

MASSACHUSETTS

The “Underground Battle” for Communities and Climate

Hundreds from across Massachusetts and New Hampshire rallied this summer on the Boston Common to protest an ill-conceived proposal for gas expansion through New England. This pipeline, the latest project of Texan billionaire Richard Kinder, would ship a massive quantity of gas — fracked straight from Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale — through wetlands and watersheds, conservation lands, fruit orchards and private residential properties.

Public outcry, community organizing, and legal and political advocacy have made this a front-burner issue. “It’s time to set the record straight about the role of gas in our energy future,” says Clean Water Action’s Joel Wool. When you look carefully, Wool says, gas is neither cheap, homegrown nor reliable:

- Homegrown? Pipelines are certainly disrupting homes. At the end of the day, companies like Kinder Morgan will seek to claim land by eminent domain, regardless of state and local permits.
- Gas prices are volatile, and pipeline leaks, gas exports and emerging fracking regulations (to protect public health or curb climate change) are wildcards in the calculations.
- Far from independent, pipeline companies are lobbying for public subsidies at your expense. In New England, they’ve supported plans to fund pipeline construction through a charge on New England residents’ utility bills.
- Fracked gas is a dirty fuel, tainting local waters during the drilling process, and causing serious



Above: Map showing proposed pipeline route for Kinder Morgan’s Northeast Energy Direct.



Right: Rallying against the pipeline in Boston.

climate disruption. The lifecycle costs are severe, from extraction, local distribution, and through consumption or any export.

Facing serious pressure from the grassroots, Governor Patrick — long a champion of clean energy — has backed off from his recent push for gas expansion. Instead, he will his last months in office to study the alternatives.

As public opposition to Kinder Morgan’s plan continues, Clean Water Action and allies continue to advocate for a “Fix It First” approach to aging and old infrastructure, coupled with a push for greater energy efficiency and more clean and renewable technologies.

TAKE ACTION NOW: *Contact your local legislators and let them know you oppose the Kinder Morgan Pipeline. Clean energy solutions are available — now it’s time to fight for them.*

The Clean Water Act Turns 42 this October!

When Congress overwhelmingly passed the landmark Clean Water Act in 1972, we set an incredibly ambitious goal: eliminate all water pollution.

Before the Act, the Cuyahoga River caught fire, Lake Erie was declared “dead,” untreated waste was routinely dumped in rivers and streams, and wetlands were thought to be useless swamps that needed to be drained for development or agriculture. The Clean Water Act changed all of that. Over the past forty-two years we have seen amazing progress for our water.

The Act is visionary — it changed how we think about our nation’s relationship with our water resources, after more than a century of pollution and degradation.

We realized that we needed “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.”

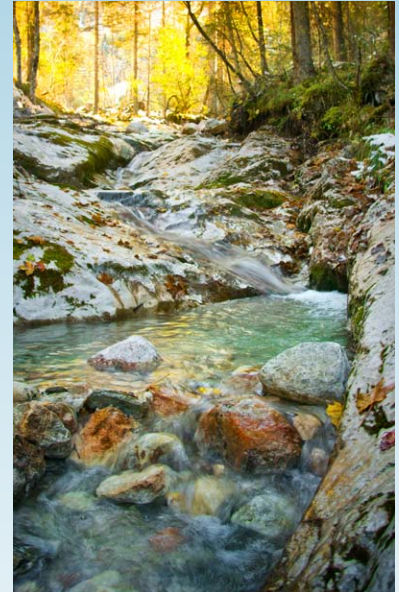
It seeks to eliminate water pollution completely and to make all rivers, lakes and streams “fishable and swimmable.”

It includes a revolutionary “citizen suit” provision that empowers concerned citizen to be effective watchdogs to protect the water resources they use, especially when government fails to do so.

The Act established the basic structure to regulate the dumping of pollutants into water and gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to set standards to provide a solid baseline to support states’ pollution control programs.

We have made significant progress that would not have been possible without the Clean Water Act:

- Nearly 2/3 of all rivers, lakes, and streams are now “swimmable and fishable” — that’s twice as many as met those water quality standards in 1972.
- Wetland losses have fallen below 60,000 acres per year (in 1972 the country was losing 500,000 acres per year).
- Discharges of organic wastes from publically-owned waste treatment facilities have decreased by over 45% and decreased by 98% from industrial facilities.
- We still have a long way to go. We have a responsibility to renew our commitment to restore and protect our nation’s greatest natural resource — water — for current and future generations.



Seeing the Obama Administration’s “clean water rule” across the finish line is a great place to start. Proposed earlier this year, the EPA and U.S. Army Corps rule would restore protections for small streams, wetlands and drinking water sources by clarifying what water resources are covered under the Clean Water Act. Clean Water Action has led a national campaign to fix the Clean Water Act, restoring these protections for more than ten years. Clean Water Action members alone have contributed more than one million actions on this issue during that time – letters, calls, e-mails, petitions and more — which have all brought us to this point.

Now Clean Water Action and allies are on track to deliver more than 750,000 comments supporting EPA’s action, more than on any other water issue. Some of the nation’s biggest polluters — fossil fuel companies, corporate agriculture, big developers, mining and chemical interests — are doing everything they can to keep the rule from being finalized. It’s up to us to stop them and make sure the voices of everyone who cares about our water and wants to see it protected are not drowned out in the process.

Celebrate the Clean Water Act’s birthday by taking action today to fix the Clean Water Act to restore protections for our streams and drinking water: www.ProtectCleanWater.org

See more at: <http://blog.cleanwateraction.org/2014/10/18/happy-birthday-to-the-clean-water-act-2/#more-3902>



Door by Door: Steve Turner Marks 25 Years With Clean Water Action

Q: When did you start with Clean Water Action?

A: I moved around a lot growing up, but came to Massachusetts in 1974 to start school at UMass Amherst. In 1981, I took my first canvassing job working for the National Women's Political Caucus on the Equal Rights Amendment. I went on to work with Connecticut Citizen Action Group. When I returned to Northampton in the late 80s, I started canvassing for Clean Water. I've been knocking doors since February 1989, and love it.

Q: What do you like about canvassing? It's a difficult job — what keeps you in the fight?

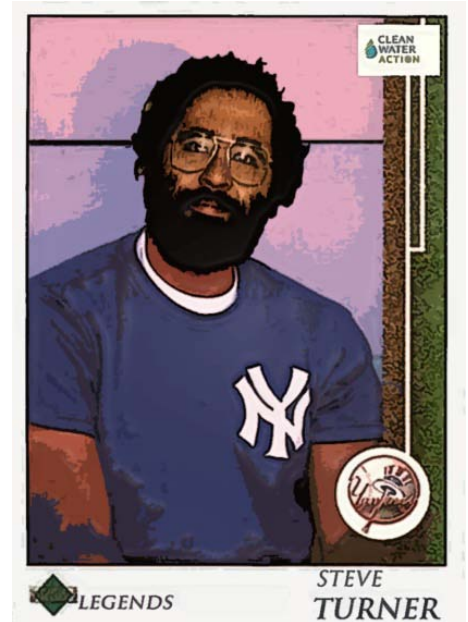
A: A big part of it for me — I've canvassed for Clean Water Action for 25 years now, and I've been in Western Massachusetts for most of that time — is that I go through neighborhoods and I know people. Many people know me by name ("Hey Steve!") when I come to their house. I've set up a network of people who believe in what we are doing.

Q: What changes have you seen over time?

A: It takes dedication to what you're doing to make change over time. I remember sitting here in the Northampton office in 2006 and the Canvass Director told us we were going to work on a campaign about BPA (bisphenol-A). I had no idea what that chemical was, and people I canvassed didn't know what it was either. But three or four years later, I could say, "We're the group that worked on BPA" and people would respond "Oh yeah, the baby bottle toxin!" That showed me how you can work to change public narratives. When I hear that kind of recognition, I know we've done our job.

Q: What are the most memorable things you've seen?

A: One night while I was canvassing, a little boy came to the door, looked at me and then said, "Mom, the Clean Water guy is here." People know who I am and expect me to be there. When I'm not there or another



canvasser goes to their door, people ask "Where's Steve? How's he doing, is he okay?" You build relationships over time. People thank you for what you are doing.

Canvassing is not about fighting or arguing with people. Showing that you care about something for a long time really matters. People will say to me, "Steve, I'm glad you're still here and I can help in my small way." That's powerful magic — when people recognize you. And it makes me feel an obligation to keep going. I believe in the rightness of what we are doing.

RHODE ISLAND

Primary Election Win for Lauren Carson

Clean Water Action's Lauren Carson won her Primary Election bid for State Representative from District 75. She will not face an opponent in November so effectively becomes Newport's newest Representative, bringing fresh environmental leadership to the Statehouse.

First serving as Clean Water Action's New Jersey Director, Lauren moved to Newport in 1986 and stayed with Clean Water Action until 1991.

Lauren rejoined the Clean Water Action's staff in 2011 in Rhode Island, following a stint running her own business. She has worked on solid waste and stormwater issues and led programs to make events greener and more sustainable.



RHODE ISLAND

Mercury Recycling Underway

Under a new Clean Water Fund program co-sponsored by Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management (DEM), hardware stores across Rhode Island have begun collecting fluorescent light bulbs for free recycling. The bulbs contain mercury, a powerful neurotoxin that poses particular danger to children and pregnant women.

Consumers can bring compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and linear bulbs up to four feet long to hardware stores in Warwick, North Kingstown, Providence, Woonsocket, Tiverton, Greenville and Narragansett. Employees will place the spent lighting elements into prepaid containers for shipping to the recycling firm NLR, which will crush the bulbs, separate the mercury and sell it for reuse.

This process will keep the toxic metal from escaping broken bulbs and finding its way into the environment. Most people are exposed to mercury through the fish they eat, which become contaminated when mercury is released from landfills, incinerators and coal-burning power plants.

"This new program offers Rhode Islanders a convenient way to safely recycle and dispose of used compact fluorescent bulbs and linear lamps," says DEM Director Janet Coit. "Thanks to the cooperation of the hardware retailers, we are able to provide this valuable service for Rhode Island residents. This program will reduce waste and keep mercury out of the environment."

More information and a list of participating retailers is at www.cleanwater.org/ri



The Stormwater Problem

Rain — it's a good thing. It waters plants, fills reservoirs, makes rivers flow.

But rain falling on roads, parking lots, driveways and buildings can't soak into the ground. It flows over the landscape, washing heavy metals, nutrients, sediments, bacteria and other pollutants into nearby waters. Heavy rainfall often causes storm drain systems to back up, flooding roads and buildings. This is Rhode Island's stormwater problem.

Clean Water Action members understand that the state's economy relies on a clean and safe environment. Clean water that is safe for swimming, fishing and shell-fishing, and communities that are resilient in the face of a changing climate are critical for the state's economic success.

Stormwater harms the state's economy. Businesses' bottom lines are impacted by frequent flooding, tourists can not visit closed beaches and fishing grounds. Even Providence's WaterFire celebrations are threatened by stormwater pollution.

Over the past 30 years, the state has spent millions to upgrade sewage plants, pre-treat industrial wastes, and eliminate sewage discharges from boats, but stormwater runoff continues to degrade water quality throughout the state.

"Gray" infrastructure to manage stormwater involves gutters, basins and pipes, but is now aging and



severely under-funded. Climate change is compounding stormwater management problems, and increasingly intense storms add stress to these already-weakened systems.

Clean Water Action supports "green infrastructure" approaches which manage stormwater by infiltrating rainwater into the ground where it falls using vegetation or porous surfaces, or capturing it for later reuse. Examples include rain gardens, vegetated swales and permeable pavement, green roofs, rainwater harvesting, downspout disconnection and tree planting. These approaches place greater emphasis on meeting people's needs together with environmental priorities and offer significant benefits for residents of lower income neighborhoods and communities of color, reducing flooding, strengthening small businesses and promoting social equity.

CONNECTICUT



Above: Clean Water Connecticut staff, Susan, Anne, and Meg (L-R) with Clean Water Board member Andy Bauer.

Energy

Clean Water Fund and Clean Water Action are focused on two parallel strategies to build a clean energy future in the state: Supporting communities as they work for smarter, cleaner, more efficient energy use and renewables development, and organizing for policies to make clean, renewable energy more competitive.

Thanks to a Tremaine Foundation grant, Clean Water Fund is helping local Clean Energy Task Forces in three communities on energy planning and outreach strategies, working directly with community leaders and volunteers and connecting them with colleagues around the state via a new web site, www.sustainableCT.com

Connecticut's Energy Program continues to operate on two strategic tracks: directly supporting communities in their energy innovations, and advocating for them in public policy. This summer and fall, we have been quite active on both fronts. This fall, the program will sponsor workshops and convene regional strategy meetings.

At the same time Clean Water Action continues to fight backward-looking energy policies that would impede solar progress and could harm the state's growing clean energy economy. In recent comments on a proposed Connecticut Light and Power rate hike that would impact all utility customers equally, including those who are fully solar, Clean Water Action critiqued the proposal's flawed logic, pointing out how renewable energy users "will feel the biggest proportional bite because the flat, inflexible portion of their bill will increase compared to the part they can generate from natural resources."

Contact Melissa Everett in Hartford for more information or to get involved, 860-232-6232.

A Primary Election Win for Water and Health



Marilyn Moore's recent primary win over State Sen. Anthony Musto creates new opportunities for advancing needed environmental health reforms in Hartford.

Moore is firmly committed to policies that will reduce and prevent exposure to toxic chemicals in products, while, as Senator, Musto was a major obstacle, according to Clean Water Action's Connecticut Director Anne Hulick, who is also a leader with the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut.

Toxics

Clean Water Action and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut continue to lead the fight against exposure to toxic chemicals in everyday household and personal care products. The groups' national "Mind the Store" campaign urging major retailers to shift from using toxic chemicals in products sold in their stores is making progress. Walmart and Target have both announced plans to identify a list of "chemicals of concern" and work with suppliers to shift to safer alternatives. Campaign activities are also focusing on Walgreens and CVS Health.

Right: Visitors to the Norwich, Connecticut Walgreens pose with printed customer comment cards, which were signed and delivered to stores across the nation. (Clean Water Action's Susan Eastwood, at left).



From Connecticut to Japan

Two dozen volunteers, allies and staff gathered in Hartford for an informal meet-and-greet featuring a live video chat with Clean Water Action's former Connecticut co-Director, Roger Smith who recently moved to Japan, where he is investigating tsunami recovery in the hard-hit town of Matsushima.

Participants heard from Roger about how recent news reports on the Fukushima nuclear disaster's lasting effects say little about the ongoing recovery.

"Every day I walk to work past my town's solar-powered radiation monitor. The readings are lower than where I lived in New England," Roger reports. "That isn't surprising as the ruined reactors stopped releasing radiation into the air, and for most outside the evacuated area, life goes on more or less as before..."

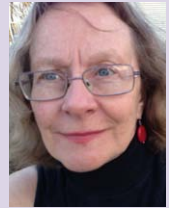
Roger says there are many signs of hope locally, where towns are leading a shift to clean energy, with the Fukushima Prefecture working toward 100% renewable energy by 2040 and some towns are moving even faster and solar power is almost standard for new homes.

The event also introduced Melissa Everett, Clean Water Action's new Energy Program Manager.



Above: Roger Smith, Skyping from Japan.

Right: New Energy Program Manager Melissa Everett.



NEW ENGLAND CURRENTS

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