

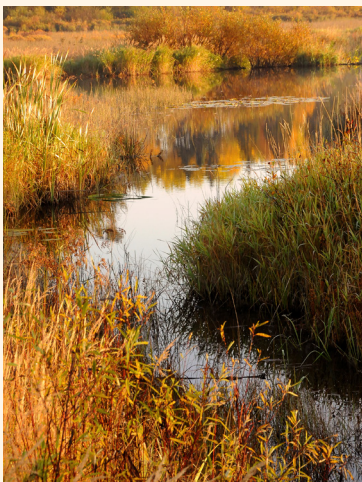
NATIONAL UPDATES

Victory After Ten Years of Clean Water Advocacy: EPA Strengthens Coal-Fired Power Plant Water Pollution Limits

On April 25, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized more strict Clean Water Act wastewater pollution limits (also known as Effluent Limitations Guidelines or ELGs) for coal-fired power plants. [Our press release](#) describes the details of the new rule, which will prevent millions of pounds of harmful pollution from being released into our waterways each year, protect drinking water sources for more than 42 million people, reduce costs for drinking water systems and their customers, and ensure a healthier future for all communities. As [highlighted in one of our latest blog posts](#), this win is the culmination of more than a decade of advocacy by Clean Water Action and its hundreds of thousands of members across the country.



A Year Since Devastating Sackett v. EPA Decision: Colorado Leads the Way in Restoring State Protections to Wetlands and Streams



The U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in the case of *Sackett v. EPA* on May 25, 2023. This ruling narrowed the Clean Water Act's definition of "Waters of the United States" by removing protections from most wetlands and streams. Clean Water Action has been working to fill the gap from the loss of these federal protections by advocating on the state level. We recently celebrated a hard-fought win in Colorado with the passage of House Bill 24-1379, which strengthened protections to wetlands and streams ([see our blog here](#)). While this was a victory for clean water on the state level, we ultimately need Congress to pass legislation to permanently restore protections to all vulnerable waters and wetlands across the country. You can help by taking action today: urge your U.S. Representative to support [a national fix to the Clean Water Act](#).

A Breath of Fresh Air for PA

President Biden and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a new rule strengthening our national air quality standard for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) or soot. The new annual limits will cut soot levels by over 25%, and according to the EPA will prevent up to 4,500 premature deaths yielding up to \$46 billion in net health benefits by 2032.

Clean Water Action has a long history of partnering with Environmental Justice communities who have been saddled with public health issues due to industrial pollution. One such area is the Mon Valley, south of Pittsburgh. It has some of the highest levels of PM_{2.5} in both Pennsylvania and nationally due in large part to emissions from U.S. Steel's massive Mon Valley Works. These facilities emit more PM_{2.5} than all the cars and trucks in

Allegheny County combined and have led to asthma rates that are over twice the national average. Mon Valley residents will get some of the biggest reductions in pollution because of EPA's action — a breath of fresh air indeed!

In addition, EPA recently took new action to reduce hazardous emissions from the steel industry, such as benzene, lead, and chromium. One big victory which we helped push for was to require fence-line monitoring to best protect frontline neighborhoods from toxins that can cause cancer and other serious health problems.

Clean Water Action not only applauds the Biden Administration and EPA for these new rules, but also the thousands of residents we've worked with whose voices are finally being heard!



2024 General Election

With one of the highest electoral vote counts and the last two presidential elections settled by an average of just 60,000 votes, Pennsylvania could once decide who is president. There are also important down ballot races taking place. We have a competitive US Senate race that could determine who controls the chamber. The razor thin Democratic majority we helped secure in the State House in 2022 is also on the line. To help voters make informed decisions, we'll be releasing our candidate endorsements soon and publish a Pennsylvania Environmental Scorecard which compiles important environmental votes your state legislators took. Stay tuned!



Fighting for Safer Products

Clean Water Action is helping Pennsylvania get a little closer to turning off the tap on toxic PFAS “forever” chemicals. We worked with State Representative Greg Scott (D-Montgomery) to help develop legislation (HB 2238) that prohibits the manufacturing or sale of products that contain intentionally added PFAS. Some of the initial items targeted include cookware, cosmetics, dental floss, food packaging, menstrual products, and products designed for babies or toddlers. The bill is modeled on similar policies adopted in Minnesota and Maine.

PFAS are a group of thousands of human-made toxic chemicals used for their ability to repel dirt, water, and grease. Exposure to PFAS chemicals have been linked to serious health problems such as cancer, immune system suppression, increased cholesterol levels, pregnancy-induced hypertension, liver damage, reduced fertility, and increased risk of thyroid disease.

Previously released internal industry memos and studies prove that industry knew for decades that PFAS was dangerous, bioaccumulated in blood and were linked to these terrible illnesses suffered by those exposed. A recent story ProPublica co-produced with the New Yorker documents how a 3M chemist showed executives back in 1997 that its PFAS chemicals were in people’s bodies. Shamefully,

► *Clean Water Action supporters gather on Capitol steps in Harrisburg to support Rep. Scott’s (D-Montgomery) legislation on getting PFAS out of consumer products.*

3M responded by questioning the methodology, downplaying the findings, compartmentalizing the knowledge within the company and reassigning the lead chemist and her team so they couldn’t continue their research. Companies KNOW it is dangerous, yet they ignore that fact and continue to manufacture and sell products with PFAS.

Pennsylvania has already taken some initial steps to tackle PFAS. Last year, Pennsylvania Attorney General Michelle Henry filed a complaint in Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court against DuPont, Chemours, and Corteva for being in violation of Pennsylvania’s Consumer Protection Law. Last year also marked Pennsylvania setting for the first time ever a state drinking water maximum contamination level for the most common constituents of these toxic chemicals. But given the pervasiveness of PFAS in our environment we must build upon this effort by addressing PFAS in other sources. HB 2238 is a good vehicle for tackling the next frontier of potential exposure.

The legislation was voted out of the House Environmental Resource and Energy Committee in June and awaits consideration before the full House. Encourage your legislator to support passage of HB 2238 without delay! You can take action [here](#).



Shifting from a Throwaway Lifestyle

Clean Water Action’s ReThink Disposable program was built to stop trash before it starts. We provide establishments participating in the program with technical assistance, support with product research and procurement, and funding to cover the initial investment of reusable foodware.

Since we rolled out the program in Philadelphia last fall, 11 restaurants have joined! These collaborations have conserved resources, prevented waste, and reduced litter pollution, while cutting costs.

If you are in the food service industry or know a business or institution who wants to ReThink their waste management, fill out [this form](#).



Support for Environmental Justice Communities Grows

Clean Water Action held a press event in Harrisburg in April with residents from Environmental Justice communities, legislators and allied organizations to urge Governor Shapiro and House Democratic leadership to become more engaged in helping HB 652 successfully advance through the legislature.

The event also recognized milestones in the growing support for HB 652. This included over half the Pennsylvania House Democratic Caucus signing on as co-sponsors, 55 organizations signing onto a letter of support, and the delivery to Governor Shapiro of 500 handwritten letters of support from residents.



▲ *Rep. Donna Bullock (D-Phila.) speaking at press event to push for the PA House to take up Environmental Justice legislation.*

HB 652 would uplift environmental justice communities by requiring known polluting facilities seeking to build or expand in these communities to prepare a cumulative environmental assessment that includes potential negative impacts their operations may have on the broader area they're operating in and empowering the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to deny a permit application or require added stipulations for approval if it finds those impacts would further harm the health and environment of the community. Similar policies have been adopted by New Jersey and Massachusetts.

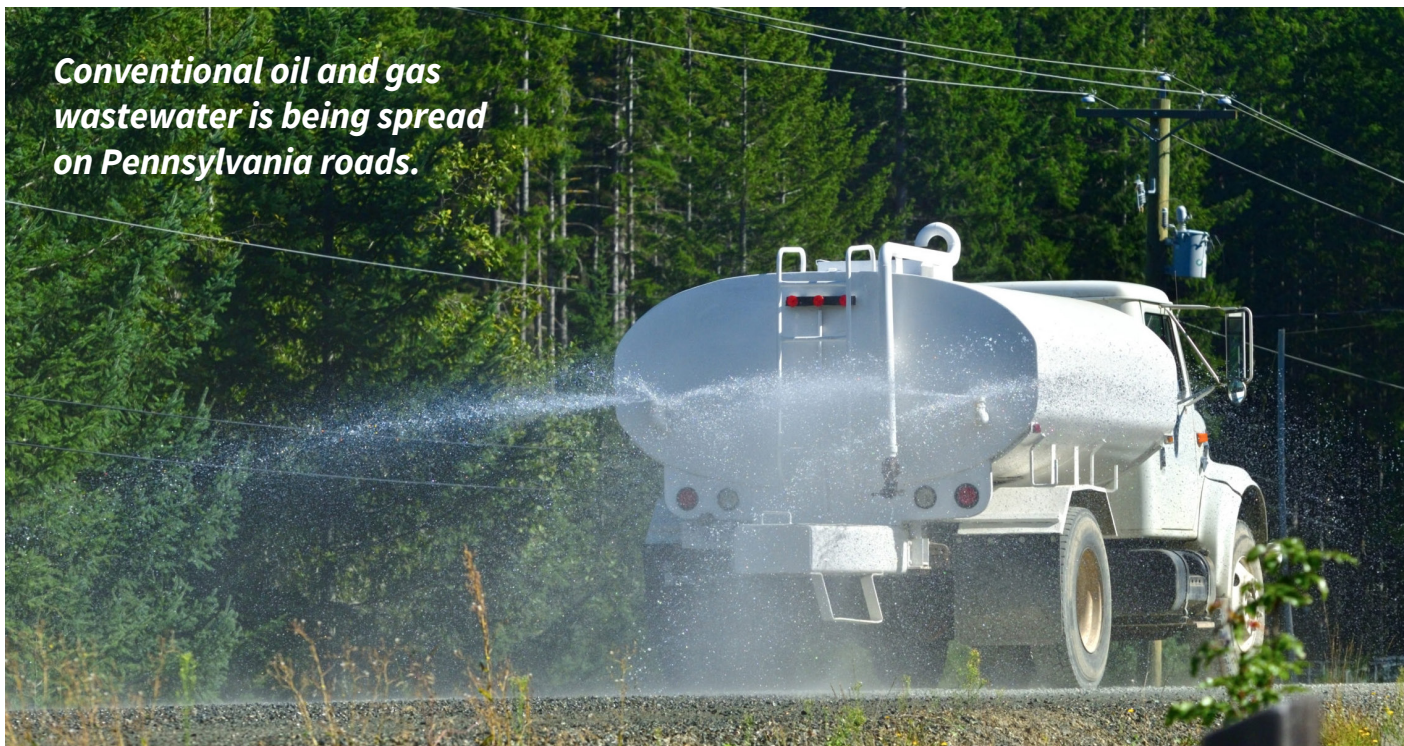
Our environmental justice communities deserve better than investments that only perpetuate the cycle of being exposed to hazardous conditions that potentially poison their water and air, impact their health, drive down their property values and prevent them from wanting to remain part of the community. That's why during the event we offered an alternative vision that calls for incentivizing sustainable and renewable energy companies to build in environmental justice communities — allowing for the creation of stable long-term jobs that also uplifts community conditions.

[Add your voice](#) to the chorus of those backing HB 652 and calling on leadership to get behind it.



◀ *Residents and supporters outside Clean Water Action's Pittsburgh office getting ready to get on the bus to Harrisburg for Clean Water Action's annual Lobby Day.*

Conventional oil and gas wastewater is being spread on Pennsylvania roads.



An End to Toxic Roadways

Clean Water Action is working to help pass State Representative Greg Vitali's (D-Delaware) House Bill 2384 which would ban the spreading of conventional oil and gas wastewater on our roads.

It's a common practice for wastewater produced by conventional oil and gas drillers to be used on roadways in Pennsylvania for dust suppression, road stabilization and ice prevention. However, more conventional oil and gas operators have turned to using the same fracking techniques as the big Marcellus Shale unconventional oil and gas companies. This means their produced wastewater often contains a dangerous mix of toxic chemicals, metals, salts, and radioactive materials, specifically radium.

Studies by Penn State have found that spreading conventional oil and gas wastewater exposes groundwater, soil, and air to potential contamination and that plain water is just as effective for this purpose, but without the negative environmental and health effects.

Pennsylvania banned the spreading of Marcellus Shale unconventional wastewater on roadways back in 2016, so why wouldn't we do the same with conventional oil and gas wastewater? HB 2384 was voted out of the House Environmental Resource and Energy Committee in June and awaits consideration before the full House. Help stop the creation of toxic roadways by [urging your legislator to support passage of HB 2384](#).

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