On the Bright Side
New Office in Justice Dept. to Fight Environmental Racism

Julia Kane, Grist

The Biden administration on May 5th unveiled a new government office for communities that have been targeted and plagued by polluters for decades.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is launching its first-ever Office of Environmental Justice, which, along with other federal agencies, will bring cases against polluters and prioritize communities most affected by environmental harm.


The new environmental justice office commits the DOJ to fighting these problems by “vigorously and transparently working to secure environmental justice . . . in communication with the communities most affected by the violations of federal law,” Garland said.

The Office of Environmental Justice will be led by Cynthia Ferguson, an attorney in the department’s Environmental and Natural Resources Division.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan noted the return of “supplemental environmental impact statements as a law enforcement mechanism the Trump administration had banned. The projects allow convicted polluters to fund local anti-pollution initiatives as part of penalties for breakdowns.

The U.S. and Germany have agreed to export highly radioactive waste fuel from the Jülich Research Center in Germany to the U.S. Energy Department’s Savannah River Site (SRS) in Aiken, South Carolina. Critics say that the transfer would appear to violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and has been put on hold.

According to the watchdog group SRS Watch, the Jülicher Nuclear Waste Management Company (JEN), located near the German-Dutch border, has large quantities of radioactive graphite pebbles that fueled Germany’s now defunct gas-cooled reactors. SRS Watch originally agreed to import and process, and ultimately dump the German waste fuel at the SRS — and perhaps elsewhere in the U.S. However, objections raised by SRS Watch, and by German colleagues opposed to the export, resulted in new agreements between the SRS and JEN to commercialize the processing of irradiated graphite fuel, which includes both low- and highly enriched uranium.

These agreements also stand in violation of the nuclear weapons non-proliferation policies under the

U.S. Renewable Energy Output Surges Ahead of Nuclear

By Lindsay Potter

In 2021 domestic renewable energy — wind, hydro-electric, solar, biomass, and geothermal — outpaced nuclear power for the second year running, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) found. Clean sources were responsible for 79% of megawatt-hours (MWh), 21% of energy production, while nuclear totaled 778 million MWh, or 20%. Solar Power Industry Mag reported April 26, 2022, that wind, the greatest source of renewable energy in the U.S., increased outputs by 12% in 2021 (14% in 2020), and utility-scale solar produced 28% more in 2021 (26% in 2020). The EIA predicts an additional 10% hike in renewable energy in 2022.

By 2050, the EIA predicts that wind and solar technologies will become as affordable as natural gas, as nuclear and coal continue to fall out of use. To make way for clean energy Congress must sever ties with the nuclear industry as additional evidence that nuclear power is dying.

Competitive clean energy casts shade on the need for nuclear, as the industry flounders to innovate and expend economic technology. Given the minimum of 10-15 years needed to bring new Small Modular Reactors online, trials in Argentina, China, and Russia have been unimpressive. Furthermore, WSNIS announced “net capacity addition” fell for nuclear to 0.4 gigawatts (GW) and rose more than 250 GW in the renewable sector last year, leading the report to conclude “nuclear is irrelevant in today’s electricity capacity newbuild market.”

The NWSIS noted that nuclear, health effects, climate change effects, the global impact of COVID-19, and “brigery, corruption, and counterfeiting” in the nuclear industry as additional evidence that nuclear power is dying.

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Congress Approves Two-Year Extension of Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

Both the House and U.S. Senate have approved a two-year extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act or RECA, a federal law that compensates some of the U.S. residents who were exposed to radiation during the Cold War.

The act was implemented in 1990, but expires in July unless the extension is signed into law by President Biden. The extension is intended to provide time to craft a larger expansion of the program that could last until 2040.

The law allows one-time payouts for downwinders, who breathe in radioactive dust from their neighborhoods, towns, or in Poetry and environmentalism, Lindsay has spent several years farming and now dedicates her time to getting back to the land, caring for family, and participating in community grassroots organizing for social, racial, and environmental justice. Most recently Lindsay focused on two projects: working in Occoquan, Virginia to protect the groundwater and the Susquehanna River from harmful frac sand mining practices at the North 40 Mine, particularly as a member of the Town Board Committee drafting a new ordinance in Occoquan, Virginia to protect the groundwater and the Susquehanna River from harmful frac sand mining practices at the North 40 Mine.

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Lindsay Potter carrying 14-month-old Riley this past winter on the Powelbrow Lands Trust, home to Nukewatch.

Nukewatch Welcomes Lindsay Potter

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