

Action Needed to Block Christie's Dirty Water Rule

The deadline for the Legislature to block Governor Christie's proposed action to weaken New Jersey's Flood Hazard rules is fast approaching. As proposed last spring (2015), the Christie Administration's plan would dismantle key clean water provisions that protect us from flooding and polluted drinking water.

The federal Clean Water Act and additional state laws were passed to protect all of our waters. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), with the oversight of the NJ Legislature, implements these laws with periodic rulemaking.

A decade ago, DEP adopted several rules to strengthen these protections, reducing pollution and flooding. Two of these key provisions increased:

- the number and types of waterways that get strong (Category 1 or c1) protections; and
- the size of buffers from development (up to 300' for c1 streams) along the banks and upstream on many of these waterways.

Unfortunately, Gov. Christie has proposed major changes to the Flood Hazard rules which reduce these buffers and create exceptions, increasing the risk of flooding and drinking water contamination.

The NJ League of Municipalities, USEPA, and FEMA have joined Clean Water Action in opposing these changes. The NJ Legislature has also passed a bipartisan resolution that the proposed rules violate legislative intent, but the Christie Administration has largely dismissed or ignored all these concerns and is planning to adopt the rule before the end of June 2016.

The Legislature can invalidate these weakening changes by passing a second resolution with a simple majority — the Governor can't veto this action.



TAKE ACTION!

Please contact the Senate President and Assembly Speaker and tell them to block these dirty water rules:
<http://bit.ly/floodhazard>

You can also write a letter (using the sample below and your own words) to:

Senate President Steve Sweeney
935 Kings Hwy., Suite 400
West Deptford, NJ 08086
Assembly Speaker Vinnie Prieto
1 Harmon Plaza, Suite 205
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Dear Senate President Sweeney
and Speaker Prieto,

Thank you for opposing Governor Christie's dangerous proposed changes to the Flood Hazard Rules so far.

By eliminating buffers around critical waterways, these changes put more people in harm's way of flooding & contaminated drinking water. With over 90% of New Jersey's waters not meeting one or more water quality standards, it is critical you finish the job of blocking this dirty water rule.

Please pass ACR160/SCR66 before it's too late.

Thank you,
Your Name, Address & Email

What's in Your Backyard?

The Good, Bad and the Ugly Truth about Frelinghuysen Avenue, Newark NJ

Nestled in the South Ward of Newark is Weequahic Park, a name derived from a Lenape word “wee-quachick,” which means “head of the cove.” This gem of the neighborhood was designed by the Olmstead brothers in 1901. All 311 acres deliver breathtaking views and an experience for outdoor and sporting enthusiasts alike. But the beauty masks the dangers lurking just a street away in all directions, high volume truck routes — Weequahic Park is surrounded by highways — Routes 78, 22 and 1-9.

On average more than 250 trucks pass in and around the Weequahic Park area per hour, mostly on weekdays. Frelinghuysen Avenue is one of the busiest designated local truck routes in the city. It runs parallel to the park for about a 1/2 mile from the Newark/ Elizabeth border all the way to the Ironbound, intersecting with highways 78, 1-9 and 22 along the way. These trucks aren't clean — they spew dirty diesel pollution which is one of the leading contributors to asthma and cancer in the region.

Toxic hazards and residential housing have mixed for decades along Frelinghuysen Avenue. It is home to White Chemical Corp. (one of the worst hazardous waste sites identified by the EPA), junk yards, abandoned buildings, and recycling centers along with the Davita Dialysis center, youth detention centers and large Senior public housing high rises. There is even large, empty Newark Housing authority residential complex with boarded up windows and overgrown weeds. All of this is located within a short one mile stretch!

To draw attention to these issues, Clean Water Action joined Newark Celebration 350 — a year-long ju-

bilee of events across the city to commemorate the city's 350th anniversary. Clean Water Action held an “Environmental Justice and Climate Tour” on Saturday, April 23rd in the South Ward to engage the community and educate those who participated about the severe injustice in the community, progress made, and what actions they can take. This tour was made possible by the Community Foundation of New Jersey and the Bus for Progress.

“Clean Water Fund's Environmental Justice and Climate Tour was fun, very informative and gave a glimpse into the creative work that some residents put into improving our community,” said Wynnie V.

Hinds, a Newark South Ward resident and newly elected NJ Board Member of Clean Water Action. “It also provided a sobering look at the environmental injustice that we are faced with on a daily basis.”

Despite the surrounding pollution, many residents are making a change in their community by adopting a lot and creating beautiful community gardens.

Carlotta's Garden and the Rabbit hole are just two of the area's budding community gardens.

Earlier this year, Clean Water Fund was awarded a grant by the Kresge Foundation, to implement the Newark Resiliency Action Plan (RAP) a three prong approach to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, adapt to the changes already underway, and foster social inclusion and cohesion. A critical component of the plan is educating and partnering with the community. The tour was just one action of many to come. [To find out more, please email jmitchell@cleanwater.org.](mailto:jmitchell@cleanwater.org)



Carlotta's Garden has a variety of fruits and vegetables that will all be donated to senior citizens in the area. Residents are able to “Adopt a Lot” for \$1 from the city of Newark and turn it into their community garden vision.

Newark Public Schools: Lead in the Drinking Water

By Kim Gaddy

As a Newark resident, elected School Board member and Environmental Justice Organizer for Clean Water Action, Kim Gaddy is sharing concerns regarding the ongoing crisis of lead in the drinking water.

First, Clean Water Action applauds the disclosure of the most recent test results by the Superintendent which, unfortunately, has come after years of lead testing of the water in the schools that included results showing lead above the “acceptable” level.

“As a parent of a child in the district, I recognize the monumental tasks facing all of us given these results,” Kim said. “But the news was not shocking, given the age of Newark school buildings and the fact that 20 years ago I exposed the problem of lead in school water fountains and had them shut off. I am disappointed that again in 2016 our children don’t have safe drinking water in our schools.”

While the affected schools are now using bottled water, the district needs a more sustainable distribution system for students and staff. Clean Water Action supports the plan to test ALL school drinking water outlets to determine where the problems are and develop a strategy for permanent shutoffs, repairs, and maintenance. Clean Water Action will also advocate for the installation of bottle filling stations throughout the district and providing each student and staff their own re-usable metal water bottle to avert the long term cost and environmental waste of paper cups or plastic cups and bottles.

Clean Water Action also supports comprehensive state policies and legislative actions to provide resources to address this crisis. Newark Mayor Baraka proposed a simple fix that he believes can help secure the resources needed to repair and update New Jersey’s crumbling water infrastructure, protect the environment, and ensure our children’s water stays lead free — the Smart Container Act.



Kim Gaddy, Clean Water Action Environmental Justice Organizer, works in the City of Newark fighting to ensure children’s health and drinking water are put first.

The Smart Container Act (A2281) would create a \$.10 deposit on plastic bottles and dedicate revenue raised from uncollected deposits to water infrastructure projects needed across our state, including public schools. Clean Water Action joined the Mayor and several environmental and social justice organizations that know that inaction puts the health and safety of our most precious resource — our children — at risk.

New Jersey’s water infrastructure is in immediate need for repair. Newark public schools are the first to test positive for lead leaching from aged pipes in our schools, but will most likely not be the last. Residents across this state depend on water that travels through pipes which haven’t been replaced in generations.

“Although my responsibility is to the residents of New Jersey’s largest city, I gladly join others across this state calling for common sense action that will secure the health and safety of not only the children of Newark, but those in Elizabeth, Vineland, Camden, Irvington, Paterson and anywhere across our state where investments in water infrastructure can prevent irreversible damage to our children and communities,” said Mayor Baraka.

Clean Water Action applauds the Mayor and will do everything in our power to ensure our children and families are protected from lead exposure. Because if we truly want to protect our water, we need to put drinking water first.

Have you seen the new CleanWaterAction.org?

CleanWaterAction.org has always been THE resource for information about the fight to protect clean water; to learn how we can put drinking water first; and the ways you can hold polluters accountable for their pollution. You can do that and more at the new CleanWaterAction.org. And you can do it on the go if you have a smart phone or a tablet.

Take a tour today. Check out the action center, read our new blog, or make a donation.

Let's Make Sure Clean, Renewable Energy Wins

The debate between continuing down the path of dirty, dangerous, and unneeded pipelines and other fossil fuel projects or supporting and expanding renewable and energy efficient technologies to create more jobs and environment justice is roiling New Jersey.

The Christie Administration continues to push two fracking gas pipelines, including NJ Gas' misleadingly named 'Southern Reliability Link' (SRL), through the Pinelands' 17-trillion gallon pristine aquifer.

The Administration is non-committal at best on two other proposed pipelines that also threaten drinking water: PennEast in Hunterdon and Mercer Counties, and Pilgrim Oil that runs from Bergen through Morris and Passaic counties before ending in Middlesex and Union Counties.

Governor Christie can protect drinking water by denying the water quality permits for these pipelines. That is exactly what New York Governor Andrew Cuomo did with a very similar pipeline on Earth Day earlier this spring.

All of these projects are interconnected. PennEast proposes to transport gas from Pennsylvania along the Delaware River to Transco's Trenton Woodbury line near Mercer County, NJ. Transco's Garden State Expansion project would get this gas from there to Chesterfield, NJ. SRL would then haul it to Manchester, Ocean County to, in NJ Gas' own words, "support growth in Ocean County."

NJ Gas' plan is to bring gas from Pennsylvania through PennEast, which it partially owns. This will spur more development, further

degrading the Jersey Shore, increase reliance on fossil fuels, and exacerbate climate change. Which will, in turn, increase sea level rise and the severity/frequency of extreme weather at the Jersey Shore which is already disproportionately hurting from and vulnerable to climate change.

Clean Water Action is working to put an end to this fossil fuel madness. The NJ Legislature can pass S1707/A2203 that will steadily increase the amount of clean renewables in the state's energy mix to 80 percent by 2050. The bill has already passed the NJ Senate and now we are urging for the NJ Legislature's support.

TAKE ACTION and get more information at www.cleanwateraction.org/actions/action-alert-energize-new-jersey

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