

Protecting Communities and Special Places

e-Newsletter January 24, 2014



**"We can't afford energy solutions
that are paid for by
environmental degradation."**

**~ John A. Fry, President
Drexel University**

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VIDEO FEATURE



Watch Jon Stewart on

What the Elk River Chemical Spill Means to Us

By ANN PINCA

On January 9, several hundred thousand West Virginia residents suddenly discovered what some unfortunate Pennsylvania residents in natural gas drilling areas already learned the hard way: daily life without a viable water source is downright difficult.

After the chemical leak of licorice-scented 4-methylcyclohexane methanol (MCHM) from [Freedom Industries Inc.](#) tainted their river water and left it suitable only for flushing toilets, our West Virginia neighbors were without use of their tap water for up to 10 days. A second chemical, a mixture of polyglycol ethers known as PPH, was only named much later, apparently because it is considered a "proprietary" chemical by the company.

The reasons behind this man-made catastrophe are inexcusable. The personal sufferings of the affected citizens as they continue to struggle to get by, with an added worry of lasting health impacts from unknown chemical exposure, are unconscionable. And unfortunately, West Virginia citizens have discovered what their Pennsylvania counterparts already know: living without a clean water source is not only inconvenient, but also costly. And that potential cost is too often overlooked in this era of economy over the environment, where preservation and regulation are dirty words because "we need the jobs."

If there is just one lesson that should be learned from this West Virginia water debacle, it is that protecting precious, irreplaceable natural resources vital to our very lives is also of paramount economic importance.

Consider the economic losses to West Virginia workers as daycares, universities, schools, and restaurants were all shut down by the Kanawha Charleston Health Department when the water went bad. Any other water-dependent business would have no choice but to do the same. As residents sat at home losing their daily wages, other businesses incurred massive

unexpected expenses. According to David Ramsey, CEO and President of the Charleston Area Medical Center Health System, direct costs related to the spill totaled \$2 million to the health system, while another Charleston health provider estimated costs in the hundreds of thousands.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Public Hearings on Proposed Oil and Gas Regulations

The comment period has been extended and two additional hearings were added!

New hearing dates are:

February 10
Troy High School
150 High St., Troy, PA

February 12
Warren County
Courthouse
Warren, PA

The new deadline to submit written comments is **March 14**

Several groups have developed **talking points** for Monday's hearing in Williamsport. Find PennFuture's talking points [here](#) and another set of talking points [here](#).

An earlier hearing planned for Wyoming County at Tunkhannock High School was postponed and has been rescheduled for **January 27 at 6 p.m.**

For additional information, read the [updated information here](#) and the original [press release here](#).



Film Screening

"Triple Divide"

On January 10, President Obama declared the nine affected counties a disaster area, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Guard rolled in with tank trucks and three million bottles of water to the rescue—meaning taxpayers were footing the bill for Freedom Industries' poor business practices.

The continued need for water and other necessities for struggling families hit hard by income loss are being filled by the combined efforts of churches, businesses, neighboring counties and states, and grass roots organizations. And Freedom Industries, who caused this mess? As lawsuits mounted, Freedom Industries quickly filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on January 17 to avoid payouts—but they did say they were sorry for the spill.

Freedom Industries Inc. chose not to have its storage tanks inspected since 1991 because there was no requirement to do so, and then hid behind bankruptcy proceedings as quickly as it could when things went bad, leaving taxpayers and citizens stuck with the bill. Recently purchased by wealthy Pennsylvanian J. Clifford Forrest, owner of the Rosebud Mining Company, Freedom Industries Inc. represents yet another corporate example of privatizing the profits while socializing the losses, as taxpayers and good-hearted citizens pick up the tab for Freedom Industries' corporate negligence in West Virginia.

As the corporate natural gas industry industrializes its way across Pennsylvania, tearing up and threatening our environment to chemical exposure as it goes, we should remember the example set by Freedom Industries Inc. We must look through the veil spun full of economic promises, inflated job numbers, and energy independence and realize the true cost of industrialization at the expense and risk of our environment. Only then will we understand who is apt to get stuck with the bill when something goes wrong.

Many WV communities have water issues. Click the picture to sign the Energy Action Coalition's petition demanding cleaner water for the Mountain State.

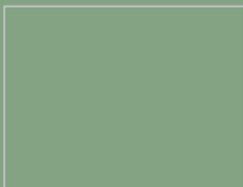
**A Worried Mother-To-Be Tells Her Story in
"West Virginia Girl, All Bottled Up"**

**February 8
2:00 p.m.**

Campus Theater
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Screening sponsored by
Shale Justice; free
admission, donations
requested.

[Look here for more
information](#)



Pennsylvania Community Rights Workshop

Who decides what
happens in your
community, and how
did it get that way?

**February 21, 6-9 p.m.
February 22, 9-4 p.m.**

Susquehanna University

Sponsored by
Shale Justice,
presented by [CELDF](#)

Space is limited to 40
participants!

[Click here for information](#)

IN THE NEWS

This Week's Scoops

In yet another round of
Act 13 actions, the state
Supreme Court [ruled
this week](#) that
Sen. Joseph Scarnati
and Rep. Samuel H.
Smith lack sufficient
interest to obtain party
status in the case. No
doubt they were not
pleased with that
decision.

In her blog, "Mrs. Cheesehead" light-heartedly introduces herself as "The Wife of a Cheesehead, a Proud West Virginian, and a soon to be Momma," but her poignant post describing her life and worries during and after the West Virginia water contamination incident tell a story different from her earlier upbeat posts.

"I am scared in knowing that my life and 'freedoms' have changed dramatically in the past 13 days," says the blog, "and I am even more terrified that local businesses, politicians, and the government as a whole seem far more concerned about getting back to 'business as usual' than they do for the health and safety of my community."

[Read her story here](#), which tells of the uncertainties caused by the chemical spill that has changed her life. Then follow her request to "do what YOU can to help protect our country's PRIORITIES and WATER SOURCES."

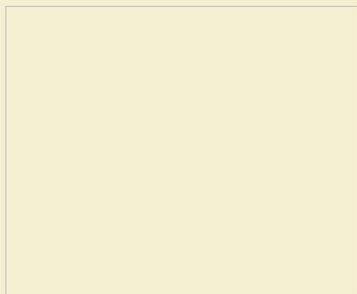
The candidates wait for the forum to begin.

IMAGE: ANN PINCA

Gubernatorial Sustainability Forum Held January 13 in Philadelphia

By ANN PINCA

PHILADELPHIA-- Eight Democratic candidates vying for the Governor's office in Pennsylvania participated in a sustainability forum held January 13 at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. The candidates included John Hanger, Jo Ellen Litz, Rob McCord, Katie McGinty, Max Myers, Ed Pawlowski, Allyson Schwartz, and Tom Wolf. Governor Corbett was invited but did not attend.

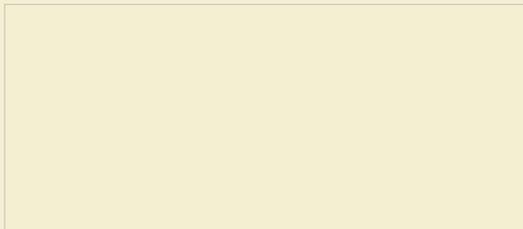


Drexel University President John Fry set the tone for the forum, noting that "the time when sustainability was a fringe issue in an election is now long past."

The candidates fielded several questions dealing with Marcellus Shale issues that asked how they will protect the environment against shale development, whether they supported a drilling moratorium, and if they agreed that the state was subsidizing fossil fuels. Other topics included climate change, biomass, energy efficiency of utilities, funding for state parks, and if they would refuse to accept campaign contributions from any specific groups.

The candidates' comments were occasionally interrupted by shouts and organized efforts from the audience that included signs, banners, and even a group wearing T-shirts urging for a drilling moratorium.

Questions for the candidates were developed by the sponsors of the forum, which included Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance, League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund, Conservation Pennsylvania, and PennEnvironment, in addition to Drexel's Academy of



Though Gov. Corbett was quick to change venues last weekend to [avoid protestors](#), he did make an appearance in Williamsport this week to [unveil his energy plan](#) for Pennsylvania. The plan's title "Energy = Jobs" pretty much says it all.

Meanwhile, the controversial Center for Sustainable Shale Development (CSSD) [began accepting applications](#) this week for its voluntary independent certification process. Apparently there's no rush to sign up, as many large drillers said they [were unlikely to participate](#) in the program.

Perhaps a program for oil-moving trains could help boost the CSSD's business, as yet [another derailment](#) took place this week. This one left crude-filled tank cars dangling over the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, but fortunately the cars remained intact so no spills or explosions took place—this time.

Join RDA

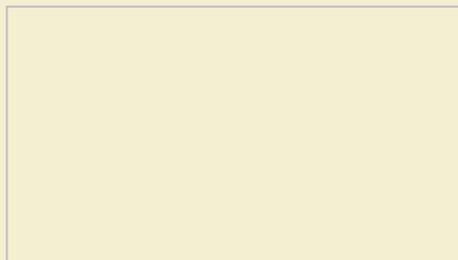
We welcome your active participation and are in need of help for special events, publicity, research, and other projects. Contact us for details.

Membership levels:
Adventurer.....\$10
Explorer.....\$20
Woodlander.....\$50
Guardian.....\$100
Naturalist.....\$500
Preservationist...\$1,000

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, RDA relies on donations for the important work we do. In order for RDA to continue its valuable education

Natural Sciences.

Surely sustainability is an important issue in the upcoming gubernatorial election. Watch the forum to see where each candidate stands on these important issues.



Watch the forum here by clicking on the image.

You can also find reports of the forum [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#).

groundswell RISING
protecting our children's air & water

Feb. 1, 2014
12:30pm
\$10 suggested donation
proceeds to support distribution

this screening is free to those who previously donated at the May 26th, 2013 screening

meet-the-producers Q & A after the screening

Pocono Community Theater
88 South Courtland Street
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

<http://www.groundswellrising.com>

You are invited to a special screening of Groundswell Rising, Protecting Our Children's Air and Water, Feb 1, 2014 at the Pocono Community Theater, 88 South Courtland Street, East Stroudsburg, PA, 12:30pm. A panel discussion and Q & A with the director, producers and special guests will follow. This film is a tale of epic proportions where ordinary people are making a choice to stand up and protect their children's future.

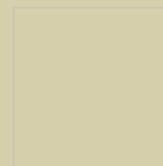
[Download flyer](#)

For those in the Pocono Vicinity please join us on Jan 25 at 9pm for a Film Release Party at Pocono Inn at Delaware Water Gap, I-80 Exit 310, 101 Broad Street, Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327 [Download flyer](#)

Visit www.groundswellrising.com for more information

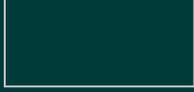
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and advocacy outreach in 2014, please consider a tax-free contribution to our efforts.

Please use the [Donate](#) button below to send a donation or join online, or [download the membership form here](#)



Jim Slotterback - RDA Board of Directors

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Please note: The RDA newsletter includes reporting on a variety of events and activities, which do not necessarily reflect the philosophy of the organization. RDA practices only non-violent action in voicing the organization's beliefs and concerns.

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Contact RDA with questions and comments using either the address below, by email at responsibledrillingalliance@gmail.com or by phone at 888-332-1244 (toll free).

For more information, visit the [RDA web site](#), or like us on [Facebook](#).

Donations can be sent by mail to: Responsible Drilling Alliance, P.O. Box 502, Williamsport, PA 17703

Thank you for your support!

