

## Minneapolis Residents Ready to Bring Their Own Bags



Thanks to supporters throughout Minneapolis, the Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) ordinance passed the Minneapolis City Council by a vote of 10 to 3 in April 2016. Starting June 1, 2017, there will be an incentive for residents to bring reusable bags rather than using disposable plastic or paper bags.

Despite strong support from Minneapolis residents, neighborhood organizations, and environmental groups, the plastic bag industry, and eight industry associations, mobilized against the ordinance.

The campaign was successful despite this opposition because Clean Water members signed petitions, emailed, called, and testified. Clean Water Action's Minnesota Director Deanna White testified on behalf of the more than 2,600 residents who signed petitions supporting this effort.

Special recognition should also be given to Councilman Cam Gordon, chief author of the BYOB ordinance and co-author Councilman Abdi Warsame. Now we can look forward to Minneapolis stores being free of single-use plastic bags by June 1 of 2017.

*Learn more about the Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance:*  
[cleanwateraction.org/MinneapolisBags](http://cleanwateraction.org/MinneapolisBags)

## Bringing the Great Lakes to Washington

In March, Clean Water Action led a group of Minnesotans to Washington, D.C. for Great Lakes Day, for education and advocacy with Minnesota's Congressional delegation. The group was joined by nearly 100 other advocates from around the Great Lakes region who were meeting with their representatives from Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.

For decades, Clean Water Action has led the fight to protect and restore Lake Superior and the Great Lakes. Why? Because the Great Lakes contain 21% of the Earth's available fresh water, are the drinking water source for more than 35 million people, and tourism to the Lakes brings in more than 16 billion dollars each year to local economies. For more than a century the lakes were treated as though they were sewers and industrial waste disposal sites.

In 2010 Clean Water Action and partners from around the lakes pressured Congress and President  
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### Have you seen the new [CleanWaterAction.org](http://CleanWaterAction.org)?

[CleanWaterAction.org](http://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](http://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.**

# Report Finds BPA Still Common in Food Cans

The food we buy should be safe and healthy for our families, right? Unfortunately a recently released report found 67% (out of nearly 200 food cans sampled) tested positive for bisphenol A (BPA), a hormone-disrupting chemical linked to breast and prostate cancer, infertility, and type-2 diabetes.

The new report, *Buyer Beware: Toxic BPA and regrettable substitutes found in the linings of canned food*, found that most of the cans sampled still tested positive for this harmful chemical. Studies have shown this chemical can migrate out of cans, get into the food our families eat, and make its way into our bodies.

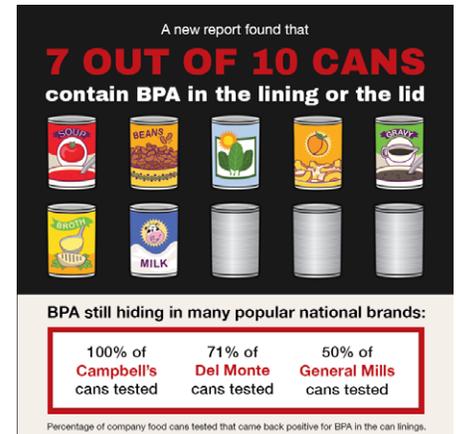
Four years ago Campbell's pledged to reduce their use of BPA in canned food, yet the new report

found the lining in most of their cans still tested positive for this harmful chemical.

When they learned about the report, Campbell's announced it will eliminate BPA in North American cans by mid-2017. Clean Water Action is calling on them to follow through on this commitment by mobilizing consumer comments to Campbell's CEO.

While some leading brands have already eliminated BPA from their food can linings, the substitutes may not be safer. Four major alternative coatings were identified among the tested cans: acrylic resins, oleoresin, polyester resins, and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) copolymers.

The good news is four brands have fully transitioned away from



the use of BPA and have disclosed the BPA alternatives they are using. Another brand has eliminated 95% of BPA from its canned foods. Six retailers have adopted policies to reduce the use of BPA in their private-label canned food and one retailer is now prohibiting BPA from all new canned items.

[Read the full report: www.cleanwateraction.org/BPAcans](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/BPAcans) • **Take Action:** [www.cleanwateraction.org/BPAcampbells](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/BPAcampbells)

## Great Lakes *continued from page 1*

Obama to pass the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). With support from Clean Water members' this landmark legislation accelerated efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world — the Great Lakes.

Since then, more than 2 billion dollars has been secured to restore and protect these treasured lakes for future generations. Though it has taken a while, the many problems that have plagued the lakes — agricultural pollution, sewer overflows, leaking septic tanks, habitat destruction, and the spread of invasive species — are being addressed. However, much more is needed to reach the goals in the GRLI.

That's why the focus is on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2015. This bill would provide stability for Great Lakes funding for at least five years and establish a permanent program in the

Environmental Protection Agency to continue these important projects. The GLRI Act will provide secure and stable funding and will encourage more state and local governments, as well as private businesses, to invest in protection and restoration across the Great Lakes basin.

Congress only takes action on these issues when they hear from constituents, and Clean Water made sure members' voices were heard. Even with this investment in the future of our lakes, it is going to take many more years before all the Great Lakes are once again swimmable, fishable, and safe for all communities to get clean, affordable drinking water. However, the GLRI and the work we continue to do will get us closer to treating them as the Great Lakes, not just "so-so" lakes.

## Risks of Recycled Tire Products

Nearly 300 million car and truck tires are discarded every year. To address the problem of tire stockpiles, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages the recycling of waste tires into playground mulch and synthetic turf athletic field infill. Use of recycled waste tires has grown over the last two decades with thousands of playgrounds across the country using the material as cushioning under outdoor play equipment and as infill on artificial turf fields.

Increasing evidence about the toxicity of recycled tire material is raising concerns. Waste tire mulch and crumb rubber contains toxic chemicals such as phthalates, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and many other chemicals known or suspected to cause adverse health effects. According to a chemical analysis conducted by Yale University, 96 chemicals were found in the 14 samples analyzed. Half of the chemicals have not been tested – making it unclear whether they are safe or harmful to human health.

Children go to playgrounds almost daily and young athletes frequently practice and play on the artificial turf fields, exposing them to chronic toxicity from the various chemicals present in the recycled waste tire. When the material gets hot, the off-gassing of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) increases. Cumulative exposure can result in a buildup of toxic chemicals in their bodies and can potentially result in disease. For example, there is concern that soccer goalies with chronic exposure to crumb rubber on synthetic turf fields may be at a higher risk for lymphoma and leukemia cancers.

EPA acknowledges that more studies of crumb rubber need to be done, and has retracted an earlier assurance that crumb rubber turf is safe. On February 12, 2016 EPA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission launched a multi-agency action plan to study key environmental human health questions related to rubber from waste tires. By late 2016, the agencies will release a draft status report that describes the findings and conclusions of the research through that point in time. The report will also outline any additional research needs and next steps.

Clean Water Action supports delaying any new installation of playgrounds containing recycled tire mulch and artificial turf fields containing crumb rubber until findings from the Federal Research Action Plan on recycled tire crumb rubber infill are published and evaluated. The public deserves comprehensive evaluation of the product and deserves to be safeguarded from exposure until it is proven that there are no adverse environmental effects or risks to public health.

**TAKE ACTION:** *Sign our petition calling for a moratorium on using recycled tire mulch in playgrounds:* [www.cleanwater.org/tiremulch](http://www.cleanwater.org/tiremulch)



### Cleaning up on Earth Day

Several dozen Clean Water Action members and staff gathered the day after Earth Day to help clean up the area along Bassett Creek Park. Joining with the Minneapolis Park Board and other groups around the Twin Cities, the volunteers gathered dozens of bags of trash and recycling. Special thanks to Danielle from Clean Water's Field Canvass for coordinating the event and to all those who turned out to help us make a real difference for this body of water.

**Minnesota Environmental Fund:** The Minnesota Environmental Fund's (MEF) workplace giving programs support Clean Water Fund and more than 20 other respected and responsible nonprofit environmental and conservation organizations. MEF's local workplace giving option connects people to Minnesota's environmental charities through payroll giving and employee engagement. **Ask your employer to be part of MEF today.**



# Minnesota's Buffer Bill: We Need More Roots on the Ground

Among the greatest threats to the quality and health of Minnesota's rivers, lakes and streams are excess chemicals, fertilizers, and sediment from irresponsible agricultural practices. While these pollutants find their way into our waters in various ways, runoff from single crop farmland is one of the largest contributors.

There is a simple and cost effective measure that can help prevent these pollutants from ever reaching our waters — vegetative buffer strips planted alongside the borders of farmland and waterways. Buffers are primarily designed to help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment by preventing erosion, slowing runoff, and trapping polluted materials.

Last year, in response to alarming reports from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) that an estimated 40 percent of Minnesota's waters are classified as impaired, Gov. Dayton supported legislation to expand buffers.

In the southeast, southwest, and across a wide band stretching from the Twin Cities to extreme western Minnesota, less than 40 percent — and many times less than 20 percent — of streams and rivers fully support swimming and recreation, the report said. Excess phosphorus, which comes from fertilizer, creates harmful, sometimes toxic, algae for at least part of the summer. This same type of algae shut down the drinking water supply for Toledo, Ohio for three

days in the summer of 2014 and left nearly 500,000 people without safe drinking water.

The buffer bill that passed last year laid the groundwork to require the use of buffers, and offered increased funding for programs to help offset the initial costs of creating them.

The contention over the bill however continues, and revisions are currently being discussed in the state legislature. The opposition would like to delay implementation of the buffer bill for between five and ten years, weaken enforcement, and reduce the amount of waterways covered by the policy. We need to steer that conversation toward protecting more water, not less.

*Read more about buffers, and other policies to reduce corporate agriculture's impact on Minnesota's water: [cleanwater.org/CleanerAg](http://cleanwater.org/CleanerAg)*

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