As you may have seen in an earlier email, effective April 28, I am retiring as Clean Water Action’s President and CEO after twelve years in that role and 32 years with Clean Water!

Helping lead Clean Water has been the high point of my career. The work that we have done together to protect our drinking water and the rivers and streams we hold dear, to get toxic chemicals like phthalates and BPA and PFAS out of our water, our food and our clothing, and to fight climate change and the oil and gas pollution that sickens so many people — that work has touched the lives of millions of people. The amazing victories we have won — reducing pollution of our air, water, homes — protecting treasured waterways from destruction — combating climate change — have made a huge difference in our collective future.

Equally important to me are the incredible people I have had the pleasure to work with for more than 32 years — the thousands of amazing colleagues and volunteers who devoted their time and energy to protecting clean water and building a healthier planet. The hard work and dedication of our door-to-door canvassers and phone canvassers, our program organizers and administrative staff have inspired and motivated me. The incredible efforts by volunteer activists like the mothers who changed the way pesticides are used in Pennsylvania’s schools and the activists protecting their drinking water from toxic PFAS chemicals have constantly

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encouraged me and challenged me to do better. And the support of the millions of members who gave their money and their time to support our work made all our work and our victories possible.

I am thrilled to be turning the leadership of Clean Water Action over to Jeff Carter. Having known Jeff for six years, I am confident that he will continue to carry out Clean Water’s great vision and mission in the coming years, and I am thrilled and excited to leave the organization in his hands.

To all of you who have participated in our work over the past decades, whether as staff, volunteers or members, thank you for all you have done and for making our victories possible. It has been an honor and privilege to help lead this organization for the past twelve years and I look forward to seeing even more wins for clean water and a healthy planet in the years to come.

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**Welcome Jeff Carter**

A Message from Clean Water Action’s Incoming President and CEO

I am excited and honored to take on the role of President and CEO of Clean Water after six years leading Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). I won’t lie to you though, stepping into Bob Wendelgass’ shoes is a daunting task. In sports, when a popular, long-tenured coach retires, their successor often talks about the pressure of replacing a legend. I know how they feel. Bob has been an extraordinary leader of this organization — someone I’ve admired from afar for a long time. I want to thank Bob and LeWanda Gipson (Clean Water’s Chief Financial and Administrative Officer) for spending so much time with me over the winter to prepare me for this role, and thank you to everyone I had a chance to speak with before my official start. I also want to thank the search team and the Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund boards for their trust in me.

My background includes many years working on federal adult education policy. That journey began as a volunteer tutor in Boston. I’d like to think that I always had a passion for justice, but it was this experience that informed my professional journey. It angers me that we still cheat people — and, disproportionately, people of color — from the educational opportunities I had. That fueled my decision to go to law school — I was planning on becoming a criminal defense attorney. My interest shifted to education policy (it helped that trial practice was my worst class), but that sense of injustice fueled my lobbying for adult education on the Hill years later. It carried over to my work at PSR, where, for example, we started to stress the justice aspects of nuclear weapons (historically, people of color have disproportionately suffered the harms caused by the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons). Clean Water’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice was what appealed to me most about the job. What is the fight for clean water if not a fight for justice?

Finally, I want to recognize the tremendous effort put forth by everyone on this staff and members like you. At the end of the day, it’s the people and supporters that make an organization great. I’m grateful for your dedication to our work, and I look forward to leading this organization to a bright future alongside you.
Clean Water Action was invited to a January 27 White House summit where mayors, regulators, drinking water utilities, advocates, and others came together to focus on opportunities to accelerate replacement of lead service lines in our drinking water distribution systems. Lead service lines deliver water from large water mains to houses and buildings. Where they are present, lead service lines are the largest source of lead in drinking water. Communities nationwide are demonstrating that with commitment and resources, we can put this source of lead exposure behind us. Clean Water Action will participate in the Biden-Harris administration’s ongoing Get the Lead Out Partnership to accelerate replacement and ensure that the new funding is spent effectively and equitably.

Providing tools and support to accelerate lead service replacement community by community is the objective of the Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative, which Clean Water Action helped to found in 2016. A diverse collaboration of environmental and health organizations, organizations focused on eliminating other sources of lead exposure, drinking water utility associations, and others, the Collaborative has developed popular on-line resources and has hosted webinars and other events to address the information needs and challenges faced by those seeking to get the lead services lines out.

Ambitious water infrastructure investments in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), passed in 2021, include $15 billion specifically for lead service line replacement. While this does not cover the cost of replacing all of the estimated 10 million lead services lines around the country, it is a meaningful down payment on this overdue modernization of our drinking water systems. A successful start makes it more likely that we can secure additional federal support for this and other critical drinking water needs. Learn more about the White House event in Report from the White House Summit on Accelerating Lead Pipe Replacement.

Ohio Train Wreck Could Be Biden’s Chance to Champion Chemical Safety

When a train carrying hazardous chemicals derailed in East Palestine, Ohio in February, it put people in the surrounding area at risk. It also demonstrated the need to improve safety requirements for the transportation of hazardous substances and to consider our over-reliance on highly-toxic chemicals. Rick Hind, who worked with Clean Water Action from 1979-83, authored a guest blog post on one immediate opportunity: Ohio Train Wreck Could be Biden’s Chance to Champion Chemical Safety.
Ensuring America’s Water Infrastructure is Equitable, Modernized, and Resilient

Clean Water Action is leading the way in the effort to ensure that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a success. The IIJA, passed in late 2021, will increase spending on lead service line replacement by $15 billion dollars and begin filling in the spending gap on our nation’s water infrastructure needs. Clean Water Action has been working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ensure the strongest possible guidelines are given to States regarding equitable and effective spending of the funds, which will primarily be allocated through the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds.

Our blog post 6 Things you Need to Know about the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act outlines the opportunities made possible by this new funding. Clean Water Action will continue to advocate for modernizing the nation’s water infrastructure and ensuring that the benefits accrue equitably — especially to communities who have often not had access to such funding historically. Thanks to the new water infrastructure funding, this is water’s moment. We will make sure we meet the moment with historic investments to benefit vulnerable communities, to upgrade aging drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, to build in climate resilience, and to protect our drinking water sources.

**Victory! EPA Proposes Protective Wastewater Treatment Standards for Coal Plants in Response to Our Litigation**

On March 8, 2023 EPA announced a proposal to strengthen water pollution standards for coal plants. Clean Water Action has been advocating for these standards for over a decade. Prior to 2015, most coal plants had no limits on heavy metals and other toxic pollutants. These standards were rolled back in 2020 by the Trump administration and this new proposal is in response to a lawsuit Clean Water Action and other allies (represented by Earthjustice) brought challenging that rollback.

This proposal will require significant reduction of mercury, arsenic, bromide, and other pollutants. EPA estimates these new standards will eliminate over half a billion pounds of water pollution every year. Bromide is especially harmful for drinking water systems because it can lead to the creation of carcinogenic byproducts in treated drinking water that are difficult and costly to remove.

There will be a 60-day comment period on the proposal and comments are due May 30, 2023. Clean Water Action and our allies will be submitting detailed technical comments on the proposal and mobilizing our members to urge EPA to issue a protective final rule that finally puts an end to coal plants’ toxic water pollution. You can submit your own comment to EPA HERE.

**Congress Votes to Nullify Clean Water Restoration Rule**

The Clean Water Restoration Rule was finalized by EPA and the Army Corps on December 30, 2022. This policy is a modest return to longstanding approaches for defining “Waters of the United States”, yet polluters and their allies in Congress wasted no time in putting it on the chopping block.

Using the Congressional Review Act (CRA), a legislative tool that allows Congress to invalidate a recently-finalized agency rule and prevent any future administration from issuing a rule that is “substantially the same,” the U.S. House of Representatives voted 227-198 in favor of nullifying clean water protections on March 9. You can see how your member of Congress voted here. On March 29 the U.S. Senate also voted 53-43 to overturn these vital protections.

Eliminating the Clean Water Restoration Rule would not only allow unregulated pollution to damage critical ecosystems, but it also would damage the many downstream communities that rely on clean water. President Biden vetoed the CRA on April 6th. It’s possible Congress will try to overturn the veto (which will fail).
The Biden administration’s March 14, 2023 proposal to regulate PFOA and PFOS in drinking water is a necessary and long overdue action. Too many communities have been victimized by unhealthy levels of these toxic PFAS chemicals in their drinking water, and we’re excited that EPA is leading the way to protect the health of water drinkers. While a handful of states have begun to set limits on these chemicals, EPA’s new proposal is stronger and more protective. Clean Water Action is mobilizing comments to EPA in support of a strong standard later this spring once the proposal is formally published. Visit our website and take action to protect public health.

In the meantime, while Clean Water Action strongly supports federal regulation of PFAS in drinking water, we also want to make sure that the financial burden of these regulations doesn’t fall on drinking water systems and their customers. We should not shift the burden of contamination from industries producing or using PFAS chemicals onto downstream communities and their drinking water systems. Allowing PFAS to contaminate our drinking water sources in the first place is a glaring injustice.

Clean Water Action has long urged EPA to use the powerful pollution prevention tools of the Clean Water Act to go after PFAS at the source — the industrial polluters that benefit from the use of these toxic chemicals. Too often, these polluters dump their PFAS-laden wastewater into drinking water sources. This shouldn’t be allowed, and thankfully there are tools available to curb this reckless practice, but EPA is only in the very beginning stages of revising these new regulations — known as Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards (ELGs) — to address PFAS.

ELGs are national, industry specific technology-based wastewater regulations. Because the use of PFAS is ubiquitous in so many consumer and industrial products, we have urged EPA to revise ELGs for all industrial sectors known to discharge PFAS simultaneously (rather than one industry at a time), but to date EPA has only announced it is working on revising ELGs for four industrial sectors — Organic Chemicals, Plastics & Synthetic Fibers (OCPSF), Electroplating, Metal Finishing, and Landfills. EPA is also collecting data on PFAS discharges at Electrical and Electronic Component Manufacturers, Textile Mills, Pulp/Paper/Paperboard Mills, and airports. It will take years for EPA to finish updating these ELGs and we’ll continue to push the agency to streamline how it revises these pollution standards. In the meantime, EPA and states don’t have to wait to limit industrial discharges of PFAS; they can use the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to address PFAS in wastewater discharges immediately. You can read more about how EPA and states are using water pollution permits to curb PFAS in our December 2022 blog.

Using the tools of the Clean Water Act shifts the burden to clean up PFAS away from drinking water systems and communities and back onto the polluters who financially benefit from using these toxic “forever” chemicals.
CALIFORNIA

January 1, 2023 marked the 10th Anniversary of California’s Human Right to Water statute, which states that every resident has the right to access sufficient, safe and affordable water for basic drinking and sanitation. There’s still much work to be done. With a host of new members of the legislature, we’re looking to introduce new bills, with our primary focus being on water affordability, equitable groundwater management and removing toxic chemicals from our products and our environment.

Buffer Zone Bill

One particular piece of legislation that we’ve been following closely is last year’s SB 1137, which required a 3,200-foot buffer zone between oil and gas operations and sensitive populations. The health protective measure has officially been put on the November 2024 ballot after Big Oil submitted nearly a million signatures. While we’re confident the public will support this measure, Big Oil has already won, because they get an extra two years to extract oil at the cost of community health. Stay tuned for more updates in our state newsletter coming out soon!

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Anacostia Parks & Community Collaborative (APACC)

In the District of Columbia, Clean Water serves as fiscal agent of the Anacostia Parks & Community Collaborative (APACC). APACC is a network of community leaders and organizations working together to make the Anacostia River and its park system the best possible resources for residents of Wards 7 and 8. Through collaborative events and programs, APACC and its partners work to meaningfully engage people in Anacostia Park, building relationships with park visitors and engaging with communities in Wards 7 and 8.

As the fiscal agent of APACC, we distributed over $90,000 last year to community-led projects that address community needs while providing on-the-ground opportunities for members to work on tangible projects and events. In 2022, we hired Brenda Lee Richardson, who has brought an increase in energy and dynamism as the new APACC Coordinator, and helped take its activities to a higher level. Ms. Richardson has dramatically increased APACC’s profile, particularly with District officials and members of City Council, and increased APACC membership to 55 community groups.

MARYLAND

Legislative Priorities

Every spring our Maryland office is busy with our 90-day legislative session. This year our top priorities include instigating a sunset review of the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, a quasi-governmental agency that promotes trash incineration; pushing legislation to allow farmers to accept food scraps in their compost piles; eliminating trash incineration, factory farm “biogas,” and woody biomass from Maryland’s Renewable Portfolio Standard; passing historic legislation on transportation equity; establishing a database for septic systems; and more. We are also responding to issues of public notification after positive e. coli tests in public water systems, salt applicator certifications, a bottle deposit bill, PFAS in pesticides, and again supporting requiring at least two crewmembers on freight trains.

Outside state government, we are also working with Howard County Government on a tree planting project and are supporting Baltimore City as it seeks to create and expand composting and recycling infrastructure in its capital budget and plans.

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MICHIGAN

Legislative Opportunities
The Michigan team ended 2022 on a high note following historic victories in the November election, resulting in a pro-environment legislative majority. Numerous Clean Water Action endorsed candidates were elected to office and are already championing our drinking water and Great Lakes in Lansing. In light of the new legislative opportunities, Michigan staff are pushing lawmakers to act quickly on a number of priorities. This winter and spring, we anticipate progress on both polluter pay legislation and a bill package to address Michigan’s water affordability crisis and water shutoffs. In addition, we are pushing for the repeal of “no stricter than federal” legislation that was passed in 2018 that bars state agencies from adopting or creating rules that are stricter than the federal minimum standards.

On March 22, we partnered with EJ allies to host a World Water Day event and lobby day at the Capitol. We are also engaging the Governor’s office and legislative leadership to ensure the state budget includes significant funding increases for environmental protection, lead service line replacement, climate resilience, and water shutoff prevention programs.

MINNESOTA

Legislative Priorities
Minnesota has multiple pieces of legislation that are progressing through the legislative process, including PFAS prevention, cumulative impacts, and lead service line replacement. We are also working to start a conversation at the Capitol around false solutions and the truth behind chemical recycling. The PFAS bills in particular have caught the eye of chemical company lobbyists who have flown in from DC to spread a false narrative around PFAS and its dangers. To counteract this, Clean Water Action Minnesota has partnered with the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy to hold multiple townhalls around the state with media and lawmakers to discuss why Minnesotans want and need these bills to pass. Our next townhall is in Sauk Rapids on April 30th.

Pints for Progress
Clean Water Action is also working to reach Minnesota members in every part of the state with Pints for Progress’ I Believe in Clean Water, a statewide, year-long pub crawl. We will be holding casual meet-and-greet events at breweries across the state to connect members, stakeholders, and lawmakers to talk about the water issues that you care most about. The first event was a great success and we are looking forward to upcoming stops across the state, including a special Earth Day event on April 22nd.

NEW ENGLAND
(Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island)

CONNECTICUT

2023 Legislative Kick-off!
The Connecticut legislative session is in full swing, and Clean Water Action is working on getting additional restrictions on products containing PFAS chemicals. In 2021, we passed a nationally-recognized bill to ban PFAS in firefighting foam, establish a take-back program, require a switch to a safer fluorine foam and include a ban on PFAS in food packaging.

Connecticut has been in the lead but we can’t stop here. Just this year, PFAS has been found around an old landfill in Ellington, in private wells and a school water source in Killingworth and in fish in the Hockanum River, requiring a fish advisory limiting consumption.

We must continue to “turn off the tap” and stop the use of products containing PFAS that harm health and the environment for decades to come. Help us continue Connecticut’s leadership on PFAS and get a comprehensive bill passed this session!

Waterbury Energy Efficiency
Our energy efficiency campaign to help Waterbury residents learn more and sign up for services in their homes was a big success! Waterbury is a large, urban, diverse community with a high population of residents continued on next page
disproportionately burdened by many polluting facilities and old housing stock. Reducing emissions from buildings is a critical step in mitigating climate change. In Connecticut, emissions from energy use and heating and cooling residential buildings produce 18% of greenhouse gas emissions. Making homes more efficient also has the benefit of saving residents money on energy bills and making homes more comfortable, a priority for many Waterbury residents that live in older, drafty homes and pay high prices to heat and cool their homes. We’re proud that we met our goal and are excited to launch the next round of work in Waterbury this year. Stay tuned!

MASSACHUSETTS

Victory: Public Lands Preservation Act
Clean Water Action ended 2022 on a high note with the passage and signing of the Public Lands Preservation Act, which codifies a policy of “no net loss” of public land in Massachusetts. Passage of this landmark law was a longtime priority of co-state director Elizabeth Saunders and her late father, Philip Saunders, who dedicated two decades to the effort. In January, Clean Water Action joined fellow organizers and elected officials to celebrate the bill’s passage.

Healthy Futures for All
This spring, we are building support for our 2023 priority bills — the Healthy Futures for All legislative package. Included are bills to:

- Protect residents, particularly children, from exposure to health-threatening pollution and toxic PFAS
- Address lead in drinking water
- Empower overburdened communities to reject new polluting facilities
- Create funding for energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades for low- and moderate-income households.

Clean Water Action also celebrated World Water Day on March 22nd with the expansion of our work educating and empowering communities to #GetTheLeadOut of their drinking water with full lead service line replacements, building on our successful work in Chelsea and Malden.

RHODE ISLAND

Zero Waste
Clean Water Action has been leading the newly-formed “Zero Waste Rhode Island” coalition, which is advocating for a statewide container deposit law (a.k.a. “bottle bill”) and other policies to reduce plastic pollution and improve recycling in the state. The field canvass has been collecting letters in support of the bottle bill for months, and RI staff recently coordinated a tour of the state’s Materials Recycling Facility for RI legislative leaders to help them better understand how recyclables are actually sorted and processed. In addition to supporting container deposit legislation, Clean Water Action Rhode Island is also advocating for “extended producer responsibility” (EPR) for packaging and opposing efforts to allow regulatory loopholes for industry-backed so-called solutions like “chemical recycling.” We are also excited to restart our ReThink Disposable campaign in RI, which will work directly with restaurants and institutions to help them phase out single-use plastics.

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PFAS
Clean Water Action is also leading efforts in Rhode Island to reduce PFAS pollution in our waters. Building upon the success of last year’s passage of the ban on PFAS in food packaging and legislation that established PFAS standards for drinking water, we will be advocating for a more comprehensive ban on PFAS in a wide range of consumer products, including apparel, carpet, juvenile products, cleaning products and firefighting foam.

NEW JERSEY

Flood Protection
Congratulations New Jersey Clean Water Action members — you rose to the occasion writing letters and making phone calls to successfully push Governor Murphy and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to finally propose long-awaited stormwater and flood hazard protection rules! There was an open comment period this winter, where again, members testified and submitted public comments urging the DEP to strengthen and adopt the proposed rules as soon as possible. The DEP is currently in the process of reviewing all of the public comments they received, and we are hopeful the final rules will be adopted before the official start of hurricane season this year.

New Jersey is the most densely-populated and developed state in the nation, with more people living in flood-prone areas than anywhere else. Flooding caused by increasingly intense storms will threaten the quality of our water supplies, resulting in loss of life (as we saw with Hurricane Ida in 2021) and billions of dollars in property damage in the coming years.

PENNSYLVANIA

Environmental Justice
Clean Water Action worked with the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus to hold the state’s first public hearing on the need for a comprehensive environmental justice policy. We brought together 20 community, environmental justice, and environmental organizations to support statewide legislation that would require cumulative impact analysis on companies seeking permits to release pollution, modeled on groundbreaking legislation that New Jersey passed two years ago.

New PFAS Drinking Water Standard
Pennsylvania recently enacted its first state drinking water standard on the most common PFAS chemicals which have been found around the state. Clean Water Action members helped generate almost half of the 5,000 public comments received supporting a strong standard that will protect our drinking water, and help drive cleanups in contaminated communities.

2023 Elections
Don’t forget to vote in the Primary Election on May 16! Key local elections this year will decide our next Allegheny County Executive and Mayor of Philadelphia, as well as City Councils in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Look for our endorsements at www.cleanwater.org/pa.

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TEXAS

Spring in Texas brings blankets of bluebonnets, our beloved state flower — and, in odd-numbered years, the Texas Legislature goes into session. Clean Water Action’s work on elections in late 2022 delivered some strong advocates in the Texas House, and now it’s time to legislate! Early on, focus is on the budget in both chambers, and Clean Water Action is making the rounds with emails, calls, visits and testimony in support of funding to shore up our leaky drinking water systems. We are pushing for budgeting and legislation to better serve all Texans in water, wastewater, and flood protection planning with a focus on under-served communities.

We also need to make sure that Texas is able to draw down our maximum amount of dollars being passed out to states for water infrastructure from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Aside from the legislature, we continue to work with Austin City Council, educating new Members and continuing work alongside returning Council Members to implement Austin’s Water Forward Plan.

VIRGINIA

Election Victories

During the fall 2022 election, the people of Virginia led the way by voting for clean water, climate action and the environment, re-electing Clean Water endorsed candidates Abigail Spanberger, Don Beyer, Jennifer Wexton, and Gerry Connelly to the U.S. House of Representatives. We want to especially thank our growing cohort of central Virginia volunteers — Abigail Spanberger won 51.9% of the vote. That means every single one of our members who got to the polls, talked to their neighbors and volunteered had a personal hand in winning this race. This was a huge win for the environment, our water, and our communities!