

July 2010 Austin PSR Monthly Update

Membership Update

No new news this month, just holding steady. It's summer!

Countdown to Zero – Claim Your Ticket!

We are four days out from our free screening and post-film discussion of the documentary *Countdown to Zero*, about the current global nuclear weapon threat that still faces us. Dr. Elliot Trester will speak and moderate an audience discussion immediately after the Friday, July 30, 7:40 PM screening at the Regal Arbor Cinema on Great Hills Trail, and YOU! can still reserve a free ticket at <http://countdowntozeroaustin.eventbrite.com>. See you there!

Organizing Health Professionals Around State on Clean Air Action

Austin PSR in partnership with Sierra Club is organizing doctors and other health professionals across Texas to have an impact on the upcoming 2011 Texas Legislative Session to promote clean air in Texas. We will be looking for Texas medical professionals from Dallas, Houston, Austin, and the Coastal Bend areas who are interested in working on clean air issues in Texas. The goals of this working group would be:

1. To unite the efforts of the medical communities who are active in Texas for Clean Air;
2. To organize input for before and during the Legislature next Spring; and
3. To influence positive policy changes for cleaner air in Texas.

If you are interested in being involved with this effort, or know of colleagues in other areas who would be interested, please connect us up! You can start by contacting Marian Morris at mmorris@psr.org.

Local Efforts to Take Action on Promotion of Clean Air, Water and Soil

Austin PSR has been busy working with clean air partners in Austin and throughout Texas to stave off the negative effects of using energy from coal-fired power plants. Austin PSR's board members Lisa Doggett and Don Williams, along with Public Citizen, Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter, Environmental Integrity Project, Environmental Defense Fund, Texas Campaign for the Environment, SEED Coalition, and Re-Energize Texas, requested that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hold a hearing in Austin on the topic of initiating regulation of coal ash, a waste byproduct of coal-fired power plants. In the request Dr. Doggett and Dr. Williams wrote: "As physicians and health professionals, we are concerned with all aspects of coal-burning plants and their impact on the health of both children and adults in our communities."

Dr. Doggett and Co-President Trish O'Day also signed on Austin PSR as a supporter to another document regarding the proposed White Stallion coal plant that would be sited

near Bay City. This letter went to a Matagorda County judge who had been asked to support the building of the plant, asking him to specifically express opposition to the plant's construction for reasons of the negative impacts to humans, animals and the overall environment.

And Still More on the Dirty Energy Front....

Sierra Club, along with CleanupTexasNow, another friend organization, is trying to stop a tar sands pipeline that will come through pristine parts of Texas from Canada. CleanupTexasNow writes: "Our cities are struggling to breathe as our air quality fails to attain the basic public safety standards in the Clean Air Act. A new pipeline is planned to bring thick, heavy Canadian Tar Sands and its toxic waste to Houston and Port Arthur. Communities are yearning to be heard by Governor Perry and his Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as Texans cry out against the second wave of the Texas Coal Rush and its 12 newly proposed dirty coal plants." Austin PSR intends to support their efforts as well, in part by relaying their efforts to our members.

For more information: <http://CleanupTexasNow.org> and <http://www.citizen.org/Page.aspx?pid=3281>

Texas Tribune article on Sunset Review of TCEQ

Austin PSR is a coalition partner in Alliance for a Clean Texas (ACT), which is organizing to give input on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) sunset review process that will be happening in the 2011 legislative session. This article is great background for informing yourself about the effort and communicating this information to others.

Article link: <http://www.texastribune.org/texas-environmental-news/environmental-problems-and-policies/group-of-enviros-pragmatically-approaches-sunset/>

Austin PSR will continue to support the efforts of ACT in reforming this agency so that it can wield its intended potential of keeping air, soil and water clean and safe for Texas citizens. For more information, go to <http://allianceforcleantexas.org/>.

Murkowski's Move to Gut Clean Air Act Defeated, Yay!

Just in case you missed it (and we didn't report it in the June [update](#), but national PSR's Kristen Welker-Hood spoke on it)

"The U.S. Senate voted on the Murkowski Dirty Air Act resolution intended to place limits on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) ability to control carbon pollution leading to climate change. By defeating this resolution (final vote 53 to 47), the majority of the Senators voted in favor of the burgeoning scientific evidence that climate change is undeniable, that human activity is a major driver of carbon pollution and that

urgent action is needed to protect human health and the environment. This vote upheld the importance of the EPA endangerment finding last December, which established the legal basis for moving forward with critical proposed rules to limit carbon pollution from large emitters and vehicles. Physicians for Social Responsibility Executive Director Dr. Peter Wilk had the following response:

"In an ongoing effort to delay capping these dangerous pollutants, Senator Murkowski (R-AK) attempted to obfuscate her protection of Big Oil and Dirty Coal, claiming that EPA regulators should not be setting climate policy. This vote against her resolution demonstrates a resounding rejection of her intent to place corporate and private interest politics before the health of our nation. The Clean Air Act is our most successful environmental law on record and it has effectively controlled many dangerous air pollutants for the past forty years. We must use every tool available, including EPA authority under the Clean Air Act, to limit greenhouse gas emission from large sources immediately. The vote today echoes the call heard across the country for action to limit carbon pollution. PSR is grateful for all the Senators that voted to protect current and future generations."

Speaking of Non-Toxic Substances....

[Help drive the manufacture of non-PVC blood bags!](#)

Here's an opportunity for you to make your voice heard on an international level. You can assist with an effort in Europe to help drive the manufacturing of non-PVC blood bags (for red blood cells).

The Jegrelius Institute for Applied Green Chemistry in Sweden has been commissioned by the Jämtland County Council to move to greener products in healthcare via procurement. The Jegrelius Institute in conversation with manufacturers have been informed that non-PVC blood bags can be developed if market demand is strong enough. Unfortunately, the Swedish market doesn't make enough of an impression on the manufacturers.

So the Jegrelius Institute, through Health Care Without Harm/Europe, is asking you to kindly support their petition to move the industry.

- Please click here: to download and sign the petition
- For additional background information and to learn more about this issue, please click here

Upcoming Events

July 30: "Countdown to Zero" film premiere at Arbor Theater –

<http://countdowntozeroaustin.eventbrite.com>

August 29: Austin PSR board meeting, 3-5 PM, Lisa and Don's house, all welcome, 1309 Marshall Lane, 78703.

October 21-22: Children's Environmental Health Institute's (CEHI) annual conference, "Prenatal and Early Life Exposures", Houston

October 24: Austin PSR board meeting, 3-5 PM, Lisa and Don's house, all welcome,
1309 Marshall Lane, 78703

September 9-10: UT Center for Sustainable Development's conference on initiatives
and research on the UT campus (more information next month)