



***IWSA WEEKLY UPDATE***  
**January 30, 2009**

### ***WTE DEVELOPMENTS***

**The Senate Finance Committee this week approved, with a 14-9 vote, a stimulus package that includes a two-year extension of the production tax credit for waste-to-energy and other renewables.** Consideration by the full Senate is expected next week. This follows on the heels of approval by the House of Representatives of a stimulus bill that includes a three-year extension of the production tax credit for waste-to-energy and other renewables. A table summarizing the provisions in the House and Senate bills is attached to this email.

**EPA's Office of Solid Waste has changed its name to the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery, in order to reflect its heightened focus on conserving resources and recycling waste material.** The reorganization consolidates the previous six divisions into three new divisions. EPA claims that the reorganization recognizes that the program has moved from a traditional emphasis on regulating waste disposal to a more sustainable materials management approach. The three new divisions are: Materials Recovery and Waste Management, headed by Bob Dellinger; Resource Conservation and Sustainability, led by Peter Grevatt; and Program Implementation and Information, directed by Jim Berlow, according to a new organizational chart.

**A group of House Democrats are banding together to promote renewable energy technologies, create green jobs and tackle pollution and climate change.** Reps. Jay Inslee (D-Wash.) and Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) are co-chairmen of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, a new caucus designed to push for policies that promote renewable energy and domestic manufacturing, create "green collar" jobs, help curb global warming and protect the nation's natural resources. Members met recently with Carol Browner, the White House climate and energy czar, to discuss energy and climate policy. The caucus also worked to promote the inclusion of green technology measures in the forthcoming economic stimulus package, including federal funding for advanced-battery manufacturers. Coalition leaders say the group will operate much like the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Democrats or the centrist New Democrats, voting blocs that work together to push their legislative priorities.

**Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) was sworn in this week to fill the Senate seat previously held by Hillary Rodham Clinton.** As noted in the *Weekly Update* last week, Gillibrand wrote an op-ed recently touting the renewable resources, including waste-to-energy, in New York's Hudson Valley. After her swearing in this week, Gillibrand was awarded a seat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, which has primary jurisdiction over climate change. IWSA will be working with her office to ensure that she supports policies that will benefit the ten waste-to-energy facilities in New York.

**A reminder: IWSA has moved.** Our new location is: 1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036. Phone number and email remains the same.

### ***IN THE COMMITTEES***

**IWSA releases** a new position paper on the climate and renewable benefits of waste-to-energy. It is available on [www.wte.org](http://www.wte.org). Check out “What’s New” for January 26. (*Legislative Committee*)

**IWSA participates** in a public debate at the Rotary Club taking the “pro” position with respect to building a new waste-to-energy facility in Frederick County, Maryland. (*Public Affairs Committees*)

**IWSA participates** in a technical summit designed to strengthen the presentation of data used by the solid waste industry to promote our contributions with respect to greenhouse gases. (*Technical Committee*)

### ***RELATED STORIES***

**More than 100 government delegations from all over the world came together in Bonn Jan. 26 for the official launch of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).** The agency's main goal is to increase the market share of renewable energy in energy consumption across the world. IRENA will advise industrial and developing countries on how to finance and advance research on renewable energy, how to facilitate the transfer of renewable energy technology, and how to build international networks. The United States is not a charter member of IRENA. More information on IRENA is available at <http://www.irena.org>. (*Daily Environment Report 1/27/09*)

**The Surface Transportation Board is publishing an interim rule outlining its interpretation of a 2008 law that turns over to states regulation of sites where solid waste is transferred to rail cars for shipment to landfills.** The interim rule, published in the Jan. 27 Federal Register, clarifies that states now have authority over these waste facilities, but it also outlines a petition process under which STB in certain cases can preempt state laws or rules when it comes to the siting of the facilities. The Clean Air Railroads Act of 2008, part of the much larger rail safety bill, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, signed by President Bush in October, effectively closes a loophole in federal law that allowed large piles of garbage to accumulate along rail lines across the country, according to Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), who authored the law. The Clean Railroads Act gave control of the transfer stations to the states, reserving STB authority only over the issuance of land use-exemption permits, which preempt state control. Under the new rule, STB is limited as to when it can issue an exemption. If it grants a land-use exemption to a solid waste rail transfer facility, all state laws, regulations, orders, or other requirements affecting the siting of a facility are preempted with regard to that facility. An exemption might still require compliance with such state laws, regulations, orders, or other requirements, the STB notice said. (*Daily Environment Report 1/27/09*)

**States on both coasts of the United States are discussing the possibility of merging two regional climate initiatives to create a sprawling program restricting greenhouse gas emissions that will affect several economic sectors, one-third of the country and most of Canada.** The move could impose emission limits on sources like cars, businesses and residential heating fuel in 17 states, including along vast stretches of both heavily populated coastlines, and in four of Canada's seven provinces. Such a merger would widely expand the scope of the nation's only cap-and-trade program, launched this month in 10 Eastern states, limiting carbon dioxide emissions from 233 power plants. It also underscores the urgency with which some states are acting to address climate change, even as President Barack Obama settles into the White House after promising to impose federal carbon restrictions. Professional staff members from states participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the East Coast program stretching from Maine to Maryland, are meeting with their counterparts at the more aggressive Western Climate Initiative to lay the groundwork for blending the two programs, according to participants. The plans are in the preliminary stages, though participants believe the programs could coalesce by 2012, when the Western initiative is scheduled to launch. (*ClimateWire 1/28/09*)

**Letter to the Editor: Waste to energy, a 21st century solution:** The latest report on NPR about greenhouse gases was quite dire. [Our political leaders] have a rare opportunity to put the spotlight on our community, which has always been ahead of the curve. All they have to do is say no to outdated solutions regarding the handling of solid waste; say no to landfills which release methane and toxins; say no to transporting our waste to the backyard of some poor folks in North Carolina or in some other state, who don't have a voice; say yes to contracting with private waste management vendors until such time that a viable solution can be reached, choose to be on the right side of environmental justice and work toward a sustainable solution such as creating a waste-to-energy facility, which will incinerate our waste and generate energy. The 21st century is here, and we need a 21st century solution. This is a new age. Let's act prudently and wisely and make this a win-win for all parties and work toward creating a sustainable planet for all of earth's inhabitants. With a slight change of heart and direction, I believe we can make a difference in our fight against global warming. –by Maria Todd (*newsobserver.com 1/28/09*)

**Letter to the Editor: My thoughts on WTE: I would like to make three points about the waste-to-energy facility (WTE) that Frederick County commissioners are considering.** Apparently, the petulant, but self-assured Commissioner Kai J. Hagen has launched one more attack in his anti-WTE battle. First it was about pollution. The anti-WTE people loaded their arguments with emotional and misleading words, vague innuendo, scare tactics, and in at least one case outright lies. Success having eluded them, they switched to financial arguments. Again, conclusive evidence somehow eluded them. Now, Hagen resorts to attacking the integrity of his fellow commissioners. How is it that only Hagen knows the truth? How is it that every other commissioner is incompetent? How is it that Hagen has no concerns about our Virginia neighbors whose land is polluted with our trash? Could he be a NIMBY? Is it OK if someone else has to deal with our trash? Secondly, I would like to point out that The Gazette exhibits bias in its news pages when it uses the word "incinerator" to describe this project, as in "the proposed incinerator, or what some people call a 'waste-to-energy facility' because it burns trash to generate electricity." In this argument, there are those who cannot suppress using the word "incinerator." Doesn't that sound negative, dirty, and smoky? Most knowledgeable people call it

a waste-to-energy facility. WTE is infinitely cleaner than the incinerator image. Those who wish to put it in a negative light prefer "incinerator." It's a clever use of words, however. It provides cover and deniability. Newspapers should be reminded that their news pages are to report who, what, where, when and why. They should save their biases for their editorial pages. By Rick Blatchford, Mount Airy (*gazette.net 1/29/09*)

### ***UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS***

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual North American Waste-to-Energy Conference (NAWTEC)  
Chantilly, VA  
May 18-20, 2009