



# Clean Water Action

Chesapeake Sustainer Letter — August/September 2001

*Clean Water Action is a 700,000-member, national organization of diverse people and groups, joined together to protect our environment, health, economic well-being, and community quality of life. Goals include: clean, safe and affordable water; prevention of health-threatening pollution; creation of environmentally-safe jobs and businesses; and empowerment of people to make democracy work. CWA organizes strong grassroots groups and coalitions, campaigns to elect environmental candidates and solve environmental and community problems.*

## National

### Arsenic Battle Heats Up

Since May, the fight to get protective health standards for arsenic in drinking water has intensified. The 10 parts per billion (ppb) set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) near the end of the Clinton administration was long overdue. A 1999 "Arsenic in Drinking Water" report by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), found that the existing standard, set in 1942, "does not achieve EPA's goal for public health protection", and therefore "requires downward revision as soon as possible". That report noted that the existing standard "could easily result in" a 1 in 100 combined fatal cancer risk.

Despite overwhelming evidence that the new standard is more than justified, and is not even as strict as public health advocates have supported, the Bush administration's new EPA head Christine Whitman withdrew the new regulation pending a review of the health science and the potential cost of implementation.

Clean Water Action (CWA) immediately created a campaign with our allies in the Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water to reverse the Bush/Whitman decision. The campaign has targeted the Bush Administration, Congress, and the purveyors of arsenic-treated wood (used in many playgrounds, picnic tables and outdoor decks). The results so far are only the beginning of a massive and sustained campaign that will achieve a health protective standard as a model for all contaminants.

Congressional action has been fast and furious. CWA supports three bills:

H.R. 1413, "Get Arsenic Out of Our Drinking Water Act"- will put into place the 10 ppb standard issued by EPA in January 2001, and double the federal funding for drinking water infrastructure from \$1 billion to \$2 billion.

H.R. 1252, "Arsenic Reduction in Drinking Water Act" - will lower the limit to 10 ppb by 2003, and to 3 ppb by 2006, and authorize \$800 million in grants to help water systems meet the new standard.

H.R. 1178, "Small Community Drinking Water Funding Act"- will establish a grant program to provide \$750 million per year for five years to help small public water systems meet

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drinking water standards including arsenic, maintain reasonable water costs and enhance long term operations. On July 27, the House voted to prohibit the EPA from spending money to weaken the arsenic standard from 10 ppb. Further action is expected as we go to press.

On July 19, EPA requested comments on lowering the 50 ppb standard to 3 ppb, 5 ppb, 10 ppb or 20 ppb. Polluters like the mining and wood preservative industries, as well as some water companies, will lobby as hard as possible for the 20 ppb standard. We ask you to join thousands of other Americans in demanding a health protective standard of 3 ppb. Comments must be postmarked by October 31, 2001. Please send a copy of your comments to your U.S. Senators and Representative.

Talking points for your comments:

- New technologies and creative funding programs will enable us to achieve the 3 ppb standard at reasonable costs.
- To ensure consumer awareness, the final rule should contain requirements for arsenic reporting in consumer confidence (right to know) reports.

W-99-16-VI Arsenic Comments Clerk  
Water Docket (MC-4101)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20460

Comments may be submitted electronically to: [ow-docket@epa.gov](mailto:ow-docket@epa.gov)  
list Water Docket (MC-4101) in the subject

For further information on arsenic in drinking water, contact: The EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline, phone: (800) 426-4791 or (703) 285-1093, e-mail: [hotline-sdwa@epa.gov](mailto:hotline-sdwa@epa.gov)

### Poisonous Wood

The wood treatment industry has been a vocal opponent of a stricter arsenic standard fearing enormous cleanup costs for toxic sites and other problems caused by chromated copper arsenate (CCA), the primary chemical used in pressure treated wood. On July 3, the Consumer Product Safety Commission

### Dear Members and Friends:

As readers of the Chesapeake Sustainer Letter know, each bimonthly edition contains reports on current campaigns throughout the region. As Clean Water Action is a national organization, each issue reflects at least one national campaign, and updates from each of the jurisdictions in the immediate Chesapeake region, which includes Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia. Pennsylvania CWA has a separate Sustainer Letter for PA members.

Your support and campaign participation make possible the victories that are chronicled in the Sustainer Letters. The letters and calls that we generate through door-to-door and telephone outreach are supplemented by the activism of recipients of the Sustainer Letter. We are expanding our Internet outreach, as a way of complementing the interaction with our members at the doorstep and over the phone. Please visit [www.CleanWaterAction.org](http://www.CleanWaterAction.org). In addition to your financial support and campaign activism, we greatly appreciate the feedback that you give to us in our community outreach. If you have suggestions for ways that we can improve our outreach, including the Chesapeake Sustainer Letter, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanks again for your great support!

Andrew Fellows  
Chesapeake Program Director  
202-895-0420 x102 or 410-235-8808  
[afellows@cleanwater.org](mailto:afellows@cleanwater.org)

## Virginia

### 2001 Elections – A Call To Action

Following the July 13 filing deadline, questionnaires were sent to candidates in this year's House of Delegates races. CWA helped the Virginia League of Conservation Voters train volunteers to help interview prospective candidates for endorsements. As we usually do in elections, Virginia Clean Water Action Vote Environment (VA CWAVE) will make endorsements in key Delegate races, and potentially in the race for Governor, based on recommendations of our local endorsement committee.

This year we are stepping up our usual recruitment and coordination of volunteers in the elections. Our goal is to activate over 250 volunteers during the election to help get out the environmental vote this Fall. Whether you're a seasoned veteran or have never participated in a political campaign, this is a great time to get active. The need to improve source water protection, protect open space, clean up waterways and make polluters pay has never been greater, due to eight years of the Allen and Gilmore Administrations who have neglected these and other environmental issues.

CWAVE will provide volunteer training and develop your skills at a pace at which you feel comfortable. From posting a lawn sign in your yard, to handing out literature, to phone banking, to knocking on doors, there are many ways to get involved. No matter where you live in Virginia, we want to hear from you so that we can help you play a key role in the Fall of 2001. Please contact Andrew Fellows. (info above)

### Poisonous Wood *(continued from page 1)*

voted unanimously to hear a petition - prepared by the Healthy Building Network and the Environmental Working Group and endorsed by CWA - on a potential CCA ban. Also in July, EPA and the wood preservative industry agreed on voluntary warning labels for CCA wood. For more information, please visit [www.CleanWaterAction.org](http://www.CleanWaterAction.org).

## Maryland

### Baltimore Recycling Victory

When Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley threatened to end Baltimore's "Blue Bag" recycling program, recycling activists in the City and elsewhere mobilized to save the program. We won. Mayor O'Malley announced that Baltimore would continue recycling, and that the City would consider which of the Recycling Coalition's suggestions for improvements to implement. The battle is not over; recycling is woefully underfunded and understaffed, and needs to be strengthened and expanded in order to realize the potential of dramatic waste reduction, costs savings and revenue generation through re-sale of materials.

Write and thank Mayor O'Malley, and ask him to take steps to strengthen Baltimore's recycling program during the coming months:

The Honorable Martin O'Malley  
Mayor, City of Baltimore  
100 North Holiday Street  
Baltimore MD 21202

### Anne Arundel County Incinerator Ban

On May 25, Anne Arundel County Executive Janet Owens signed a law that banned incinerators as a permitted use in industrial zones.

The ban also demonstrates that Anne Arundel County is serious about reducing waste and expanding recycling and reuse programs. Incinerators can release carcinogens and neuro-toxins into the environment that can cause cancer, respiratory illness, learning and behavioral disabilities and other adverse health effects. The action can also lead to similar bans in other counties. If you are interested in working to achieve a ban in your county or city, please contact our Baltimore or Washington office.



Shenandoah River Valley



Environmentalists Call For Clean Energy

## District of Columbia

### The Sewage Debate

Washington D.C.'s Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) has drafted a Long Term Control Plan that proposes to drastically reduce the amount of raw sewage dumped into the Anacostia, the Potomac and Rock Creek during heavy rains. It is an ongoing scandal that waste from the nation's capital's toilets flows untreated into local waterways due to the use of "combined sewers." Designed and constructed about a century ago, combined sewers channel flow from residential, commercial, governmental and non-profit wastewater (from toilets, sinks, showers, etc.) mixed with stormwater sewers (rain water and street runoff). During times where flow is high, such as after heavy rains, combined sewer overflows (CSOs) empty raw sewage into creeks and streams.

It is a widely recognized problem that plagues many communities, though it has taken authorities years to even address the issue. The current draft of the plan (available at many District libraries and at [www.dcwasa.com](http://www.dcwasa.com), click on "News") has two key flaws. First, due to expense, the Plan proposes to reduce - but not solve - the problem. The Plan recommends allowing a projected 20 raw sewage overflows per year into creeks and rivers, and this after an expenditure of over a billion dollars over 20 years.

Second, the Plan proposes weakening Water Quality Standards to allow for raw sewage dumping. The WASA concern is that it would cost too much to solve the problem and that a lower standard is the only way for the District to be in compliance.

Write now! DC WASA is asking for comments until October 11. Write or email:

Dr. Mohsin Siddique  
 CSO Control Program Manager  
 5000 Overlook Avenue, SW  
 Washington, DC 20032  
 E-Mail: [Mohsin\\_Siddique@dcwasa.com](mailto:Mohsin_Siddique@dcwasa.com)

Also, please attend the public hearing on September 11, at 6 pm, at the Martin Luther King Library, 901 G Street, NW.

## Regional Air Alert

In order to clean up our nation's dirty power plants, please ask your legislators to cosponsor and support the following bills.

Ask your U.S. Representative to support:

- H.R. 1256 - Clean Smokestacks Act: will amend the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions from electric powerplants.
- H.R. 1335 -The Clean Power Plant Act will reduce emissions of mercury, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide from electric power plants.

Ask your U.S. Senators to support:

- S. 556 - The Clean Power Act: will amend the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions from electric powerplants.

Representative _____	Senator _____
U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20515	Washington DC 20510

The Washington DC region's air quality is reaching levels so unhealthy that the Federal Government may withhold funds until we clean-up our act. If tailpipe emissions aren't reduced in the next 2 1/2 years, we may lose all federal funding for road and bridge construction. Atlanta is the only major metropolitan region to lose federal funds as a result of poor transportation planning and unhealthy air.

Two actions you can take to protect our air and health:

1. Drive Less - automotive pollution accounts for much of our smog and accelerates global warming. Consider walking, bicycling or using trains, buses or car-pooling whenever possible.
2. Use Less Electricity - coal-fired power plants provide most of the electricity used in our region and emit various pollutants. Consider line-drying clothes and watching less TV.

Visit [www.CleanWaterAction.org](http://www.CleanWaterAction.org) or Clear the Air at [www.ClearTheAir.org](http://www.ClearTheAir.org) for more information.

## Delaware

### Legislative Wrap Up

The first half of the 141st session of the Delaware General Assembly closed on June 30, and the people of Delaware won on some important environmental issues. Governor Minner came out strong from the very beginning of the session with an environmental agenda whose overall theme was public notification and public involvement. Her emerging priorities tells us that the concerns of our Delaware members are being recognized. Good job!!

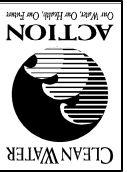
Two key victories have already been signed into law. **Senate Bill 33** will require immediate public notification of toxic spills and unpermitted releases, and will create a community involvement advisory council. **Senate Bill 192** will provide

*continued on page 4*



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Clean Water Action  
4455 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite A300  
Washington, DC 20008  
www.CleanWaterAction.org  
August/September 2001



### Legislative Wrap Up *(continued from page 3)*

for the public notification of drinking water contamination. The time for reporting in Delaware on non-life threatening contaminants is now 14 days as opposed to the federal time of 30 days. The law also provides that failure to monitor for contaminants must be made public within 14 days instead of the federal requirement of 90 days to 1 year. SB 192 also establishes a drinking water information system.

Other enacted bills that will be good for the environment include the establishment of incentives for the clean up and redevelopment of brownfields (land contaminated by previous uses) and restructuring the realty transfer tax code to increase funding of park and greenways. We are encouraged by the fact that of the environmental bills introduced in the legislature, more passed and became law than has been the case for several years.

Thank you for helping make this a good year for quality of life in Delaware. However, there is still work to do. **House Bill 39, The Inland Bays Protection Act** was not brought to a vote in this half of the 141<sup>st</sup> session. From an environmental and economic standpoint, this bill is important for the future vitality of a growing Delaware. Permitting development to continue throughout the state without knowing the exact impact on our fragile ecosystem and quality of life is foolhardy at best and potentially dangerous. We cannot allow a few developers to thwart the will and threaten the welfare of the people of Delaware. **Write to Governor Minner and to your Representatives and Senators in the Legislature.**

Governor Ruth Ann Minner  
Carvel State Office Building  
Wilmington DE 19801

Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
Legislative Hall  
Dover DE 19903

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
Carvel State Office Building  
Wilmington DE 19801

## Clean Water Fund

### Calling All Friends

Clean Water Fund does education, research and training. During the past year we have presented workshops on reducing exposure to neurotoxins and using Water Quality Reports to hold drinking water systems accountable.

Crucial support for these efforts comes from workplace giving programs, where employees can donate a portion of their salary for charitable purposes. In Maryland, we participate in campaigns with the Environmental Fund for Maryland, a state federation of groups working on environmental issues throughout the state. Throughout the region and the nation, Clean Water Fund is part of campaigns with Earth Share, a national workplace giving alliance of environmental groups.

In all of these efforts, it is greatly helpful to have employees who support our efforts work with us to establish and strengthen workplace giving campaigns. These employee allies, or "Friends", make it easier for fellow workers to have a choice in giving to favorite environmental efforts.

If you would like to help out Clean Water Fund in expanding or establishing workplace giving programs at your place of employment, please contact Andrew Fellows, 202-895-0420, x102, or email [afellows@cleanwater.org](mailto:afellows@cleanwater.org)

For more information on all Clean Water Fund activity, check out the website at [www.cleanwaterfund.org](http://www.cleanwaterfund.org).

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