



Clean Water Action News

JANUARY – MARCH 2008

PENNSYLVANIA NEWSLETTER

Victories for the Environment in 2007 — Challenges for 2008

Thanks to the work and support of Clean Water Action members, we were able to make some major steps forward for protecting our environment and our health in 2007! At both the state level and in communities across Pennsylvania, Clean Water Action continued our over 20 years of work here to ensure that we all have clean water and a healthy environment. Some of our victories this year included:

- Thousands of Clean Water Action members wrote and e-mailed their state legislators demanding that the state take action on cleaning up the thousands of hazardous waste sites that threaten communities across the state. Finally, just two weeks before the state hazardous sites cleanup fund was completely bankrupt, **a new funding bill for \$137 million in hazardous sites cleanup was passed and signed into law by the Governor.** These new funds will ensure that the state will have the money to continue to cleanup toxic waste sites for the next three and a half years.



- While pristine trout streams often get the most protection from water pollution, the rivers that supply our drinking water get no special protections from the state. Most Pennsylvanians drink from streams with the lowest quality water, often not even meeting Clean Water Act standards. **Groundbreaking new legislation to protect our drinking water sources, called the Safer Drinking Water Act, was introduced this fall into the State Senate with support from a group of 11 bi-partisan legislators. Drafted by Clean Water Action, this bill will for the first time prevent polluters from degrading rivers that we, and our families, drink out of.**

- While Clean Water Action works at both the state and national levels, some of our most important achievements are at the local level. Clean Water Action worked in many communities and neighborhoods in the Philadelphia area, the Lehigh Valley, and in the Pittsburgh area to win many local victories for protecting our environment. See inside for more about these important accomplishments.

While we've made progress over the last year, we are looking forward to new challenges and successes in 2008! Please continue reading inside for more on our top priorities in the coming year.

INSIDE

2

**Looking Ahead
in 2008**

3

Local Victories

4

**How Is Congress
Voting On
the Environment?**

Looking Ahead in 2008

Clean Water Action has a number of critical campaigns for 2008 that we will be focusing on throughout the year. At the national level, our number one priority remains passage of the **Clean Water Restoration Act**, or CWRA. This bill, introduced into Congress in 2007 with 172 co-sponsors, will end the ongoing rollback of the Clean Water Act. Until CWRA is passed, more and more small streams and wetlands will have all of their federal water protections removed, as the EPA declares them to be "outside the jurisdiction" of the Clean Water Act. Hearings on CWRA were held last year in both the U.S. House and Senate, and we will be working hard for this bill to be voted on and passed in 2008.



At the state level, Clean Water Action will be focused on getting passage of our **Safer Drinking Water Act**. This bill has now been introduced in both the State House and State Senate, and has the support of 41 legislators on both sides of the aisle. Passage of this bill will make Pennsylvania a leader in ensuring that both the rivers and groundwater that supply our drinking water have the protections they need from potential sources of contamination.

Another important state priority will be on improvements to our water quality regulations. The state DEP is currently reviewing these rules, and CWA has been working with the PA Campaign for Clean Water, a state coalition of watershed groups, on a number of initiatives to improve protections. The most critical is a proposal to require that all streams in the state have 100 foot forested buffers. Currently, there are no stream buffer requirements and developers can build right up to the stream bank. Forested buffers greatly improve water quality through utilizing the natural filtration of trees, plants, and soils, as well as greatly reducing stormwater management costs, and decreasing the harmful effects of downstream flooding.

As 2008 is an election year, Clean Water Action will once again be focused on ensuring that we have both state and federal representatives who support strong policies for clean water, clean air, and a cooler planet. We are currently surveying candidates from every level including, Presidential, U.S. Congress, and the state legislature, and will be examining their voting records and other histories of support for the environment.

Finally, Clean Water Action continues to be active at the local level, helping communities throughout the state faced with pollution problems. In the Philadelphia area, we will be continuing to work with townships on passage of local water protection ordinances, including ordinances to provide stream buffers, reduce stormwater, and protect public drinking water wells. Our Allentown office will also be reaching out to Lehigh Valley townships on water protection issues, in addition to providing ongoing support to communities facing new or expanding landfills. And in Pittsburgh, where air quality is ranking second worst in the U.S., CWA is focused on reducing air pollution from both industrial sources and diesel vehicles.

It will be a busy year, and CWA looks forward to working with you, our members, to make these victories for the environment possible!

Clean Water Action News

Pennsylvania Newsletter January–March 2008

Allentown Office

1124 W. Tilghman Street
Allentown, PA 18102
610-434-9223
allentowncwa@cleanwater.org
Rick Loomis, Organizer
Luke Taylor, Canvass Director

Philadelphia Office

1315 Walnut St., Suite 1650
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-545-0250
philly@cleanwater.org
Billy Goldsmith, Canvass Director
Alisha Deen Steindler, E. PA Director
Anne Misak, Organizer

Pittsburgh Office

100 5th Avenue, Suite 1108
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-765-3053
pittcwa@cleanwater.org
Felicia Sam, Phone Canvass Director
Bryan Cytryn, Field Canvass Director
Myron Arnowitt, PA State Director
Kathy Lawson, W. PA Director
Ashleigh Deemer, Organizer

National Office

4455 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite A300
Washington, DC 20008
202-895-0420
www.cleanwateraction.org

Clean Water Action is a national citizen's organization working for 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.

Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups, coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well being and community quality of life. This update was prepared for our Pennsylvania members who contribute at the sustaining member level of \$60 or more.

Local Victories for the Environment in PA

Across our state, Clean Water Action works in many local communities to protect our health and our environment. Below are just some of our many local victories over the past year:



Lehigh Valley: CWA has gotten six local municipalities to support a formal petition to the state to have the Upper Perkiomen Creek watershed designated “Exceptional Value” (EV), the highest level of protection from pollution. This watershed, which includes sections of Lehigh, Bucks, Montgomery, and Berks Counties, could face development pressure in the future and it is critical to ensure that protections for our water resources are in place now. Community support for granting EV status is an important part of the process.

In Northampton and Lehigh Counties, CWA is working with local watershed groups to get special protection for the Martins and Waltz Creeks and the Little Lehigh Creek. These trout streams are also being exposed to rapidly increasing development pressures which will severely lower water quality. CWA is helping the Martins-Jacoby Watershed association to prepare its petition for state protection and is working with the Little Lehigh Watershed Coalition to stop sediment and sewage contamination of the Little Lehigh and its tributaries.

In central Montgomery County, CWA has been helping residents in the Collegeville area organize to protect their communities that have ongoing air and water contamination from TCE, a suspected carcinogen. CWA helped get over 70 residents to a recent state hearing on TCE contamination, and one of the two largest TCE polluters in the community recently announced that they will start a process to phase out the hazardous chemical at their plant.

Philadelphia Area: As a core member of the Philadelphia Recycle NOW coalition, CWA turned out over 100 residents to a City Council hearing aimed at improving City recycling policies. Our efforts also got Mayor Nutter to commit to Recycle NOW’s five point agenda, which

includes starting weekly curbside recycling in Philadelphia city-wide in 2008.

CWA made progress in our campaign to get municipalities in the Schuylkill River watershed to adopt local water protection ordinances. Over the last year three municipalities have adopted our model ordinances which include ensuring local protections for drinking water sources, requiring vegetated buffers along streams, and strong stormwater rules that require new development to have stormwater infiltrate into the ground.

CWA was very active in local elections in 2007, helping to get strong environmentalists Michael Nutter elected as Mayor of Philadelphia, and Joe Hoeffel as Montgomery County Commissioner. CWA was one of the first groups to endorse Nutter, who originally wasn’t given much of a chance to win. We were impressed with his strong support for the environment and sustainable development, and are excited to be working with him in the future.



Pittsburgh Area: CWA has been tackling the problem of diesel pollution in Allegheny County, and has raised money to get Pittsburgh school buses and garbage trucks to be retrofit with pollution control devices that eliminate 90% of harmful particulate (soot) from the tailpipe. In total, CWA has gotten over \$1.4 million allocated towards diesel retrofits in the region, including a fund for cleaning up school buses throughout Allegheny County, and a program to retrofit municipally owned diesel vehicles in the Mon Valley.

CWA continues our work with residents living near large pollution sources on Neville Island and in the Mon Valley. Last year, we raised money to install a first ever Pollution Webcam that will help residents monitor Neville Island for excessive pollution from plants. We also held several public events in the Mon Valley that attracted considerable attention to the problems of Reliant Energy’s out of compliance coal burning power plant in Elrama.

How is Congress Voting on the Environment?

With one year under their belt, Clean Water Action is closely looking at how our new Congress is voting on key environmental issues. To see how green your representative is, refer to our chart below:

Representative	Dist. #	Region	Stop weakening of Clean Air Act? 6/27/07	Stop logging roads in Tongass National Forest? 6/27/07	Oppose development of high pollution "liquid coal" fuel? 8/4/07	Reduce oil subsidies and increase clean energy subsidies? 8/4/07	Improve car fuel mileage and require clean power production? 12/6/07
Bob Brady	1	Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chaka Fattah	2	Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jim Gerlach	6	Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Patrick Murphy	8	Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allison Schwartz	13	Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joe Sestak	7	Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charlie Dent	15	Lehigh Valley	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Chris Carney	10	Northeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Kanjorski	11	Northeast	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jason Altmire	4	West	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Michael Doyle	14	West	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Phil English	3	West	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Tim Murphy	18	West	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
John Murtha	12	West	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ = pro-environment vote ✗ = anti-environment vote

We will be continuing to monitor how Congress is voting in the future. Make sure to let your representatives know how you feel about their votes on the environment! You can write to your member of Congress at U.S. House, Washington, DC 20515.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PITTSBURGH, PA
PERMIT NO. 2122

Clean Water Action
100 5th Avenue, #1108
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

