

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](#).

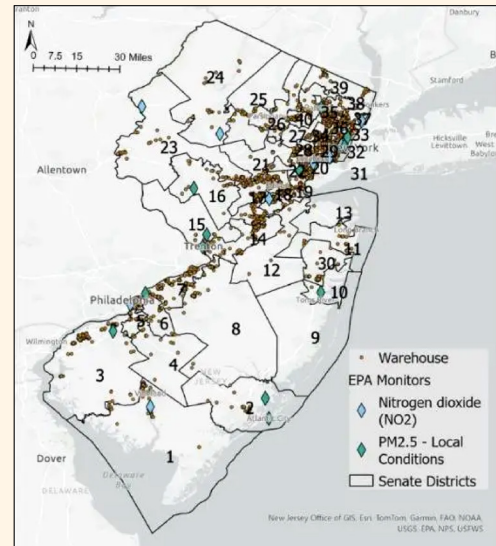
Launch of NJ Warehouse Proximity Report and Introduction of Warehouse and Port Pollution Reduction Act!

On June 18, Clean Water Action's Zero Emissions and Warehouse Organizer, Tolani Taylor, co-hosted a virtual press conference with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). The [press conference showcased key findings](#) regarding the proximity and adverse health impacts on people working and living close to warehouses and ports. The report also arrives as state legislators put forward ([S3546/A4679](#)), the Warehouse and Port Pollution Reduction Act, a bill designed to curb pollution at warehouses, ports and other truck attracting facilities in the Garden State.

If enacted, they would be required to implement concrete emission reduction measures. The bill would direct the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish flexible compliance options alongside permit requirements to achieve specific reductions, with higher thresholds for environmental justice communities. The press conference included many speakers representing different perspectives of the freight and goods movement industry throughout the state including labor, community, environmental justice and policy. For access to the report, you can check out [the recent press release](#). For updates on the Warehouse and Port Pollution Reduction Act, please feel free to reach out to Tolani Taylor at ttaylor@cleanwater.org.



▲ Image of truck traffic in Newark. PHOTO BY TOLANI TAYLOR



Tell DEP to include warehouses on the EJ Map!

In addition to advocating for the Warehouse and Port Pollution Reduction Act, which has [garnered support](#) from legislators like Senator McKeon and Assemblywoman Katz, Clean Water Action also has a sign on petition directed at the New Jersey Environmental Protection (NJDEP). We are calling on NJDEP to include warehouses on the Environmental Justice (EJ) Mapping Application (EJMAP) and consider their presence and detrimental impacts on pollution-burdened communities when deciding future actions. The omission of warehouses on the EJ Map demonstrates a failure to adequately acknowledge the concerns of communities already struggling with multiple environmental injustices.

Please join us! Sign the petition [HERE](#).

Working to Eliminate Single-Use Plastics in New Jersey

Clean Water Action's ReThink Disposable program is working with local emergency food providers, as well as local and state governments, to help eliminate single-use plastics across New Jersey!

Over the past 16 months, ReThink Disposable in the Garden State has helped numerous emergency food providers save a total of nearly \$200,000 per year, all while annually reducing over 3 million single-use disposables from going into the waste stream. We have helped businesses and institutions switch to providing their clients hot meals on reusable foodware instead of single use disposables (SUDs). In doing so, people are being treated with more dignity and respect by not making them feel like they are part of the throw-away society.

At Interfaith Neighbors, an organization that serves over 1,300 daily meals, Clean Water Action not only provided their six Monmouth County senior centers with reusable foodware but also technical assistance to help their Meals On Wheels program. Now their clients are provided with fresh fruit instead of small plastic filled sugary fruit cups, a detriment to diabetics. With these environmentally friendly changes, [Interfaith Neighbors](#) anticipates saving \$100,000 per year — money that can now be used towards their many other programs. There is now less litter and less pollution going into the waste stream, landfills, incinerators and environment (nearly 15 tons).

At the government level, ReThink Disposable is leading the New Jersey campaign commonly referred to as Skip the Stuff. [Skip the Stuff helps reduce single-use disposables](#) in restaurant takeout orders by providing cutlery and condiments only upon request. It is a triple win for everyone. Restaurants



▲ [Clean Water NJ Zero Waste Specialist Marta Young paneling for Oceana discussing ReThink Disposable.](#)

save money by reducing what they need to purchase, customers reduce what they need to throw in a junk drawer, garbage or refrigerator and the environment is saved from unnecessary toxins from going into the air, water and land.

Between March and June of this year, Clean Water Action will have led 7 towns to adopt local Skip the Stuff ordinances and 1 town passed a resolution. In doing so, we are building local support and momentum for NJ legislation as part of a larger statewide coalition effort that Clean Water Action is leading. Our Zero Waste Specialist, Marta Young, has been working hard to get others involved in the campaign by

conducting training seminars for other organizations including Beyond Plastics and Waterspirit, as well as served on a panel for Oceana and Break Free from Plastics.

We are proud to announce that state legislation was introduced by Senator Bob Smith ([S3195](#)). It was reviewed by our very own Marta Young, and loophole-free amendments are being incorporated into the bill. We anticipate it will get voted out of committee and move towards passage later this fall.

To ensure local success once a Skip the Stuff ordinance is adopted, Clean Water Action is helping towns create educational material for restaurants, businesses and residents so everyone understands the harms of plastic and the reasons behind reduction.

Over 40 billion plastic utensils are discarded each year in the United States alone and most are never use. Plastic never goes away but breaks into micro and nano pieces that are toxic from creation, transportation, use to disposal. Plastic has been linked to numerous cancers and reproductive

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ReThink Disposable

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issues. It has been found in the animals and plants we eat because the nanoparticles are so small the roots of plants absorb them, let alone animals drinking and breathing the particles floating in the water and air. Plastic has been found throughout our own bodies and even in newborns.

If you are a restaurant owner and want to save money or a local resident who wants to help reduce litter, it is easy to do. Everyone can help prevent toxins and the proliferation of single use disposables at an individual level but also you can help pass an ordinance in your town. [View our website and toolkit](#) which includes materials and sample ordinances. Reach out to [Marta Young](#), Clean Water Action's Zero Waste Specialist. She is happy to join you at your local council, green team or environmental committee meeting.

Finding and Fact-Checking False Energy Solutions

It has become increasingly evident climate solutions must be embedded within our energy sectors fast. But it is easy to be misled and misinformed by those with a fossil fuel or dirty power agenda. They want to scare us into thinking that a clean renewable energy path is not possible while claiming we can tame gas with all kinds of gimmicks for another 10-20 years. Although some NJ legislators are fully aware of the problems and negative outcomes of the current roster of dirty power bills, many others are lobbied hard that their false solutions are the answer. How can you tell the difference?

Here are some key phrases to look for when spotting positive and TRULY SQUEAKY CLEAN energy solutions:

- Reduce air and co-pollutants (NOx, SOx, particulate matter) not just greenhouse gases
- Protect and prevent harm in already overburdened communities
- Solar
- Wind
- Energy Efficiency
- Geothermal
- Heat pumps

Here are some phrases to ring alarm bells for DIRTY energy:

- "Renewable Natural Gas"
- Carbon capture or sequestration
- Hydrogen (of ANY color)
- Silence on co-pollutants

Let's not be hoodwinked by false choices. Only squeaky clean renewable energy will do. In fact, NJ State policy sets a goal of 100% clean energy by 2035. You are not going to get there by continuing to advance policy that supports the dirty fossil fuel industry. [Contact Molly Cleary](#), Environmental Advocate to learn more.

This fall, Clean Water Action will be hosting our annual **Autumn Toast to a Healthy Environment** in Newark, NJ's Weequahic Park — with games, prizes, music, food, and more! We'd love to see you on **Sunday, November 17th from 1-4 pm!** Please visit cleanwater.org/autumntoast to buy tickets and learn more.

Clean Water Action will also be participating in the **Dodge Poetry Festival** in Newark, NJ, **October 17-19** in partnership with ReThink Disposable to help mitigate single-use waste at the festival. Learn more about Dodge Poetry Festival [here](#). Contact [Marta Young](#) if you want to be a Green Team volunteer at one of our zero waste stations. As a way of thanks, you will get free entry to festival events.

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THE
DATES!

NEW JERSEY CURRENTS

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