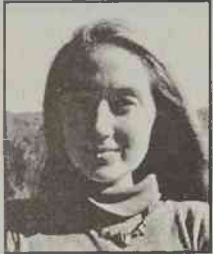


PERSPECTIVES

An Environmental Perspective

Clean Smokestacks Act to Help Decrease Pollution



Candice Carr
Environmental Columnist

Would you be willing to pay \$4.09 a month for clean air?

That is the estimated average, based on a \$100 per month household bill (which seems high), that North Carolinian families would have to pay in order for the coal-burning power plants of the state to put emission-reducing technologies on their smokestacks.

N.C.'s 14 coal-burning power plants are "grandfathered into," or exempt from, the requirements of the Clean Air Act because they were built before the act was passed.

The emissions from these plants are creating photochemical smog that is endangering our health and economy.

Sulfur dioxide emissions (SO₂) are reducing the visibility here in the mountains at an astounding rate.

In the Southeast in general, visibility has declined by 75 percent from natural levels. That is especially a problem here in Western North Carolina where tourism is such an important economic factor.

Of more immediate concern is the damage that pollutants like SO₂, carbon dioxide (CO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) have on the health of our bodies and our ecosystems.

NO_x is the main ingredient necessary to create ozone (O₃), which scars lung tissue and inhibits breathing ability in healthy adults by 25 percent.

It is estimated that NO_x pollution from power plants triggers more than 200,000 asthma attacks across the state each year, and SO₂ pollution causes more than 1,800 premature deaths, ranking N.C. as the fourth worst state in the nation for power-plant related deaths.

Airborne mercury falls into the state's rivers and estuaries, thereby contaminating saltwater and freshwater fish populations.

Mercury compounds bioaccumulate in the food chain, making king mackerel, bowfin and other fish unfit for human consumption.

Agriculture and forests are seriously impacted by air pollution as it manifests in acid rain and nitrogen

deposition, contributing to stunted growth and making vegetation more susceptible to pests and disease.

In the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, America's most air-polluted national park, rainfall is five to six times more acidic than normal rainfall, and significant declines have been measured in populations of spruce, dogwood, fir, beech, and other tree species.

In the East, airborne nitrogen contributes to algal blooms and fish kills.

Lakes in the Adirondack mountains in New York are now dead due to acid rain, and they are still spending millions liming these lakes from airplanes to try to bring them back to life.

Perhaps N.Y. should have regulated air pollution more stringently.

Dirty air is estimated to cost the state of N.C. over \$3 billion annually in morbidity and mortality costs.

N.C. farmers lose more than \$175 million each year due to reduced crop yields, and the loss in economic activity around the Smokies park is estimated to cost more than \$200 million each year.

Last, but not least, power plants emit CO₂, which is the main greenhouse gas contributing to global climate change.

Power plants are responsible for 82 percent of all SO₂ air pollution, 45 percent of NO_x and 65 percent of mercury. Automobiles and other mobile sources emit 48 percent of

the NO_x.

Technologies exist to reduce these emissions and make our lives healthier and more prosperous, but the power companies are not likely to install such innovations on their plants until the state government forces them to do so.

In order to see a reversal of the current negative trends in air pollution, we need an immediate abatement in pollution of at least 80 percent.

Selective Catalytic Reduction can reduce NO_x emissions by more than 80 percent from uncontrolled levels. Flue Gas Desulfurization (scrubbers) are able to reduce SO₂ emissions by more than 90 percent from uncontrolled levels. Another solution is renewable energy sources (nuclear power is not one).

Last year, 11,000 North Carolinians showed up or wrote letters in response to public hearings held around the state on this issue.

Three regulatory plans were being proposed.

All advocated NO_x reduction, but only one was strong enough to actually do anything about the problem. While the power companies, Duke University and CP&L proposed a 50 percent overall reduction, and the state suggested a 67 percent reduction, the Clean Air Coalition proposed an 80 percent reduction in NO_x.

Practically every person who showed up to those hearings or wrote letters were in total support

of an 80 percent reduction.

Yet, after the governor went behind closed doors with the power companies, a compromise was reached.

This is one issue where compromise is completely ineffective. Studies by the nation's best air quality scientists show that N.C.'s air will continue to worsen unless the emissions are reduced by 80 percent.

Politicians in Raleigh, N.C. know how strongly the public feels about air quality regulation.

It's a good thing this issue is finally being brought to the N.C. state legislature.

Next week, representative Martin Nesbitt and Senator Steve Metcalf will introduce the North Carolina Clean Smokestacks Act, which would require an overall reduction of 82 percent in NO_x, 80 to 90 percent in SO_x and a minimum reduction of 90 percent in mercury

release to the air.

Heavily supported by the public, this act has the potential to really benefit our lives.

Your state senators and representatives need to know that you support the Clean Smokestacks Act presented by the N.C. Clean Air Coalition.

Time is of the essence, as it must get passed before the "crossover date" of April 26, after which it cannot be reintroduced for two years.

So, call or write to these senators and ask them to support the act.

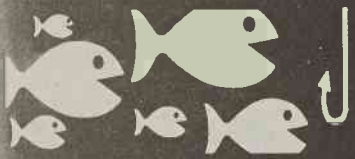
Senator Charles Carter
2111 Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

Senator Dan Robinson
2113 Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

Technologies exist to reduce these emissions and make our lives healthier and more prosperous, but the power companies are not likely to install such innovations on their plants until the state government forces them to do so.

FYI

For Your Information



Get the rest of your education...

Apr
5
thru
Apr
12

FYI is a service of the Student Activities and Student Affairs offices.

FYI is published each Thursday. Deadline to submit information is Friday at 2 pm. for the following week's publication. Send basic information to K. Keane at HC 27 or kkeane@unca.edu. See FYI on Banner online at www.unca.edu/banner/fyi

Academic Notices

- Study Abroad Info Sessions: Tuesdays at 11 am & Thursdays at 4pm, HC 37, sign up in HC 31
- Registration for Summer and Fall Semesters thru 4/13
- Philosophy Undergrad Conference, 9am-5pm, KH 4/7

Athletics

- Baseball vs. Gardner-Webb, 2pm, Greenwood Field 4/8
- Baseball vs. Furman, 3pm, Greenwood Field 4/11
- Baseball vs. High Point, 3pm, Greenwood Field 4/13

Career Center/Jobs

- E-jobs: Part time jobs listserve-contact mwhitson@unca.edu
- JobTrak.com: Graduating Seniors register for full time jobs www.unca.edu/career
- Business & Communication Employer Reception, 3-5pm, HCL 4/5
- Student Activities Intern, 2001-2002 school year, 20 hrs/wk, applications avail. outside HC 27 due 4/5
- UNCA Writing Center Tutor, 2001-2002 school year, \$6.25/hr, must have "B" avg. in 2 Lang Courses, apps KH 017 due 4/13

Concerts/Live Entertainment

- Theater: "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," 10am & 12:30pm, LH Aud., Free 4/5
- Comedian Bobby Lee, 8pm, HCL 4/5
- University Singers and String Ensemble, 7pm, HCL 4/6
- "Dances to Dine For," UNCA Dance Program, 8pm, Diana Wortham Theater, x6874 info 4/6
- Benefit Show, spon. by Amnesty Intl., 7:30pm, Asheville Music Zone, \$5 4/8
- Poet Lee Ann Brown, reading, 7pm, HLH 4/10
- UNCA Percussion Ensemble, 8pm, LH 018 4/12
- Outkast, Live in Concert, 8pm, Asheville Civic Center 4/21

Etc.

- Caring Cans Food Drive, spon. by Marriott, DH thru 4/6
- Student Art Reception and Awards Ceremony, 6:30pm, OH 4/6
- Admissions Open House, LH 4/7
- Funds Available, Proposals Accepted for Cultural/Special Events for 2001-2002 School year, send to CPO#1200, x6669 info due 4/9
- Putt-Putt Finals, spon. by Residence Life, 4:30pm, HCL 4/9
- Ceramics Soup and Salad Bowl Sale, 11am-2pm, OCC 4/13
- Bulldog Dash, Race for Dogs and Owners, 9am, Track 4/14
- Ping-Pong/8-Ball Tourn., 7pm, Gameroom thru 4/23
- Bulldog Express, free bus service around Asheville-Downtown, Wal-Mart, Mall, Beaucatcher Cinema (7:30pm-12:30am Friday and Saturday) from UNCA and return
- UNCA on TV, "Inside UNCA," video clips, 12pm & 7pm weekdays
- Foreign Language Tables in PDR (Dining Hall), French Wednesdays 11:30am-1pm, Spanish Fridays 11:30am-1pm, All Welcome
- UNCA Babysitter Connection, www.unca.edu/childcare
- Night Sky Viewings, 8pm, Quad •Mondays and Tuesdays
- Register your bike with Public Safety/prevent theft, x6710 info

Exhibits

- Catherine Bukowski Exhibition, University Gallery 4/6-4/24
- Annual Juried Student Exhibition, University Gallery 4/6-4/24
- George Raming Exhibition, Blowers Gallery thru 4/28

Films

- "Tax Day," by Laura Colella, discussion w/ filmmaker to follow, 7:30pm, LH Aud. 4/5
- "Roots," spon. by AASA, 7pm, HCL 4/10
- "A Bout de Souffle," French Film Fest, 7:30pm, KH 127 4/11
- "Clerks," spon. by UP, 9pm, HCL 4/13

Lectures/Seminars/Workshops

- "Is Depleted Uranium Hazardous to Health?" 7pm, RL 4/5
- Teaching Diversity & Tolerance: Take it or Leave it? 12:15pm, LF 4/6
- "Nuclear Silence," discussion by UNCA students, 7:30pm, LF 4/9
- Annual Crystal Ball Seminar-Financial Outlook, 6:15pm, OCC 4/12

Outdoor Activities (Sign Up in HC)

- Rock Climbing, \$15 includes equipment, guide & transportation, 8am-5pm 4/7
- River Leader Workshop, \$15 4/7-4/8
- Mountain Biking, Pisgah Forest, \$15 includes equipment, guide & transportation 4/8

Organizations/Special Programs

- Women's Resource Center, open Monday thru Thursday: 11am-1pm, 3pm-6pm, 7pm-9pm, Mills Hall 232
- Bahai Diversity Forum, 8pm, HCL 4/9
- SOC Meeting, 6pm, HCL 4/11
- Take Back the Night, spon. by WAIL, 8pm, Quad 4/13

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

- Korean American Comedian Bobby Lee, 8pm, HCL 4/5
- Origami Workshop, 4pm, HC Coffeehouse 4/8
- Art of Language: Name Translation into Chinese/Japanese, Lunch and Dinner Times in the DH 4/11

Tickets in HC

- Asheville Art Museum -\$2
- United Artist Movie Theaters-\$4
- Ice Skating at Civic Center -\$2
- Smoke Hockey Tickets -\$4
- Mountain Echoes Storyfest -\$5 (4/27-4/29)
- Biltmore House -\$22
- Chimney Rock -\$6
- Outkast -\$20 (4/21)

Volunteer Opportunities

- For service-learning opportunities Key Center for Service-Learning, 251-6400 or lweinberg@unca.edu
- Help needed for national mental health screening on campus, x6868 info 4/5