

Ohio Citizen Action

2014 Year in review

Fracking

We kicked off our campaign to slow or stop use of injection wells to store fracking waste by urging US EPA to conduct a thorough audit of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' management of the injection well program. Public participation was strong, with 35,047 signatures on a petition and 8,506 personal letters sent from Ohio families to U. S. EPA.

We urged Governor Kasich to include language to repeal the oil and gas industry's exemption from reporting hazardous chemicals directly to emergency planners and first responders in his Mid-Biennium Review. The language made it in, but was later spun out into a stand-alone bill HB 490, which we supported in testimony given in a state house of representatives committee. Later, when the language was pulled, we testified *against* the bill in the senate. We also organized testimony from others, including doctors, nurses and first responders.

We assisted volunteers from Frack Free Mahoning to distribute information advocating a Community Bill of Rights which would return local control over oil and gas drilling to citizens most affected by it.

We released a report "The Eisenbarth well fire: Ohio fails in a fracking emergency," which highlighted fracking chemical disclosure problems in Ohio which contributed to the severity of the fire, which burned for nine days and washed 54,000 gallons of toxic chemicals into a tributary of the Ohio River in rural Monroe County.

Coal and Clean Energy

We organized ratepayers throughout the city of Cincinnati to renew the city's commitment to 100% clean, green energy, as it renegotiated its aggregated electricity contract. The average Cincinnati resident saved 23% on their electric bills during the first three years of aggregation.

We officially joined the Ohio Energy Table (OET) and were voted onto the steering committee. The OET consists of Ohio Citizen Action, Sierra Club Ohio, Ohio Environmental Council, Blue-Green Alliance, Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, National Wildlife Federation, Environment Ohio, Natural Resources Defense Council, National League of Conservation Voters, Environmental Law and Policy Center and the Environmental Defense Fund. The OET coalition is the group

working to end the “freeze” on Ohio’s renewable energy and energy efficiency standards, stop the big utilities from getting a “bailout” for their oldest and least efficient coal plants, and to implement strong carbon emission standards at the state level.

In August, we began organizing ratepayers through our field and phone canvass to stop the bailouts, implement strong carbon rules and oppose the freeze on state energy efficiency and renewable energy standards. Our phone canvass connected 741 people for “patch-through” calls opposing SB 310, the bill which froze the energy efficiency and renewable energy standards, which have saved Ohio ratepayers \$1.3 billion from 2009-2013.

Through our work against the Prairie State coal plant we helped to pull off a very successful Bowling Green, Ohio Earth Day event and media junket highlighted by over 100 in attendance throughout the day. We brought in David Schlissel from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) to meet with the Bowling Green Mayor, community members, business people and the media. In addition, BGSU has been considering the possibility of removing the university from the municipal power system which has been causing some serious waves in the town and with city officials. Because we helped organize a network of citizens in Prairie State communities throughout the Midwest, residents in Batavia and Geneva, IL are demanding action on their electricity contract, bolstered by the Sierra Club Illinois Chapters' organizing efforts.

Business owners began speaking out in Paducah, KY about paying one-third more this year for their electricity rates and the bad decision, in their opinion to switch 5 years ago from TVA:
<http://prairiestatecoalplant.org/paducah-power/>

Rumpke landfill expansion

We organized comments to the Colerain Township Trustees as they considered an offer to settle Rumpke’s lawsuit against them for denying a proposal to double the landfill. We also helped Property Owners for Equal Rights to turn out people for the public hearing on the settlement offer. The township voted not to accept the offer.

Organizational news

We awarded the Howard M. Metzenbaum Award to author and civil rights activist Michelle Alexander.

Our Cincinnati office moved from suite 100 to suite 401 at the Park Place Tower, 2330 Victory Parkway, 45206.

We conducted our first-ever Earth Day fundraising appeal. Members and other supporters helped us to raise \$16,188 for our coal-related work by responding to mail, phone calls and emails. This was especially helpful because gifts given to Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund were able to be matched dollar-for-dollar by a generous matching grant from the Energy Foundation.

We held two successful fundraising events, the Brewraiser in Cleveland and Rock 'n Roll Against Dirty Coal: Live Band Karaoke Challenge in Cincinnati.