LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

WORC, DRC MEMBERS PROTEST PROPOSED NEPA CHANGES

DRC, ND HEMP ASSOCIATION TEAM UP ON EDUCATION AND JOB CREATION

RENEWABLE ENERGY REPORT RELEASED

'Death to Harm' Film Showing a Success

DRC members and community members of Valley City and Fargo ND gathered to watch 'Right to Harm'. 'Right to Harm' is an exposé on the public health impact of factory farming across the United States, told through the eyes of residents in five rural communities. The film explores the devastating public health impacts of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations or CAFOs. These facilities produce millions of gallons of untreated waste that destroy the quality of life for nearby neighbors, throughout the United States. Filmed across the country, the documentary chronicles the failures of state agencies to regulate industrial animal agriculture. You can hear more about the film from director Matt Welcher on the Dakota Resource Council Podcast on our website.

After the film DRC members Randy Coon and Liane Stout answered questions from the crowd, including members of Buffalo Concerned Citizens, about how the fight against a potential hog farm has affected their lives. DRC member Liane Stout said, “I was worried that this movie was going to be too long,” as she addressed the crowd of 40 people in Valley City, “but now I honestly think it was too short. Many people from Buffalo can watch this movie and say this is exactly what we went through.”

(Story Continued on Page 3)
Hello Everybody,

Well, last night my favorite weather lady assured me that we should get a week of high 30's to low 50's...that tells me we've got a good jump on winter, I hope!

Anyway, you'll see that our staff is working on a lot of issues right now. Ag and Food's involvement in hemp and COOL looks very promising.

Even though most of us didn't have the opportunity to watch “Right to Harm”, DRC purchased one more showing. Whether you are urban or rural, I'd recommend driving to see it. I know I will.

Now, on a personal note, Lead Organizer Liz Anderson is taking some time to help her dad with a critical course of medicine in an attempt to save his vision, so please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Finally, with all of the concerning issues both nationally and statewide that seem to be affecting integrity and common sense, I hope the powers that be can come together and remember what it means to find true common ground. Stay safe!

Take Care,

Curt
The community event at the Barnes County Museum was open to the public with members and non-members mingling long after the forum was over. The Barnes County Historical Society captured the event on film for their archives. Sunday brought another successful showing in Fargo with around 40 people eager to learn about the effects of CAFOs that are proposed in rural communities in North Dakota. Curt Stofferahn, Lee Fraase, and Randy Coon sat on the panel at the Fargo showing. Crowd participation was high and they listened intently as the panelist shared their story. Evaluate what your local legislators are doing and where they stand was a theme for the Fargo showing. Curt Stofferahn said, “If you value rural recreation you should care about CAFO’s.” After months of preparation DRC would like to thank everyone that volunteered to help and make this project a success. Our goal is to build a statewide organization to stop CAFOs wherever they start and promote sustainable agriculture across the state. If you are interested in being a part of the CAFO fight, please email Sam Wagner at sam@drcinfo.com.

**NEPA Rollback**

DRC and Ft. Berthold POWER member, Lisa DeVille, testifying in front of the CEQ in Denver, Co on February 11.

DRC and Ft. Berthold POWER members, Lisa and Walter Deville, along with other community leaders from across the Western U.S., traveled to Denver, Colorado, on February 11 to testify at a hearing held by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regarding the potential rollback of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In the public hearing, farmers, ranchers, tribal

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**Oil & Gas**

**Bonding and Reclamation**

When oil and gas wells on federal lands are not properly managed, taxpayers end up paying the cost. Specifically abandoned wells without a clear owner or an owner that can be held liable, must be cleaned up with taxpayer money.

“When these wells become orphaned the operator’s bond held by BLM is not sufficient to cover reclamation costs. BLM regulations set minimum bond values at $10,000 for all of an operator’s wells on an individual lease, $25,000 on an individual lease, $25,000 for all of an operator’s wells in a state, and $150,000 for all of an operator’s wells nationwide.” To combat this issue, in September of 2019, California Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D) introduced House Resolution (HR) 4346 (Bonding Reform and Taxpayer Protection Act of 2019). HR 4346 would increase the amount of bond that oil and gas developers must post before being allowed to drill on public and tribal lands. This bill is not completely ideal, but it is a start. As of today, bonding and reclamation assurances haven’t been adjusted for inflation since the 1960s. Fort Berthold POWER and DRC are establishing relationships with North Dakota delegates and the MHA leadership on FBIR to help with updating this issue and to gain support for this bill or others like it that would improve bonding and reclamation assurances.

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The 'Right to Harm Panel' featured DRC members. From Left to Right: Curt Stofferahn, Lee Fraase & Randy Coon.
Under the proposed rules, government agencies could ignore the landscape-scale or global impacts of a project, such as climate change; public participation would be reduced to the lowest legal amount and complex environmental reviews would be subject to arbitrary time and page limits. The proposal also explicitly allows a project applicant, such as a company proposing to mine or drill public minerals on tribal lands, to prepare its own environmental impact statement and removes the prohibition on hiring contractors that have conflicts of interest, such as financial ties to the applicant.

Lisa Deville testified saying that, “For tribal communities like Fort Berthold, which bear the brunt of health problems such as heart disease and asthma from the poorly planned federal projects, NEPA isn’t just an environmental protection law, it’s a critical tool for ensuring our voice. We cannot afford to lose it. Any law that provides broad opportunities for public participation in government decisions that affect the environment and local communities shouldn’t be rolled back; rather, laws like NEPA should be embraced and strengthened. NEPA is one of the only avenues for tribal members to have any input on federal actions.”

“LAWS LIKE NEPA SHOULD BE EMBRACED AND STRENGTHENED. NEPA IS ONE OF THE ONLY AVENUES FOR TRIBAL MEMBERS TO HAVE ANY INPUT ON FEDERAL ACTIONS.”

LISA DeVILLE
CO-FOUNDER, PROTECTORS OF WATER AND EARTH RIGHTS

BLM Methane and Fracking Rules

The campaigns for the BLM Methane and Fracking rule lawsuit are now in their final stages of decision making in the California Supreme Court. Oral arguments for the BLM Fracking rule were given in January and the oral arguments for the BLM Methane rule will be given in early March. The ruling on these lawsuits could be handed down in early to late spring of 2020. Keep an eye on DRC’s Facebook page and website for any updates.

Trade War Part 2: North Dakota: Spinning Numbers to Save Face

The Phase 1 deal between China and the US is slowly starting to release more details about terms and conditions of the agreement. The deal seems favorable when viewed as simply a number. The Chinese agree to 80 billion dollars over 2 years with an average of 40 billion a year. The deal allows China some flexibility to buy goods as it sees fit as long as it hits that number by the end of 2021. Purchases that will count towards the 80 billion dollar deal will start February 15. As of February 4th, the markets have been moving upwards as news that the Corona Virus is causing panic worldwide. China will have to respond to their people hoarding food supplies in the long term, but in the short term China has not committed to buying US soybeans, or many other US goods for that matter. This makes sense because there is no use buying goods until it starts counting towards the trade agreement. After the February 15th deadline markets will expect China to start buying from the US in larger quantities.

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DRC Temporarily Closes Office, Cancels Future Events Until Further Notice

Dear DRC Member,

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dakota Resource Council will be closing our physical office in Bismarck to the public to reduce our staff and members from exposure. DRC staff will be working remotely by utilizing phone and online conferencing for any meetings that were once face to face. All work-related travel has been suspended until further notice.

In addition, all planned DRC events will be cancelled until further notice. If meetings can be held via teleconference or video conference, we will consider utilizing those options.

We will continue to monitor recommendations coming from our public health experts and update you as soon as things change.

If you would like to stay updated on the COVID-19 Virus or would like more information, please use the recommended resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH).

Stay safe,

Scott Skokos
Executive Director

DRC PODCAST

Catch the DRC Podast! The Dakota Resource Council podcast is an update with organization news, member profiles & interviews. We also talk with experts that are involved with issues that affect our members. You can download our podcast on iTunes, visit drcpodcast.buzzsprout.com, go to drcinfo.com and scroll to the bottom of the page or watch for updates on our Facebook Page!
Ag & Food

Base building is never easy. It takes a lot of talking to people, listening to them and most importantly, following up. For the past couple months I have been working with DRC members to ensure that the Right to Harm film showings go well. With this initial event we can start to build a coalition of people across the state to band together against factory farming and be ready for whatever 2020 throws at us. DRC will continue to work towards our goal of reinstating mandatory Country of Origin Labeling and will have many chances in 2020 to make that goal a reality. We will also be bringing you stories about farmers affected by our trade war this year. By working together, DRC will have many Ag & Food victories to celebrate this coming October at our annual meeting but that won’t happen without the help of members like you.

Are you ready to follow up, too?

Sam Wagner

DRC Visits the Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Expo

DRC Field organizer Sam Wagner and members Curt Stofferahn and Randy Coon, tabled at the Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Expo on January 24th and 25th in Fargo North Dakota. This outreach effort met the 400 people who attended the expo and provided educational material promoting DRC events. Over 50 newsletters were handed out promoting DRC.

DRC Partners with North Dakota Hemp Association on Education and Job Creation Projects

DRC attended the North Dakota Hemp Association (NDHA) membership drive on February 6th to help promote an alliance to grow the newly legalized hemp industry. With this partnership we hope to start educating farmers that hemp is a crop that can reduce our dependence on soybeans and corn, and diversify ND’s markets. By helping with education and entrepreneurial studies, DRC will promote sustainable rural businesses to grow across the state. DRC Member, Michael Graalum of Fargo, North Dakota, is currently working on a study to determine the viability of a hemp paper mill located in Hillsboro, North Dakota, in cooperation with Crystal Sugar. The NDHA is also working on education websites to help first time hemp farmers and is looking into doing outreach seminars to educate new farmers about the product. Lastly, the NDHA wants to create a seed database to ensure that farmers have a resource to research the quality of the product that they are

Visit our website at drcinfo.org to join, renew or to catch up on news and updated blogs!
buying when consumer knowledge is still relatively low. If you are interested in learning more about how you can grow hemp, contact Ag and Food Organizer Sam Wagner (sam@drcinfo.com).

**COOL & US Beef Integrity Act Update**

After being held up for nearly a year in the House of Representatives, the USMCA was passed in the Senate on January 16th and was signed by the President January 29th. Although many concessions were made to make the agreement more appealing to organizations such as the Farmers Union and the AFL-CIO, mandatory COOL was still not reinstated. DRC and WORC are disappointed with the decision, but there is still pressure to reopen the agreement to amend it. In the past both George W. Bush and Barack Obama reopened NAFTA and changed the terms and conditions of various sections of the agreement. The US Beef Integrity Act is still in committee in the Senate and would change the USDA regulations stating what can and cannot be labeled “Product of the USA”. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has voiced support for the rule change but this is not mandatory COOL. Contact Senator Hoeven (202) 224-2551) and Cramer (202-224-2043) to let them know Mandatory COOL is truly what we want.

**Booker’s Farmers Bill of Rights**

Sen Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) along with U.S. Representatives Deb Haaland (D-NM) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME) have submitted a Farmers Bill of Rights into the United States Senate. While a longshot to pass through committee, this bill has some very substantial reforms to a system that desperately needs it.

**The Farmers Bill of Rights**

- Highlights the challenges facing our family farmers and ranchers, including historically underserved farmers and ranchers.
- Recommends a strict cap on foreign ownership in order to ensure that all American farmers can access domestic farm land.
- Gives historically underserved farmers and ranchers access to capital and an equal voice against increasing corporate concentration and abusive practices in America’s farm and food markets.

**Trade War Stories**

DRC Organizer Sam Wagner will be traveling next month to interview farmers affected by the U.S. China Trade War. This spring and summer, DRC will be bringing you their stories. This is a DRC story-telling project. If you are interested in telling your story, please contact Sam Wagner at sam@drcinfo.com.

In addition, we will continue to update you on the Phase 1 deal with China on our blog, which can be found by visiting drcinfo.com and clicking “DRC Blog” on our homepage.

In late February, Dakota Resource Council released a Renewable Energy Survey Report to learn what North Dakotans think about renewable energy. It is becoming increasingly important that ND diversify its energy sources, so that North Dakota can build healthier communities, lower carbon emissions, address man-made climate change, decrease reliance on foreign powers, reduce pollution, and increase community resilience, especially in rural places.

Here's what we wanted to know:

- Is there a difference in support for solar versus wind in ND?

- What are the perceived barriers to implementing renewable energy projects as an individual and in a larger community?

- What do people like about renewable energy?

- What do people think about ND going 100% renewable by 2030?

- Is there a difference in support between rural and urban areas?

Solar Energy:

- Ages 45 - 54 have the largest percentage of undecided (40.7%) followed by ages 55-64 (37.9%)

- The largest support for solar comes from age groups 25-34 and 35-44 at 52.6% and 55.2%, respectively

- Urban - 61.9% would support solar projects (11.9% oppose)

- Small Town - 57% would support solar projects (14.9% oppose)

- Open Countryside - 37.3% would support solar projects (23.9% oppose)

Wind Energy:

- Ages 65+ have the largest percentage of opposition at 31.2%

- Small Town - 60.5% would support wind projects (20.2% oppose)

- Open Countryside - 43.3% would support wind projects (25.3% oppose)

- 47.5% of respondents are in support of wind projects in ND, the majority of which identified as Urban or Small Town. The majority of those opposed to such projects identifies as Open Countryside

More than half of respondents support incorporating renewable energy projects along with other energy sources including fossil fuels. However, there are more than a quarter undecided respondents.

(energy report continued on page 9)
The survey responses indicate a need for education regarding solar and wind power. An increased understanding will allow North Dakotans to make more informed decisions about implementing wind and solar. Through education there is an opportunity to address some of the barriers indicated by respondents.

DRC hopes to build momentum for renewable energy. We can start with conversations around ways renewable energy sources can foster healthier communities and lower carbon emissions which were identified as areas of excitement in the poll.

Efforts should be made to more fully understand why Open Countryside residents oppose wind projects so much more than their Urban and Small Town counterparts. Perhaps part of it is because they would be, or already are, directly impacted by wind projects. It’s true that most wind farms are in Open Country. More conversation is needed before we will know how we can address this barrier.

Respondents are mixed about setting a 2030 goal of 100% renewable energy. 44% of those who support solar projects are undecided about a renewable goal for ND. This suggests more discussion is warranted. There may be an opportunity to educate the public about policies and to grow support for renewable energy in ND.

Lastly, with the world-wide economy trending away from fossil fuels, it will be important for ND to diversify its energy portfolio by expanding its use of renewable energy. To gain more support for this transition, efforts should focus on educating the public about the long-term benefits of renewable energy.

For the full report, visit our Facebook Page and find the link to the report pinned at the top of the news feed or visit: https://drcinfo.org/survey-shows-support-for-renewable-energy-in-nd-education-needed-to-grow-support.

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**DRC Members in the News**

**Increased Funding for Conservation Needed**

Drought, October snow storms 2 years in a row, flooding in November, unstable ag markets - a few reminders that we live in a changing climate and an uncertain world in general. This might be a good time to consider how wetland conservation and restoration can be part of the resiliency that our times require.

Wetlands are lands in the transition between terrestrial and aquatic systems. The water table is at or near the surface or the land is saturated or covered by water at some time during the growing season. Soils and plant types further help to define wetlands, both drained and intact. Depending on how long they retain water, wetlands can be temporary, seasonal, semi-permanent or permanent.

But in common, they all can:
- Decrease flood by retaining at least 1 acre foot of water/acre in their shallow depressions.
- Improve water quality by trapping sediment and nutrients from cropland. Nitrogen and phosphorus cause eutrophication of receiving water bodies leading to alga blooms and fish kills.
Think of the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico and more locally, the outbreaks of blue green alga (cyanobacteria) that cause human and animal sickness. Sequester carbon
Provide habitat for wildlife
• Recharge ground water
• Support biodiversity

Currently there are no accurate estimates of wetland area on a statewide basis; a 1981 estimate is 2,490,000 acres. This represents between a 49% reduction since settlement. That is a lot of water, and often not great quality water, going into our rivers and streams or in times of flooding, our roads, homes and businesses.

What can be done? Landowners with wetlands or drained wetlands on their property can visit their local USDA office to see if their land would qualify for a number of Conservation Reserve Program contracts. These generally are for 10-15 years and pay rates that are close to market rental rates. The rate is locked in at time of entry providing a stable stream of farm income and a hedge against downturns in the farm economy.

Non-Landowners, hunters, anyone concerned with keeping a sustainable environment and the many benefits that flow from maintaining wetlands as an integral part of rural landscapes can spread the word to their landowning friends.

Peak enrollment for nationwide CRP acres was in 2007 at 36.8 million acres. The 2014 Farm Bill capped the acreage at 24 million acres. Although the 2018 bill increases the cap gradually to 27 million acres by 2023, it is never too early to lobby our Congressional legislators, especially Senator Hoeven who sits on the Ag Committee, to support increased funding for the conservation budget in the next scheduled farm bill in 2023.

Dr. Madeline Luke - Valley City, ND

Don't Roll Back NEPA

Native communities have very few opportunities to voice our concern about major projects such as drilling, highways, pipelines right-of-ways, and industrial waste sites in our backyard. Yet the Trump Administration is trying to remove the few opportunities we do have by gutting the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). I stand in strong opposition to the proposed changes, which will without a doubt add poison to our air, dirty our water, and impact our health for generations. Gutting the 40 year old NEPA regulations will result in less public comment, companies writing their own environmental reviews, bulldozed burial sites. We cannot afford to lose our voice in what happens in Fort Berthold and beyond.

For tribal communities like Fort Berthold, which bear the brunt of health problems such as heart disease and asthma from the poorly planned federal projects, NEPA isn't just an environmental protection law, it's a critical tool for ensuring our voice. We cannot afford to lose it. Any law that provides broad opportunities for public participation in government decisions that affect the environment and local communities shouldn't be rolled back, rather laws like NEPA should be embraced and strengthened. NEPA is one of the only avenues for tribal people to have any form of input on federal actions. Tribal communities need to protect NEPA.

NEPA is the main law which gives citizens in Fort Berthold protection from the widespread negative impacts of energy development. This is because NEPA gives communities like Fort Berthold a voice in the decision-making process surrounding energy development. In addition to giving us a voice, NEPA protects indigenous significant historical and cultural sites, burial sites, endangered species, and water. I encourage North Dakota's delegation to reconsider their public support for the wholesale rollback of NEPA and for the public to comment on the NEPA rollback. Deadline to comment is March 10, 2020. http://protectnepa.org/

Lisa DeVille is an enrolled member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, also known as the Three Affiliated Tribes, on the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota. She has lived her whole life in Mandaree, ND with her husband, five children, and five grandbabies. Lisa assisted in creating grassroots group Fort Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights (POWER) and is a member of the Dakota Resource Council (DRC).
The question on everyone’s minds are “What will they buy?” and “How much will they buy?”.

**Near Term Demands and Politics**

China’s action of stating that they will buy 80 billion dollars of agricultural goods suggests that the number was given to the US for purely political reasons. No specific information was given to determine what they would buy. There are also disputes over what commodities count as agricultural products. Giving the US a dollar amount of how much they would buy means that China has the flexibility to buy only what they need and it gives the US an opportunity to claim that they will sell billions of dollars of goods. Corn is expected to be a more valuable commodity for China to purchase than soybeans would be. US markets are showing corn to be competitive in pricing for a quality product at this time of year and the US has a reasonable supply on hand. China’s record keeping has been in doubt regarding the number of pigs, chickens, and stores of soybeans that they have on hand.

Market research shows that when China buys soybeans or corn it goes directly to its people or animals and is consumed or processed almost immediately. It’s estimated that if every Chinese person ate one more pork chop or drumstick of chicken a year, the US couldn’t keep up with demand. Soybean sales would increase because more feed would be sold. The next 30 to 60 days will give us a better idea of what China will want to buy and how badly they need it.

“I can give you more reasons why it would fail than succeed”

Joe Vaclavik, of Standard Grain, reported on AgriTalk radio, Feb 4th, that Brazil is expecting a record soybean harvest this year, with the markets expecting them to have their best February. China claims that the corona virus is affecting purchase of US products. Signs point to economics being the reason they buy from Brazil because market prices are currently cheaper. Speaking about the trade deal Vaclavik said, “I’m not saying that it can’t succeed, at this point I can give you more reasons why it would fail rather than succeed.” The largest question is what can China buy that would get them to the target number as agreed to in the Trade Agreement. Because China can purchase soybeans for a lower price outside of the US and other products count as agricultural, such as lumber or farm equipment US soybeans will likely not be purchased in large quantities. Ethanol could help the US reach the 40 billion dollar goal in the trade agreement. Currently there are disputes about whether ethanol is an energy or agricultural product.

China could be stalling to see if they can renegotiate the terms of the trade agreement by buying what it needs and trying to renegotiate later. The situation will be more clear by August when our market has more hard data.

China is well equipped to play the long game when it comes to trade. The US can try to hold out but it will come at the cost of more subsidies and strained relations with other industries being affected by the trade war who are not receiving subsidies. Most importantly the average farmer will continue to struggle the longer we negotiate.

**Domestic Effects of the Trade War**

The effects of the trade war are far more apparent in North Dakota than other areas of the country because our soybeans go directly to the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Market which is the direct line that sells to the Chinese market. The prevailing thought is that large scale animal agriculture can soften the blow domestically, but that comes with environmental concerns regarding factory farming. Investing in local industries that could process soybeans or planting other crops like hemp would be another effective method to create jobs and build the economy.

**Preparing for 2020**

There is no magic bullet, but most economists agree that the markets aren’t going to return to 2016 levels immediately even with Phase 1 in effect in the best case scenario. Getting back to a market based economy rather than relying on a subsidy check from the government is something that every farmer can agree with. As the usual uncertainty with weather and domestic markets linger, the trade war continues adding extra layer of worry as farmers prepare their risk assessment for the coming year.

The question remains is how long can farmers weather the storm?
I want to join Dakota Resource Council and affect positive change in North Dakota!

Please make your tax-deductible payment to DRC and mail to 1720 Burnt Boat Dr, Ste 104, Bismarck, ND 58503, OR join at drcinfo.org/join

1. Choose membership level
   ___ $1000*Watchdog of the Prairie
   ___ $500 Sustaining
   ___ $250 Supporting
   ___ $100 Century Club
   ___ $55 Household
   ___ $35 Individual
   ___ $15 Student/Senior

2. I ALSO want to join my local affiliate, please choose one at $10.00
   ___ Badlands Area Resource Council
   ___ Fort Berthold Protectors of Water & Earth Rights
   ___ McKenzie County Energy & Taxation Association
   ___ Missouri Valley Resource Council

Name ____________________________________________________________

Address _________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip __________________________________________________

Phone ________________________________ Email ________________________