

**October 2010 Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) Monthly Update**

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**Town Hall Meeting – Prep for Sunset Review of Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)**

**Wednesday, November 17, from 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Bass Lecture Hall in LBJ School at UT-Austin**

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**And**

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**Sunset Review Commission Hearing Reviewing TCEQ  
Wednesday, December 15, starting 9:00 am, Texas State Capitol**

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These are **two important meetings** to attend, and we want to encourage each of you as PSR members to consider coming to them. The sunset review of TCEQ is a once-in-12-years chance to re-shape an important state agency. Texas faces many challenges in keeping our air, soil and water clean so that Texas residents stay healthy. Please come – listen, talk with others, speak up, bring friends and colleagues, and testify.

The November meeting’s discussion will be preparatory for the full sunset review process of the TCEQ, which controls permitting for energy-producing projects in Texas. Asking for substantive reform to how TCEQ currently operates can affect the lives and health of tens of thousands of Texas residents. For maps, directions, and more information, go here: <http://www.acttexas.org/node/942>

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**Membership Update**

Up to 234 on our email list.

**Next Austin PSR Board Meeting: Sunday, January 30, 2011, 3:00 to 5:00 pm**

The next board meeting is 3-5 pm on Sunday, January 30, 2011, and as usual, all are welcome. If interested in attending, please write Marian Morris at [mmorris@psr.org](mailto:mmorris@psr.org).

**Holiday and Early 2011 Gatherings**

Along with several other local organizations PSR is co-hosting the **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Green Holiday Party** this year, which will be held **Thursday, December 16**, from 5:30 to 9:30 pm, at Fiesta Gardens – save the date! We will send out more information soon about tickets and party details.

## **And in January....**

Save this date too: **Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 6:00 to 7:30 pm** – for a **PSR Meet and Greet!** Come and hear briefly about what Austin PSR is up to, especially with regard to the upcoming legislative session, and meet other PSR members, and have a beer or drink of your choice from Central Market. More details to come in December's update.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH**

### **Climate Change and Coal**

#### **Organizing Health Professionals Around State on Speaking Up About Health Impacts of Coal**

Austin PSR in partnership with Alliance for a Clean Texas (ACT), Sierra Club and Public Citizen is mobilizing doctors and other health professionals across Texas to have input on the upcoming 2011 Texas Legislative Session to promote clean air, water and soil (and therefore healthy humans!) in Texas. We held a conference call Thursday evening, October 7<sup>th</sup>, from 7 to 8 pm, and specifically focused on health impacts of using coal for energy production, organizing interested doctors around the state, and considering how to discuss with legislative officials the health impacts of decisions about energy production. If you are interested in participating in this organizing activity, please contact us – Marian Morris at [mmorris@psr.org](mailto:mmorris@psr.org) will put you in touch with the right folks.

#### **Latest on Coal – EPA Public Comment Period on Proposed Coal Ash Regulation**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is receiving public comment through November 19 on the topic of regulating the management of coal ash, a waste byproduct of coal-fired power plants. Coal ash, which contains heavy metals linked to neurological damage in humans, among other ill effects, is less regulated than household garbage, and there is a lot of it spread across Texas, very possibly seeping into groundwater that eventually makes its way into us. Austin PSR is developing an op-ed to publish and offer as a template for other doctors interested in making public statements about how the EPA should set up its coal ash regulations – stay tuned.

#### **Re-Announcing: National PSR Releases Comprehensive Report on Health Impacts of Coal Ash**

The national PSR office released its report, "[Coal Ash: The Toxic Threat to our Health and Environment](#)" in September, and it is a very useful document for getting up to speed about this historically under-noticed aspect of using coal for energy production.

#### **How the Navajo Nation Wants to End Reliance on Coal**

Last month we sent you the link to an article about how Hungary is working to end its reliance on coal. Austin PSR thought this was another interesting story to share about how to end U.S. reliance on coal for energy production:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/26/science/earth/26navajo.html>

## **NUCLEAR ISSUES/NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Tell Senators Hutchison And Cornyn – Yes on New START**

This is a repeat of last month, but still going on! The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a moment of bipartisan cooperation, sent the New START legislation to the Senate floor for a vote. Now is the moment to tell our representatives what we would like for them to do – so please contact U.S. Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn and let them know that you would like to see the New START ratified, to take action toward eventual nuclear disarmament. You can write them here:

<http://hutchison.senate.gov/> and <http://cornyn.senate.gov/public/>.

### **Local Nuclear Expert Speaks On Stopping Nuclear Proliferation**

At the Jewish Community Association of Austin lecture series this month, one speaker was Dr. Alan J. Kuperman from the UT-Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs. Dr. Kuperman is also Director of the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Program at UT-Austin. This op-ed was published in the *New York Times* almost a year ago on December 24, 2009. Dr. Kuperman's position is that a pre-emptive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities is the way to stop Iran from using nuclear weapons. See his full article here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/24/opinion/24kuperman.html>

### **Comanche Peak Proposed Nuclear Reactors**

An oral hearing on Comanche Peak's two proposed nuclear reactors was held on October 28<sup>th</sup> in Glen Rose, Texas. Attorney Bob Eye represented SEED Coalition, Public Citizen, State Representative Lon Burnam and the local group True Cost of Nukes. Contentions raised by intervenors included that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement analysis of the need for power is flawed, that the carbon emissions analysis is distorted, that global warming impacts are understated, that reactor cooling ability could be impacted by higher water temperatures, and that wind and solar were not adequately considered as alternatives to nuclear power. The groups expect a response from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel judges in approximately two months. SEED Coalition is grateful for help from PSR National in this effort.

### **Did you know...?**

The National Lung Cancer Partnership (NLCP) recently conducted a survey showing that most Americans (80% of survey respondents) did not know that lung cancer is the top cancer killing Americans in the U.S. Further, most female respondents did not know that lung cancer kills more women than does breast cancer, and most male respondents did not know that lung cancer kills more

men than does prostate cancer. For the complete article on these findings, you can go here: <http://www.nationallungcancerpartnershipnews.org/omk.php?pid=1188&sid=S20101026104514B3R7K9&pr=1804>

## **Upcoming Events**

November 17: Town Hall Meeting About TCEQ Reform, 7- 8:30 pm, Bass Lecture Hall, LBJ School of Public Policy, UT-Austin ([www.acttexas.org](http://www.acttexas.org))

December 15: TCEQ Sunset Review hearing at the Capitol, starting at 9:00 am

December 16: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Green Holiday Party, Fiesta Gardens, co-hosted by Austin PSR

Various: ACT Town Hall meetings across Texas. For one near you, go here: <http://www.acttexas.org/>

January 19, 2011, 6:00 to 7:30 pm: Austin PSR Meet and Greet, more details to come!

January 30, 2011: Austin PSR board meeting, Sunday, 3-5 PM. Write Marian for more info at [mmorris@psr.org](mailto:mmorris@psr.org).