

Summer 2026 • The Clean Water Action Newsletter

The Future is Here! Offshore Wind is Providing Clean Energy to New England Right Now

Last month, Clean Water Action staff grabbed sunscreen and Dramamine to witness the wonder that is offshore wind up close and personal, joining a boat tour of the South Fork Wind farm hosted by the National Wildlife Federation and the Environmental League of Massachusetts alongside fellow organizers, academics, and students.

As the turbines emerged from the fog on the horizon and slowly grew, the energy on the boat shifted from excited buzz to silent awe. The collective efforts of the passengers had culminated in these massive, and shockingly quiet, structures providing clean, reliable energy to New England homes.

“I started organizing for climate solutions in 2004,” said Kerry Doyle, of Clean Water Action’s New England team. “Now, over 20 years later, I’m a mother of two young kids, and I’m witnessing the results of our decades of work. First impression? They are huge but so quiet. It’s emotional because this is the clean energy future my children will inherit, and it’s finally happening.”

The South Fork Wind farm is just one of the commercial scale offshore wind farms already operating off the East Coast. This 12-turbine project provides power to approximately 70,000 homes and was built using entirely union labor.

Larger New England wind farms are also now delivering power this spring. Revolution Wind, off the coast of Rhode Island, is up and running and will deliver power to 350,000 homes and businesses in Rhode Island and Connecticut while Vineyard Wind, a 62-turbine wind farm off of Martha’s Vineyard, will ultimately provide clean, reliable energy to 400,000 Massachusetts homes and businesses. **Wind energy isn’t the future; it’s happening right now!**

The East Coast is declaring our energy independence this spring! Offshore wind energy is locally generated, employs local neighbors, and is clean and reliable. And up close? It’s majestic.



▲ *Clean Water’s Emma Weis [left] and Kerry Doyle visiting the South Fork Wind farm.*

MASSACHUSETTS

The Youth Action Collaborative is Building a Generation of Environmental Leaders

Since its launch in 2024, the Youth Action Collaborative (YAC) has built a community of justice-oriented environmental advocates at Malden High School whose impact keeps growing. “Empowering the next cohort to believe in themselves enough to actually enact change,” was Adrian Aguilar’s favorite part of returning to YAC as part of the inaugural alumni node. This year, alums worked alongside staff to pass down knowledge, instill confidence, and guide cohort participants as they picked up projects where the previous group left off.

YAC participants presented their final projects to their community in June. They spoke eloquently about the need for climate education, proper waste disposal practices, lead service line replacement, and protection from toxic forever chemicals. The presentations were a culmination of a year of learning about local environmental issues and practicing organizing skills like public speaking, writing letters to the editor, power mapping, and digital organizing. “My favorite part was learning how to talk to people in power,” said junior Ryleigh Morrow, who presented to Malden city councilors about her group’s successful use of educational posters to encourage proper waste sorting in Malden High School classrooms.

Kidus Tsige, alumni mentor and Clean Water Action 2026 Youth Leadership Award recipient, recounted how YAC helps young environmentalists find like-minded peers. “I know, oftentimes, one of the big issues that kind of drives people away from the field is the fact that they feel isolated,” he noted. “With the YAC, you can find other peers in your school community who are interested and engaged with work on climate projects with you.”

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Bolstered by the support of alums like Kidus, this year’s program brought landmark wins! The climate group hosted a first-of-its-kind collaboration with Malden Reads. The lead group is better positioned to drive citywide change following a [productive testimony](#) at the Malden City Council with asks including prioritizing lead service line replacement in households with pregnant women and young children. And all of the students gained experience speaking before city leaders. The Council president noted, “I like [YAC’s pamphlet] better than the one that the city puts out. I think we should steal some of this and use it.”

YAC students and alums continue to advocate in Malden and beyond. Whether they’re leading the Massachusetts Youth Climate Coalition, speaking

on behalf of their community on the World Asthma Day stage, or lobbying in front of the State House, the next generation of environmental leaders is here, and they’re giving us all a little more hope.

◀ *Youth Engagement Program Manager Omesa Mokaya [right] with Malden City Councilor Karen Colon Hayes [second from right] and YAC students at the program’s final showcase.*



RHODE ISLAND

The 2026 Legislative Session Ended, but the Work Continues!

Rhode Island legislative sessions are short and packed. This session ended with Clean Water Action fending off a last-minute attack on the state law restricting toxic PFAS, but many priority bills remained in limbo as the legislators broke for the summer. Here's a breakdown of what happened:

First, the good. Industry lobbyists are scrambling across the country to dismantle existing laws restricting toxic PFAS chemicals, particularly in cookware. Clean Water Action and our allies worked hard in 2024 to pass a law banning PFAS from a wide range of everyday consumer products that is set to begin enforcement on New Year's Day, but on the last weekend of the session, legislation was sneakily proposed that would have delayed the law's implementation and weakened its protections.

Clean Water Action's Rhode Island Director, Emily Howe, jumped into action and rallied our legislative allies to stop this effort in its tracks. This matters not only for Rhode Island but also for other states, like Massachusetts, who are currently considering passing PFAS restrictions. Every time legislators and the public rally to oppose industry-supported rollbacks, it sends a message that these protections are here to stay. Rhode Island is done with these toxic "forever chemicals" infiltrating drinking water.

This was also a good year for holding the line on clean energy and climate justice! Despite federal attacks on wind energy nationwide,

Rhode Island's Revolution Wind project is up and running and providing clean, reliable energy to the grid! Meanwhile, proposals to scale back Rhode Island's clean energy goals and cap energy efficiency programs were defeated by a coalition of environmental organizations, unions, and clean energy providers. The latest state budget reaffirmed Rhode Island's commitment to achieving our climate goals and providing ratepayers with relief from the rising costs of natural gas infrastructure.

The campaign to improve recycling in Rhode Island didn't make major waves in the legislature this session, but that was expected. Right now, an implementation study is being conducted to examine the recycling proposals put forth at the end of the 2025 session, so it was expected that further legislative action would be delayed until the completion of that study. Clean Water Action and allies continue to work behind the scenes to build support for policies to fight litter and fix recycling!

Two bills Clean Water Action championed this year fell short – legislation to keep dangerous heavy metals out of personal care products and the RI Voting Rights Act. Both bills will be back in 2027, and Clean Water Action will campaign between now and then to build more support for both.

The session may be over, but the work continues! Follow Clean Water Action on [Facebook](#) and [Bluesky](#) to stay updated on ways to get involved all summer!

Election Season is coming! Are you registered to vote?

As the federal administration guts environmental protections, it is more important than ever that we vote for a Congress that will safeguard our water, health, and environment. Midterms are quickly approaching: primaries take place on August 11th in Connecticut, September 1st in Massachusetts, and September 9th in Rhode Island. Don't let these elections sneak up on you! Make sure you're registered to vote in [Connecticut](#), [Massachusetts](#), or [Rhode Island](#).



CONNECTICUT

Meet the Zero Waste Hydration Summer Road Show!

The problem? It's hot. The event is outdoors. And hundreds, if not thousands, of people need cold water.

The solution: Clean Water's new water refill station!

The Connecticut Clean Water team, with support from the Rockfall Foundation and the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, are now in possession of a portable water refill station that can connect to potable water supplies as well as 1500 reusable cups. This means folks can refill reusable water bottles and borrowed cups at hot outdoor events rather than purchasing single-use plastic water bottles.

The team is already putting the refill station to good use! In June, Clean Water Action's Zero Waste Organizer, Amber Schmidt, was at Middletown Pride serving cold water and smiles. Hundreds of people stopped by the Clean Water Action table to cool off, splash their friends, and learn how they can take steps to reduce single-use trash and fight plastic pollution.

But that's not all. The Connecticut Clean Water team is once again partnering with the Cedar Lake Tri Series to make the races Zero Waste by providing reusable cups at the athlete hydration stations on race days all summer. That means no disposable cups tossed in the trash mid-race. The United Church of Chester has graciously donated the use of their industrial dishwasher, so the cups can be sanitized and reused over and over.

Word of this growing Zero Waste race movement is growing. Amber is now in touch with organizers of an August race in Killingworth, CT, and through a partnership with Care for the Cape and Islands in Massachusetts and support from the Clif Foundation, Clean Water is also bringing the cups and the water refill station to New England Endurance Event races across Cape Cod. Fulfilled Goods in Newton, MA is donating the use of their dishwasher, supported through a MassDEP Reduce, Reuse, Repair Microgrant. This means the elimination of thousands of single-use cups at races all summer!

Middlesex County, Connecticut is becoming a showcase for Zero Waste events. The growing



▲ Amber Schmidt, Clean Water Action's Zero Waste Organizer, poses at Middletown Pride with the new water refill station.

partnership between Clean Water's ReThink Disposable campaign, local event organizers, community groups, and small businesses is demonstrating that single-use throwaway items don't have to be the norm. The future is reusable!

Know of an event that could benefit from Clean Water's Zero Waste hydration station? [Reach out to Amber and the Clean Water Action ReThink Disposable team!](#)

MASSACHUSETTS

Your Guide to Zero Waste Take-Out Dining in Massachusetts! Great news! Clean Water Action is working with two Massachusetts downtowns to establish Zero Waste take-out systems! That means take-out food without piles of trash. Enjoying food in **Northampton**? You can borrow and return FREE reusable take-out containers at La Veracruzana, Ana Bandiera's Chocolates, and Joe's Cafe. Dining in **Jamaica Plain**? The following businesses are also participating in the reusable take-out container program: Jadu, JP Seafood, Gangnam Spice, Ula, and TK Eats.

[Download the free Recircable app](#) to start borrowing containers and reduce your waste footprint!

MASSACHUSETTS

Make Way for Ducklings! (And Kids' Health!)

With legislation to protect kids from toxic chemicals stuck in committee, Clean Water Action deployed a new tactic this June, a 30-foot inflatable rubber duck sitting right on Beacon Street, overlooking the Common, and looming over the State House. While this humorous spectacle certainly drew the attention of curious onlookers, it also drew the attention of state legislators, serving as a serious symbol of the harmful presence of polyvinyl plastic and other chemicals of concern within popular kid's toys and other products marketed for children.

Toxic chemicals can currently be found in thousands of children's products including toys, strollers, personal care products, furniture, baby spoons, and other items that are used by children every day. An Act Relative to Toxic Free Kids will:

1. Ban toxic PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) from products for children.
2. Require manufacturers to disclose the presence of other toxic chemicals in children's products.
3. Create an ongoing state process to identify and restrict toxic chemicals in children's products.

At the June event, legislators, advocates, and doctors spoke in support of the bill as the giant duck looked on.

"The science is clear: certain chemicals found in everyday children's products are linked to cancer, developmental harm, and other serious health concerns," said Dr. Alan Woolf, Co-Director of the Pediatric Environmental Health Center at Boston Children's Hospital.

"No parent should ever have to worry that the teether, car seat, or pajamas they buy could expose their child to dangerous chemicals. An Act relative to Toxic Free Kids takes the guesswork out of parenting by demanding transparency from manufacturers and banning the worst "forever chemicals" from the products our kids use every day. It's time to put child health before corporate convenience," said State Representative Jim Hawkins (D-Attleboro).



▲ *Hey, MA Legislature — get your ducks in a row! Clean Water's Laura Spark at the Toxic Free Kids press event in front of the Massachusetts State House.*

"I am proud to partner with Representative Jim Hawkins to file legislation to identify and remove the most harmful toxic chemicals from newly manufactured children's products. I am grateful to Clean Water Action, Boston Children's Hospital, and Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility for organizing at the State House and advocating to take these necessary steps to protect our children," declared Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton).

"We can't keep ducking the issue," riffed Laura Spark, Environmental Health Program Director at Massachusetts Clean Water Action. "Let's get our ducks in a row and start protecting kids from this constant onslaught of toxic chemical exposures."



▲ *Springfield residents alongside Climate Justice Organizer Emma Weis [rear, center] and local advocates at the Clean Air Resource Fair in honor of World Asthma Day.*

World Asthma Day: Fighting for Asthma Support and Solutions in Springfield, MA

Springfield residents continue to experience the disproportionate effects of toxic air pollution and have waited for years for legislation to clean up their air. On May 19th, Clean Water Action joined a broad coalition of local and statewide organizations at the Clean Air Resource Fair in honor of World Asthma Day. Neighbors learned from environmental and health professionals about steps they can take to protect themselves, including air filter demonstrations, and how they can advocate for change.

Meet the 2026 Rhode Island Environmental Champions!

In May, Clean Water Action welcomed a standing-room-only crowd to the Edgewood Yacht Club in Cranston for the 24th Annual Breakfast of Champions. Rhode Island legislative leaders were on hand to celebrate including the new Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, Chris Blazewski.

The 2026 awardees are as follows:

2026 David R. Gerraughty Award for Lifetime Commitment to the Environment

— Sheila Dormody, Chief of Policy and Resiliency for the City Of Providence

Sheila has been at the forefront of Rhode Island's efforts to address climate change and stand up for environmental and social justice for over 30 years. Throughout her outstanding career as an organizer, Sheila fought for and won campaigns to protect neighbors from lead pipes, promote producer responsibility for e-waste, enact a RI Renewable Energy Standard, clean up emissions from diesel buses, and phase out the sale of products containing toxic mercury.



▲ *From L to R: RI State Senator McKenney, RI State Rep. Spears, Kate Sayles, Emily Howe, Steve Ahlquist, Sheila Dormody, Aislinn Hanley.* PHOTO CREDIT: RI CAPITOL TV

Open Space Champion — Kate Sayles, Executive Director of RI Land Trust Council

Excellence in Environmental Journalism — Steve Ahlquist, editor of steveahlquist.substack.com

Clean Jobs Champion — Aislinn Hanley, Climate Jobs Rhode Island Program Director

Legislative Champions — Rep. Tina Spears and Sen. Mark McKenney

[See the event photo album](#) on Clean Water Action RI's Facebook page!

NATIONAL UPDATES

EPA Proposes to Roll Back PFAS Drinking Water Protections

In 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized the nation's first drinking water standards for six toxic PFAS "forever chemicals," a major victory for public health after years of advocacy. Now, the Trump administration is proposing to rescind protections for PFHxS, PFNA, GenX chemicals, and PFAS mixtures while also creating a pathway for some water systems to delay compliance with the remaining PFOA and PFOS standards until 2031. PFAS contamination has been found in drinking water sources across the country and exposure to these chemicals has been linked to cancer, immune system suppression, developmental harms, and other serious health effects.

Clean Water Action strongly opposes these rollbacks. Communities should not be forced to wait longer for protection from toxic chemicals in their drinking water. Instead of weakening safeguards, EPA should accelerate efforts to prevent PFAS pollution at its source, hold polluters accountable, and strengthen protections for public health. During the public comment period, Clean Water Action is mobilizing members and allies to urge EPA to reject these proposals and maintain strong federal drinking water standards for PFAS. [Take action today](#) before the comment period closes July 20, 2026.

Honoring Excellence in Lead Pipe Replacement

On June 23rd, the Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative recognized 16 people and programs leading the charge to remove lead from the nation's drinking water systems. During the recognition ceremony, Lynn Thorp, President of Clean Water Action and Lead Services Line Replacement Collaborative Steering Committee member, presented the block of awards related to excellence in community engagement, ensuring equal access to replacement, promoting public health protection, and other aspects of program design that reflect a collaborative approach to getting the job done. Read more [here](#).



Our National Campaigns Team is excited to welcome two fellows for the summer from the Yale Environmental Fellows Program and the Yale Conservation Scholars-Early Leadership Initiative: **Jagur Parks** and **Brandi Williams**. As part of their first week, they had the opportunity to visit Climate Action Campaign's unique pop-up, the Museum of Unnatural Disasters. This moving exhibit highlighted how extreme climate events are affecting us all through artifacts and survivor stories.



EPA's Latest Giveaway to the Coal Industry

Clean Water Action has worked on securing stronger wastewater limits for coal plants for more than 13 years. In 2024, EPA finalized long-overdue protections to help control the hundreds of millions of pounds of toxic pollution being released by coal plants each year. Yet, in December 2025, EPA extended compliance deadlines by up to five years, prolonging the release of dangerous pollutants into our waterways. Now, in a second giveaway to the coal industry, EPA is proposing to weaken federal wastewater standards at up to 113 coal plants across the country. The proposed rule would threaten drinking water, damage critical ecosystems, and put the health of communities across the country at risk.

During the comment period, we spoke out at meetings with EPA, mobilized thousands of comments urging EPA to withdraw its plans, and coordinated a [community comment letter](#) with nearly 65 national, state, and local organizations opposing the rule. Thank you for helping us push back against EPA's latest giveaway to the coal industry.

Juneteenth and Environmental Justice: Juneteenth is a celebration of liberation, resilience, and the ongoing struggle to ensure that the promise of freedom is realized for everyone. As part of our efforts commemorating this important day, we're proud to highlight the environmental justice work happening across Clean Water Action. Read about it in [our latest blog](#).



NEW ENGLAND CURRENTS

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