



# EMC News

May 5, 2009

[www.tompkins-co.org/emc](http://www.tompkins-co.org/emc)

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## **A SENSE OF WONDER 5/9 AND 5/12**

This film about Rachel Carson will be shown at the Tompkins County Public Library on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM and on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. Running time is 55 minutes.

## **WATER WEEK CELEBRATION 5/9 AT THE ITHACA FARMERS MARKET**

Come celebrate National Drinking Water Week in Tompkins County at the Ithaca Farmers Market. Learn about the "Wonder of Water" from local water resource groups and agencies, and take the 16<sup>th</sup> annual drinking water taste test. More info and details available at: [www.tompkins-co.org/health/eh](http://www.tompkins-co.org/health/eh)

## **REQUIRING SAFER ALTERNATIVES TO BPA IN PRODUCTS SOLD IN TOMPKINS COUNTY**

*Submitted by Amy Risen & Katie Kelly*

The Consumer Products Committee has been exploring solutions for dealing with products containing toxic chemicals in Tompkins County. For our most recent project, we have been reviewing policy options for the county to phase out the sale of products containing Bisphenol A (BPA) in favor of products made with safer alternatives. Katie Kelly from Clean NY will be leading a discussion on this topic at our May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and afterward we'll vote on a resolution in support of Tompkins County passing BPA policy.

The current regulatory framework in the U.S. for addressing toxics is outdated and weak in comparison to other world leaders such as Europe and Canada. The majority of the regulation in the US is achieved by the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) of 1976. Europe has recently adopted a much more comprehensive policy called Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals (REACH). Passed in 2005, REACH addresses the impact of production and use of chemicals on environmental and human health. One main difference is that while REACH addresses both old and new chemicals, TSCA grandfathered in the majority of chemicals present in the US at that

time REACH also requires companies to substitute safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals when suitable replacements exist. Several groups are trying to improve national regulation of toxic chemicals in the U.S., but in the mean time we may also act on state and local levels

States and municipalities have been proposing policies to phase out products with toxic ingredients with readily available safer alternatives. These campaigns are assisted when some retailers already offer products made with the replacement, but voluntary action only protects a fraction of the consumers. Two examples of such toxic ingredients are BPA and a flame retardant called Deca brominated diphenyl ether (DecaBDE). The toxicant that we are focusing on presently is BPA and it can be found in baby bottles, sippy cups, sports bottles and food can linings. We have provided links on the EMC website to inform you of the health concerns associated with the use of these products and the steps that are being taken to ban them and require the use of safer alternatives.

At the May EMC meeting we will be hearing from Katie Kelly, Child Safe Products Campaign Coordinator for Clean NY. She will be discussing BPA, the associated health concerns, a NY State Bill and other county and municipal policies currently under consideration, and the feasibility of phasing out certain products containing BPA in our county. This is an exciting opportunity for Tompkins County to take a lead role in supporting legislation to improve environmental and human health! EMC members are encouraged to prepare for our meeting by reviewing the proposed resolution for a BPA ban and supporting information in resources linked to our website.

## **ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEANUP 6/13**

EMC's first cleanup for 2009 will be held from 10 AM to noon on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Our stretch of Route 13 is from Warren Road to Route 366.

## **GAS DRILLING: COORDINATING EFFORTS AMONG GROUPS AND A CALL OUT TO MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES**

*Submitted by Amy Risen*

Several groups in Tompkins County have been concerned about the potential effects of gas drilling in our area. We are discovering that there are many topics to address such as: water withdrawals, the handling and treatment of drilling and flowback deep-well water, landscape fragmentation, noise pollution, excessive road use, public knowledge of drilling fluid ingredients and associated issues such as emergency medical response preparedness, county and municipal planning, and many more. As each group encounters these issues they have looked at their own areas of specialty and identified topics to focus on. With so much momentum picking up on gas drilling it seems an appropriate time to improve our communication among groups, share our goals, use each other as resources, and identify topics that none of us have tackled yet. The EMC is currently reviewing the efforts of each group and you can find a preliminary list of groups and resources on our website.

At a recent Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG) meeting we discussed the need to coordinate county data. Planners need information on our natural environment to identify sensitive areas that may require site specific reviews for gas drilling. We are requesting that municipal representatives consider any inventories they have for their area and report on these to the EMC chair (Amy [ajr53@cornell.edu](mailto:ajr53@cornell.edu)). These include viewsheds, conservation zones, aquifers, areas of archeological significance, etc. It would be best if this information were available in the form of a map, however that is not required.

## **SEEKING NEW MEMBERS TO PERFORM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS**

*Submitted by Jim McGarry*

The EMC's Environmental Review Committee seeks individuals to review local development projects for environmental impact issues. This requires reading project documents, site visits, consultation with other committee members, two meetings per month, potentially additional community meetings regarding the project, and writing drafts of a comments document to be submitted to stakeholders, lead agencies, and other interested parties.

Individuals should be committed to environmental values and have some environmental interest, knowledge, or experience. Interested individuals should contact Jim McGarry, ERC Chair, at [james\\_mcgarry51@hotmail.com](mailto:james_mcgarry51@hotmail.com)

## **EMC VACANCIES**

EMC has one at-large vacancy plus three municipal vacancies (Village of Freeville, Village of Trumansburg, and Town of Groton). We also welcome associate members.

### **Upcoming EMC meetings!**

May 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm

June 10<sup>th</sup>, July 8<sup>th</sup>

At the Transit Center

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Members: If you are unable to attend, please contact Amy Risen, Chair ([ajr53@cornell.edu](mailto:ajr53@cornell.edu)) or Kathy Wilsea, Secretary (274-5560 or [kwilsea@tompkins-co.org](mailto:kwilsea@tompkins-co.org))