

UUFVB Social Justice Committee News - September 2015

Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act

Americans are exposed to thousands of chemicals every day, and only a small fraction have ever been adequately tested for safety. Our primary chemical safety law, the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), hasn't been updated for almost 40 years.



After years of debate and inaction, a bipartisan group of Senators has introduced legislation – the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act – that fixes the biggest problems with our current law. With 40 cosponsors from both parties, a narrow window has opened to pass meaningful reform that protects the health of American families.

This bill would for the first time require safety reviews for all new and existing chemicals. The proposal also provides explicit protections for people most vulnerable to the effects of toxic chemicals, like infants and pregnant women, with deadlines for all EPA decisions.

Here are the vital fixes the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act will make:

- Mandates safety reviews for all chemicals currently in use, and requires a safety finding for new chemicals before they can enter the market.
- Replaces the law's onerous safety standard—the one that prevents the EPA from banning asbestos—with a health-based safety standard.
- Enhanced authority to the EPA to require testing.
- Concrete, aggressive deadlines for all EPA decisions.
- And it makes more information about chemicals available by limiting companies' ability to hide chemical safety data.

Encourage Sen. Nelson and Rubio to support this act.

[Source: <http://www.edfaction.org/campaigns/toxic-chemicals>]

Four Ways to Lower Your “Food Print”

Eat less meat and dairy - Animals raised for meat consumption and dairy create about 1/5 of man-made greenhouse gas, even more than all transportation combined. That's because 10 billion animals a year means a lot of manure which adds up to a lot of methane and nitrous oxide gases, two very potent greenhouse gases. Chicken and fish have a much lower food print.

Choose fish wisely - Fish is a great substitute for meat, but only if from sustainably sourced seafood. Many fish populations are stressed from overfishing and destructive fishing practices. Look for sustainably sourced seafood labels.

Buy local, organic produce in season - Long-running studies show that organic farming is far more effective at removing greenhouse pollution from the atmosphere and fixing it as beneficial organic matter in the soil than current industrial farming practices. Eating organic local produce in season also reduces the number of “food miles” necessary to get food onto the table. Fewer miles means less greenhouse pollution.



Reduce waste - Nearly half of all food in the United States is thrown away before it's consumed. It's now estimated that 25% of all freshwater and 4% of all oil consumed in this country are used to produce food that is never eaten. Get in the habit of buying only what you can eat and make room in the menu for leftovers.

Reduce packaging - Get in the habit of bringing your own shopping bags to the store. Choose recyclable packaging when possible (no Styrofoam egg cartons!).

You can calculate your meal's “foodprint” with the Bon Appetit calculator found at <http://www.eatlowcarbon.org>

The Social Justice Committee invites you to Dinner and a Movie on Tuesday, Nov. 10. The dinner will feature vegetarian and vegan dishes (including dessert) with locally grown, organic, non-GMO, and/or Fair Trade ingredients as much as possible. Cost is \$10. The film (“Fed Up” - narrated and produced by Katie Couric) discusses the causes of America's obesity problem with its accompanying increase in diabetes, liver, and heart disease and how changing our eating habits can make us healthier. Dinner at 5:30 PM in Fellowship Hall is open to UUFVB members and friends and their guests. Please sign-up on the rolling cart and pay your money in the office. Film at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary is open to the public. Questions? See Bonnie Howard or Nancy Stiefel.



Large Grocery Chain Joins Fair Food Program, but Not Yet Publix or Kroger's

In late July the Coalition of Immokalee Workers announced that Ahold

USA became the first major grocer to join their Fair Food Program. Ahold's joining the Fair Food Program is the latest success in CIW efforts that began nearly two decades ago.

The Fair Food program includes numerous proactive provisions, like protecting workers' rights to organize and educate each other. The Social Justice Information Table has more information about CIW and the Fair Food Program.

[Source:

<http://www.allianceforfairfood.org/news/2015/8/4/media-abuzz-with-news-of-ciw-agreement-with-ahold>]

Concerns About Drinking Water in Florida

One of the major impacts on the Indian River Lagoon is our traditional landscaping concept of green lawns. Lawns require massive amounts of chemicals, water, and fossil fuels. If you are considering about an alternative to a lawn based landscape, you'll want to attend a presentation by botanist, gardener, and author Ginny Stibolt. On Sunday, Oct. 11th, at 2:00 PM, she will present "The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape" at Vero Beach Book Center in Miracle Mile.

Judy Orcutt supplied this information:

Florida Power & Light has purchased land in Okeechobee County, bordering IRC and controlled by SJRWMD. FPL plans to apply for a consumptive use permit for 9 million gallons per day of water from the Floridan aquifer. That is more than the entire city of Vero Beach uses! Watch the media for more on this issue!

The Florida Senate realizes that adequate fresh water is going to be a problem for Florida in the future. They ordered DEP to conduct a study about alternative sources of drinking water. They are even advocating for cleaning of sewage water (reclaimed water) to use as potable water, which is already happening in some parts of Florida. Other sources of potential potable water are storm sewer water and excess surface water. To read more of the August DEP report, go to :

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/reuse/docs/sb536/SB536-Report-Draft.pdf>

A More Humane Holiday Season

(by Laura Castle and Maryanne Schreiber of the Social Justice Committee)

As the Holiday Season approaches, please consider the option of enjoying vegetarian meals that do not include dead, decaying carcasses from traumatized, mistreated turkeys and other animals. The holidays are an ideal time to consider the reasons for not eating meat.



According to Travis McKnight in the August 4, 2014, issue of *The Guardian*, "Livestock production is among the most

destructive forces driving climate change: it degrades air quality, pollutes waterways, and is the single largest use of land... Raising animals to eat produces more greenhouse gases than all of the carbon dioxide excreted by automobiles, boats, planes, and trains in the world combined."

Life on factory farms is a living hell with animals subjected to mutilation of their beaks and their toes cut off to reduce the aggression that results from overcrowding into packed pens. Furthermore, animal processing plants are among the most dangerous work places, due to fast line speeds, dirty sloppy work floors and poor training of their exploited workers.

If you are not ready to go full vegetarian, a list of some of the more humane places to buy your Thanksgiving or Christmas turkey and other meats will be present on the Social Justice Information Table in Fellowship Hall every Sunday morning.



For the full article by McKnight, go to:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/04/climate-change-impact-vegetarian>

