

Saturday, February 17, 2024

## What the **HEC** is happening at the Statehouse?



Dear HEC Supporter,

As the short session progresses, the Hoosier Environmental Council has focused its attention on a handful of bills, both in support and in opposition. [Stopping SB 52](#), a bill that would endanger a decade of work and hundreds of millions in investment and economic development centered around public transit, **is now one of our top priorities**. This bill would restrict dedicated lanes and likely be the death of the planned Blue Line Bus Rapid Transit Route that will connect the airport to the far east side of Indianapolis. According to documents shared by IndyGo, over 30,000 households in Marion County do not own a car and east/west travel across the city is particularly difficult. This is an environmental justice issue: it strips planned investment that would benefit thousands of low- and moderate-income households, would help reduce traffic congestion, and related harmful vehicle emissions.

Read on to learn how you can lend your voice to the opposition of SB 52 and about HEC's other legislative priorities.

## Take Action for Public Transit

### **OPPOSE SB 52: Prohibiting Dedicated Bus Lanes**

[SB 52](#), the anti-rapid bus transit bill, is now scheduled for a hearing in the [House Roads and Transportation Committee](#) on Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 8:30 a.m. HEC, together with a host of allies, will be present to testify against this wrong-headed legislation. We anticipate that if the bill is approved in Roads and Transportation, it must be sent to the [House Ways and Means Committee](#). We urge you to call your state rep., particularly if they serve on either of these two House committees, and urge them to **oppose** SB 52. You can send your state rep. an email [using our website](#) or give them a quick call using this script:



*"Hello Rep. [your rep.'s name], my name is [your name] and I live in your district at [be sure to identify your neighborhood/city]. I'm calling to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 52, which would have drastic impacts on public transit in Indianapolis and throughout Indiana. [Share your thoughts on why transit is essential]. Thank you for your time and consideration."*

## Take Action for Wetlands

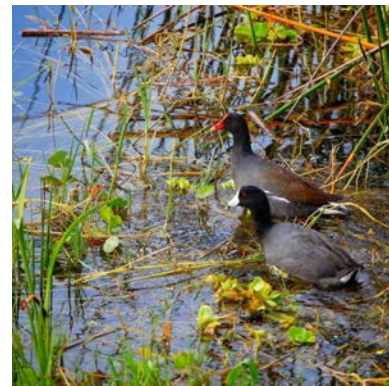


## **SUPPORT SB 246: Assessment of wetlands classified as wildlands**

**SB 246** continues to advance with bipartisan support! This week, it unanimously advanced from the House Natural Resources Committee, and has been reassigned to the **House Ways and Means Committee**, where it is scheduled to be heard on Wednesday, 2/21 (along with another bill we're watching, SB 5 - more on that below). In addition to the environmental groups that testified in favor, the Indiana Builders Association also testified and voiced their support for the legislation. SB 246 would expand a voluntary incentive program for property owners to preserve wetlands. Please contact **your state rep.**, especially if they serve on House Ways & Means, and urge them to support this legislation.

## **An Update on HB 1383**

As SB 246 advanced this week, unfortunately, so did HB 1383. Despite strong bipartisan opposition and over 1300+ petition signatures, HB 1383 was signed into law by Governor Holcomb this week. Thank you to everyone who was involved and took action. We will continue to advocate for Indiana's wetlands and will work to address wetland permitting.



## **Environmental Health Legislation**



## **OPPOSE HB 1399: PFAS**

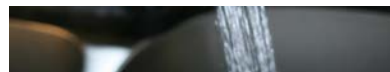
While **HB 1399** is scheduled to be heard on Monday, 2/19 in the Senate Environmental Affairs Committee, there is good news – it is scheduled for testimony only and won't be voted on in this committee meeting. What does this mean? It means there will be more time to raise your voice in opposition to this bill that would prohibit future PFAS regulation. PFAS chemicals are also known as forever chemicals – **learn more about them and their health effects**. Please contact **your state senator**, especially if they serve on the **Senate Environmental Affairs Committee**, and urge them to **oppose** HB 1399.



## **SUPPORT SB 5: Lead Service Lines**



A bill that would make it easier for utilities to replace lead service lines continues to advance with broad bipartisan support. [SB 5](#) advanced with unanimous support from the House Utilities Committee, and now heads to the [House Ways and Means Committee](#), where it is scheduled to be heard on Wednesday, 2/21, along with SB 246. Please contact [your state rep.](#), especially if they serve on House Ways & Means, and urge them to **support** this legislation.



## Take Your Advocacy to the Next Level!

### Take Action for Clean Air and Healthy Environments in NW Indiana

Indiana's Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is hosting a public meeting about renewing the air permit for BP's Whiting Facility on **Thursday, February 22nd, 2024 at 6pm**. The meeting will be an opportunity for IDEM's staff to describe the draft air permit and answer questions from citizens, and will not include formal testimony.



Learn more about this meeting and what's been happening at BP's Whiting Refinery on [our blog](#).

**Free Beyond Plastics Webinar**

### How NY is Holding Pepsi Accountable for Its Plastic Pollution—and Your State Can, Too

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024  
at 7:00 PM ET US

Register now at:  
<https://bit.ly/2-20-24>  
or scan the QR code

Featuring:

- Dawn Henry, Beyond Plastics Senior Advisor
- Judith Enck, Beyond Plastics President
- Lemuel Srolovic, Bureau Chief, Environmental Bureau, New York Attorney General's Office

### Free Webinar: How NY is holding Pepsi Accountable for Plastic Pollution

Did you know that PepsiCo is being sued over its plastic pollution? Learn more about the suit brought by NY State Attorney General Letitia James and its significance on Feb. 20th with a webinar hosted by Beyond Plastics. This webinar will also include a discussion about how residents in other states can advocate for similar suits by their own Attorneys General. [Register for the webinar.](#)

### Thanks for attending our mid-session update webinar!

*"Thanks for giving me some hope. So much of the time it seems that Indiana is in an environmental hole and the legislature is passing out shovels. It's great to see so many engaged people trying to stop the madness."* We had a great group of advocates join us for our mid-session update webinar! Check out the recording.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS 1981-2021  
Indiana's Environmental Council

**YOUR VOICE, INDIANA'S ENVIRONMENT**

**HEC'S 2024 MID-SESSION LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

FEBRUARY 8TH | 7 PM | ZOOM

This webinar is being recorded.





### **Attend Meet your Legislator Events**

Meet your lawmakers face-to-face at a "Third House" event near you. Check out our website for a list of some of the upcoming events.

[Third House Events Calendar](#)

## **Your Quick Calls to Action:**



## **Your Advocacy Resources:**

Find your state legislators and their contact information. Be sure to save this information in your contacts!

[Find Your Legislators](#)

For the latest details on what we're watching at the Indiana General Assembly, check out our Bill Watch page.

[Bill Watch 2024](#)

Learn how YOU can make a difference this Legislative Session using HEC's Legislative Advocacy Guide.

[Legislative Advocacy Guide](#)

## **HEC in the News**

- "[Swimming upstream? SCOTUS decision, Indiana legislation reignite wetlands debate,](#)" Alexa Shrake, The Indiana Lawyer, Feb. 14, 2024
- "[House lawmakers advance bill to speed up replacement of lead water lines,](#)" Casey Smith, Indiana Capital Chronicle, Feb. 14, 2024
- "[Indiana Governor Holcomb signs House Bill defining wetlands, pushing it into effect this](#)

[summer](#)," Rachel Law, WTHI-TV, Feb. 14, 2024

- "[HEC Bill Watch 2024 - Sam Carpenter](#)," WFHB, Feb. 15, 2024
- "[Indiana bill aims to replace lead service lines more quickly, efficiently](#)," Jayden Kennett, Daily Journal, Feb. 12, 2024
- "[Holcomb signs first bill of 2024, rolls back wetlands protections](#)," Whitney Downard, Indiana Capital Chronicle, Feb. 12, 2024

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***Your thoughtful contributions support the work of the Hoosier Environmental Council. Please consider becoming a member with a gift of any amount today!***

Support our work

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