

University of Dayton

eCommons

Rivers Institute Blog Archive

Rivers Institute

12-31-2012

An Energy Nerd's Reflection

Drew Bolubasz

University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/rivers_blog

eCommons Citation

Bolubasz, Drew, "An Energy Nerd's Reflection" (2012). *Rivers Institute Blog Archive*. 227.

https://ecommons.udayton.edu/rivers_blog/227

This Blog is brought to you for free and open access by the Rivers Institute at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rivers Institute Blog Archive by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

Monday, December 31, 2012

An Energy Nerd's Reflection

Drew Bolubasz, 2015 Cohort

Hello Stews,

As the year ends, I have realized the great impact River Stewards has had upon my experiences in my collegiate career. I have a much greater appreciation for the city of Dayton, the great water resources available and how the city utilizes its resources. I have also learned a great deal about sustainability through River Stewards and joining Sustainability Club on campus.

One part of sustainability that has really caught my interest is in energy. I am currently studying to be an electrical engineer and co-op at an energy company, Duke Energy. During the River Steward summer orientation, I made a joke, to Leslie's disliking, that I work for a company that pollutes our air and water, and I felt like I needed to balance that out with something that protects our environment. Although this was meant as a joke, it is not a joke that energy production is a large contributor to pollution today. However, being an employee of a large energy company has given me a unique perspective on sustainable energy and what is being done to make our energy as clean as possible.

A hot topic in clean energy is renewable energy. In the United States, this clean energy has received a large push by many people and governments to become a more prominent way for our energy to be produced. I am all for renewable energy, but there are many issues with it for energy companies who would be the ones most using this new means of energy production. For example, many wind farms have been built across the USA. A major problem with wind farms is that large energy companies lose money by allowing the windmills to produce energy. However, the government gives companies money for producing wind energy to cover the costs. With the shape our government is in now, I am not sure how much longer this subsidizing will last. There are many advancements in renewable energy that need to be made in order for this to be a main producer of energy for our nation, but I am optimistic for these future advancements.

In the Midwest, against our liking, coal is a main source of energy because of its availability, price, and efficiency. To our liking, the government has put many environmental regulations on the production of coal that is causing many coal plants to be shut down because they cannot meet these regulations. Because of the regulations, there are many investments being made by energy companies to make our energy cleaner. Many coal power plants have scrubbers installed that remove about 95% of sulfur oxide from the smoke from coal.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCMchx6Q9Is>

Energy companies, including Duke Energy, are also investing in a new way of burning coal through an Integrated Gasification Combine Cycle (IGCC). This process turns coal into a gas so harmful chemicals can be removed from the coal before it is burned.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28UrjfyAh-U>

Although it would be ideal to stop burning coal all together, the reality is this is not economically possible based on demand and profit. Next week I will begin my second co-op term with Duke Energy and am very excited to see other steps that can be done with our energy companies to better protect our environment. My experiences as a River Steward have allowed me to make connections from my job to the effects on the environment and I am excited to continue to learn and apply more as a River Steward.