

## MARYLAND

### *Advocating for Virtual Access*

Clean Water Action is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. And while we have adapted our approach throughout history, we continue to lead with classic door-to-door canvassing, talking to people impacted by environmental issues in Maryland and throughout the country. As we continue our work, navigating challenges from COVID-19, our team is practicing an abundance of caution by wearing masks at the door, in our offices, and in public to reduce community spread and protect public health.

We continue to advocate for virtual access to public testimony. Virtual access to governmental meetings and public testimony during the pandemic made it possible for people to fully participate, including individuals with health barriers or those whose work, family, or other circumstances prevented them from traveling to Annapolis or their County seat. As governments recommence in-person activities, we can't lose the benefits that virtual accessibility brought. When Baltimore City returned to in-person hearings in April, virtual accessibility ended; the city government made statements that hybrid accessibility would come soon, but was not yet ready. After several months with no movement toward virtual access, we worked with Common Cause, the NAACP, and Blue Water Baltimore to urge the Council to restore virtual access to testify at hearings. Very shortly after, they did — and it's working great! Kudos to the Baltimore City Council for making full participation in hearings more widely accessible to the public.

**Supporting Compost.** At Clean Water Action we are gaga for compost! By composting food waste, we can reduce methane emissions in landfills, create a soil amendment to repair our depleted soils, and create economic value out of waste locally. This year, we worked on a framework for school compost grants. This effort was largely spearheaded by students across Maryland, from the Catoctin Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean, who have already created successful programs. We are also working with farmers who want to take in food scraps to add to their manure piles. Both Frederick County and Montgomery County have already amended their zoning codes to support on-farm composting — and we're working to bring similar changes to Baltimore County communities across the state!



## MARYLAND

# Legislative Updates

**Septic Systems:** Septic systems play an important role in protecting water quality, public health, and home values. For years, we've been working with a team of stakeholders on a suite of bills to improve the state of septic systems in Maryland.

**HB318/S479**, from Delegate Stein and Senator Hester, creates a state regulatory board governing the septic industry. After four years of working on this concept, we're thrilled to see this legislation pass! [Read our testimony here.](#)

**Composting and Zero Waste:** In working to transition away from trash incineration, one of the biggest climate champions for trash is compost! A [report](#) this past March says that composting organic waste alone could cut methane emissions from solid waste by 78% by 2030.

**HB150/SB124**, from Delegate Charkoudian and Senator Hettleman, creates a grant program for local schools to reduce wasted food, and compost what remains! This program builds on the successful volunteer-driven compost programs in schools all across Maryland, from [Frederick](#) to [Ocean City](#). This bill passed, but without funding — yet. [Read our testimony here.](#)

**HB566**, from Delegate Boyce, required that newly-constructed schools be designed with sorting and separating trash in mind. In the schools that have started compost and waste diversion programs, the infrastructure has been made ad-hoc; dedicated, well-designed infrastructure will make a big difference. [Read our testimony here.](#)

**HB0184/SB0229**, from Delegate Shetty and Senator Gallion, would have allowed farmers to compost more food waste on their farms. Right now, farmers can use up to 40,000 square feet to compost waste generated on their farm and manure from off their farm, but if they want to incorporate food waste, they are restricted to 5,000 square feet. This bill passed the Senate unanimously, but was held up in the House. [Read our testimony here.](#)

**Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Priorities:** We're proud to serve as Maryland's co-anchors of the [Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition](#), working to advance environmental and economic justice priorities in

Maryland and our neighboring states. The coalition selected three legislative priorities this year:

**HB141/SB23**, from Delegate Ruth and Senator Carter, is the Transportation Equity Act, proactively enforcing Civil Rights Act Title VI protections in Maryland and ensuring that decisions made by the Maryland Department of Transportation are equitable. This bill passed with a supermajority, but unfortunately, Governor Hogan vetoed the bill. [Read our testimony here.](#)

**HB11**, from Delegate Stewart, is the Reclaim Renewable Energy Act: a bill to delete all polluting energy sources, from trash incineration to factory farm biogas, from our Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), where they soak up subsidies that should be supporting wind and solar development. This bill didn't pass, but we'll keep fighting for a truly renewable RPS. [Read our testimony here.](#)

**HB1033**, from Delegate Rosenberg, would have mandated that 40% of spending in key areas related to environmental justice go to low-income communities already overburdened by pollution. It leaned on the expertise of the [Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health at UMD](#) to define overburdened and low-income communities. These definitions were included in the landmark Climate Solutions Now, and its language was amended into the state budget. [Read our testimony here.](#)

**Saying NO to the M-83:** M-83 is a proposed highway in Montgomery County that would cut through parkland, forests, and streams. With local partners, we are asking Montgomery County to remove this relic of the mid-1900s from modern plans.



The forested greenspace in Montgomery Village and Gaithersburg shown above will be [paved over](#) if the M-83 highway is constructed.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

# Citizens' Poplar Point Working Group

The Citizens' Poplar Point Working Group is a broad-based, collaborative effort of residents interested in the future of the Poplar Point area of the District of Columbia. The 110-acre site is located on the east side of the Anacostia River adjacent to the Anacostia Metro Station, near the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

Three respected DC-based nonprofit organizations joined forces to create the citizens' working group: The Anacostia Coordinating Council (ACC), the Anacostia Parks and Community Collaborative (APACC), and the DC Environmental Network (DCN). None of the groups has any direct financial interest in the future of the area.

The citizens' working group is co-chaired by Clean Water's APACC Coordinator, Brenda Lee Richardson, and Doug Siglin, both of whom have been involved in Anacostia River-related planning and advocacy for more than two decades.

### **Background**

Much of the site is undeveloped and covered with vegetation, including several designated and protected wetlands. The entire area is a floodplain. About a third of the site is given over to the National Park Service's National Capital East headquarters and the United States Park Police headquarters, including its Aviation Unit, with large attendant parking lots. The two headquarters buildings were built by the Navy more than 70 years ago.

Poplar Point is currently owned by the U.S. government and managed by the National Park Service. US Public Law 109-396, passed by Congress in 2006 and signed by President George W. Bush, requires that the site be transferred to the District of Columbia when certain conditions are met. Little of significance has happened in the fifteen years since the law was passed. One condition is remediation of past contamination caused during prior use of the site by the Navy, the Architect of the Capitol, and the D.C. government. A joint National Park Service/D.C. Government study process under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act has been slowly moving forward for several years. Another condition

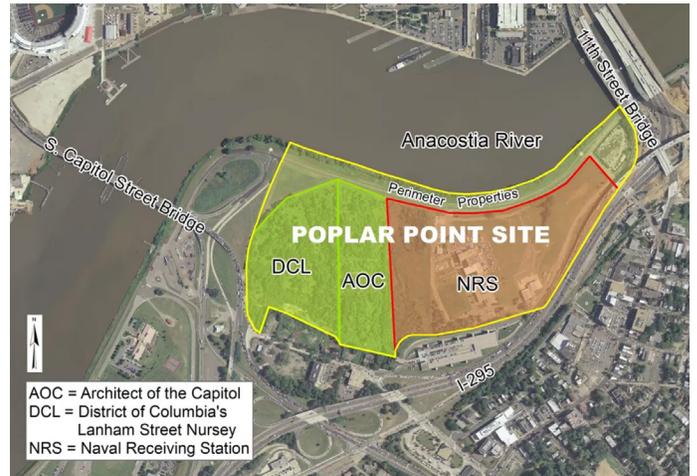


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is approval of a land use plan by the Secretary of the Interior. The law requires that no fewer than 70 acres of the site be designed for park purposes in perpetuity.

### **Community-driven Vision**

Our goal has always been to uplift and protect the collective with a sense of equity as we invest in two precious resources: people and nature.

The stories of working-class communities are often lost or erased, making it hard to remember the recipes for collectively organizing for a better future. We seek to uplift the stories and dreams of people who live in and work to improve Anacostia communities, parks and waterways to celebrate our community leaders, and to inspire others. Stories are an important aspect of who we are, where we come from, and why we do what we do! Archiving the stories of folks living and working in and around Anacostia honors the rich culture of this watershed.

The Citizens' Poplar Point Working Group is an effort to document and elevate the collective vision and stories of people who have been working to transform the site for more than 30 years. As part of that effort, we are working with students from the Georgetown University McCourt Policy Innovation Lab to collect community data during the fall semester, and committed additional resources to the Poplar Point Project including communications and media support.

## VIRGINIA

# 2022 Virginia Endorsements

The 2022 elections present a huge opportunity to re-elect pro-environment leaders who will help advance clean water and renewable energy priorities in Congress. We need leaders who will protect our communities and natural resources. Virginia voters like you will make the difference in the outcome of races that will affect control of the U.S. House of Representatives.



### **Get the info you need to be a Clean Water Voter**

Virginia has made it safer and easier to vote by extending absentee voting to more voters, extending early voting periods, installing secure dropboxes, and making changes to polling locations. [Learn more](#) and make a plan to vote.

### **Choose Clean Water Leaders, Tuesday Nov. 8**

Clean Water Voters must make their voices heard this year. Make sure you have a plan to vote and make sure your friends and family are ready too. For Virginians who love clean water and take action to protect our health and environment the choice is clear:



#### **Vote Elaine Luria – District 2** **Clean Water Legislative Score: 100%**

Congresswoman Luria is fighting to ensure we all have access to clean air and drinking water. Protecting the Chesapeake Bay is among her top priorities. Representative Luria introduced the bipartisan Chesapeake Bay Program Reauthorization Act to secure funding for crucial Environmental Protection Agency cleanup efforts in the Bay watershed, and has helped Virginia secure nearly \$360.8 million from the Land, Water & Conservation Fund, supporting projects in the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge, and Virginia battlefields like Yorktown.



#### **Vote Abigail Spanberger – District 7** **Clean Water Legislative Score: 100%**

Congresswoman Spanberger's election in 2018 made her the first Democratic representative of the district since 1971. Representative Spanberger has dedicated herself to growing the economy and protecting the environment. The Bay generates \$33 billion in economic value annually and hosts one of the most important sites for ecological diversity in North America. As Chair of the Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, Congresswoman Spanberger has been a proud voice for farmers investing in conservation practices that are both beneficial for Virginia's environment and our region's economy. Her leadership along with Virginia's record of restoring the Chesapeake Bay while being one of the best states for business and recreation shows how compatible these goals are.



#### **Vote Don Beyer – District 8** **Clean Water Legislative Score: 100%**

Congressman Beyer is a long-time clean water champion and a strong voice standing up to polluter interests. As a member of the House Committees on Ways and Means and Science, Space, and Technology, and as co-Chairman of the Safe Climate Caucus, he has dedicated himself to leaving this world better than we inherited it and keeping Virginia and our country moving forward by making smart investments that lower costs to the American taxpayer while protecting the air, land, and water.



#### **Vote Jennifer Wexton – District 10** **Clean Water Legislative Score: 100%**

Congresswoman Wexton has served the people of Northern Virginia and Shenandoah Valley for nearly two decades, and has worked to protect open space, invest in sustainable transportation and clean energy technology, and defend streams and wetlands across Virginia and the nation. As a member of the Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition, she has dedicated herself to fighting climate change, protecting our air and water, promoting renewable energy and environmental justice, and prioritizing pro-environment legislation, like the Inflation Reduction Act — the most consequential piece of legislation Congress has ever passed to tackle the threat of climate change and promote clean energy.

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**Vote Gerry Connelly – District 11**  
**Clean Water Legislative Score: 100%**

Congressman Connelly has been a leading voice for clean water and renewable energy for decades. As a co-Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Sustainable Energy and Environment Caucus, Congressman Connelly plays a leadership role in efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay and push for investments in sustainable infrastructure — helping pass the largest investment in clean energy in American history.

***Make your voice heard on Tuesday, Nov. 8***

You know how vital clean water is to our economy and our health and quality of life. On November 8th, your vote will help sustain momentum for a cleaner and greener Virginia. That is why a vote for Virginia’s environmental leaders is a vote for Congress to protect clean water and act on climate.

If you haven’t submitted your absentee ballot yet, we recommend that you submit your ballot at a drop off box or at your County elections office instead of by mail. Make your voice count and be a #CleanWaterVoter! For more information on finding your drop off box location or voting in person, visit [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org).

Thank you for voting,  
Michael Bochynski  
DC Program Director

*Paid for by Clean Water Action for distribution to its members. Not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee. For more information, please call (202) 895-0420, x106 or visit [cleanwater.org/Virginia](http://cleanwater.org/Virginia)*

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Fall 2022

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