, plus about $750,000 in annual operational costs, County Executive Tom Santulli said. The new regulations also would kill economic development prospects, he said. The legislation to be introduced in the House of Representatives next week would limit the EPA's ability to modify existing permits so permit holders would not be impacted by the EPA unilaterally changing standards, Reed said."We actually have a letter from a high-ranking official in the EPA that says if the other six states that feed the Chesapeake Bay had our water quality, the Chesapeake Bay wouldn't be polluted," Santulli said. He referred to a May 24, 2011 letter to Reed signed by Arvin Ganesan, deputy associate administrator of the EPA, who was responding to questions from Reed. "If all jurisdictions had the same aggregate delivered loading rate per acre as New York, using estimated 2009 loading rates, the total loads to the bay would be below the (total maximum daily) loads," Ganesan wrote.

WENY-TV ELMIRA, NY

From Early Bird Congressman Reed Fights Back Against EPA Mandate ELMIRA, NY (WENY-TV)---Congressman Tom Reed is fighting back against a plan by the EPA that would require costly upgrades to wastewater treatment plants. The Environmental Protection Agency wants up to 19 counties in New York to contribute to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Chemung River is a tributary of the Susquehanna River, which feeds into the Chesapeake. Congressman Reed is pushing back, saying New York's water quality is already higher than the EPA requires, and this mandate unfairly targets states that aren't contributing to the bay's pollution. In Chemung County alone, the cost of this EPA's proposal would cost $30 million. "It prevents the EPA from trying to reclassify facilities, farmers and other entities that are under the permit structure so they can then try to regulate them even further," says Congressman Reed. "They're unfunded mandates is what they are, and we don't have nothing left to spend. Farmers are not making big money, they're hanging on, same as you and I," says Ashur Terwilliger. Chemung County executive Tom Santulli says the financial burden on taxpayers through the EPA's plan would effectively halt economic development in the state.

THE DAILY CALLER

From Early Bird Blog: At the EPA, environmentalism isn't a 'spectator sport' Lisa Jackson's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is at it again. Already having been called out on flawed science for its ground water studies in Wyoming in the fight over the practice of hydraulic fracturing, the agency is now clashing with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which charges the EPA with meddling, as the agency seeks to increase federal oversight of the Marcellus Shale, a rock formation believed to hold the largest reservoir of natural gas in the U.S. This new degree of involvement in state regulatory affairs shows once more that Jackson wasn't kidding when she quipped on "The Daily Show" last year that "environmentalism isn't a spectator sport." Just how serious she was has become evident in the battle over the Keystone XL pipeline project connecting the oil sands in Alberta, Canada with American refineries on the Gulf of Mexico.As the pipeline crosses an international border, the Keystone XL permitting decision rests with the State Department, leaving the environmental left very "uncomfortable." In spite of the fact that the State Department produced two separate environmental impact statements over three years of intensive review involving 10 federal and various state and local agencies, Jackson's EPA flexed its muscle under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Throwing a wrench into the process, it called each of the State Department studies "inadequate," thus prompting further review. Some believe the president, having only recently declared that "We Can't Wait" on job creation, would have genuinely liked to approve the project, which also had the support of many labor unions due to its estimated job benefits. Ultimately, however, political calculus trumped policy.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Early Bird Lawsuits against EPA target nutrients in US waters NEW ORLEANS - Environmental groups are suing the Environmental Protection Agency to force the federal government to curb an overdose of nutrients from farms and cities that end up in the nation's rivers, lakes and coastal waters. The groups say the nutrients cause toxic algae blooms and the massive low-oxygen "dead zone" that crops up every summer in the Gulf of Mexico. Environmentalists said Wednesday they hope lawsuits in federal courts in New Orleans and New York will force the EPA to stem the influx of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous into the waterways. The case is led by the Natural Resources Defense Council, a New York-based environmental law group. The group charged that the agency has refused to take action over a pollution problem it has "acknowledged for decades." The suit, filed in New Orleans, asks the federal agency to set nutrient standards for states in the Mississippi River valley while the suit in New York aims to get the agency to update its nutrient standards for publicly owned sewage treatment plants. Both suits seek to expand the agency's authority over nutrients under the Clean Water Act. Under the law, the agency cannot regulate most agricultural operations, but it does have broad authority over water quality in rivers and coastal waters. "The Mississippi and the Gulf have been the nation's sewer for decades and it's well past the time for EPA to take these first steps," said Matthew Rota, the director of Science and Water Policy at the Gulf Restoration Network, a New Orleans-based group involved in the suits. "We need that first step to make the changes that need to happen." Since the 1980s, scientists have measured a massive area of low oxygen that forms each summer in the northern Gulf. The dead zone is created when microscopic organisms , feeding on fertilizer, runoff and other substances brought by the Mississippi River , multiply, die and then fall to the ocean floor, where their decomposition uses up oxygen. Many marine creatures cannot exist in the dead zone and must flee or die.

Miami, New York, other coastal areas may be more at risk to sea rise from global warming
WASHINGTON — Nearly 4 million people across the United States, from Los Angeles to much of the East Coast, live in homes more prone to flooding from rising seas fueled by global warming, according to a new method of looking at flood risk published in two scientific papers. ... Sea level rise experts at the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration who weren't part of the studies said the results make sense and were done by experts in the field. "All low elevation places in the many urban areas along the coast will become more vulnerable," said S. Jeffress Williams, scientist emeritus for the USGS, who wasn't part of the studies. He pointed to Boston, New York City, Norfolk, Va., New Orleans, Charleston, S.C., Miami and Washington and its Virginia suburbs. "More people and infrastructure will be at increasing risk of flooding."

PIPELINE

Ohio couples say fracking has polluted their water

Two Medina County couples say Landmark 4 LLC's drilling operation contaminated their private water wells, their houses and land with hazardous gases, chemicals and industrial wastes. The couples want the federal court to require periodic testing for them. The Cleveland Plain Dealer reports: The Mangans and Boggses said Landmark didn't have sufficient cement casing on its wells and was negligent in training staff. In separate lawsuits filed against the company this week, the couples said their homes have lost value, they "live in constant fear of future physical illness," and they pay for water samples and water from outside sources.

NEW YORK TIMES

Going to Extreme Lengths to Purge Household Toxins LAURA MacCLEERY was four months pregnant when she parked herself on the couch and started an inventory of the chemicals in her Alexandria, Va., town house. First, Ms. MacCleery, 40, a lawyer and women's health advocate, collected 70 products in a pile: things like makeup, shampoo, detergents and sink cleaners. Then she typed the names of the cosmetics into an online database called Skin Deep, created by the Environmental Working Group (ewg.org/skindeep), a research and advocacy organization. The results were not comforting. Ms. MacCleery's $25 lipsticks contained a dizzying brew of chemicals, including ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate, a possible endocrine disruptor. "When I bought them, I thought I was doing something special for myself," she said. "But then it turned out I was probably eating petrochemicals." The lipsticks went into the trash bag.For some products, the site listed dozens of exotic chemicals and compounds. There were estrogenic hormones and neurotoxins and bioaccumulators. For other items, there was almost no information at all. What effects could these substances have on her baby? Ms. MacCleery didn't know and didn't intend to find out. By the time the inventory was over, "I threw out, I would say, all but three or four of the items," she said. "Everything was toxic. Everything."