RivertownCoalition
for Clean Air and Clean Water

We're back! Hope you have missed our Newsletters! We will work to share helpful environmental news. Being only digital, be sure to take advantage of the hyper links and to "zoom in" when the print seems small.

Quick Links:

☞ The Trump Administration is Reversing 100 Environmental Rules. Here's the Full List

☞Water Farming: Managing Agricultural Lands for Clean and Safe Water from Pasa

☞ LNG Gibbstown Interactive Map showing the population impacts from LNG transport from Delaware Riverkeeper

☞ A Green Stimulus and Recovery Platform for Pennsylvania from Penn Future. How to move forward.

☞ Earth Overshoot Day is August 22. Graphic shows how we are using our earth resources at an unsustainable rate.

Recent Legislation

●Pennsylvania passed House Bill 732 to pay more than $670 million over the next 25 years to incentivize plastic factories that could add more than 130 million tons of carbon pollution into our atmosphere.

ICYMI

●Andrew Maykuth wrote in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* **Pipeline projects run into resistance cited in *THE DAILY ITEM* 7/19/2020** ●Dakota Access Pipeline (shut down for formal environmental impact analysis),● Atlantic Coast Pipeline (cancelled because of Dominion Energy Inc divesting ownership), Constitution Pipeline (cancelled), ●Southern Reliability Link (permits suspended), ●Mariner East System (suspending construction while changing construction methods after repeated fines for environmental violations), ●PennEast (tied up in court).

●Susquehanna University study shows that 100% of the small mouth bass studied in 2019 had tiny plastic particles in their digestive systems.*The Daily Item* 7/19/20

●A scientist with a history of disputing human activity is driving climate change appointed to top post at NOAA which oversees federally funded climate research. *NPR.org* cited in *The Week* September 25, 2020 p.18

E2 Good for the Economy Good for the Environment

view full report here

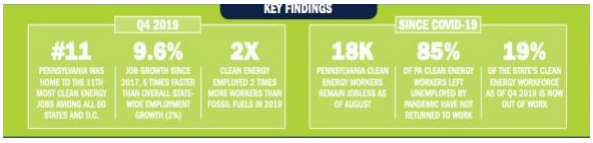
E2 is a group of 8000 business professionals that provides an annual report on the jobs situation in the clean energy sector. Their September 23, 2020 report focused on Pennsylvania. We had been on a great trajectory as the 11th ranking state with 8,253 new clean energy jobs (an increase of 9.6%). The clean energy sector employed 2.5X more people than the fossil fuel industry.

Clean energy jobs are in five categories: *Energy Efficiency*, *Renewable Energy*, *Clean Vehicles*, *Fuels*, *Grid and Storage.* The largest number of jobs is in the Energy Efficiency segment, but all of the sectors were showing growth. Covid-19 hit the industries hard. They lost 20,000 jobs in Pennsylvania. 85% of the workers have not yet returned to work.

Now the **most important thing to help these industries** recover is policies such as ACT 129. This energy efficiency policy has proved that the legislature can get it right. It has been successful and is entering Phase 4 which goes in effect for 5 more years. The rebates and incentives will remain the same. **POLICIES** such as this create a guaranteed market and give business owners the incentive to expand, to train and hire new people. It has been working well.

There are several **new energy bills that have not yet passed** in the legislature. One sets the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards. If even 10% was set aside for solar energy, 60,000 to 100,000 new jobs would be created. **PA-HB 1195** and **PA-SB 600** are important for this development. We need to remember that the jobs involved are more diverse than merely installing solar panels. They involve sheet metal workers, carpenters, electricians, excavation workers and manufacturing jobs. Retooling engines for greater efficiency as well as any new construction of High Efficiency buildings is part of this sector. These are steady Union worker jobs. There is software development (such as programable thermostats) that is also part of the jobs in renewable energy. We have empty buildings that had been used for manufacturing that left the area that could be refitted for solar manufacturing. PA-**HB 531** and PA-**SB 705** would pave the way for community solar operations. Even without new legislation, we need to encourage Electric Distribution Companies to require a certain percentage of their default supply to be renewable energy. The potential is limitless, the jobs are steady and well paying.

The **level of expansion depends on** the comfort level of investors and businesses. Having supportive legislative policies gives that stable environment for expansion. The ripple effects into the economy follow from this growth. Two interesting and fun examples: better business for a Sunbury shepherd whose flock grazes to keep the grass under control at Susquehanna University solar site and *Earth Seeds* who specializes in pollinator friendly seeds that are planted at solar sites. We need to help jumpstart the clean energy sector by supporting positive legislation.



Hard Truths About Plastics Emissions:

From beginning to end, plastics are not good for our environment. It begins with plastic being a product that is made from fossil fuels.

SAMMY LEE / EARTHJUSTICE

Lifecycle of Petrochemicals: Shale gas is extracted through fracking. Fracked gas liquids are separated from fracked gas, and refined into their distinct products, such as propane, butane, and ethane. Under high pressure and temperature, ethane is broken down into ethylene — the building block of most plastics. Toxic chemicals from discarded plastics can leach into groundwater.

These extraction and separation processes create air and water pollution in the areas where the chemicals are produced. Petrochemicals are the building blocks for plastics, industrial chemicals, agricultural pesticides, and other materials that harm human health and the environment throughout their life cycle. Even after they are produced and used, petrochemical products continue to fuel the climate crisis. As plastic waste is incinerated, it releases more greenhouse gases. Even as it degrades new research suggests that it releases greenhouse gases representing another vast source of emissions. These petrochemicals never die or return to a harmless state.

In addition, one of the things that ends up in our water is nurdles which are plastic resin pellets produced at these petrochemical facilities that serve as the raw ingredient for nearly all plastics. Some companies are offending environmental laws and dumping these nurdles into the water.

Photo by Julie Dermansky

Recycling:

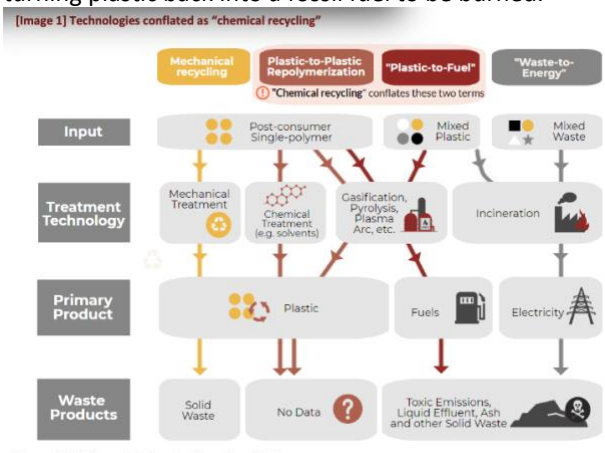
It seems that our efforts at recycling are saving the planet are a myth. According to the EPA less than 10% of plastic has been recycled. The dark blue section in the graph to the right. And even worse to learn is that the recycling efforts were devised by the gas and oil companies as a way to keep producing more plastics. There are documents dating back to the 1970's showing that recycling would not be economically viable but the gas and oil companies spent millions of dollars on recycling ad campaigns to distract the public from the realities of the problems of disposing of plastics. The industry was facing initiatives to ban or curb the use of plastics and they promoted recycling to keep the plastic bans at bay. Their intent was to keep people from being concerned about the environment because they were busy doing recycling and believing their effort could save the planet.

NPR's *Planet Money* had a two-part series in July of 2019 describing the fascinating story of how recycling actually began in the US with an entrepreneur from Alabama, a mob boss in New York City and a plan to burn garbage for energy. The resulting "Garbage Barge" coming from NYC down the coast creates such a stir that it is never allowed to dock in the US. After 6 months of floating in the Gulf Coast, China eventually accepted it. For years China became the dumping ground for our recycling trash until their economy improved and it was no longer profitable for them either. In 2018, China declared it would not take any but very clean and prepared items. The resulting trash back up in the US has our current "recycling" ending in landfills. One small hope for those of us who want to recycle, it is still viable and useful to recycle metal of any sort.

Now that the visible accumulation of plastic trash is causing public outcry again, the gas and oil industry is starting a new project promising to recycle and a new ad campaign hoping to distract us again. We are supposed to believe that the companies who sell virgin gas and oil is somehow going to create a market to replace themselves.

A False Promise from a polluting industry: see full gaia report "All Talk and No Recycling: An Investigation of the U.S."Chemical Recycling" Industry

- Feeling the pressure from increasingly sustainability minded consumers and governments, the plastics industry is now promoting "chemical recycling" as technology that turns plastic back into plastic - as the silver bullet to solve the plastics crisis.
- However, of the dozens of "chemical recycling" facilities proposed since the early 2000s, just three are operational and **none are known to have successfully turned plastic into new plastic.**
- Much of what the industry calls "chemical recycling" or "advanced recycling" is actually plastic-to-fuel, or turning plastic back into a fossil fuel to be burned.



Source: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives. (2019)

Fool me once shame on you. Fool me twice shame on me.

*There is a Agil*yx and Monroe Energy "chemical recycling" plant proposed in Trainer, PA