

It's the latest edition of the MountainTrue Raleigh Report. In this week's update...Clean Power Plan debuts, budget deal inches along and a solar witch-hunt.

Clean Power Plan

Last week, the EPA released its much-anticipated Clean Power Plan (CPP), which requires states to develop plans to reduce carbon emissions from coal-fired plants by 32% by 2030. You can read more about the CPP's implications for our state in the [EPA's Fact Sheet](#).

North Carolina's investments in renewable energy would make it fairly easy for the state to achieve the targets as established. Alas, Gov. Pat McCrory's administration is so ideologically opposed to the CPP that it announced its intention to challenge the plan in court. NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources Sec. Don Van der Vaart's staff, urged legislators this week to approve measures that would allow North Carolina to comply with just enough of the rules to trigger a federally-imposed plan and make such a challenge possible.

Never mind that reducing pollution from coal-fired power plants will cut premature deaths from power plant emissions by nearly 90 percent in 2030 compared to 2005. Or that it will decrease the pollutants that cause asthma attacks in kids by more than 70 percent.

Last issue we told you that Rep. McGrady's bill (H571) to begin a stakeholder implementation process of the CPP was hijacked in a Senate committee. Well the bill was subjected to a few more changes this week before passing the Senate on a party-line vote.. Per DENR's request, the bill now only requires the Department to submit a carbon emission reduction plan based solely on efficiency improvements, making it impossible for North Carolina to meet its targets. That would ultimately result in the federal government imposing a plan on the state.

The future of H571 is unclear. The bill will now return to the House, where it is unlikely to be met with agreement. Whether a bill emerges from conference before the end of the session is anyone's guess at this point.

Robin Smith, a former DENR assistant secretary and special deputy attorney general, has an informative discussion of North Carolina's response to the CPP, its implications, and its backstory, on her [blog](#).

[Contact Governor McCrory](#) today and tell him to get out of the way of the progress of the Clean Power Plan. Tell him to support the CPP and move North Carolina – and our nation – in the right direction.

Budget Limp Along

There were signs last week of some progress toward a budget deal. The Senate appears to have removed two roadblocks – Medicaid reform and sales tax reform – from negotiations and, ultimately, a budget deal. How fast the two chambers resolve other budget differences remains to be seen, but it is still unlikely that a deal is reached before the continuing resolution expires on August 14th.

Solar Bashing

The House Appropriations subcommittee for Natural & Economic Resources (NER Approps) met last week for what was supposed to be a presentation on the disposal of old solar panels. But because renewable energy appears to be a force of evil (at least in the minds of some legislators), the discussion quickly devolved into an ad hominem attack on solar power, with the solar industry stuck playing defense.

You can read the presentations from the hearing on the General Assembly's [website](#).

Here's hoping we have some better news to share with you next issue. Don't forget to contact Governor McCrory and tell him to support the Clean Power Plan!