Weekly News Roundup April 24, 2015

Community Action Protects Clean Air, Health, and Justice

[United States] Take Action! Five years ago, after the BP oil spill, the United Houma Nation, a 17,000 member tribe, applied for damage payments and was denied because it's not officially recognized by the U.S. government. Sign the petition to support their fight for land sovereignty.

[El Salvador] Take Action! CESTA Friends of the Earth, the Movement of Victims Affected by Climate Change, and Corporations MOVIAC have created a petition calling on the government to ratify the Human Right to Food and Water in the country’s constitution. With international support, they are hoping to gain 3,000 signatures by the 30th of April.

[United Kingdom] Flintshire Council’s planning committee has officially rejected the proposal for the Deeside Incinerator project because of community concerns over pollution, noise and traffic. Burton residents celebrate!

[Canada] Ryley residents protest a proposed hospital waste incinerator because of toxic emissions. Incinerator expert Paul Connett has been working with residents. “It’s the burning process creates these bad chemicals that build up in the environment,” said Connett, noting that dioxins and furans do not break down, but accumulate in farm animals that ingest the particles. “Ryley is in the middle of agriculture land with cattle, so it’s the last place you want it.”

[India] NGO Chintan is working on a Gender Based Violence Program to help protect women waste pickers in Delhi from street harassment and provide them with a safer environment.

[Philippines] Various environmental groups congregated and marched from Espana Road to Malacanang palace in honor of Earth Day to protest the push to lift the incinerator ban. “In response to renewed attempts by some pro-incineration congressmen to water down the Clean Air Act, we call on President Benigno Simeon Aquino, III to defend the law from legislative attacks and keep the incineration ban intact!” Says Aileen Lucero, National Coordinator of the EcoWaste Coalition. Additional coverage of the protest here and here.

[Philippines] The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice celebrated Earth Day with a press conference on the need to switch to renewable energy. Paeng Lopez of GAIA warned of a dangerous trend toward co-firing waste and coal in power plants.

[United States] Burlington, Vermont, is now powered entirely on renewable technology, but critics point to wood-burning plant. Mary S. Booth, a New England ecologist, fired off a letter to the editors of the “PBS Newshour,” which was among many news outlets to herald Burlington’s achievement. She pointed to the city’s McNeil Electric Generating Facility, which
burns wood to produce about one-third of the city's power, noting that the plant emits a variety of pollutants, including greenhouse gases.

[India] On Earth Day, Delhi-based NGO Chintan made people sign pledges that they will not litter in their surroundings and nor let others litter.

[India] Pune-based NGO SWaCH (Solid Waste Collection and Handling) has started a project to come up with a design for user-friendly pushed carts for ragpickers of the city, since the current design is leading to health issues among the ragpickers.

[United States] For over 30 years, Michael Mariotte of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) has been a leader in the movement to end nuclear power and build a safe, clean and affordable nuclear-free, carbon-free energy system. Michael has been stricken with pancreatic cancer. NIRS is now conducting a fundraising campaign, the Michael Mariotte Legacy Fund, to ensure that Michael's salary and essential health and life insurance benefits will be maintained. Please consider making a donation here.

Zero Waste is Happening and Necessary!

[United States] This Earth Day, New York City Mayor de Blasio announced a plan to achieve Zero Waste, connecting this goal to helping 800,000 people out of poverty. This was a huge victory for Environmental Justice groups in a city that sends more trash to landfills and incinerators than any other in the world today. Over the years, these groups and allied environmentalists have successfully stopped numerous incinerator proposals, and prevented renewable energy subsidies from being awarded the waste industry. According to Eddie Bautista of the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance - “We have fought for an environmentally just solid waste plan - where we stop dumping on not just communities of color in NYC, but also communities affected by NYC waste export elsewhere - for over 20 years. This was a really big step forward today”

[Himalayas] This March, GAIA Coordination staff Pratibha Sharma and Ananda Lee Tan visited communities across the Himalayas, where members of the Zero Waste Himalaya network have been working to start up community-based initiatives to reduce waste, reduce plastics pollution and improve local livelihoods. Check out the first of two blogs about their trip.

Spotlight on Dirty Industry

[United States] Casper, Wyoming is considering an incinerator to fix their overflowing landfill problems, including methane and leachate. The project will cost about $1.5 million, and the system will likely burn for at least the next 30 or 40 years.
Vijayawada State government plans to “fix” its garbage disposal problem by establishing an incinerator in every district. It’s currently facing a number of hurdles, including the government offering too low a price.

Senate Bill 752 in Oregon, which declares biomass "carbon-neutral," passed on Monday. SB 752 now heads to the House, and then to the governor.

Check it out!

May 29-31. Detroit, MI. International Social Movements Gathering on Water and Affordable Housing: join social movement organizations to work together for water and housing accessibility and affordability.

San Francisco Conservation Corps is hiring a Zero Waste Events Supervisor.

IIT Bombay pulled a simple yet brilliant April Fool’s Day prank to promote picking up trash.

"The Gateway Plant" tells the amazing, hilarious, 100% true story of Full Harvest Farm in Oakland, CA. It shows the Full Harvest farmers journey from growing weed to growing organic tomatoes to growing an oasis for community resilience and black liberation.

Check out this paper produced by European Environmental Bureau, ChemTrust, Friends of the Earth Europe and Zero Waste Europe on the importance of getting toxins out of products not only for health reasons but also to guarantee quality reuse and recycling.

From the Institute for Policy Studies: Join us for a day of celebration and exploration of the new economy. There will be interactive workshops that will explore core elements of the New Economy movement. Each session will connect local, national, and global issues. We will learn together about the compelling conceptual framework that unites all of these various pieces and get ideas for creative constructive action.

Come learn why EPA’s Clean Power Plan could accelerate forest cutting and what we can do about it. On Monday, May 4, 7:00-8:30 PM at the Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St., Arlington, VA (Ballston Metro). CONTACT: Susan Bonney, Sierra Club Great Falls Group, sbonney001_at_aol.com.