BellBendCOLPEm Resource

From: Eric Epstein [lechambon@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2014 9:03 AM
To: Quinn-Willingham, Laura
Subject: Re: RESENDING WITH CORRECTIONS: Scoping Summary Report Related to the Environmental Scoping Process for the Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant Combined License Application
Attachments: Environmental Synopsis - April 2014.pdf

On Apr 29, 2014, at 1:20 PM, Quinn-Willingham, Laura wrote:

Eric,
Thanks for sending that report. The staff has been following it and other reports that the DEP (and other state agencies) issue annually. We are considering all the reports, as appropriate, in our EIS analyses.
Thanks again,

Laura Quinn-Willingham
Project Manager
Environmental Projects Branch 2
Mailstop T6-C32
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From: Eric Epstein [mailto:lechambon@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2014 12:17 PM
To: Wade, Tony
Cc: Dave Allard; Paula Ballaron; Shawn Beeler; Heidi Biggs; Robert E. Brown; Brian Busher; Kyle Carey; Mike Caverly; Jamie Davis; Barbara DeRonde; Robert DeRonde; Wilbur Dennis, Jr.; Amy Elliott; James Gresham; Rev. Chad A. Hebrink; John Heim; Walter Holtsmaster; Ted Jacobsen; Rich Janati; Vince Kelly; Lingard Knutson; Tonda Lewis; Cynthia Lombard; Kevin Magerr; Steve Mars; Steve McDougal; James E. Meighan; Catherin Stuccio Mentrinkoski; Sabatini Monatesti; Olivia Mowery; Pat Naugle; John Nichols; Robert M. Paley; Patricia Perluke; Kelly Petock; Tom Popko; Greg Ruppert; Erin Schloyer; Ryan Search; Rocco R. Sgarro; Tom Shervinskie; Jennifer Siani; David Simpson; Nate Snavely; Dave Superdock; R.K. Temple; Tifft, Doug; Gene Trowbridge; Kevin White; Larry Winker; Lora Zimmerman; Quinn-Willingham, Laura; Takacs, Michael; RidsOpaMail Resource; Screnci, Diane; RidsRgn1MailCenter Resource; RidsOgcMailCenter Resource; Rosebrook, Andrew; bruce.mcdowell@pnnl.gov; Dixon-Herrity, Jennifer; Terry, Tomeka; RidsNroDnrl Resource; Burnell, Scott; Greives, Jonathan; Ennis, Rick; Brown, Maria; Wright, Megan; Krohn, Paul; Hove, Ann; Sanders, Carleen; Finney, Patrick
Subject: Re: RESENDING WITH CORRECTIONS: Scoping Summary Report Related to the Environmental Scoping Process for the Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant Combined License Application

On Apr 28, 2014, at 10:27 AM, Wade, Tony wrote:

To: Jennifer Dixon-Herrity
From: Tomeka L. Terry
Date: April 21, 2014
Accession No.: ML14024A659

Subject: Scoping Summary Report Related to the Environmental Scoping Process for the Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant Combined License Application

Mrs.Tony Wade <image001.jpg><image002.jpg>
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<ML14024A659 - Scoping Summary Report Related To The Environmental Scoping Process For The Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant Combined License Application. .pdf>

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Subject: Re: RESENDING WITH CORRECTIONS: Scoping Summary Report Related to the Environmental Scoping Process for the Bell Bend Nuclear Power Plant Combined License Application
Sent Date: 4/30/2014 9:03:25 AM
Received Date: 4/30/2014 9:04:17 AM
From: Eric Epstein

Created By: lechambon@comcast.net

Recipients:
"Quinn-Willingham, Laura" <Laura.Quinn-Willingham@nrc.gov>
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The Chairman's Corner

Sen. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman

April 9th marked the release of an interesting study sponsored by the Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association (PWIA) entitled *"The Economic Impacts of the Municipal Waste Collection, Transportation, Recycling, and Disposal Industry in Pennsylvania."*

The study, carried out by Econsult Solutions, Inc., a Philadelphia-based economic consulting firm, is a snapshot of the economic impact that the municipal waste collection, transportation, recycling and disposal industry has in Pennsylvania. Among the study's stated purposes is to "identify, articulate and quantify" the industry's economic impacts in order to provide more - and more accurate - information to policy discussions regarding municipal waste.

The consultant's report states that the study's results came about through the use of "accepted economic methodology, based on official state and national data", as well as the information collected in a survey of the commonwealth's landfill operators, haulers and recyclers.

PWIA is the Pennsylvania chapter of the National Waste & Recycling Association and represents private-sector recyclers, haulers and landfill operators. This is the third such study commissioned by PWIA.

Waste disposal and recycling are issues with which the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee has a long history. For example, the committee was the driving force behind enactment of the Waste Tire Recycling Act in 1996 and the act's subsequent updates. The committee has also conducted extensive research into Act 101 of 1988, the state's municipal recycling law; into electronic recycling; into the possibilities and ramifications of a system of mandatory trash collection in Pennsylvania; and into ways to combat illegal dumping.

While there is a great deal of information contained in the study, what the report calls its "bottom line" is that the municipal waste industry produces a total economic impact of more than $4.2 billion annually and supports more than 26,000 jobs both directly and indirectly in Pennsylvania. The industry collects, hauls, and disposes of 8.6 million tons of municipal solid waste annually, according to figures in the study attributed to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

(continued on page 8)

In This Issue...

Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee

A Legislative Service Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly

Notes from the Director

CRAIG D. BROOKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Proponents and critics of the Keystone XL pipeline unleashed a final flurry of pleas to try and persuade the government to accept their respective views on construction of the proposed pipeline, which has become a focal point in the debate over energy development versus climate protection. The public had until March 7, 2014 to participate in the official review of whether Keystone XL is in the national interest. The deadline having passed, it is now up to the Secretary of State and the Obama administration to decide whether to approve or deny the long-delayed $5.4 billion TransCanada project for piping fuel from Alberta's oil sands to U.S. Gulf Coast refineries.

Most of the eleventh-hour comments simply restated positions taken during the previous five years of debate. Critics claim the project will hasten the effects of climate change by promoting development of the Alberta sands while proponents assert that Keystone XL will boost U.S. energy security while posing no significant environmental, climate or cultural risks. Proponents also believe construction of Keystone will immediately create jobs and contribute significantly to the struggling U.S. economy.

The Keystone XL environmental impact study drew more than 1.5 million submissions during its initial comment period

Industry and environmental organizations have said that they will continue to forward letters bearing thousands of signatures from citizens who support their respective causes. The American Petroleum Institute, for instance, whose members include ExxonMobil, has gathered more than 500,000 signatures in support of the project.

There are also public comments posted on www.regulations.gov, which are included in the State Department's ongoing review attempting to weigh the environmental, economic and cultural impact of Keystone XL. The State Department has jurisdiction over the review because the pipeline will cross an international border. Eight federal agencies have been given an additional 60 days to submit comments to the State Department for consideration.

Although new arguments are largely absent from the postings, the multitude of comment submissions shows that Keystone continues to generate significant public interest. The national interest review process began once the State Department released an environmental impact study in January, determining that the pipeline poses no significant threat to the climate due to the fact that the Alberta oil sands would likely be developed regardless of the existence of the pipeline. The study did note that oil sands production could negatively affect the crude oil market and cause prices to drop below $75 a barrel, making railway transportation of the fuel uneconomical. Ultimately, the review determined that this scenario is highly unlikely.

The environmental impact study drew more than 1.5 million submissions during its initial comment period. Roughly 99 percent of those comments were sponsored by interest groups such as the Sierra Club and the American Petroleum Institute. While government agencies have up to 90 days to weigh in on the project and make recommendations to the administration, the State Department is not subject to these same time constraints. There are also several pending court cases that could slow the process and further delay the approval or rejection of the project.

The Obama administration claims it has all the evidence it needs to approve or reject Keystone and has told state governors that they plan to decide on the project within the next few months.

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Each month, the committee's staff researches and prepares a number of "briefs" on several topics relevant to the Joint Conservation Committee's mission. Very often, these briefs include references to reports and further research on the topics so that readers may pursue issues on their own.

Please Note: The information and opinions expressed in the Research Brief articles do not necessarily represent the opinions or positions of the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee, nor those of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

Report Suggests Major Job Loss from Proposed Fracking Ban

- Tony M. Guerrieri, Research Analyst

In 2013, four communities in Colorado passed restrictions on the controversial oil and gas exploration technique known as hydraulic fracturing or fracking. So what would occur if the technique were banned throughout the entire state? A number of states, including Pennsylvania, have rules for fracking but the practice is banned in neighboring New York. Some experts now believe Colorado could be the next battleground in the U.S. energy boom.

A recent report from the University of Colorado focuses on the economic impacts of proposed statewide bans on hydraulic fracturing in Colorado. The report, *"Hydraulic Fracturing Ban: The Economic Impact of a Statewide Fracking Ban in Colorado"*, was conducted by researchers at the University of Colorado's Leeds School of Business.

According to the report, a statewide fracking ban would cost state and local governments close to $567 million in tax revenue annually during the first five years...with the cost continuing to rise to nearly $985 billion by 2040

Fracking is a contentious natural resource extraction technique that involves pumping millions of gallons of highly-pressurized water, sand and chemicals into a wellbore to release oil and natural gas from dense shale formations.

Since 2013, groups in Colorado have proposed ballot initiatives in two general categories: local control and setbacks. One initiative calls for a constitutional amendment that would give Colorado counties and local municipalities control over whether hydraulic fracturing should be allowed within their municipal limits. The setback initiatives – a total of four have been proposed – would require wells be drilled anywhere from 1,500 feet to 2,640 feet away from homes, schools and other occupied buildings. The state's current setback requirement is 500 feet.

The mining sector, dominated by oil and gas, made up 3.7 percent of Colorado's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012. The oil and gas extraction industry in Colorado is nearly equivalent to the construction industry or the hospitality and food service industries. More than 87 percent of oil and gas activity in Colorado is concentrated in five counties and 31 counties represent the remaining 13 percent of activity. While the physical extraction of oil and gas activity remains rather concentrated, the employment and tax impacts are much more widespread. The five largest-producing counties represent 35 percent of oil and gas employment. The 31 smallest-producing counties represent 29 percent and the 28 nonproducing counties account for 36 percent.

The report was based on a new modeling system being deployed by economic development agencies to measure the financial and employment impact of policy changes, such as a proposed ban on fracking. To forecast the future of Colorado's economy without fracking, the report developed a scenario where new wells were decreased by 95 percent based on the percent of fracked wells statewide.

With a fracking ban beginning in 2015, the economic consequences would result in a roughly $10 billion decrease in GDP and 68,000 fewer jobs in the first five years when compared to the baseline scenario. Over the long run (2015-2040), GDP would decrease, on average, by $12 billion (2.6 percent) and employment would shrink by as much as 93,000 (2.2 percent) jobs.

The implications for state and local governments are immense. According to the report, a statewide

fracking ban would cost state and local governments close to $567 million in tax revenue annually during the first five years beginning in 2015 and the cost would continue to rise to nearly $985 billion by 2040.

Although previously fracked wells would be allowed to continue operating even under the proposed bans, the gradual tapering off of production would continue to siphon off jobs as the oil and gas fields are depleted, the report said.

The report also reveals many indirect economic impacts of a fracking ban including negative impacts to businesses that supply the energy industry with equipment and to the benefits derived from the income of industry professionals. According to the report, the large impact on jobs is indicative of a far-reaching supply chain in Colorado that provides the industry with goods and services.

It is important to note that this study focused solely on the economic perspective. The report did not look at potential impacts to water, air quality, health or quality of life issues surrounding hydraulic fracturing.

The report was conducted on behalf of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corp., Denver South Economic Development Partnership and the Common Sense Policy Roundtable. The 33-page report, *"Hydraulic Fracturing Ban: The Economic Impact of a Statewide Fracking Ban in Colorado"*, is available at: http://www.scribd.com/doc/214735753/Economic-Impact-of-Fracking-Moratorium-Final-Report-March-2014-032414.

EPA to Require Best Management Practices at Construction Sites

- Craig D. Brooks, Executive Director

The construction, utility and housing industries will now be required to implement best management practices to prevent soil erosion at construction sites in lieu of numeric nutrient limits for turbidity in stormwater, according to a March ruling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The new effluent limitations emphasizing best management practices to control erosion and stabilize soils at construction sites are the result of a December 2012 agreement between the EPA and the Wisconsin Builders Association, National Association of Home Builders and the Utility Water Act Group, to resolve a lawsuit surrounding portions of a 2009 rule that included strict numeric limits for stormwater turbidity.

The unchallenged portion of the 2009 effluent limits has already formed the basis of discharge limits in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System general permit for construction sites that took effect in February 2012. The final ruling will take effect in May 2014 or 60 days following publication in the Federal Register.

As promulgated, the final ruling will clarify the 2009 effluent guidelines limitations that required the development of a stormwater prevention plan, among other practices, to reduce erosion and would amend 40 CFR 450, which governs pollutant discharges associated with the construction and development industries. The EPA has said that the ruling will not impose new onerous regulations or increase costs on the industry.

Under the new EPA requirements, the use of common erosion control practices would be required to reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater flowing from construction sites

This final ruling is critical because construction activities such as clearing, excavating and grading significantly alter land. If not managed properly, the disturbed soil can easily be washed into nearby water sources during storms. Stormwater discharges from construction activities can cause significant chemical, physical and biological impacts to receiving waters. The final ruling clarifies that the EPA's intent is not to require best management practices once construction has ceased and the sites have already been stabilized. The best management practices will only apply during the physical construction phase.

Under the new EPA requirements, the use of common erosion control practices would be required to reduce the volume and velocity of stormwater flowing from construction sites. Examples of common erosion control practices include keeping the length of slopes short, using low gradients and preserving the natural vegetative cover.

The EPA has said that they still reserve the right to propose additional effluent limits and monitoring requirements, even though the agency is removing the 2009 language establishing numeric turbidity limits and requiring turbidity monitoring. The EPA also claims it will continue to collect data on turbidity in stormwater. The EPA expressed concern that a numeric limit on turbidity may create a disincentive for implementing

green infrastructure techniques, such as planting trees or vegetative buffers, to manage stormwater runoff. For example, the EPA said that meeting a numeric standard may require installation of a sediment basin or other impoundment on certain sites, which can create a disincentive for installing distributed storm water controls. Distributed storm water controls refer to controls placed at different points of water discharge as opposed to a single control for handling runoff.

The final ruling language has received a mixed reaction from attorneys who represent electric utilities and some home builders have subsequently asked the EPA to give permit holders the flexibility needed to tailor storm water controls based on site-specific conditions.

Making the Case for Solar Power in Iowa

- Tony M. Guerrieri, Research Analyst

The sun could power more of Iowa's energy needs with solar potential that exceeds traditionally sunny states such as Florida, Georgia and Utah, according to a report by the Iowa Environmental Council. The report, *"Real Potential, Ready Today: Solar Energy in Iowa"*, highlights the state's solar energy potential in comparison to its current low installation rate. It suggests that the state invest more money into solar photovoltaic (PV) energy production.

While average system prices have dramatically decreased, Iowa's installed capacity is low in comparison to other states of similar resources. For example, Iowa's installation growth rates are currently behind New Jersey with 971 megawatts (MW), North Carolina with 229 MW, and Massachusetts 198 MW. Iowa had just 1-2 MW installed despite benefiting from higher natural solar resources, according to the report.

Iowans can rely on solar energy when demand is at its highest: during hot, sunny afternoons. Solar PV can also provide substantial energy all year long, the report says. At the height of summer, Iowa has solar radiation readings of up to 7 kilowatt hours per square meter.

The report also factored in land use potential, using topography and state environmental preventions on land use to accurately calculate Iowa's solar potential. The amount of solar energy Iowa could reasonably produce would rank the state 16th in the nation, the report says. That would put it ahead of states like Florida, Georgia, Utah, Missouri, North Carolina and South Carolina in solar energy generation potential based on land available and natural solar resources.

Iowa could create an average of 2,500 jobs annually if it added just 300 MW of solar energy over the next five years... and the state could save $14 billion on imported energy

The report concludes solar energy should be further developed in the state due to its availability when electricity is in peak demand, as well as solar's small geographical footprint on the state (Iowa's rooftop potential alone could provide up to 20 percent of Iowa's energy needs).

The report also highlights job creation, consumer savings, cleaner air and water, innovation and technology investment and improved stability in the electric grid as noteworthy benefits of solar energy. Iowa could create an average of 2,500 jobs annually if it added just 300 MW of solar energy over the next five years, the report said. The state could also save $14 billion on imported energy.

Iowa already gains 25 percent of its energy mix from wind power. The report notes that solar is complementary to the wind energy already installed: with wind production favoring night time and winter conditions, solar can produce energy for the state during the day and in the summer. Iowa's energy mix currently has coal producing 65 percent of the state's energy, wind 25 percent and smaller fractions from nuclear, natural gas and hydropower. The report estimates solar can account for between 5 percent and 10 percent of energy in the next ten years as a realistic target. This is in line with other state solar goals.

The report makes the case for solar energy by citing falling installation costs, which have decreased significantly in recent years. While the cost to install a watt of solar PV averaged $7.50 in 2008, that cost had come down to about $4 per watt in 2012.

The cost is declining as technology improves, the report says. Much of this decrease was caused by a reduction in the price of solar PV panels themselves. Costs are expected to continue to decline in future years. The U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Vision Study identifies goals of reaching $1 per watt for utility-scale PV, $1.25 per watt for commercial PV, and $1.50 per watt for residential PV by 2020, according to the report.

The report also highlights public policies to better implement the use of solar power, including better access to utility incentives such as rebates and low-

interest loans to supplement the federal and state tax incentives offered to individuals and businesses.

Local zoning and permitting are also important policies, the report said. Some communities in Iowa have zoning ordinances, which create barriers for solar, such as restrictions on where solar can be installed on individual property or in certain areas of the community. The report recommends simplifying, streamlining and standardizing the permitting and zoning requirements in communities across the state, to make solar energy easier and less expensive to install.

Iowa's largest solar installation to date is the 280 kilowatt array in Decorah, followed by a 150 kilowatt array on a distribution center near Peosta and a 40 kilowatt array at a farm in Lisbon, Iowa.

The Iowa Energy Center at Iowa State University provided funding for the report. The Iowa Environmental Council is an alliance of organizations and individuals working together to protect Iowa's environment. The report, *"Real Potential, Ready Today: Solar Energy in Iowa"*, is available at: http://www.iaenvironment.org/solar/.

EPA Proposes Major Cuts to Water Infrastructure Revolving Funds

- Craig D. Brooks, Executive Director

The proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) budget for 2015 would cut funding for a pair of water infrastructure programs by nearly $581 million. The budget request, released on March 4th, includes a combined total of $1.8 billion for the clean water and state water revolving loan funds, which provide capital for local water infrastructure projects. The figure represents a 24.7 percent decrease in funding when compared with the funding level for Fiscal Year 2014 (FY). Overall, the budget request would cut funding for the EPA by approximately $310 million, or 3.8 percent, when compared with the agency's current $8.2 billion budget.

According to the agency, the FY15 budget request reflects a strategic approach by the EPA to address recent budgetary constraints. The EPA does realize that the proposed level of funding for clean water and drinking water state revolving funds (SRF) would not be sufficient to meet state needs for water infrastructure funding, however the agency maintains tough decisions were needed to cope with the current budgetary landscape.

The budget proposal would allocate $1.02 billion to the Clean Water SRF, which was funded at a level of $1.45 billion in FY 2014, and $757 million for the Drinking Water SRF, which was funded at $907 million in last year's budget. According to EPA, although these numbers represent a decrease of more than $581 million, the additional funding included in this budget would bring the total federal investment in these funds to approximately $22 billion since 2009.

The EPA stated in budget documents that in order to maximize the reduced funding for the SRFs, the agency will focus assistance toward financially disadvantaged communities. However, as expected, the EPA budget request has prompted negative reactions from many organizations representing state and local water authorities. According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), $189.9 billion will be needed over the next 29 years for wastewater infrastructure investments while $384.2 billion will be needed for drinking water infrastructure. According to NACWA, it appears that the budget proposal is using the SRF cuts to fund other EPA projects since the proposed $581 million cut to the SRF program is greater than the overall EPA budget cut of $310 million.

EPA's 2015 budget request represents a 24.7 percent decrease in funding compared to the FY 2014 funding levels

According to the AMWA, if the EPA is intent on refocusing the SRFs toward smaller projects in disadvantaged communities, it only further demonstrates the importance of implementing the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) to continue to fund infrastructure projects that are too large for the SRFs to address.

A congressional conference committee is currently negotiating an agreement on water resource reform and development legislation. The Senate-passed version of the water resources reform bill contained WIFIA components but the House version of the bill did not. Although this current administration has proposed deep cuts to the SRFs in previous years, Congress has always ensured that the SRFs are funded at a higher level, sending a clear signal of commitment to the SRF programs.

On the Horizon . . .

A LOOK AT UPCOMING EVENTS

✔ **Monday, May 5, 2014, 12 noon - Environmental Issues Forum, Room 8E-A, Capitol East Wing, Capitol Complex, Harrisburg PA**

The topic of May's Environmental Issues Forum will be an overview of the TreeVitalize program - a public-private partnership helping restore tree cover in Pennsylvania's metropolitan areas.

✔ **Wednesday, May 7, 2014, 9 a.m. - Public Hearing, Room 8E-B, Capitol East Wing, Capitol Complex, Harrisburg PA**

The committee will receive an update on the status of Pennsylvania's Waste Tire Recycling Program.

Please call the committee office at 717-787-7570 if you plan to attend Environmental Issues Forums. And, check the committee website at http://jcc.legis.state.pa.us for more details and events that may be added to the schedule.

Committee Chronicles . . .

A REVIEW OF SOME MEMORABLE COMMITTEE EVENTS

On March 26, 2014, the Joint Conservation Committee toured a waste tire cleanup effort at the Coxton Yards site in Duryea, Luzerne County. The committee visited the site (pictured at right) at the invitation of committee member Senator David G. Argall. The committee worked with Sen. Argall to formulate and enact the Waste Tire Recycling Act in 1996 and has worked to refine the law with several amendatory acts. It has proven to be a valuable program, with approximately 95 percent of 32.6 million tires having been cleaned up since the law's enactment.

On April 7, 2014, the committee's monthly Environmental Issues Forum featured a presentation by Greg Brouse, Quality Manager for Eastern Industries Inc., (pictured with Chairman Hutchinson at left) on the fiscal and environmental benefits of using recycled ground tire rubber (GTR) in Pennsylvania's highway paving projects. Greg's PowerPoint presentation is available on the committee website at http://jcc.legis.state.pa.us (go to "Newsletters and Reports").

The committee traveled to West Pikeland Township, Chester County, on April 10, 2014, for a public hearing on the residential pipeline notification process in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The committee received testimony from several witnesses (pictured with members of the audience at right) representing local municipalities and community organizations who described their experiences with the pipeline construction process.

The study notes that about half of that $4.2 billion impact comes from direct annual operating expenditures and employment within the municipal waste industry, which amounts to about $2.3 billion. According to the study, the industry is directly responsible for about 12,000 jobs at an average wage of $55,000 annually. The remainder of the economic contribution is in the form of "indirect and induced impacts", which include ripple economic activity and employment across what the study calls a "multitude of industries" that provide services and do business with the municipal waste industry.

Further, the study reports that the industry generates about $250 million in various taxes and fees to state and local governments annually. These include about $80 million annually in state disposal, recycling and environmental fees, and about $60 million annually in payments to municipalities that host disposal facilities. Between 2010 and 2012, the industry states that $400 million in capital improvements were invested, according to the survey results provided by landfills, haulers and recyclers.

The study also provides an interesting look at who makes up the municipal waste industry in Pennsylvania. The industry, states the report, operates 45 municipal waste landfills, five construction demolition landfills, three residual waste landfills and six waste-to-energy and resource recovery facilities, all dealing with non-hazardous materials. In addition to municipal waste, the industry is also responsible for seeing to the safe and proper disposal of materials in landfills such as sewage sludge, infectious waste, ash residuals and asbestos.

The full economic impacts study sponsored by the Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association (PWIA) is available on PWIA's website at www.pawasteindustries.com

The study says that recycling is the fastest-growing component of the waste industry, good news for those of us who have sought to encourage recycling over the years. According to the study, between 2006 and 2011, the amount of materials recycled in Pennsylvania increased by 22 percent – more than 3.5 times that of the U.S. as a whole, and the increase in Act 101 materials being recycled (paper, plastic, cans, glass, for example) was 25 percent. Single-stream recycling has increased by almost 150 percent and now represents 43 percent of all recycled Act 101 materials, states the report.

The study also notes the increase in landfill gas-to-energy production in the past few years, a development in which the industry claims a leading role. Pennsylvania is second in the nation (behind only California) in the number of operational landfill-to-gas projects with 43.

Readers of the report will also find a substantial amount of information on new and innovative projects being undertaken by the industry, especially in the areas of recycling and energy generation. The report contains a significant amount of additional detail on the fiscal impact on state and local fees and taxes from the industry's annual operations.

The report's conclusion is that the municipal waste industry is a positive contributor to Pennsylvania and its local communities. Many of us don't give another thought to waste collection, transportation, recycling and disposal once we put our recycling bins and trash containers out for pickup. It's worth the time for readers to undertake a thorough review of the information contained in the study report.

How to Contact The Joint Conservation Committee

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