pinion



Another Viewpoint

Moratorium on coal

Andrew Korfhage

In March of this year, a Midwestern power company canceled a new Missouri coal plant, and in April, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius vetoed two more for her state. Each cited rising concerns about carbon emissions and climate change in their explanations.

"We're already a very heavy carbon state," Sebelius told the "Wichita Eagle." Benefits of low-cost electricity "are really less significant than the harm that carbon would do and potentially the financial risk that it puts those ratepayers and taxpayers in."

Sebelius is not alone, with former Utah governor Olene Walker, a Republican, protesting a proposed coal-fired power plant in Nevada, and Democratic Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue of North Carolina (daughter of a former coal miner) calling for a moratorium on new coal-fired

These government officials are simply catching up to the public.

According to a 2007 poll, nearly 90 percent of Americans surveyed said they favor a moratorium on coal plants, and agree that it's time for "a new industrial revolution, one that is characterized by the orderly phasing out of fossil fuels and the phasing in of clean, renewable energy sources." Despite rhetoric from those pushing coal-fired power on a nation ready for a clean energy future, most Americans realize coal is not clean.

First, coal mining exacts a huge environmental toll on local communities and health toll on miners. Mountaintop removal mining clear-cuts forests to expose the tops of mountains, which are then detonated with explosives. With the coal extracted, unused soil and rock are dumped into adjacent valleys. The process destroys the ecosystem, and sends toxic waste downhill into slurries, which can poison local communities. With its numerous on-the-job hazards, coal mining is, simply put, one of the deadliest professions for workers.

Secondly, even if the processes used to extract the coal weren't so dangerous and disruptive, there is no remotely "clean" process for burning coal. According to a Department of Energy statement last year about a coal-plant intending to sequester carbon emissions underground, such a process is not yet "a reasonable option because sequestration technology is not sufficiently mature."

Third, the price of coal is skyrocketing. An Ohio coal plant under construction now was proposed to cost just over \$1 billion, and instead has cost over \$3 billion with costs rising. And that's just the cost to build the plant – not to run it, sequester the carbon, or to pay for coal. Meanwhile, the cost of coal has quadrupled since last year, triggering utility rate increases around the country.

Finally, according to the Clean Air Task Force, pollution from coalfired power plants causes 30,000 deaths per year in the United States – more than drunk driving, AIDS, or homicides. Plus, fine particles and gases from coal plants are linked to asthma, heart disease, emphysema, and lung cancer, and mercury pollution from coal plants can cause birth defects. All of this is on top of coal's climate-change causing effects.

With little leadership at the national level on this issue (the Bush administration's most recent proposals cut research into solar power while increasing research on carbon sequestration and coal power), we need all state leaders to follow the examples of Kathleen Sebelius, Olene Walker, and Beverly Perdue.

In 2007, nearly 60 coal-fired power plants were canceled across the country. This year, eight more plants, including the two mentioned above, have been canceled, but there are plenty still planned. It's time to tell your governor that your state is ready for a major push on energy efficiency and renewable power -- and that it's time to close the door on coal.

Andrew Korfhage is an editor for Co-op America a nonprofit consumer organization advocating socially and environmentally responsible purchasing and investing.

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Law threatens women, children

My respect for Gov. Bill Ritter (D-Colo.) plummeted last week when he signed off on Senate Bill 200 to do away with separate sex public restrooms and locker rooms.

Ritter supported a new law that puts young girls and boys in a dangerous situation in churches, shopping malls, restaurants and even their schools.

The new "transgender nondiscrirmination" law makes it illegal to deny anyone access to public restrooms and locker rooms based on gender identity or the perception of gender identity. The senate bill is part of the expanded discrimination prohibitions which says a person's "sexual orientation" means "a person orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgender status or another person's perception thereof."

The new law means that a woman is no longer safe in public restrooms from a man just walking into the room on the pretense of relieving himself, yet stooping to assaulting or raping her.

The shoe is also be on the other foot for men, who before May 29, could stand in front of a urinal and be relatively sure no woman would walk into the room. That's over. Now, Colorado public restrooms and locker rooms



Jan Katz Ackerman

• From Where I stand

are open game to whoever wants to use them. No longer will there be men's and woman's restrooms, only public unisex restrooms.

I can't believe Ritter would do this to not only Colorado residents, but anyone who passes through his state.

Ritter, formerly the district attorney of Denver, was instrumental in setting up and overseeing the Colorado Juvenile Justice programs. He was also an instructor at a class I took a few years ago pertaining to youth crime. What on earth was he thinking in signing this law?

Ritter knows all too well that such an action will have life-changing effects on children, as well as adults, but he buckled to something. That something, while I have yet to prove it, was probably some special interest group with tons of money.

Colorado is no longer safe in what should be

one of the most private settings.

Sure, there are restrooms out there that have doors that lock, but I'm concerned about the ones that don't

Women are now, more than ever before, prey to sick people who might find a public restroom a good place to attack them. I'm not so naive to think that only the new law brought on this situation, but it certainly enhanced opportunities for sexual predators to act on their desires. How sad.

Making matters worse is the fact the law was passed with no provision for its repeal, and anyone who violates it is subject to a year in jail and a fine of \$5,000.

In addition to Ritter, how dare Colorado legislators think they are helping society by supporting and passing this law. And, what's scary is that this type of law tends to creep out of the state where it's first introduced and makes it way across America.

Kansas women better wake up and smell the sunflowers and arm themselves by communicating with their state legislators or we'll find ourselves in the same pot as Colorado ladies.

-Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press

Mother takes journey with daughter

Dawn Schultz Brewster

life. Five years, cancer free.

What a wonderful feeling. As I look back at all I went through five years ago, I feel blessed to have had breast cancer. Don't get me wrong, the surgery, chemotherapy and radiation were difficult, but the relationship I have with God is amazing. He is amazing. I truly feel my journey through breast cancer prepared me for the last nine months of my life. That relationship helped me prepare my daughter Whitney for her journey through cancer.

After completing my journey, I couldn't find it in myself to participate in the Relay for Life event in Colby. However, last year it was time. I was ready. My boss, Anne Lowe (a breast cancer survivor) and I walked the survivor lap together. What a feeling. While we walked, Whitney was on the sidelines taking our picture. Afterward, she said "next year, we are going to have a team so I can get one of those T-shirts." Little did we know that this year she will get one of those T-shirts, but now for a different reason. She will be walking that survivor lap because she is a cancer survivor.

Whitney was diagnosed with a Medulloblastoma brain tumor on Labor Day 2007. At the time I heard Whitney's diagnosis, I thought "oh no" but then deep inside, I heard a voice say "you can do this." That is the voice that I had to listen to. I always thought that Whitney was strong, but the last nine months have definitely proved it. She is strong inside and out. To date, Whitney has had surgery, six-weeks of chemotherapy and radiation combination treatments, has had many tests, been poked and prodded so many times I have lost count and is now in the process of completing nine maintenance chemotherapy treatments. At this time, she has completed five of the nine.

The brain tumor Whitney had was at the base of her brain, beneath her cerebellum. It was the size of a walnut. The tumor was blocking the spinal fluid from being able to move down the spinal cord. It was causing the nausea, vomiting, headaches and stomachaches she was

treatments were complete in December. Three of the four lesions were completely gone and the remaining one was only a speck. Whitney received the next MRI on April 3. It showed the remaining lesion was gone and no findings of metastasis. The cancer was gone. Whitney was in the audiology department having a hearing test when the nurses from oncology came down to find us. They were so excited they couldn't wait. Whitney was in the soundproof room when they told us the news. When she was done, I asked her if she heard. You should have seen her face light up! Afterward, we were walking down the hall. Whitney had a smile on her face. I asked her what she was thinking about. She said "Mom, I am cancer free!" I immediately got tears in my eyes when I heard her say those words. We were so happy.

Now, we are not fighting cancer, we are fighting chemotherapy. Treatment number four was very tough on Whitney. After the treatment, Whitney developed mouth sores. Not being able to eat or drink led to dehydration. She was hospitalized two times in Colby and lost about 10 pounds. That is a lot of weight for a small-framed girl. The day after she was released from the hospital the second time, we went to Denver to the Children's Hospital for an appointment with Dr. Foreman (her neurooncologist). When he came in the room, he told her she looked like she had lost weight. Jokingly, Mike (Whitney's dad) said, "She has been on the Jenny Craig diet." Dr. Foreman corrected Mike by saying "No, she has been on the Nick Foreman diet, guaranteed to make you lose one-fourth of your body weight." After examining Whitney, he said he thought she looked really good, but thin. When we left the hospital that day, Whitney told me she felt better all ready. She said "I think I needed to hear Dr. Foreman say I was OK."

The last few months have allowed Whitney and me to have many talks. We have visited about everything, but often find ourselves talkexperiencing. The tumor had dropped seeds ing about faith and attitude. We truly believe did promise us a safe landing."

onto her spine. The chemotherapy and radia- the journey Whitney's traveling is 99 percent tion were needed to get rid of the lesions that faith and attitude. We also have decided the had developed from the seeds. Whitney had trip is very "do-able" if you have God in your In April I passed a large milestone in my her first MRI after the chemotherapy/radiation heart. He has totally blessed the Schultz girls and definitely deepened our faith. We can not imagine going through this without God leading the way.

While Whitney was taking the chemotherapy/radiation treatments, Dr. Liu (her radiation oncologist) wanted to visit with her alone. Whitney asked me what I thought he wanted. I told her he wanted to know from her how she was doing. (I have a tendency of talking for Whitney.) After their visit, Liu came to get Mike and me. My thoughts about the visit had been correct. He then told us we would be surprised at the number of patients he has that are Whitney's age and younger that have absolutely no family support. Can you believe that? How could a parent do that to a child?

From the very beginning, Foreman told us Whitney's treatment from start to finish would be 14 months. I can remember thinking "Wow that is a long time." Well, that time is going by very quickly. Whitney is excited that school is out for summer. She needed a break. We know the next few months are going to go by just a fast as the last few have. Before we know it, Whitney will be finished with her journey. However, right now, we take it a day

I am so grateful that Whitney was sent to the Children's Hospital in Denver. Dr. Handler, the Chief of Neuro-Surgery is renowned and Dr. Foreman is the best in the nation. The new hospital is a wonderful place for healing. Whitney has made the comment that she should hate to go to the hospital, but loves it because of Foreman and his staff. Everyone there is very supportive and they all treat Whitney so special. Thank you to the people of Colby, Brewster and the surrounding area. Prayers and support have been appreciated.

As I meet people, I try to live by this. Treat everyone you come in contact with in a special way, because a lot of people are going through tougher times than you are. In closing, I want to share a quote I received from a close friend. "God didn't promise us smooth sailing, but he

Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce

Tinsley



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