

Let's Fund Safe Drinking Water in California, Now!

Thanks to the work of Clean Water Action and our allies, California's legislature affirmed the human right to safe and affordable drinking water in 2012.

But five years later, 300 communities and a million Californians continue to lack access to safe and affordable drinking water — that's more than ten times the population of Flint, Michigan. And race is the biggest single predictive factor for living near a source of dirty water in California.

To fight the problem this year, we're leading an effort in the state legislature along with our allies at Community Water Center and the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability to establish a safe and affordable drinking water fund.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Monning has co-authored Senate Bill 623 with Senate President Pro Tempore Senator Kevin de León, to set aside new funding sources to pay for safe and affordable drinking water across the state.

Children are especially at risk from this public health crisis: As many as one in four schools in the Central Valley have been impacted by unsafe drinking water and some are having to spend their limited school budgets—meant for books and teachers—on bottled water.

California has always been a leader, and we have high standards in almost every area of public life. So: It's time we caught up on drinking water.



A resident of East Oroshi checks her drinking water for impurities. Photo by Erin Lubin, image courtesy of our allies at Community Water Center.

CALL TO ACTION:

Join us as we fight for safe and affordable drinking water in California!

“Everybody, no matter where they live, or where they're from, should be able to drink water from the tap, without being afraid to get sick”, says Lucy Hernandez, a West Goshen resident and member of the AGUA coalition, which is fighting alongside us for safe and affordable drinking water.

Join Lucy, and thousands like her, and add your voice to Clean Water Action's call to fund safe and affordable drinking water in California.

Go to our website at <http://fundsafewaterca.org> and add your name. There, you can also check out the recent media coverage of this issue on NBC, in the *LA Times*, the *Fresno Bee*, the *Sacramento Bee*, and in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Clean Water Calling!

What drives our Oakland phone canvassers to call you for Clean Water?

Clean Water Action's Oakland office is home to our organization's largest phone canvass operation, and every year, our phone canvassers call you with an update on our work for clean water. But: What drives our phone canvassers to call you, on behalf of Clean Water Action? We caught up with four of them to find out!

Tiara Breaux, Aka TT

"Being a phone canvasser is tough, but it's awesome, and it takes pure dedication. I've got three sons and I live in Oakland, and it's nice to be able to connect with our members about the issues facing my family. My kids need clean water and a safe place to play, and I don't want to have to worry about their asthma. That's why the fight for clean air and water are so important. I like talking with our members because we're not just calling for our health — it's so that everyone is informed about what's going on, and so that they can join us in fighting for these important issues. We're just fighting for everyone to have a normal life."



Teri Foglia

"The best part of this job is being able to reach out to people directly and to confront them with the reality of the issues we're working on. It helps me to hear another voice, to talk about these issues and actually tell them, hey, this is a really big deal right now! Just being able to reach out. People thank us, sometimes, for our hard work, which always makes me feel good, and it's particularly encouraging to me when I connect with a moderate or a conservative on clean water issues. You'd think, for example, when you call certain areas that you might have a stereotype of the reception you might get. But we have members interested in water politics all over the country. Business owners, for example, who are really concerned about addressing environmental problems in their area. And that makes me feel really good, to be able to connect with such a wide range of folks."



Patrick Pelegri-O'Day

"I love the fierce and friendly competition of the phone canvass. I'll generally call up to 200 of our members in an evening, and end up speaking with a couple of dozen or so. I'm a California native so I've grown up with environmental management and water quality issues, and I'm really passionate about protecting our state. I like talking with our supporters because I get to explain to them about the legislation we're working on, and it can be a rollercoaster ride. As residents of California, we all have so much more voice here to push a progressive legislative agenda."

Naz Afshar-Szanto

"I came to Clean Water Action after running a grassroots campaign for state senate that really connected with my values. We lost in the general election but were hugely outspent by our opponent. I learned a lot about environmental racism on the campaign, for example, young black people in West Oakland are suffering disproportionately with asthma and other breathing problems. And at Clean Water Action we're super aware of the full impacts of the pollutants in our air and water on communities of color. Historically, the environmental movement as a whole has been pretty whitewashed. But the truth is that the people who are disproportionately affected by these things are low-income people, black people and brown people. I definitely want to help Clean Water Action be more culturally competent, but I do believe in the organization's values."



Our Legislative Priorities for 2017



Clean Water Action's priority bills this year run the gamut from requiring more transparency by the oil and gas industry to protecting the human right to water, and protecting drinking water from toxic chemicals in food packaging. Here's how we're fighting for clean water in Sacramento:



Oil and gas transparency, AB 1328 (Limon). This bill would require oil companies to disclose chemicals and additives used in oil production activities such as enhanced oil recovery, drilling, and well maintenance that discharges wastewater to land, i.e. disposal in open pits, crop irrigation. This is critical because if it's not known what chemicals are in wastewater, it's not possible to properly manage its disposal or reuse to reduce adverse environmental and public health impacts. This bill passed the Assembly in June and has advanced to the Senate.

Safe and affordable drinking water, SB 623 (Monning) will create the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund. This is the bill we covered on the front page of this newsletter.

Well-drilling transparency, SB 252 (Dodd) looks at the most stressed groundwater basins in the state. Even as wells went dry and land subsided due to groundwater overdraft during the recent drought, counties continued to issue permits to drill **new wells** without question. This bill doesn't prohibit new wells, but does require that those seeking to drill new wells provide information on the impact of the well and notify near neighbors of their plans. This will **allow communities, farmers and homeowners to weigh in** on the impact of continued drilling on their homes and livelihoods.



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Toxic chemicals in packaging: AB 958 (Ting/Quirk): This bill will require the Department of Toxic Substances Control to create regulations that will ultimately eradicate perfluorinated chemicals (PFASs) in food packaging. PFASs are common in paper and other wrappings meant to prevent leakage of grease and liquids from food. **They are highly toxic.**

Cleaning chemical transparency, SB 258 (Lara): Many cleaning products contain chemicals that are linked to serious health impacts, but which often don't appear on the label. This "Right to Know" bill will require that ingredients in cleaning products be disclosed to the public on the label, and recognizable symbols will also provide information about potential health impacts if applicable.



For more information go to: www.cleanwateraction.org/features/2017-legislative-priorities

Welcome to our new state director, Nora Benavides!

Mrs. Benavides joined us in early June as our new California state director. Mrs. Benavides has led and organized campaigns in economically challenged communities for over 20 years, including local and statewide initiatives addressing youth and gun violence, health disparities, community-based neighborhood revitalization, and environmental justice. Her mission is to improve the lives of low-income families and children and to help non-profits and governments support these communities through legislative strategies, with a focus on delivering impact and investment for overall economic and health equity. Nora joins us following the departure of Miriam Gordon after eight years



at the helm. We wish Miriam well and thank her for her hard work and significant contributions to the California office. And again, welcome, Nora!

Winning for Clean Water!

We've had two big victories already this year, with the State Water Resources Control Board agreeing to adopt new "beneficial uses" standards for water, to include subsistence fishing, both tribal and non-tribal, and tribal cultural uses. That means folks catching fish to eat, to live, will be protected by new water regulations. And the board also looks set to formally adopt a strict drinking water standard for controlling 1,2,3 TCP, a toxic chemical found in water supplies across the state. Both wins are thanks to your support. ***Thank you!***



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