

Urge Your Elected Officials to Protect ALL of Our Water!

On October 18, 2023 — the 51st anniversary of the Clean Water Act — members of the U.S. House of Representatives introduced the Clean Water Act of 2023 (H.R. 5983). This bill would restore protections to vital water resources that lost them as a result of the May 2023 Supreme Court decision in the *Sackett v. EPA* case. Ensuring that all water bodies, including streams and wetlands, are protected as Congress intended remains a priority campaign for Clean Water Action. You can help by [taking action today](#) to urge your U.S. Representative to support this bill that would protect water quality and our drinking water!

We CAN Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water!

We will be mobilizing people to weigh in on a new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal to reduce lead in drinking

water. EPA's proposal, though not final, is in itself a victory. We have been urging drinking water systems to fully replace all the lead "service line" pipes in their systems for many years and have urged EPA to include that in Safe Drinking Water Act regulations. Read our press release on EPA's proposal [here](#).



Federal Budget Update — Critical Protections and Investments Remain at Risk

As we go to press, the U.S. Congress has not finalized a federal budget for the fiscal year that began October 1. Extremists in Congress continue to propose

massive cuts to clean water and clean air programs as well as to historic investments in water infrastructure and addressing the climate crisis. Your federal elected officials need to hear from you. Tell them to protect people and not polluters [here](#).



2023 Endorsements a Success!



Clean Water Action endorsed a select number of NJ environmental champions for municipal council, county executive and the state legislature. **Every single legislator we endorsed won or was re-elected!**

Dan Benson, former Assemblyman, was elected Mercer County Executive and committed to stop a warehouse project that would clog county roads with trucks. One West Windsor Council candidate, Dan Weiss, secured a seat while two (Fox and Finkelstein) lost by 11 votes or less. These three candidates have been fighting a local 5.8 million square foot warehouse project for over 2 years. They wanted to be changemakers by having an official seat on the municipal council.

Clean Water Action got out the vote, by educating members about vote by mail, in person early and election day voting. We informed our environmental allies, members and public about our endorsement slate and our efforts paid off.

Election Day comes every year in the Garden State. The 2024 presidential and congressional election season has already begun. We will again call on our members to vote for environmental champions who align with Clean Water Action's mission and policy priorities.

In the meantime, we will be holding our newly re-elected legislative champions accountable for their commitments, as well as cultivating new ones to ensure our future success at the State House. With each election and as the climate crisis intensifies, it is ever more crucial to choose New Jersey legislators who are dedicated to clean air, water, energy and justice for all.

To learn more about Clean Water Action's 2023 endorsements, visit [here](#). To get involved in Clean Water Action's election work and legislative campaigns, please contact us at njcwa@cleanwater.org.

As a co-leader of Empower NJ and in coordination with our environmental justice allies, Clean Water Action is working to ensure that the newly proposed Clean Energy Standard bill (S2978) truly means clean renewables (wind and solar) are primarily powering the Garden State. We are working with the Prime Sponsor State Senator Smith to get it right. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that no new gas plants and corresponding infrastructure are built as the state phases out existing fossil fuels in the future. Unfortunately, right after election day, the gas industry came out blazing — re-igniting a RNG bill (A577/S1366), claiming that gas derived from methane (known as “renewable natural gas”, RNG) is good for New Jersey when it pollutes more and uses more energy to produce.

Join us in our fight for truly green renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation measures that keep the cost of energy and utility bills more affordable while taking our foot off the gas pedal. Watch for email alerts in your inbox or go to www.cleanwateraction.org/nj for updates.



Meet Our New Environmental Justice Organizer: X Braithwaite

Newark, New Jersey, has often been described as an overburdened community, grappling with a complex web of challenges. As a native of this vibrant yet struggling city, X witnessed firsthand the stark realities of crime and poverty. The statistics tell a sobering tale — crime rates that exceeded the national average and poverty levels that made dreams of a better life seem distant. But amid these challenges, X saw something else: resilience and a profound yearning for justice.

X's journey as a social justice organizer began during their first year in high school when they joined the Newark Students' Union. The organization served as a catalyst for change, uniting young activists like X who were determined to confront the systemic issues plaguing the community.

High school was where X honed their skills as a debater, and it was there that they learned the foundations of justice. X's journey was further enriched by their participation in the Bonner Scholar Program. This program, rooted in the belief that individuals have the power to effect positive change, provided X with invaluable support, resources, and mentorship.

While X's activism began with education reform, their experiences in Newark led them to recognize the interconnectedness of social and Environmental Justice. Environmental injustices disproportionately affect marginalized communities, exacerbating the challenges they face. Witnessing how pollution and environmental degradation further burdened Newark only strengthened X's resolve to address these issues.

In their time at Community and Justice Studies program at Guilford College, X had the privilege of exploring systemic injustices and contributing to meaningful dialogues.

As X embarks on their journey as an Environmental Justice organizer at Clean Water Action, they carry the lessons learned from Newark, the power of



▲ X Braithwaite from Clean Water Action and Asada Rashidi from Newark's South Ward Environmental Alliance giving a presentation on Kids and Climate.

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debate, and the transformative experiences within the Community and Justice Studies program. X's goal is to advocate for equitable access to clean air, water, and green spaces, not just in Newark but in communities across the country facing similar struggles. Environmental justice is social justice, and X is committed to being a catalyst for change.

In the heart of Newark, X found their passion for justice, and it continues to guide their path as the NJ Environmental Justice Organizer at Clean Water Action. X's experiences growing up in a community burdened by crime, poverty, and environmental inequities have shaped them into the advocate they are today. Through education reform victories, the Bonner Scholar Program, debate championships, and the immersive experiences in community and justice studies, X learned that change is possible, and together, we can create a more just and sustainable world.

Empowering Communities: Kim Gaddy Receives Environmental Justice Award at NAACP Gala

Congratulations to Kim Gaddy, Clean Water Action's National and New Jersey Environmental Justice Director, for receiving National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Environmental Justice award for her outstanding contributions!

Kim Gaddy was honored at the 'Affirming Social Justice with Action' 109th Freedom Fund Gala Awards hosted by the Newark NJ Branch of the NAACP on Saturday, September 30, 2023, at Symphony Hall. This accolade underscores her commitment to ensuring equitable access to clean water and environmental resources for marginalized communities.

Her tireless efforts have made a significant impact on environmental policies, emphasizing the importance of Environmental Justice for all. What makes Gaddy's achievement even more noteworthy is the intersection of her role at Clean Water Action and her recognition by the NAACP. As the National Environmental Justice Director, Gaddy works relentlessly to address environmental disparities faced by underserved communities, aligning perfectly with the ideals championed by the NAACP.

Kim Gaddy, a fourth generation Newarker, has spent more than 20 years with Clean Water Action on the frontlines fighting for environmental justice in New Jersey communities of color, starting in her own



◀ Kim Gaddy speaking in front of a Clean Water Action banner.

South Ward neighborhood where she raised her three children who suffered from chronic asthma. That personal experience and losing her brother-in-law to a fatal asthma attack compelled her to be a voice for communities impacted by industrial pollution. After 15 years of tenacious advocacy by Kim, Clean Water Action and other environmental justice leaders, New Jersey now has the strongest environmental justice law in the nation.

Her proactive approach and dedication to social and environmental justice have earned her this accolade, affirming the importance of her work in bridging the gap between environmental advocacy and social equality, as well as inspiring others and a new generation of activists to join the cause for a cleaner, fairer world.

New Jersey's BIPOC, low-income, and language isolated neighborhoods face higher levels of pollution from multiple sources including toxic waste sites, industry, ports and heavy traffic. The "cumulative impacts" of these pollutants affect their physical and economic health, quality of life, ability to thrive, learn and work. Clean Water Action played a pivotal role in securing New Jersey's Environmental Justice and Cumulative Impacts law — giving the state the power to say NO to new permits and setting stricter conditions on permit renewals and expansions. Now that the corresponding regulations have been adopted, Clean Water Action is working to ensure that the law gets enforced. Sign up [here](#) to stay in touch, learn more, and be involved in the fight for justice. This is especially important if a permit to pollute is coming to your neighborhood because of the color of your skin or the zip code you live in!



Using People Power to Make the Changes We Seek

Clean Water Action's NJ Zero Emissions and Warehouse Organizer, Tolani Taylor, led a virtual training that brought together community activists, warehouse organizers and concerned individuals from across the state to learn how to make a greater impact in decision-making and during elections. The virtual training covered four areas: 1) attending public meetings 2) interacting directly with public officials 3) using the media to your full advantage and 4) making your vote count on election time.

There were two incredible guest speakers Stacey Fox, Executive Director of Mercer County Defense League and Joaquin Castillejos, Organizing Coordinator at the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice in California. They both provided a wealth of knowledge regarding some tips and tricks that can be used to hold public officials accountable in addition to their experiences combatting warehouse developments in their community.

This training was crucial to encourage people to network with others, be engaged and proactive during the election season and beyond, especially at the local level. "With the power of our votes, we can send a message to our elected and appointed officials about our issues and what we expect of them, as well as work to elect progressive and environmentally-conscience leaders," said Taylor. "This will ensure that decisions regarding local warehouse development will be made more openly, and with greater protection for the environment and people's quality of life." If you need help with a local warehouse fight or want to help us pass diesel reduction policies around warehouses and our ports, contact Tolani at ttaylor@cleanwater.org. Learn more [here](#).



Skip the Stuff!

Clean Water Action is working on a new "Skip the Stuff" campaign designed to pass local ordinances that prohibit food service establishments in New Jersey from providing single-use plastic in delivery and takeout orders, unless specifically requested by the customer. [Cranford passed one](#) in 2010 and New York City more recently in 2022. Ideally, we would like the "by request only" policy to extend to single use condiments, napkins and plates. This movement will create a growing public awareness of reusable alternatives, particularly if food deliveries are being made to your home. Ultimately, our goal is to demonstrate widespread public support that will help get a state-wide law passed like we did with bags, Styrofoam and straws. To learn more about this easy way to reduce unwanted plastic, check out our [Skip the Stuff campaign page](#) and [fact sheet](#). If you are interested in passing a local ordinance in your town or want to learn more about our [ReThink Disposable](#) campaign, including the conversion to reusable food service ware in schools, [food pantries](#) and "meal on wheels", contact Marta Young, Clean Water Action's Zero Waste Specialist at myoung@cleanwater.org.



Thank you for supporting our year-end campaign, and our ongoing work to restore and protect our communities:
cleanwater.org/NJyearend

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