

GREEN ORGANIZING ACTION TEAM:

“GOAT NOAT” FOR FEBRUARY 2019

As always, GOAT has much news. Here are 2 articles about different ways to transform our environmental leadings into reality.

John McKusick with Maryland State Assembly news:

The Maryland State Assembly is in session and considering a number of environmental bills. Based upon input from Homewood Friends on a survey* conducted in December and early January, GOAT is urging Friends to support passage of two particular pieces of legislation: the Clean Energy Jobs Act and a Statewide Ban on Polystyrene Foam.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act sets Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requirements for Maryland to reach 50% clean, renewable energy used to generate electricity by 2030 with a confirmed plan to reach 100% by 2040. See more information at Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act (MCEJA). Despite the very good outlook for the bill's passage, we must be sure that the bill is not watered down and that the Governor supports it. Currently, incinerated trash is included in the state's RPS calculation despite the fact that “trash to energy” operations produce health threatening air and water pollution. The MECJA would eliminate trash for cash deals.

Several jurisdictions in Maryland have already passed bans on the use of polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam) by restaurants and food markets. This includes Baltimore and Annapolis. A statewide ban would significantly diminish trash and pollution of Maryland's streams and coastlines. See more information at Trash Free Maryland: Polystyrene Foam Ban in Maryland.

At the time of this writing, specific bill numbers have not been assigned to these pieces of legislation. GOAT will provide updates on the progress of these bills during the Assembly session that runs until April 8th. We will also provide guidance as to how Friends can learn more about these bills and engage in advocacy for them.

*Thirty members and attenders completed the survey of topics and issues of greatest concern. The top issues identified were ***Plastics Pollution: Understanding and Responding to the Grave Threat to the Planet*** and ***How to Become an Effective Advocate for Climate Justice***.

Bess Keller on Working with GreenFaith:

This school year I am a “fellow” with GreenFaith, an interfaith coalition for the environment that seeks to help people of faith increase the number and effectiveness of environmental stewards. Homewood Friends and GOAT are serving as one of my two institutional sponsors. (The other is Friends of Herring Run Parks).

A central feature of the fellowship is creating a network of faith-oriented environmental activists from around the world. Two retreats, one in November and the other in May 2019, are an important means to that end. About 20 fellows gathered last month for the first retreat at a Catholic retreat center near Newark, NJ, to

- meet one another in person, share religious traditions and environmental interests,
- learn about GreenFaith's approach to organizing, and
- visit “brown field” sites in and near Newark that have been the subject of GreenFaith's and

others' environmental justice work.

Fellows hailed from the U.S. coasts and Colorado, Chile, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Philippines. We were Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Christian. I was the only Quaker. The sense of urgency about climate change and disruption was palpable in the group.

The one other fellow from Maryland and I traveled to New Jersey together. Kori, who lives in Cheverly, is an African-American, a Muslim very active in her masjid, the mother of five daughters and a Girl Scout leader. Her masjid is planning for a new building, which will be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. For her GreenFaith project, she wants to develop the guidelines that will make the practices in the masjid as green as the new building.

Ideas for my GreenFaith project are welcome! And please, ask me questions about GreenFaith or the fellowship program.

Committee members: Carol Beck, Caitlyn Behnke, Gary Gillespie, Cathy Hanson, Polly Heninger (clerk), Bess Keller, John McKusick, and Stephan Rogers. We are an open committee. Join us!