

## Clean Water or Profit for a few, you decide

Virgin Islands residents are being bombarded by full page ads, almost weekly, paid for by the ratepayers through WAPA by way of the LEAC ( Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause). There is one point I want to make quite clear which is the following: WAPA belongs to the people of the V.I.! That point needs to be made abundantly clear. I believe the semi-autonomous status, which needs to be revisited by the Legislature, has confused the people and the top-brass at WAPA over the years. In-addition, it is most certainly inappropriate to hire a Public Relations firm, using rate-payers money, to organize a campaign against the rate-payers who owns the company. Go figure.

Our clean air and water which we take for granted in these beautiful Virgin Islands will be jeopardized if we permit Alpine to fire up the PET COKE burning plants in our territory. There is a need to share some information that a town called Masontown, Pa. has experienced since the much talked about Scrubbers have been installed in there coal-burning plant. Scrubbers are the new technology that coal and PET COKE fire-plants are depending on the fulfill EPA'S clean air requirements so that they can pollute the air in the more delicate manner. These Scrubbers were installed because 5 states including New York and New Jersey had claims alleging that the pollution caused by the plants was causing respiratory diseases and acid rain.

Scrubbers work by taking flue gas and passing it through a tower in which water and limestone mixture is sprayed. The sulfur dioxide in the flue gas reacts with limestone to produce gypsum. The remaining water rises from the stack in the form of a smoke plum. In-addition Selected Catalytic Reduction is implemented to convert nitrogen oxides to nitrogen and water through a chemical reaction with ammonia. The Selected Catalytic Reduction is similar to a car catalytic converter.

With all of this new technology one would believe that the residents of Masontown Pa. would be better off. Let us be reminded that, "Matter is never lost, it is only transferred."

With the thousands of gallons of water that being used to capture the most toxic parts of the smoke what happens to the water that does not evaporates? That water is funneled and stored. Stored where? Most places that have coal and PET COKE fired plants drain the toxic water into the rivers or water ways that are closes to the plants. The residents of Masontown were forced to drink water from the Monongahela River which was the water source for 350,000 people. A resident by the name of Phillip Coleman states that, "big companies and government officials spared us having to breath in toxins, but now they are forcing us to drink it instead." Mr. Coleman lives 15 miles from the plant. The Alpine plant is less than a quarter of a mile from the first densely populated neighborhood of Bovoni, Nadir, Bolongo, and Water Gate! St. Thomas is only 13 mile long and 2 miles wide. Our environment cannot absorb the environmental impact that this plant will have on the immediate vicinity in addition to the surrounding communities of Redhook, Nazareth, Limetree, Bakkerro, Haven sight, and down town Charlotte Amalie. In addition to the neighborhoods we have Bertha C. Boschulte middle school and Antilles School within one and a half mile from the proposed plant along with two Day Care Centers for the young of our community.

The more research and discussion that is provided to the citizen of this territory, the more questions we have, The more unanswered questions we have, the stronger our opposition will be against the installation of these PET COKE burning plants in our territory!

Scrubbers are being touted as the savior of the coal and PET COKE burning plants; however, there is mounting opposition to this technology because shifting toxin from air to water is not the solution. With the implementation of the Scrubbers and Converters our communities are left with millions of gallons of water laden with all of the captured toxins that are being dumped into our landfills and water basins because the EPA does not ,” specifically govern the disposal of power plant discharge into the waterways and landfills.” The captured toxins are as follows: arsenic, aluminum, boron, chromium, manganese, nickel, furan, sul dioxide, monoxide, lead, mercury and other chemicals that have been linked to health risk, all of which have been detected in the wastewater discharge samples.

The Clean Water Act has not been applied judicially. According to the Environmental Protection Agency record, there are currently 313 coal fired plants in the US, 90% have violated the Clean Water Act since 2004, and not one was fined or sanctioned by the federal or state regulators.

Most of the opposition to the Alpine Plants planned for the territory has focuses on two areas, the creation of the deal, and the air and ecological impact of the plant. There needs to be a concerted effort to focus on the “ wastewater discharge that the scrubbing process will produce. Wastewater discharge is equally important to air quality standards and ecological impact. In fact, WE NEED TO DEMAND that a major assessment and study be conducted even though the EPA has not enforced the Clean Water Act to its fullest capabilities. Our responsible agencies need to be tough than the EPA because if this plant is permitted the quality of life will change in the V.I forever.

Clarence Payne