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Kentucky Environmental Accountability Project

Our newest initiative to reduce pollution!

Over the past two months, we have introduced you to our three new staff members, Byron Gary, Audrey Ernstberger, and Lesley Sneed. Now, we are excited to introduce you to our new program that they are working to implement, along with the rest of our team - the Kentucky Environmental Accountability Project (KEAP).

KEAP is a three-year initiative to advance environmental quality, health, and justice in Kentucky. Launched in January 2023, KEAP combines meaningful citizen participation, science-backed information, and technical and legal expertise to ensure that Kentucky's environmental decisions protect public health and the environment.

"Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."

What's our motivation behind KEAP?

At KRC, we have spent 39 years helping communities from Paducah to Pikeville push back against polluters and protect the places Kentuckians live and love. Now, on the precipice of major change, the time has come to do more to advance environmental protection, health, and justice, and to move Kentucky toward a clean energy future.

Federal and state agencies issue thousands of permits and authorizations each year, allowing pollution to be discharged into our water, emitted into our air, and disposed of on land. The role of the public in the permitting process and in holding polluters and regulators accountable was thought by Congress to be critical to success in protecting human health and the environment under laws including the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act. Yet, in Kentucky, no more than a handful of proposed permits receive any public review or comment, and even fewer are ever challenged.

Our new project seeks to change that by designing and executing a comprehensive environmental permit review training program for citizens, supported by legal and technical experts. KRC and our network will support meaningful community engagement in the public permitting process, conduct systematic reviews of proposed permits to identify deficiencies, and bring administrative and legal challenges as needed to ensure compliance with the environmental laws designed to protect Kentucky's citizens, communities, the environment, and our climate.

An Environmental Health and Justice Working Group is providing feedback on the initiative to help us prioritize issues and areas of greatest need. We are also partnering with organizations across the Commonwealth to implement KEAP's education and permit monitoring efforts.

As resources are allocated away from oversight and existing laws face new challenges, effectively participating in the decisions and actions of our regulatory agencies has never been more essential. Motivated by the great activists who have come before us, we are fully committed to environmental accountability and, as the late John Lewis reminded us, the need to "Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."

What will KEAP do?

1. Create an environmental permit review training program for citizens.

Through this project, we will provide the resources needed for citizens to understand the various permitting and compliance processes, and become proficient in conducting permit reviews, advocating for more stringent controls and accountability mechanisms in permit decisions, and monitoring the compliance of various industrial, commercial, and institutional pollution sources.

2. Partner with organizations, universities, and experts.

We are developing a cadre of experts in the various fields associated with these permitting areas, including engineers, geologists, hydrologists, health professionals, biologists, and university centers. Our partners will assist with permit comments and research. We will also partner with local, state, and national environmental and public health organizations to share experience and expertise, develop training modules, and provide other resources to support the initiative.

3. Provide legal and technical support for public comments and hearings.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)**4. Conduct reviews of draft permits and authorizations.**

KRC and our partners will review and comment on select draft permits to create model templates for public comments, identify gaps in implementing our environmental laws, and strengthen permits. We will advocate for pollution reduction, prevention, climate change impact mitigation, and full and fair implementation of the regulations intended to protect human health, air, water, soil, and natural resources.

5. Advocate before all levels and branches of government.

Through repeated and systemic participation in the public review and comment process, our team will identify those areas where inadequacies exist, and regulatory programs can be strengthened through advocacy. KRC and our partners will use the legal, administrative, and legislative processes to effect change in these programs and strengthen the environmental laws that protect the health of our citizens and planet.

6. Engagement on rulemakings before decisions are made.

We will advocate for stronger regulations and pollution control limits before regulators like the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet (EEC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Want to attend or host a training?

Are you part of an organization that would like us to visit (in-person or virtual) and share a training with your members? KRC has two presentations, Clean Air Act 101 and Clean Water Act 101 that are ready now, with many more to follow in the coming year!

[Email Amy Carpenter, Special Projects Coordinator & Communications Associate, at amy@kyrc.org.](mailto:amy@kyrc.org)

KEAP's goals of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, reducing pollution, and correlating improvements in environmental health, quality, and justice, are investments worth making. We hope you will join us in making "good trouble" towards achieving them.

Visit KRC at Upcoming Events

As we roll toward fall and winter, the fun awaits! Stop by our KRC table and speak to staff at any of the following events:

July 29 - [Kentucky Heartwood Music Festival](#) (Millville Community Center, Frankfort)

October 6 - [Tree Week](#) (Lexington)

October 14 - [Belknap Neighborhood Festival](#) (Louisville)

November 11 - [West Sixth Brewing Co](#) (Lexington)

Is there an event you think we should attend?

Let us know by emailing Elizabeth, Director of Development, at elizabeth@kyrc.org

Join the "21 and Over Club!

Did you know that KRC has members who have given for over 21 years in a row? A dedicated and loyal group of wise Kentuckians has been supporting our organization's work for over two decades.

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deepened its capacity to meet the commonwealth's many challenges. How close are you to reaching "the age of 21?"

Contact Donna Counts to learn how many years you've been giving to KRC. Email donna@kyrc.org.

Thank you to every donor who supports KRC!



Environmental Champion Nominations Open

The nominating period for our 2023 Environmental Champion awards is now open. These awards provide an opportunity to recognize and honor our fellow Kentuckians for their dedication to a cleaner and more just Kentucky.

Sue Anne Salmon Community Advocacy Award

Intended to recognize those who demonstrate principled and courageous environmental advocacy for the betterment of community and the environment, as Sue Anne Salmon did for her whole life. This award is given to celebrate recent, outstanding acts of community advocacy in a way that advances environmental justice in Kentucky.

Winnie Hepler Lifetime Achievement Awards

Intended to recognize an individual whose life's work has shown dedication, selfless commitment to nature and others, and courage to speak against injustice, as has been the life's essence of the individual for whom the new award is named: Winnie Hepler.

[Learn more about past winners.](#) Please submit all nominations by September 29, 2023

Nominate an environmental champion!



fuel plants and embrace a cleaner and more efficient energy future!

The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) is providing several opportunities for you to comment on Louisville Gas and Electric and Kentucky Utilities (LG&E/KU)'s request to retire four coal-fired electric generating units and three natural gas simple cycle combustion turbine units and to replace them with two new natural gas combined cycle facilities, two solar facilities, one battery storage facility, and four solar power purchase agreements.

In order to build these new gas plants, LG&E and KU need PSC approval based on a showing of need for the new generating capacity and an "absence of wasteful duplication." Metropolitan Housing Coalition, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Kentucky Solar Energy Society, and Mountain Association are working together as joint intervenors in this PSC case, represented by KRC and Earthjustice, and don't believe that LG&E and KU have made the case for building two new greenhouse gas-emitting power plants, rather than aggressively pursuing energy efficiency, renewables, and other strategies to meet and lower energy demand.

Now is your chance to be heard! Public meetings are planned in Louisville, Lexington, and Harlan, and in Hopkins County. Each will feature an information session followed by an opportunity for comments. Let the PSC know that Kentucky needs an energy future that is renewable, efficient, fair, and healthy! Ask them to approve closure of the coal-fired power plants, and to deny the certificates for the two new gas plants until LG&E and KU show that there is a need after a real energy efficiency and demand management effort has been made, and cleaner options have been exhausted.

In-person meetings

Monday, July 31, 2023, 5:30 pm EST

Frederick Douglass High School, 2000 Winchester Road, Lexington, KY

Thursday, August 3, 2023, 5:30 pm EST

Harlan County Judge's Office, 210 E. Central Street, #111, Harlan, KY

Monday, August 14, 2023, 5:30 pm EST/4:30pm Central

Hopkins County Government Center, 56 N. Main Street, Madisonville, KY

Wednesday, August 16, 2023, 5:30 pm EST

Louisville Free Public Library, Main Branch, 301 York St., Community Room 202, Louisville, KY

Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, August 15, 2023, 4:30 pm EST

[Find out more about how to submit a public comment.](#)

FROM OUR FRIENDS

How geothermal power can help meet Louisville's climate goals

Renewable Energy Alliance of Louisville

Wednesday, August 23, 7:00pm EST | Virtual Event

Homes and business are already tapping underground energy. Energy from under the earth could be a key to Louisville's clean energy future. A virtual event in August will explore how geothermal power is already at work in the city and its potential for much greater expansion by businesses as well as homeowners.

On August 23 an event titled "REAL Good News" will hold its 11th in a series of quarterly public Zoom meetings aimed at making sure Louisville implements its green energy goals. In 2020 the Metro Council passed a resolution to move the city's operations to 100% clean renewable electricity by 2030. That resolution also sets a goal of 100% clean energy for the entire Louisville community by 2040.

August's event will feature a discussion by an expert panel on how geothermal energy can improve the bottom line for any heating and cooling system, how homeowners can use geothermal energy, and how the expansion of geothermal can reduce the world's emissions of greenhouse gases.

Speakers will include Brian Sinnwell with the Louisville Regional Airport Authority; Sarah Lynn Cunningham with the Louisville Climate Action Network; and Ben Reno-Weber, Metro Council Representative for District 8. Music by Louisville musician and activist John Gage will open and close the event. People attending will also be encouraged to attend Metro Council meetings to speak in favor of implementing Louisville's clean energy resolution.

Sponsoring organizations are [100%REAL](#), Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light, and the Christian Action group of St. Paul United Methodist Church.

The event is free but registration is required. [Click here to register.](#)



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