

# Conservation Committee Report



### The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

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## January is National Radon Awareness Month.

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Radon gas is a threat that most people don't think about unless they're in the process of buying or selling a home.

You can't smell or see it, but it can be in your home and in a potentially lethal dose.

### Who Can Test or Fix Your Home?

If you are interested in finding a qualified radon service profes-

sional to test or mitigate your home, you wish to purchase a radon test kit, or have questions about a radon measurement device or radon mitigation system:

**Contact your State Radon Contact** to determine what are, or whether there are, requirements associated with providing radon measurement and or radon mitigations/reductions in your State. Some States maintain lists of contractors available in their state or

they have proficiency programs or requirements of their own.

### Where Can I Get a Radon Test Kit?

The National Radon Program Services at Kansas State University offers discounted test kits available to purchase online. You may complete the test kit order form electronically and print it out to mail or fax in.

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## DEP Secretary Urges EPA to Dismiss Clean Air Council Petition, Approve State Plan Submitted Three Years Ago

Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Mike Krancer today urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to dismiss a petition that

the Clean Air Council filed with EPA in November 2011. The petition claimed that Pennsylvania is failing to implement requirements in its State Im-

plementation Plan and asked EPA to impose sanctions on Pennsylvania.

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## January is National Radon Awareness Month (continued)

You may download a Radon test kit coupon and mail it in. Go to <http://sosradon.org/test-kits>

- Some state programs offer low-cost or free kits, contact your state radon contact for more information.
- Some home improvement stores/centers sell radon test kits. Follow the directions on the packaging for the proper placement of the device and where to send the device af-

ter the test to get your reading.

• **Contact one or both of the two privately-run national radon programs** (listed below alphabetically) who are offering proficiency listing/accreditation/certification in radon testing and mitigation. (Reference herein to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufac-

turer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government.)

**The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) National Radon Proficiency Program**  
Toll Free: (800) 269-4174 or (828) 890-4117  
Fax: (828) 890-4161  
Website: [www.neha-nrpp.org/](http://www.neha-nrpp.org/)  
E-Mail: [angel@neha-nrpp.org](mailto:angel@neha-nrpp.org)

### **The National Radon Safety Board (NRSB)**

Toll Free: (866) 329-3474  
Fax: (914) 345-1169  
Website: [www.nrsb.org](http://www.nrsb.org)  
E-mail: [info@NRSB.org](mailto:info@NRSB.org)

### **Test Your Home for Radon — It's Easy and Inexpensive**

The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend that all homes be tested. Read about radon health risks.

### **Fix your home if you have a radon level of 4 pCi/L or more.**

You can test your home yourself or hire a professional.

If you have further questions about Radon, please call your State Radon Contact.

Radon Hotline

**1-800-SOSRADON** (1-800-767-7236) | Fax: (785) 532-6952 | E-mail: [Radon@ksu.edu](mailto:Radon@ksu.edu) |

[www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org)

### **Policy on EPA's RPP-issued ID Badges**

EPA-issued Radon Measurement (RMP) and Mitigation (RCP) Program photo-identification cards, and ANY item with EPA's logo or name, listing letters and identification numbers have not been valid since EPA closed its proficiency program in October

1998. Consequently, persons and companies should not represent themselves, their products or their services as "EPA Listed" or "EPA Approved" or "Meets EPA Requirements" or otherwise imply an EPA sanction. Consumers are encouraged to contact their State radon office for additional information or if you have a complaint or question.

### **EPA Acknowledgement of Non-Federal National Radon Proficiency Programs**

After the close of EPA's National Radon Proficiency Program (RPP) in 1998, there were requests that EPA offer some form of recognition of non-Federal radon proficiency programs. EPA developed recogni-

tion criteria and offered a one-time acknowledgment to both of the existing non-Federal national radon proficiency programs (The National Radon Safety Board (NRSB) and The National Environmental Health Association's (NEHA) National Radon Proficiency Program).

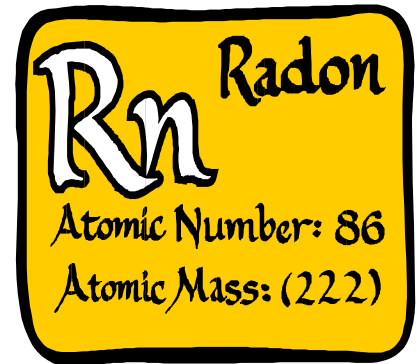
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## January is National Radon Awareness Month (continued)

This official acknowledgement [dated March 30, 2001] ran through December 31, 2002, at which time, EPA's determination expired. There were no extensions of this determination. To avoid misleading the public, the recognized programs were not to make reference to this EPA determination after December 31, 2002. EPA continues to encourage States, industry and consumers to work together to identify those elements that would improve non-Federal radon profi-

ciency programs and go beyond EPA's former voluntary RPP. These improved elements should then be adopted as standards of practice.

Source: U.S. EPA



## DEP Secretary Urges EPA to Dismiss Clean Air Council Petition (continued)

“This petition lacks merit and based on longstanding and documented facts in this matter, the EPA should promptly dismiss this,” Krancer said in letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson. “As the EPA and Clean Air Council are well aware, Pennsylvania is implementing and acting in full compliance with our latest state regulation of 2008.

“The latest State Implementation Plan (SIP) submittal of 2009, embodying that 2008 regulation, was submitted to EPA for its approval in April 2009, but has not yet been approved by EPA. This petition takes the bizarre position that Pennsylvania is guilty of not acting in conformance with a prior 1996 regulation that

is no longer even on the books in Pennsylvania.”

In 2007, the state's Environmental Quality Board proposed changes to expedite permitting of what are considered to be minor air emissions sources. To aid in crafting the final rulemaking, there were several public hearings held around the state, as well as a public comment period that included correspondence with Clean Air Council and consultation with the Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee. That committee is made up of representatives from government, environmental organizations and industry.

In April 2009, DEP submitted the final rulemaking as a revi-

sion to its SIP and because of EPA's failure to respond, it was deemed administratively complete in October 2009. To date, EPA has not responded and was recently sued by several environmental groups for lack of action on Pennsylvania's and other states' plans.

“As EPA should be painfully aware, EPA has been sued over this situation and shoulders the blame for what Clean Air Council is complaining about,” the letter notes.

“DEP and EPA should not be unnecessarily distracted by this contrived and irrational petition from the important and serious

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## DEP Secretary Urges EPA to Dismiss Clean Air Council Petition (continued)

work our agencies perform,” Krancer said. “Perhaps Clean Air Council’s time would have been better served by suing EPA for ... failing to perform one of its basic functions in a timely manner, rather than submitting this frivolous petition against Pennsylvania.

Krancer noted that DEP has expanded the public participation process to include public meetings and public hearings when appropriate, and that Clean Air Council has been present at such

hearings. The council has also complimented DEP on this effort.

Krancer sent Administrator Jackson a recent letter from CAC that praises DEP for holding one of several public hearings on plan approvals for compressor stations at natural gas operations. In addition to such hearings and public comment periods on major sources, notices of permit applications for minor sources are made public and comments

are considered in DEP’s decisions.

For more information and to read the letter, visit [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us).

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection

## EPA Issues First National Standards for Mercury Pollution from Power Plants

*Historic ‘mercury and air toxics standards’ meet 20-year old requirement to cut dangerous smokestack emissions*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, the first national standards to protect American families from power plant emissions of mercury and toxic air pollution like arsenic, acid gas, nickel, selenium, and cyanide. The standards will slash emissions of these dangerous pollutants by relying on widely available, proven pollution controls that are already in use at more than half of the nation’s coal-fired power plants.

EPA estimates that the new safeguards will prevent as many as 11,000 premature deaths and 4,700 heart attacks a year. The standards will also help America’s children grow up healthier – preventing 130,000 cases of childhood asthma symptoms and about 6,300 fewer cases of acute bronchitis among children each year.

"By cutting emissions that are linked to developmental disorders and respiratory illnesses like asthma, these standards represent a major victory for clean air and public health— and especially for the health of our children. With these standards that

were two decades in the making, EPA is rounding out a year of incredible progress on clean air in America with another action that will benefit the American people for years to come," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards will protect millions of families and children from harmful and costly air pollution and provide the American people with health benefits that far outweigh the costs of compliance."

"Since toxic air pollution from power plants can make people sick and cut lives short, the new

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# EPA Issues First National Standards (continued)

Mercury and Air Toxics Standards are a huge victory for public health,” said Albert A. Rizzo, MD, national volunteer chair of the American Lung Association, and pulmonary and critical care physician in Newark, Delaware. “The Lung Association expects all oil and coal-fired power plants to act now to protect all Americans, especially our children, from the health risks imposed by these dangerous air pollutants.”

More than 20 years ago, a bipartisan Congress passed the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments and mandated that EPA require control of toxic air pollutants including mercury. To meet this requirement, EPA worked extensively with stakeholders, including industry, to minimize cost and maximize flexibilities in these final standards. There were more than 900,000 public comments that helped inform the final standards being announced today. Part of this feedback en-

couraged EPA to ensure the standards focused on readily available and widely deployed pollution control technologies, that are not only manufactured by companies in the United States, but also support short-term and long-term jobs. EPA estimates that manufacturing, engineering, installing and maintaining the pollution controls to meet these standards will provide employment for thousands, potentially including 46,000

short-term construction jobs and 8,000 long-term utility jobs.

Power plants are the largest remaining source of several toxic air pollutants, including mercury, arsenic, cyanide, and a range of other dangerous pollutants, and are responsible for half of the mercury and over 75 percent of the acid gas emissions in the United States. Today, more than half of all coal-fired power plants already deploy pollution control technologies that will help them meet these achievable standards. Once final, these standards will level the playing field by ensuring the remaining plants – about 40 percent of all coal fired power plants - take similar steps to decrease dangerous pollutants.

As part of the commitment to maximize flexibilities under the law, the standards are accompanied by a Presidential Memorandum that directs EPA to use tools provided in the Clean Air Act to implement the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards in a cost-effective manner that ensures electric reliability. For example, under these standards, EPA is not only providing the standard three years for compliance, but also encouraging permitting authorities to make a fourth year broadly available for technology installations, and if still more time is needed, providing a well-defined pathway to address any localized reliability problems should they arise.

children exposed in the womb, impairing thinking, learning and early development, and other pollutants that will be reduced by these standards can cause cancer, premature death, heart disease, and asthma.

The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, which are being issued in response to a court deadline, are in keeping with President Obama’s Executive Order on regulatory reform. They are based on the latest data and provide industry significant flexibility in implementation through a phased-in approach and use of already existing technologies.

The standards also ensure that public health and economic benefits far outweigh costs of

Mercury has been shown to harm the nervous systems of

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## EPA Issues First National Standards (continued)

implementation. EPA estimates that for every dollar spent to reduce pollution from power plants, the American public will see up to \$9 in health benefits. The total health and economic benefits of this standard are estimated to be as much as \$90 billion annually.

The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards and the final Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, which was issued earlier this year, are the most significant steps to

clean up pollution from power plant smokestacks since the Acid Rain Program of the 1990s.

Combined, the two rules are estimated to prevent up to 46,000 premature deaths, 540,000 asthma attacks among children, 24,500 emergency room visits and hospital admissions. The two programs are an investment in public health that will provide a total of up to \$380 billion in return to American families in the form of longer, healthier

lives and reduced health care costs.

More information:  
<http://www.epa.gov/mats/>

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Budget Deal Reflects Process Tilted Towards Special Interests

**"In the new year, conservationists will be ready to fight harder than ever to protect America's wildlife and natural resources."**

Congressional leaders announced a budget deal today and are reportedly considering on a two-month extension of a payroll tax break.

"There's no doubt this bill has come a long way since we started 2011 with the truly appalling House Appropriations Committee budget, reflecting outrage across the country over its attacks on wildlife, air, water and public health, including deep cuts in conservation investments," Adam Kolton, executive director of the National Wildlife

Federation's National Advocacy Center.

The budget bill does not include some of the most controversial cuts and provisions:

- Cuts just \$219 million from the Environmental Protection Agency's \$8.68 billion enacted fiscal year 2011 budget, much less than the original House Appropriations cut.
- Riders to block new mercury pollution rules, climate pollution standards, fuel efficiency rules for cars and trucks, and Clean Water Act expansion were dropped

- Programs like the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, Multinational Species Conservation Fund received a cut of only 5 percent or less from their enacted fiscal year 2011 budgets, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund actually received a 7 percent increase.

"But the polluter riders that remain reflect a process where powerful special interests still have keys to the back room. In particular, the last-minute rider to effectively exempt Arctic drilling from national air quality

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# Budget Deal Reflects Process Tilted Towards Special Interests (continued)

standards shows the back door is always open for Congress' Big Oil donors," said Adam Kolton.

Among the anti-environment provisions in the bill:

## Energy

- Halts implementation of the energy efficiency standards for light bulbs that were enacted in 2007 with strong bipartisan support. Energy efficiency measures are one of the cheapest and quickest ways to reduce the carbon pollution that contributes to climate change. The standards will prevent more than 100 million tons of carbon pollution per year—the equivalent of taking 17 million cars off the road. These standards are supported by the industry that is already developing newer high-tech incandescent bulbs to replace the venerable 135-year-old version, saving consumers \$15.8 billion annually.
- Gives oil companies a free pass from complying with critical Clean Air Act requirements to control air pollution from offshore drilling. Specifically, the bill would move air permitting for Arctic offshore drilling from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Department of the Interior, which would effectively exempt Arctic

drilling from national air quality standards.

## Wildlife

- Undermines protections for endangered and threatened wild bighorn sheep. A century ago, bighorn sheep thrived in the West, with numbers in the millions, but contact with diseases carried by domestic sheep has reduced overall bighorn populations to the thousands. To avoid this complication, federal agencies were charged with reducing interactions between the two species—an effort that has proven remarkably successful with the help of National Wildlife Federation, the Nez Perce tribe and other stakeholders. This bill would undermine that charge and result in the decline of wild bighorn sheep populations.

## Public Lands & Waters

- Halts funding for the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study. As recent, repeated catastrophic floods have shown, our federal Missouri River policies are outdated, often conflicting, and in need of revision. This study would for the first time provide a comprehensive analysis to ensure better management, including flows that better mimic na-

ture, land protection that allows for flood storage, and protection of fish and wildlife.

- Blocks the EPA from issuing permits to control pollution from logging activities. This exemption would allow discharges associated with a broad suite of timber management activities to proceed regardless of impacts to water, including most importantly those associated with roads. Roads are a leading threat to water quality in forested areas because they collect sediment-laden runoff that degrades water quality and alters hydrology to increase the threat of flooding and harms steelhead and salmon populations. These effects can be severe, which is why the EPA and states require discharge permits for other types of industrial activities with similar impacts, including state highways, municipal stormwater, mining, and oil and gas drilling.
- Reduces opportunity for citizens to participate in how public lands are governed, undercutting one of the foundations for the management of federal lands. In the current system, one of the more meaningful rights is the

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## Budget Deal Reflects Process Tilted Towards Special Interests (continued)

public's prerogative to petition the federal courts when a citizen believes that a federal decision has not adhered to the rule of law. This bill would severely curtail these rights by reducing opportunities for the public to appeal decisions on Bureau of Land Management lands related to grazing.

- Obstructs the public's right to appeal decisions on the movement of livestock across public lands, also known as trailing. This unnecessarily creates conflict between livestock and wildlife and takes away stakeholder's ability to reduce this conflict.
- Prohibits the Obama administration from finalizing new guidelines for planning federal water projects and programs required by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. Revision of the federal water resources planning

principles and guidelines (P&G) provides an unparalleled opportunity to protect the public, protect and restore the environment, and improve the economic vitality of communities across the nation for decades to come. The current P&G are decades old and produce projects that unnecessarily damage the environment, often fail to protect the public, and undermine sustainable economic development. For example, despite the construction of innumerable flood damage reduction projects during the past 20 years, the nation's flood damages have increased at an alarming rate. During the same period, federal water projects played a major role in increasing the percentage of North America's freshwater fish species at risk of extinction from 20 percent to an estimated 40 percent.

“As Congress works towards a long-term payroll tax extension, we've already seen the House take what should be a straightforward bill to help the economy and load it like a bad holiday fruitcake with giveaways for polluters,” said Adam Kolton. “Greasing Big Oil's land grab for the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline won't create jobs. Neither will blocking long-overdue rules to clean America's air. In the new year, conservationists will be ready to fight harder than ever to protect America's wildlife and natural resources.”

Source: **National Wildlife Federation, 12-16-2011 // Miles Grant**

## Preservation Board Protects Additional 2,331 Acres of Prime Farmland

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Land Preservation Board voted to preserve 2,331 additional acres on 21 farms in 17 counties through the state's nationally recognized farmland preservation program.

The newly preserved farms are located in Adams, Bedford, Berks, Bucks, Columbia, Crawford, Dauphin, Erie, Franklin, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northumberland,

Perry, Washington, Wayne and Westmoreland counties.

“Since I joined the Department of Agriculture in February, we've preserved nearly

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## Preservation Board Protects Additional 2,331 Acres of Prime Farmland (continued)

13,000 acres of farmland across the state,” said Agriculture Secretary George

Greig. “Pennsylvania’s farm families realize the importance of agriculture not only

as our state’s number one industry – the cornerstone of our economy – but as a

way of life for our farm families. I thank these producers for enabling a new

generation of agriculturalists to keep Pennsylvania growing far into the future.”

Pennsylvania’s farmland preservation efforts work through the Pennsylvania

Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, which was developed in

1988 to help slow the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses. It enables

state, county and local governments to purchase conservation easements, also

called development rights, from owners of quality farmland.

During the program’s 23-year history, state, county and local governments have

invested more than \$1 billion to safeguard 457,537 acres on 4,229 farms.

For more information about Pennsylvania’s nation-leading farmland preservation

program, visit

[www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us) and search “farmland preservation.”

Source: PA Department of Agriculture

