

Welcome to the latest issue of the Raleigh report. In this week's issue...They're baaacckk, MountainTrue treks to Raleigh, energy bills gaining steam and much more.

Back from Break

Legislators returned from "Spring Break" ready to get down to business. The House bill filing deadline for non-appropriations bills this week resulted in a total of 1,653 bills in both chambers so far this year.

MountainTrue in Raleigh

Julie Mayfield, Bob Wagner, Southern Regional Office director Mark Stierwalt, and a MountainTrue member went to Raleigh last week to meet with legislators to talk about third party energy sales, the renewable energy tax credit and other WNC issues. Thanks to Rep. Michele Presnell, Rep. Josh Dobson and Sen. Dan Soucek for chatting with us. We had quick visits with Rep. John Ager and Rep. Brian Turner, and we waived at Susan Fisher from the House gallery. We also had a productive meeting with DENR Secretary Donald R. van der Vaart about coal ash.

Be sure to follow us on Twitter -- @MtnTrue -- for more updates on our visits to Raleigh and even more news from the General Assembly. Look for the #MTRaleigh hashtag.

Update on Third Party Sales

Last issue we told you about the Energy Freedom Act ([HB245](#)), which would, for the first time, allow customers and businesses to purchase electricity directly from renewable energy companies--a practice known as third party sales.

The bill is currently in House Public Utilities Committee, and work continues to line up support. With legislators back from break, now is a good time to let them know you support energy freedom. None of the three legislators we met with -- Presnell, Dobson, or Soucek -- voiced clear support for it, so please contact them if they represent you. [Click here to make your voice heard!](#)

The News & Observer also ran an [editorial](#) on the bill this week. As you can see, the piece was a bit of a mixed bag, with plenty of Duke Energy talking points. It would be great to send some letters to the editor in response, telling personal stories about why third party sales would be good. You can [submit letters to the editor](#) through the N&O's website.

More (Bad) Energy News

North Carolina made history in 2007, becoming the first state in the Southeast to adopt a Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard, called REPS. The law says utilities have to generate increasing amounts of energy from renewable energy sources or from increased efficiency, with increasing targets over time. The law sets an ultimate target of for utility companies of 12.5 percent produced through renewable measures by 2012.

A [bill](#) sponsored by two chairs of the House Public Utilities Committee -- Jeff Collins of Nash County and Harry Warren of Rowan County, Majority Leader (and friend of Duke Energy), Mike Hager of Rutherford County and Rep. Chris Millis of Pender County would cut that target by half. It makes the final target 6 percent, this year's benchmark, and ends the mandate in 2018.

The future of this legislation is unclear but we'll be watching – because undoing the gains that North Carolina has made in green energy investment would be bad for energy conservation and bad for our economy.

Clean Power Plan

The House Committee on Environment considered H571, Implementation of Carbon Dioxide Regulations, last week. Sponsored by Henderson County legislator Rep. Chuck McGrady, the bill requires DENR to develop a draft plan to respond to the requirements of Obama's [Clean Power Plan](#).

Rep. Mike Hager (Rutherford-R) is a cosponsor of the bill, which even he noted, "represents Heaven and Hell come together, not sure which is which." DENR expressed concerns about the bill, with DENR Asst. Secretary Tom Reeder saying "this is not the best time to sign a blank check for whatever it is EPA wants us to do."

The committee gave the bill a favorable report on a voice vote, with two loud dissenting noes from Reps. Dixon (Duplin-R) and Collins (Franklin-R), and it passed in the House Monday. If Rep. McGrady represents you, please thank him for sponsoring this bill.

Melissa Williams
MountainTrue
melissa@mountaintrue.org
www.MountainTrue.org
(828) 258-8737, ext. 216