

## MORE SHOCKING NEWS ON BPA

Last year it was lead. This year bisphenol-A (BPA) is the toxic chemical making news headlines and worrying parents. BPA is a building block of polycarbonate plastic and has been found to leach from many baby bottles and other products. BPA has been linked to obesity, early onset puberty, low sperm count, hyperactivity, depression and other health effects. Recently, two new studies have been released showing some more shocking exposure pathways and effects of BPA.

The first study showed that newborn rats exposed to BPA through their mother's milk can have developmental changes in

their mammary tissue which predisposes them to breast cancer. Nursing rats were fed very small amounts of BPA and their offspring showed abnormalities in their breast tissue when they reached maturity. In the second study, premature infants were found to have greater levels of BPA in their bodies than adults. How is this possible? The premature infants studied were exposed to BPA through the medical devices and products that were being used to save their lives in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Both of these studies emphasize the need for lawmakers to take into account exposure to BPA in newborns through other pathways than just baby bottles, such

as breastfeeding and medical devices/products. It is not enough to simply ban BPA in baby bottles.

In Massachusetts, Clean Water Action is working with the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow coalition delivered over 8,400 petition signatures to Governor Deval Patrick and organized 100's of calls to him requesting his support for a regulation banning the sale of children's products containing BPA.

*For more information and to sign the ongoing petition, visit us online at: [www.cleanwateraction.org/takeaction/ma](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/takeaction/ma)*

In Connecticut, Clean Water Action, partner groups, and leading lawmakers recently launched a campaign to phase out BPA from food and beverage containers and products for infants and toddlers. The co-chairs of the Legislature's Environment Committee, Representative Richard Roy and Senator Ed Meyer, State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz, and a number of legislators and public health advocates voiced their support for the legislation at an event on January 27 (a video of the event is on-line at [www.ctn.state.ct.us/ondemand.asp?ID=4128](http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/ondemand.asp?ID=4128)). Clean Water Action members are invited to submit written or oral testimony in support of smarter chemical safety laws for the public hearing on this legislation.

*For more information, please contact Sarah Ubl: [subl@cleanwater.org](mailto:subl@cleanwater.org) or (860) 232-6232, or visit us online at [www.cleanwateraction.org/ct](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/ct)*



Erin Boles with son Thomas and Clean Water Action's Elizabeth Saunders wait to deliver messages to Governor Patrick on BPA.

## New England CURRENTS

### SUMMER 2009

New England Currents is published by Clean Water Action.

Clean Water Action is a national citizens' 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 coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life.

This update was prepared for our New England regional members (in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island) who contribute at the sustaining level of \$60 or more.

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Union printed: Worker safety and a clean environment go hand in hand.

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## GO SOLAR CONNECTICUT



Connecticut homes, municipalities and businesses are being hurt by rising and unpredictable energy prices. As power prices rise, municipal budgets are further stretched, small businesses scramble to keep their lights on, and families struggle to pay their utility bills. An investment in rooftop solar is an investment in a fuel-free energy source which produces power at a stable cost and creates jobs for a Connecticut-based solar industry.

Clean Water Action is working with Environment Connecticut and the Vote Solar Initiative on legislation to make Connecticut follow the lead of states like Massachusetts, New Jersey and California by setting ambitious long-term solar targets. Our goal is to bring solar to a scale where it can compete directly with conventional fuels on cost over the next decade. Installing enough solar power to meet the electricity needs of the equivalent to 100,000 homes would create more than 8,000 new jobs in fields like engineering, roofing, electrical and construction, as well as entry-level installation jobs.

*To learn more and get involved locally in our efforts to pass an ambitious solar law, please contact Roger Smith at (860) 232-6232 or [rsmith@cleanwater.org](mailto:rsmith@cleanwater.org)*

## MASSACHUSETTS' GREEN REVOLUTION



Worried about the cost of heating your home? You're not alone. After the major spike in the price of oil to almost \$150 per barrel last year, the Patrick administration formed a Winter Heating Task Force to address the potential heating oil crisis facing families across the commonwealth. Clean Water Action testified at the Task Force hearing to stress the need for energy efficiency measures as a critical element to reducing energy use and costs to families.

To raise the visibility of this urgent situation, and prevent "a snowy Katrina" from unfolding in this region, Clean

Water Action united with religious leaders including Reverend Bob Massie and a powerful coalition of labor, environment, and community development groups to address the growing concern about initial high fuel prices over the summer and plan for long term solutions to the climate and energy crisis. The groups drafted the "Declaration of Energy Empowerment" which calls for \$1 billion dollars to weatherize every building and home in Massachusetts. This investment would create over 10,000 living wage jobs and reduce the global warming pollution.

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## MAKE EARTH DAY EVERY DAY!

Take advantage of one of the easiest and most convenient ways to support Clean Water Fund!

You can make a gift to Clean Water Fund by payroll contribution through EarthShare of New England's workplace giving program at numerous private companies, many state and municipal government organizations, and in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), by selecting Clean Water Fund's CFC #10636 on your pledge form.

Clean Water Fund is a member of EarthShare of New England, which is part of a nationwide network of leading environmental and conservation organizations working to protect and preserve our natural resources and public health. Find out if *your* employer hosts a workplace giving campaign and if it includes EarthShare of New England and its member charities. To find out more about workplace charitable giving campaigns, please call (800) 70-WATER x169. You can also visit EarthShare of New England's web site at [www.greenfornewengland.org](http://www.greenfornewengland.org).



# CLEAN WATER CURRENTS

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*From the President*  
John DeCock

## THE LONG VIEW

One of the most pernicious influences in American society is the quest for the Quarterly Bottom Line. It encourages instant gratification at the expense of enlightened self interest, ignoring the greater good. This irrational outgrowth of corporate culture isn't even in the best interest of corporate profits. Thoughtful planning is sacrificed for short term profit four times a year to make shareholders happy and keep executives in their jobs. It doesn't work, yet it is the guiding principle of corporate behavior in this era.

Quarterly Bottom Line thinking has infiltrated our government and marketplace in ways that work against our long term interests. We burn fossil fuels as if there is an infinite supply and no adverse consequences. We allow toxins, sewage and drugs into our water as though some invisible force will remove all the bad stuff and what comes out of our tap will be okay. We don't hold polluters accountable or require sustainable practices and products because our health and environment aren't counted in the bottom line. We fail to invest in systems, policies and infrastructure that

will ensure a healthy environment and strong economy for the long term. Many people think that way.

Fortunately, members of Clean Water Action know better.

Clean Water Action is taking advantage of the historic opportunities we see before us. We have helped to build pro-environment majorities in many state legislatures and Congress. We have a chance, in fact a mandate, to address complex, long term problems with sustainable solutions. As we start the summer, the U.S. House is taking a first big step to address Global Warming and invest in a clean energy future.

That's just the beginning.

Big changes are on the horizon in environmental public policy—changes for which Clean Water Action has been working our entire history. Shifting to a new energy economy and protecting our waters from old and new threats cannot happen without a new and comprehensive approach. We have to look at choices we make in our everyday lives and how we impact natural resources. Any environmental

issue you care about: just add water. Water is the fundamental element which connects the natural world, our health and all the things we care about.

We take the long view to protect water and are promoting a 21st century approach to water use and management. We have a decades-long commitment to protecting our communities and ecosystems from toxics, outmoded water systems, water borne diseases, poor water use and management practices and a range of other issues that demonstrate the connection between water and every aspect of our lives and our world.

Clean Water Action empowers people to make democracy work. We work for solutions that protect health and natural resources. Where big, bold initiatives and decisions are required; our people power makes it happen. People power and a long, persistent approach. That is what we do. Constant pressure applied constantly. It's the way diamonds and good environmental policy are made.

# HOW SAFE IS YOUR BATH TUB?



Bubble baths should be clean, safe and fun. But *No More Toxic Tub*—a report published in March 2009 by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics in partnership with Clean Water Action and other organizations—found hazardous ingredients in numerous bath products marketed to babies and children. The report lists 38 products contaminated with formaldehyde, 1,4-dioxane or both, although neither contaminant appears on product labels. Both chemicals are linked with cancer but neither toxin is federally regulated in the United States.

The European Union and Canada prohibit 1,4-dioxane use *at any level* in cosmetics, while Sweden and Japan have banned the use of formaldehyde in cosmetics and toiletries. Canada and the European Union also closely regulate the chemical. In the U.S., the FDA has done nothing.

The *Toxic Tub* report found that 67% of tested products contained 1,4-dioxane. 82% contained formaldehyde. 61% contained both toxins. Even trace amounts of these chemicals can present health risks for babies and may contribute to serious health problems and disease.

“Many people are shocked,” says Clean Water Action’s Mia Davis, who coordinates the national Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. “We shouldn’t have to be chemists to pick safe products for our children.”

Baby products are often marketed as gentle and safe—terms not typically associated with cancer-causing chemicals. The list of contaminated products includes trusted names like Johnson


& Johnson, Sesame Street Bubble Bath and Gerber’s Grins & Giggles Milk & Honey Body Wash.

To spread the word about dangerous chemicals in baby products and other cosmetics, Clean Water Action offices across the country have hosted a series of successful outreach events, inviting members and non-members to ask questions, read literature and learn about products ranging from safe to dangerous.

“It’s not just babies, it’s everyone,” explains Sarah Holzgraf, campaign organizer for Clean Water Action’s New Hampshire office. “People see a product on the table and think: ‘I use that! Why is it there? What’s wrong with it?’” Holzgraf explains that people are surprised and upset to learn the cosmetics industry is self-regulated. “They think the government is protecting us.”

Clean Water Action New Hampshire is also working with the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics to collect petition signatures to deliver to public officials, urging them to support more effective regulations of chemicals in personal care products. New Hampshire members can sign the petition at: [www.cleanwateraction.org/takeaction/nh](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/takeaction/nh)

*To learn more about Clean Water Action’s work for Healthy, Safer Families and Communities, visit [www.cleanwateraction.org](http://www.cleanwateraction.org).*

 *The trouble with these chemicals doesn’t end in the bath tub. “They are getting back into our waterways,” says Davis, who explains that these are just two of the many chemicals and toxins we are washing down our drains. Our cosmetics, household cleaners, pesticides and prescription drugs all eventually find their way through our plumbing and into the environment. This chemical cocktail can wreck havoc on ecosystems, wildlife and community water supplies. Some of these chemicals have been linked to damaged aquatic ecosystems, where frogs are sprouting six pairs of legs and male fishes are developing female reproductive organs.*

## Bathe without chemicals: get informed and read labels

Neither formaldehyde or 1,4-dioxane are intentionally added to baby bath products, which means they do not appear on the ingredients list. Instead, the chemicals are contaminants that combine and degrade during the manufacturing process or in the bottle. Reduce your risk of exposure by reading labels and avoiding any products with the following ingredients.

Formaldehyde may be found in products containing:

- quaternium-15
- diazolidinyl urea
- DMDM hydantoin
- imidazolidinyl urea

1,4-dioxane may be found in products containing:

- PEG-100 stearate
- sodium laureth sulfate
- polyethylene
- cetareth-20

Formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane are not the only potentially dangerous chemicals in our bath products, and there is no comprehensive list of safe options. You can reduce your exposure:

- Choose products with fewer ingredients.
- Avoid products that use synthetic fragrance or dyes.
- Use fewer products overall.
- Read labels and avoid the ingredients listed above.
- Research your favorite products at [www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com)
- Contact your elected officials to support regulation of the cosmetics industry.
- Share concerns, fears and frustrations with manufacturers.
- Read the report at [www.safecosmetics.org/toxictub](http://www.safecosmetics.org/toxictub)

## RESTORING THE CLEAN WATER ACT MUST TOP CONGRESS' AGENDA

The Clean Water Restoration Act, introduced in April by Senator Russell Feingold, (D-WI) and almost two dozen co-sponsors, would restore critical Clean Water Act protections lost during six years of the Bush Administration's "No Protection" Policy. Reversing these policies has been a top priority for Clean Water Action since late 2002 and it should be Congress' priority now.

Beginning in 1975, the Clean Water Act was interpreted to protect all of the waters of the United States. For decades, it was presumed that every body of water fit this description, and qualified for federal protections. Now, in the wake of confusing and ill-defined U.S. Supreme Court rulings (*Rapanos v. United States* and *SWANNC v. Army Corps of Engineers*), the opposite is true. Now, federal Clean Water Act enforcers must undergo a resource intensive analysis

for every stream, creek, wash, wetland, tributary and river before it can retain protections under the Clean Water Act.

Confusion over Clean Water Act protection has led to delays in permitting decisions, to the dismay of developers; and a lack of protection enforcement, to the dismay of environmentalists. Hundreds of pollution enforcement cases and development applications have been dropped

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## FOR CALIFORNIA WOMAN, PROTECTING A RIVER CAN COST YOU A JOB

Heather Wylie traded her job for a river. And she'd do it all over again.

In 2008, Wylie joined a handful of protestors for a kayak trip down the Los Angeles River, earning the wrath of her employers and the attention of a nation. Why? At the time, Wylie was a biologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The agency had just designated the LA River "non-navigable"—putting the watershed at risk and setting a dangerous precedent. Wylie and her compatriots set out to prove the Army Corps wrong. If they could make the journey then the LA River must be navigable which was a critical first step in retaining Clean Water Act safeguards.

Wylie's passion for water began in college when she worked as a canvasser with Clean Water Action. "That was really fun," she remembers. After college, Wylie worked with the Army Corps. Wylie's enthusiasm for environmental protection matured into opposition of the Army Corps' policies. By 2008, she was frustrated enough to grab a paddle to prove her point.

The trip succeeded—triggering events involving the Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, Congress, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and other organizations and individuals. By the end of the summer, the EPA had wrested jurisdiction of the LA

River system from the Army Corps. In December, Wylie lost her job.

Some people say Wylie lost her job over a kayak trip but that's not true. She'd probably still be working for the Army Corps if she'd chosen a different river. Wylie lost her job over a word: navigable.

Why the fuss over a single word? Navigable, according to current interpretation, is the only word that matters when protecting America's waters. Only waterways deemed navigable qualify for federal oversight and protection under the Clean Water Act. Wylie proved the Army Corps wrong. She lost her job.

Despite its importance, no clear guidelines define navigable as it applies to the Clean Water Act. The law itself broadly defined "navigable" as "the waters of the United States," regardless if water had, or could, be navigated. For decades, it was presumed every body of water fit this description, and qualified for federal protections. In the wake of confusing, ill-defined U.S. Supreme Court rulings, the opposite is true. Now, federal Clean Water Act enforcers must undergo a resource intensive analysis for every stream, creek, wash, wetland, tributary and river before it can retain protections. The farther away a creek or wetland is from a body of water you can float a boat on, the harder it is to keep it protected. Designating waterbodies



as being navigable-in-fact has become a critical first step in retaining Clean Water Act protections on the creeks and wetlands that drain to them.

The result of this confusion has been a sudden halt to the permitting process, uniting environmentalists and developers in frustration. Hundreds of pollution enforcement cases and development applications have been dropped with thousands more indefinitely delayed. Lately, it's hard to find anyone—environmentalist or developer—who believes the Clean Water Act's regulatory process is working.

With a kayak and some personal sacrifice, Wylie proved herself right. The EPA is reviewing the LA river system. Wylie is hopeful it will soon be officially defined as navigable.

But this story extends beyond LA. This is about our lakes, rivers, and streams, and how we choose to protect them.

The consequences are felt in our homes and communities, from the tap to the

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# WHAT YOU WON'T SEE IN THOSE 'CLEAN COAL' ADS: DIRTY AIR, A WALL OF SLUDGE, POISONED RIVERS

Surely you've seen the ads scattered around the internet and splashed across our newspapers and magazines. Commercials interrupt our favorite television shows and invade our local radio station's airspace. They are everywhere. But that doesn't make them true.

No PR campaign, no matter how well executed, can make coal clean.

Advocates for "clean" coal argue that technology exists—almost—that will allow coal-fired power plants to capture their carbon emissions and store the climate-changing gas deep under ground. Technically, this may be true. Realistically, this is extremely expensive, and doesn't begin to address impacts on our water from continued coal mining and reliance on it to produce electricity. From mines to power plants, the process of wresting energy from coal is dirty and unhealthy for our waters, our communities and our bodies.



When the Kingston Fossil Plant dam failed on December 22, 2008, decades of hazardous coal ash and sludge were released along the Emory River in Tennessee. An estimated 1.1 billion gallons of contaminated water oozed downstream. Homes were destroyed and many wild creatures were killed, but no one knows what the long term impacts might be.

Already, water samples collected by Appalachian Voices have revealed frightening levels of contamination. Arsenic was present at 30 to 300 times the allowable limits. Lead was present at 2 to 21 times the legal limit for drinking water. In fact, every water sample collected by Appalachian Voices had elevated levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, nickel and thallium. The Tennessee Valley Authority, responsible for both the dam and its rupture, claim that their water samples reveal acceptable levels of contamination for drinking water. Whether or not you believe their results, the question remains: Did they drink the water?

Would you?

*To find out more about coal power and its impact on water, visit us online at: <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/currents/spring2009>*

## Restoring the Clean Water Act *(continued from page 5)*

entirely, and thousands more have been indefinitely delayed. The Clean Water Act is broken and must be fixed.

Restoring the authority of the Clean Water Act to protect water resources must top Congress' water agenda. Current policies threaten protections for sources of drinking water for more than 110 million Americans. Waterways at risk range from most of a 53-mile stretch the Los Angeles River basin, declared exempt from Clean Water Act protection by the Corps of Engineers, to Avondale Creek in Birmingham, Alabama, a continuously flowing

stream that flows into residential neighborhoods, a lake and eventually a large river.

There is wide support for Congressional action to fix the Clean Water Act and restore the protections that were in place just six short years ago. Earlier this year, more than 160 scientists sent a letter to President Obama urging him to support the Clean Water Restoration Act, which would clarify in law the connection between waterways—connections well understood by scientists. Committee action in the U.S. Senate is expected in May.

 For more information on the need for Congress to act now on the Clean Water Restoration Act, visit us online at <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/restorationact>

## Protecting a River Can Cost You a Job *(continued from page 5)*

stream. We need a water protection process that makes sense. The Clean Water Act is now broken and over half of our nation's waterways—and our health—may no longer be protected. It's time to pass the Clean Water Restoration Act and restore the original intent of the Clean Water Act.

Wylie doesn't regret her lost Army Corps job. She insists she'll grab that paddle again if needed. But we cannot protect our water resources by floating a kayaker down every river. We need to revive clean water protections in our nation. "Our nation's waters will continue to be in a state of crisis until the Clean Water Restoration Act is passed," says Wylie. Once again, she's right.

**MAKE EVERY DAY EARTH DAY!** Take advantage of one of the easiest and most convenient ways to support Clean Water! You can make a gift to Clean Water Fund by payroll contribution through **EarthShare's** workplace giving program at numerous private companies, many state and municipal government organizations, and in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), by selecting CFC # 10636 on your pledge form. Clean Water Fund is a member of EarthShare, a nationwide federation of the country's most respected environmental and conservation charities. For more information about how you and your workplace can support Clean Water Fund, please call (800) 70-WATER x169.



# 2009 NEW ENGLAND LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

**CONNECTICUT** | With a coalition of 45 groups, Clean Water Action is supporting legislation to reduce chemicals of concern. HB 5499 will phase out Bisphenol-A (BPA) from food and beverage containers and children's products. HB 5477 will phase out polybrominated flame retardants (PBDEs), for which safer alternatives are readily available. HB 6111 will create a framework for prioritizing hazardous substances for phase-out when safer alternatives are available, and an additional bill will require green cleaning in all primary and secondary schools. *For more information visit us online at [www.cleanwateraction.org/ct](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/ct)*

*For information on the Connecticut solar initiative, check out the Go Solar article in this edition.*

**RHODE ISLAND** | Clean Water Action supports the Water Conservation and Competitiveness Act to promote water conservation and efficiency and invest in an efficient and reliable system of supply and distribution.

The Rhode Island Energy Independence and Climate Solutions Act will reduce global warming pollution in Rhode Island 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. These goals are what scientists say we need to achieve to avert the worst impacts.

Providence County ranks among the worst 6% of all counties in the United States for health impacts from diesel pollution. Clean Water Action supports legislation to strengthen the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act to require the use of emission control technology in state vehicles and major construction projects (the second largest source of diesel emissions in the state).

In 2005, Rhode Island banned the sale of thermostats that contain mercury. However, remaining thermostats in Rhode Island homes contain an estimated 3,651 pounds of the toxin. The Mercury Thermostat Pollution Prevention Act will require thermostat manufacturers to pay a bounty to ensure the safe

collection and recycling of mercury-containing thermostats.

**MASSACHUSETTS** | Everyday we are exposed to toxic chemicals in our homes, workplaces and schools. The Safer Alternatives Bill will create a program to replace these toxic chemicals with safer alternatives wherever possible. The bill got a strong start to the 2009–10 legislative session with 125 out of 200 legislators signing on as co-sponsors.

Annually, diesel pollution in Massachusetts is responsible for more than 450 premature deaths, 9,900 asthma attacks, and 60,000 days of work lost. The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2009 will require many vehicles such as waste haulers, buses, and state contracted maintenance or construction vehicles to be retrofitted with diesel “scrubbers”

that filter out up to 90% of the dangerous soot and particulate matter from their tailpipes.

The volume of electronic waste in the state is an estimated 300,000 tons per year, costing Massachusetts cities and towns \$6–21 million annually in recycling expenses. These numbers are expected to increase with the shift to all-digital TV broadcasting. Clean Water Action is working to pass the E-waste Producer Responsibility Bill to require manufacturers to set up and fund collection programs for recycling of electronic waste products.

*To learn more about any of these bills and to find out how you can help, please contact your local Clean Water Action office:*  
**CONNECTICUT (860) 232-6232;**  
**MASSACHUSETTS (617) 338-8131; or**  
**RHODE ISLAND (401) 331-6972.**

## CONNECTICUT CLEAN CAMPUS CAMPAIGN

Clean Water Fund, a research and education organization whose programs build on and compliment those of Clean Water Action, has launched a pilot Clean Energy Campus program in late 2008 to support Connecticut campuses model leadership on global warming and clean energy. Starting with the University of Hartford, Fairfield University and Wesleyan University the program is working to:

1. secure commitments to reduce global warming pollution;
2. create climate action implementation plans; and
3. to purchase 20% of their energy from renewable sources by 2010.

Working on campuses to solve our global warming and energy challenges is a great learning experience for students, faculty and administrators as the whole campus serves as their laboratory.

In addition to helping members of the campus communities build grassroots support for ambitious on-campus green building, clean energy, and climate efforts, Clean Water Fund is working to establish relationships between these universities to help them learn from each other and incorporate sustainability into the schools' strategic plans. Hundreds of students from Connecticut schools, including dozens from the three campuses Clean Water Fund is working on, went to Washington D.C. on February 27 for Powershift 2009. They joined 10,000 young people from around the country to tell the new administration that they need to make clean energy a top priority.

*For more information, please contact Jacqueline Rowland at (860) 232-6232 or [jrowland@cleanwater.org](mailto:jrowland@cleanwater.org).*

# MOBILIZING FOR ACTION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



In one of the most exciting election seasons in recent history, Clean Water Action's membership grew dramatically in New Hampshire as part of our drive to elect strong environmental leaders in the Granite State. To keep this great momentum going forward, we've launched the Civic Engagement Project with a goal to educate, engage and mobilize our 15,000 members in New Hampshire on key federal and state issues

How can YOU get involved? We're offering a variety of options, from social networking to organizing community events and helping you contact your local media or public officials. On the

social networking front, we have launched a Facebook Group, [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=47450073070](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=47450073070). Our plan is to build our e-mail action alert networks to communicate issue updates and fast-breaking alerts to our members in ways that make it easy to get involved.

What is *your* top issue of concern? There are lots of opportunities to weigh in including:

- Support smart investments in the maintenance of our drinking water systems
- Urge personal care companies to phase out toxics and sign safe cosmetics pact
- Win public and lawmaker support for chemical policy reform to replace

- toxic chemicals with safer alternatives, including Bisphenol-A (BPA) in food and beverage containers (like baby bottles!)
- Raise awareness about our government's need to support smart global warming and energy solutions—including cutting carbon pollution, and increasing new green jobs.
  - Gain increased investment in climate friendly transportation such as a commuter rail system.

*For more information or to join our campaigns, please call our Manchester office at (603) 622-8151 or e-mail [sholzgraf@cleanwater.org](mailto:sholzgraf@cleanwater.org)*

## CLEAN WATER ACTION PREVENTS MERCURY POLLUTION AND PROMOTES ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Clean Water Action's Zero Mercury Campaign has launched campaigns in Rhode Island and Massachusetts to require manufacturers to take responsibility for the collection and recycling of thermostats and light bulbs that contain mercury.

Everyone in New England is familiar with the old fashioned round thermostat used to control the temperature in our houses. Many people don't know that those thermostats contain 3 to 5 grams of mercury. Since a single gram of mercury is toxic enough to contaminate all of the fish in a 20-acre lake, that adds up to a significant source of pollution that needs to be controlled.

Our campaign has already been successful in both states in banning the sale of thermostats that contain mercury. However, thermostats can last in our homes for decades of use. Thermostats already in Rhode Island homes contain over 3,500 pounds of mercury and in Massachusetts, over 21,000 pounds!

Both Maine and Vermont have passed laws requiring thermostat manufacturers to pay \$5 to homeowners, contractors,

or others for each mercury thermostat they bring to the collection program.

Bringing similar collection programs to Massachusetts and Rhode Island will both help prevent mercury pollution when thermostats are thrown away and help promote energy efficiency. New programmable, digital thermostats can save up to 10% on heating and cooling costs.

Many Clean Water Action members have already taken our other energy efficiency advice: to switch their home light bulbs to compact fluorescents (CFLs). CFLs are important for saving energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but they do contain small amounts of mercury. In Massachusetts, Clean Water Action is working to pass legislation that would require the CFL manufacturers to pay for the convenient collection and recycling of bulbs. The bill also requires standards for the amount of mercury allowed in CFLs while maximizing energy efficiency.

*To get involved in the campaigns, contact Elizabeth Saunders in Boston: [esaunders@cleanwater.org](mailto:esaunders@cleanwater.org) or Sheila Dormody in Providence: [sdormody@cleanwater.org](mailto:sdormody@cleanwater.org)*

### Massachusetts' Green Revolution

*(continued from page 2)*

The Declaration, released with fanfare at the *Rally for an Energy Empowerment Revolution* convened in Faneuil Hall on November 25, was also signed by event keynote speaker Senator John Kerry who called for urgent investment in weatherizing homes and was supported by concerned citizens who attended the event.

Clean Water Action has also joined the Green Justice Coalition, which is a partnership of community groups, labor unions, environmental organizations and other allied organizations who are building a broad-based effort in support of a sustainable, equitable and clean energy economy in Massachusetts. Clean Water Action was a coordinating partner in the December 6 kick-off event at the Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury and is working with the coalition and others to advance the green jobs platform.

*To learn more and sign on to the Declaration of Energy empowerment go to [www.cleanwateraction.org/ma](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/ma)*