

Winning for Clean Water in California's Legislature

It's been a busy year for Clean Water Action in California! And thanks to Member support, Clean Water staff have been able to spend valuable time pounding the halls of the legislature in Sacramento to work on bills that affect clean water across the state...

The Governor signed two of our bills in 2017 that will increase understanding of the toxic chemicals introduced to our environment on a daily basis: AB 1328 (Limon) will require oil companies to disclose some chemicals and additives used in oil production activities, while SB 258 (Lara) requires companies making cleaning products to disclose their ingredients to the public on the label and website. There are also worker safety provisions in the bill for those exposed to cleaning products on the job.



PHOTO COURTESY TARA LOHAN, WATERDEEPLY.ORG

Senator Bill Monning addressing a rally in July in Sacramento in support of legislation on funding safe drinking water.

Clean Water will also keep fighting next year to make sure there's progress on three more bills. SB 623 (Monning) will create the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund to fill funding gaps that leave a million Californians without safe drinking water each year. AB 958 (Ting/Quirk) requires the Department of Toxic Substances to create regulations that will eradicate perfluorinated chemicals (PFASs) in food packaging, and SB 705 (Allen) would prohibit food providers from dispensing food in disposable food containers made of polystyrene foam.

► *It's all about strength in numbers.*

Working bills to keep the state healthy takes time and it can't be done without support and contributions from members across California. President Donald Trump's presence has been making itself felt in the California legislature with a chilling effect on swing votes on key legislation, which means your help is more important than ever. You don't need to wait for a canvasser to knock your door or make a yearly renewal call. Make a donation today at www.Bit.ly/CleanWaterCalifornia.

Outstanding In Their Field

Every weeknight, the California field canvass makes its way out to meet with Clean Water Action members. What drives them to do it? (Apart from Ishan, literally driving them, in the Field canvass van. What figuratively drives them?)

Travis Wall is California's Field Canvass Director

"I had a background in graphic design, actually. I was a little bit tired and burned out on it, and a lot of the projects I was working on were for companies whose values I didn't really agree with, and so I sort of stumbled across Clean Water Action, in the first place, but I fell in with a great group of people who were passionate about making a positive impact, and I saw it as a really great vehicle for my own passions. It can be a challenging job, going out and meeting with so many people to talk about our work, but the thing I always keep asking internally is, why we're doing this. The current administration helps a lot with that. People are really worried about President Trump and what we can do to counter what he's doing. It can be particularly rewarding for me to have longer conversations on the doorstep with people who are not necessarily so supportive of what we're doing, but here in California, there's a lot of support here for our work. I think people see an all hands on deck moment and there really isn't enough we can be doing, we could work on this day and night, and we'd still have work to do. So that's what we're doing. People here also want to know a lot about our legislative work, they might have a specific bill in mind and want to talk about it. They're plugged in!"



that's my life's mission. And trying, at the door, to combine this belief in the avoidance of dystopia with the positive initiatives we're taking, that's fascinating. Being a field canvasser gives me some fascinating insights into how people think, and the role liberal environmental non-profits can play in avoiding that bleak future. You never know who you're going to meet on a canvassing shift, and it's a superb lesson in the concept of independent events and probability, maintaining equanimity towards them. I think everyone struggles with getting bogged down, with maintaining a positive attitude, and just knowing what's in your hands, what isn't in your hands. This job is such good training for that stuff, and of course, it's always nice when an Indian family ask me what my father does. I tell them 'he's a landscape architect and a professor in Gujarat,' and they always enjoy that."

Logan Hansen is a California Field Canvasser

"I'm taking a break from studying as an undergraduate at UC Berkeley with a major in environmental economics. What I really wanted to be doing during this time when



I'm not in school was working on something that was meaningful to me. I've been looking at the Department of Water Resources in my school work, and I started to become aware of how complicated water issues were. I've also been thinking about groundwater sustainability issues. Going out and knocking on people's doors and talking about these issues is a lot more personal, and a lot more immediate. When there's someone looking you in the eyes, talking about water issues, it's really helpful for people in getting over that inertia of not really knowing how to act. And one of the things I've learned is that there are so many people out there who support our work. Obviously it's kind of tough, at the moment, politically, but it's heartening to know that there are so many people who care."

Ishan Raval is a California Field Canvasser



"I write a lot, I'm probably going to graduate school next fall having graduated from North Carolina in 2015. I majored in philosophy and English literature and for my

dissertation, I wrote "A Hipster Manifesto." It was a kind of organizing and political work straddling the boundaries of ecology and computation. I'm interested in trying to avoid a future that's like the movie *Mad Max* or the TV show *Black Mirror*,

ReThinking Disposable in Alameda: *Let's Unpackage An Entire Island*

Thanks to a grant from the Ocean Protection Council, Clean Water Action joined forces with the City of Alameda and Downtown Alameda Business Association to launch an ambitious initiative to convince the entire island of Alameda to go disposable-free.

It's part of the *ReThink Disposable* campaign, which has already saved California businesses thousands of dollars and helped the environment at the same time. Right now we can confirm reduction of more than 10 million disposable packaging items, and \$400,000 in packaging costs, numbers that are rising each day.

The goal of **ReThink Disposable: Unpackaging Alameda** is to help move the island away from over-reliance on single-use disposable packaging. Program Manager Samantha Sommer said Alameda provides “the ideal model community to prove our concept.”

Signing up with *ReThink Disposable* saves the average business thousands of dollars each year by reducing packaging waste. Clean Water staff are also training dozens of *ReThink* champions to go out and get businesses interested in Alameda, and some of the Alameda businesses we've already worked with have been blown away by the results.

“They were all so helpful and we really learned a lot at the same time,” said Rumi Ruhmani, owner of The Beanery on Park Street. He saved hundreds of dollars after signing up. “All the feedback has been positive from all our customers.”

Ruhmani was already striving to run an environmentally friendly business when he signed The Beanery up for the program, serving all his dine-in food on reusable plates. But our expert *ReThink* auditors recommended further changes such as eliminating disposable water cups and plastic side cups and replacing them with reusable cups.

Mark Rogers, owner of Lola's Chicken Shack, also on Park Street, has saved \$3,200 each year, and eliminated 1,400 pounds of waste, after making changes recommended by *ReThink*. “In a nutshell, it's a win, win, win!” Rogers said. “It's a win for the planet, a monetary win for me and an operational win.”



Launching ReThink Disposable: Unpackaging Alameda, from left to right, Kerry Parker with the city of Alameda, Mayor Trish Spencer of Alameda, Samantha Sommer, ReThink Program Manager with Clean Water Fund and Clean Water Action, and Donna Layburn, President of the Downtown Alameda Business Association.

Alameda's Downtown Association Executive Director Janet Magleby says, “Many of our district merchants and business owners both live and work in Alameda. They have double the reason to want to participate in this project that will not only save money for their operations, and help keep the waterways surrounding our island clean and safe.”

ReThink Disposable is not just for businesses in Alameda. There are a host of ways you can get involved, apart from supporting *ReThink* businesses across California. If you're interested in learning more about *ReThink Disposable*, not just in Alameda but in California and beyond, then be sure to visit our brand spanking new website, www.ReThinkDisposable.org.

Leftover Medications? Don't Rush To Flush!

The opioid epidemic is drawing increased attention to a less considered side effect of mushrooming dependence on over-the-counter and prescription medications: water pollution by pharmaceuticals. And that's where Clean Water Action comes in.

If you've got leftover over-the-counter or prescription medications, please make sure you dispose of them safely in one of our safe disposal bins, rather than rushing to flush them.

Most of us flush our unused pharmaceuticals down the toilet or throw them in the trash, both of which result in trace amounts of drugs getting into California's water. Trace amounts of drugs have big effects, and Californians are becoming guinea pigs in society's great big drug experiment.

"We've been tackling the problem with extended provider responsibility and pharma take-back ordinances," said Andria Ventura, Toxics Program Manager at our California office. "There are now 100 bins in 11 cities, keeping tons of drugs and needles out of our waterways and the hands of those who may misuse them."

Need to find out where to dispose safely of your leftover medications?

If you're looking for a safe disposal site for your leftover medications, go to www.DontRushToFlush.org/locations. And if you'd like to get involved in our campaign work to expand our pharmaceutical take-backs, check out the [California page](#) on Clean Water Action's website.



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