

STATEHOUSE SPOTLIGHT WEEK 2

This is the second weekly report designed to inform CAC board and staff, as well as CAC members and the general public regarding our activities and work during the 2020 Indiana General Assembly.

CAC staff attended multiple hearings and coalition meetings this week. We're following more than forty bills with more legislation continuing to appear through the public process as we speak. By the week's end 912 separate pieces of legislation had been filed including 457 Senate bills and 455 House bills.

Much of the Statehouse was centered on Governor Eric Holcomb's fourth State of the State speech Tuesday night.

We were disheartened again when Governor Holcomb failed to name clean energy and lowering utility bills a policy priority for his administration. He said nothing about the clean energy revolution and instead claimed Indiana's water and air quality have never been better despite routine rankings as some of the worst air and worst water quality in the nation.

ENERGY

We saw it coming and here it is: the coal bailout bill, authored by Rep. Ed Soliday (R-Valparaiso). House Bill 1414 obstructs Indiana's electric utilities' ability to retire their dirty, expensive, and outdated coal-fired power plants. More from the IBJ here.

WATER QUALITY

Last Monday we saw a disappointing bill move out of the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee. Senate Bill 229, authored by Sen. Victoria Spartz (R-Noblesville) that will damage and possibly destroy wetlands by exempting drain reconstruction from the wetland rule. Indiana has lost more than 85% of its original wetlands according to the EPA and we're deeply concerned this bill will make things worse. This bill moved through committee with a vote of 6-2 and is on the Senate calendar for Monday, where it will be eligible for amendments.

We testified in House Environmental Affairs this week supporting House Bill 1265, which will require schools to test for lead in their drinking water. Lead can get in the water from pipes and fixtures, especially in older school buildings. While the bill was not voted on, we encouraged the committee to support the bill and thanked Rep. Carolyn Jackson (D-Hammond) for her authoring the bill. The Committee also discussed House Bill 1257 by Rep. Pat Boy (D-Michigan City). HB 1257 seeks to improve notification requirements when toxic chemical spills occur. These releases have been in the news quite a bit in the last year. Rep. Boy's bill will expand penalties for failure to properly notify downstream interests and water users. No action was taken on HB 1257 but we expect the topic to reappear in future meetings of the committee, perhaps in the form of House Bill 1337 by Rep. Ryan Hatfield (D-Evansville).



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LOOKUP YOUR LEGISLATORS

*Legislators need to hear
from you!*

The House Utilities Committee met this week to discuss bills but nothing on our naughty or nice list.

The Senate Utilities Committee met and discussed a water and wastewater utilities bill, Senate Bill 254. The bill is designed to extend the authority to replace customer-owned lead service lines to municipal and non-profit utilities, which we strongly support. The bill will also provide the water and wastewater utilities a new tracker, or a rider on your monthly bill, to more quickly recover the costs related to health and safety concerns, primarily water contaminants like PFAS.

We had concerns with how broad and generous the tracker was in the introduced bill. However, there was an amendment adopted in Committee which mostly addressed our concerns and we ultimately supported the bill. The legislation and committee hearing was covered by Indiana Public Media in their story "Bill Would Help Smaller Utilities Address Lead In Drinking Water."



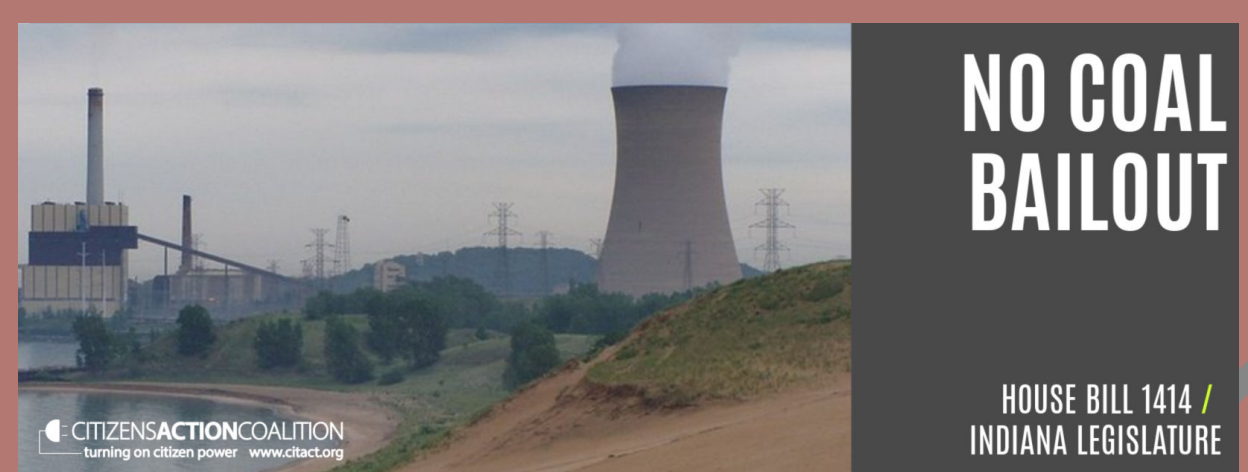
KERWIN OLSON
TESTIFIES ON SB 254

UPCOMING THIS WEEK

The House Utilities Committee will likely meet on Wednesday. It is expected that among other bills, the Committee will hear House Bill 1414, otherwise known as the **coal bailout bill**. It has already been widely covered by the media, including by the Indianapolis Business Journal, Indiana utilities would be prevented from shutting down coal-fired plants under new bill.

Take action on the Coal Bailout Bill by emailing your legislators here.

Get involved and use the social media hashtag #NoCoalBailout



The Senate Utilities Committee will meet on Thursday and hear Senate Bill 411, a horrible bill which would provide a tracker to the electric utilities to charge captive customers the costs related to leasing excess bandwidth capacity to telecommunications carriers. Last time we checked, electric consumers pay for assets necessary to provide electricity, not broadband services.

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