

## WANT TO SOLVE MARINE DEBRIS? CHANGE THE 3 R'S TO THE 3 P'S

By Miriam Gordon

Clean Water Action is working to resolve the growing problem of marine debris by preventing litter at the source. Thanks to the plethora of waste from our “throw away” society, there is a garbage patch in the Northwest Gyre\* of the Pacific Ocean estimated to be twice the size of Texas.

Marine debris is primarily comprised of convenience food packaging and single use disposable products—products the plastics and packaging industry believe we can't live without. Plastic makes up 60 to 80% of marine debris (in some places it is as high as 90–95%) and the ratio of plastic to plankton floating on the ocean surface in the Pacific Gyre is 64:1 (by weight).

In essence, the oceans are becoming a plastic soup in which many marine species are known to ingest floating plastics causing them to starve or suffocate. They can also become entangled in plastic debris and/or are poisoned by the toxins that are absorbed by plastics in the ocean. We know little about human impacts, but lately fish in the human food chain are being found with plastics in their bellies.

While recycling and composting rates have risen in the last 20 years, we continue to generate more and more waste. Despite California's efforts to enact a policy of the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and cut the amount of waste in our landfills by 50%, no attention has

been paid to the first R—*reducing* the overall quantity of waste being generated. Consequently, the amount of waste needing to be managed is steadily increasing with no mandated limits, resulting in more litter in our environment.

### The 3 P's—Preventing Plastic Pollution

California is taking the lead on promoting solutions that will prevent marine debris by **preventing plastic pollution**. The Governor appointed Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopted a resolution and a strategy that focuses on methods that prevent litter-prone waste from being generated in the first place. Their primary recommendations are:

- 1. Producer take-back of packaging**—make producers of packaging and disposable goods responsible for managing products at the end of their useful life
- 2. Product Bans**—prohibit single-use products that pose significant ocean litter impacts where a feasible, sustainable alternative is available
- 3. Litter fees**—assess fees on commonly littered items at point of purchase, including single-use grocery bags.

Clean Water Action is acting to make these recommendations a reality by supporting a suite of bills in the



\*A “gyre” is a concentric pattern of currents that circulates in a vortex pattern. Gyres tend to accumulate debris!

*Continued on page 7*

## California CURRENTS

### SUMMER 2009

California Currents is published  
by Clean Water Action.

Clean Water Action is a national citizens' organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health-threatening pollution, creation of environmentally-safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work.

Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots coalitions and campaigns to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life.

This update was prepared for our California members who contribute at the sustaining level of \$60 or more.

#### EDITOR

John DeCock

#### MANAGING EDITORS

Andria Ventura • Miranda Wilson

#### ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Anne Dougherty

#### DESIGN

Ideal Design Co.

#### STATE DIRECTOR

Miriam Gordon

#### SENIOR POLICY ANALYST

Jennifer Clary

#### PROGRAM MANAGER

Andria Ventura

#### FIELD CANVASS DIRECTOR

Dave Schwerin

#### PHONE CANVASS DIRECTOR

Mary Carbone

#### SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE

111 New Montgomery Street, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Ph: 415.369.9160 • Fax: 415.369.9180

cwasf@cleanwater.org • www.CleanWaterAction.org/ca

Reproduction in whole or part is permitted with  
proper credit. © Copyright 2009. All rights reserved.

Union printed: Worker safety and a clean  
environment go hand in hand.

## USING WATER TWICE *By Jennifer Clary*

A rainy February and March have only slightly reduced the severity of the last three year's water shortage, sparking calls for water conservation around the state.

Is this yet another sign of climate change, or is it just one of the dry spells to which our state is prone? Whichever is the correct response, we must all begin thinking differently about the ways in which we use and misuse water. This includes changing our "use it once and throw it away" mentality, which regards any water that has left the tap, no matter how lightly used, as contaminated. Reusing waste water from sinks, washers, and showers that has not been contaminated with harsh chemicals or human or animal waste—better known as "gray water"—can substantially reduce water use and associated costs.

You may already be familiar with the most common form of gray water reuse—placing a bucket in the shower to capture water for the garden or to flush the toilet. It is possible to maximize home gray water reuse by installing a system that diverts water from the sink, shower, and washing machine to the garden. However, the cost can vary dramatically—from a few hundred dollars for a home-made system, to several thousand for a properly

permitted and constructed system. The cost of obtaining required permits and the limited number of allowable uses (the state code and most municipalities only allow gray water to be used for outdoor subsurface irrigation) discourages many households from moving forward or results in homeowners putting in systems without the blessing or knowledge of the local permitting authority.

Clean Water Action is working at the state level to reduce disincentives for gray water reuse. Last year, Senator Alan Lowenthal (D, Long Beach) authored SB 1258, which requires the state Department of Housing and Community Development to update the state's Plumbing Code to include new indoor and outdoor uses for

*Continued on page 7*



## SPENDING OUR STIMULUS MONEY WISELY *By Jennifer Clary*

**The Federal Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act** was signed into law by President Obama on February 17 of this year, but Clean Water Action has been working with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the State Water Board (Board) since last November to establish criteria under which more than \$400 million of stimulus funding for water projects should be spent. Our goal has been to ensure that disadvantaged communities with the greatest public health and infrastructure needs are able to access these funds. Many of these

communities not only lack safe drinking water, but also have no staff able to prepare funding applications. DPH and the Board are allowing these communities extra time to prepare their applications, and for those unable to take advantage of this stimulus package, are providing planning assistance to prepare the communities for future funding opportunities. After additional input from Clean Water Action, the Governor and Legislature agreed with this approach and passed enabling legislation the last week in March to allow these funds to flow to California.

### Silicon Valley Water Awards [www.waterawards.org](http://www.waterawards.org)

Clean Water Action joined with other Bay Area non-profits in hosting the first annual water conservation awards for Silicon Valley commercial facilities. The event was held on March 23rd at DeAnza College. The event was a huge success, with a wide variety of organizations taking home awards for their water conservation activities. Visit our website to see what great water conservation ideas are being implemented in Silicon Valley!

# CLEAN WATER CURRENTS

A National Newsletter of Clean Water Action. | Volume 37, No. 2 | Summer 2009



*From the President*  
John DeCock

## THE LONG VIEW

One of the most pernicious influences in American society is the quest for the Quarterly Bottom Line. It encourages instant gratification at the expense of enlightened self interest, ignoring the greater good. This irrational outgrowth of corporate culture isn't even in the best interest of corporate profits. Thoughtful planning is sacrificed for short term profit four times a year to make shareholders happy and keep executives in their jobs. It doesn't work, yet it is the guiding principle of corporate behavior in this era.

Quarterly Bottom Line thinking has infiltrated our government and marketplace in ways that work against our long term interests. We burn fossil fuels as if there is an infinite supply and no adverse consequences. We allow toxins, sewage and drugs into our water as though some invisible force will remove all the bad stuff and what comes out of our tap will be okay. We don't hold polluters accountable or require sustainable practices and products because our health and environment aren't counted in the bottom line. We fail to invest in systems, policies and infrastructure that

will ensure a healthy environment and strong economy for the long term. Many people think that way.

Fortunately, members of Clean Water Action know better.

Clean Water Action is taking advantage of the historic opportunities we see before us. We have helped to build pro-environment majorities in many state legislatures and Congress. We have a chance, in fact a mandate, to address complex, long term problems with sustainable solutions. As we start the summer, the U.S. House is taking a first big step to address Global Warming and invest in a clean energy future.

That's just the beginning.

Big changes are on the horizon in environmental public policy—changes for which Clean Water Action has been working our entire history. Shifting to a new energy economy and protecting our waters from old and new threats cannot happen without a new and comprehensive approach. We have to look at choices we make in our everyday lives and how we impact natural resources. Any environmental

issue you care about: just add water. Water is the fundamental element which connects the natural world, our health and all the things we care about.

We take the long view to protect water and are promoting a 21st century approach to water use and management. We have a decades-long commitment to protecting our communities and ecosystems from toxics, outmoded water systems, water borne diseases, poor water use and management practices and a range of other issues that demonstrate the connection between water and every aspect of our lives and our world.

Clean Water Action empowers people to make democracy work. We work for solutions that protect health and natural resources. Where big, bold initiatives and decisions are required; our people power makes it happen. People power and a long, persistent approach. That is what we do. Constant pressure applied constantly. It's the way diamonds and good environmental policy are made.

# HOW SAFE IS YOUR BATH TUB?



Bubble baths should be clean, safe and fun. But *No More Toxic Tub*—a report published in March 2009 by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics in partnership with Clean Water Action and other organizations—found hazardous ingredients in numerous bath products marketed to babies and children. The report lists 38 products contaminated with formaldehyde, 1,4-dioxane or both, although neither contaminant appears on product labels. Both chemicals are linked with cancer but neither toxin is federally regulated in the United States.

The European Union and Canada prohibit 1,4-dioxane use *at any level* in cosmetics, while Sweden and Japan have banned the use of formaldehyde in cosmetics and toiletries. Canada and the European Union also closely regulate the chemical. In the U.S., the FDA has done nothing.

The *Toxic Tub* report found that 67% of tested products contained 1,4-dioxane. 82% contained formaldehyde. 61% contained both toxins. Even trace amounts of these chemicals can present health risks for babies and may contribute to serious health problems and disease.

“Many people are shocked,” says Clean Water Action’s Mia Davis, who coordinates the national Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. “We shouldn’t have to be chemists to pick safe products for our children.”

Baby products are often marketed as gentle and safe—terms not typically associated with cancer-causing chemicals. The list of contaminated products includes trusted names like Johnson


& Johnson, Sesame Street Bubble Bath and Gerber’s Grins & Giggles Milk & Honey Body Wash.

To spread the word about dangerous chemicals in baby products and other cosmetics, Clean Water Action offices across the country have hosted a series of successful outreach events, inviting members and non-members to ask questions, read literature and learn about products ranging from safe to dangerous.

“It’s not just babies, it’s everyone,” explains Sarah Holzgraf, campaign organizer for Clean Water Action’s New Hampshire office. “People see a product on the table and think: ‘I use that! Why is it there? What’s wrong with it?’” Holzgraf explains that people are surprised and upset to learn the cosmetics industry is self-regulated. “They think the government is protecting us.”

Clean Water Action New Hampshire is also working with the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics to collect petition signatures to deliver to public officials, urging them to support more effective regulations of chemicals in personal care products. New Hampshire members can sign the petition at: [www.cleanwateraction.org/takeaction/nh](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/takeaction/nh)

*To learn more about Clean Water Action’s work for Healthy, Safer Families and Communities, visit [www.cleanwateraction.org](http://www.cleanwateraction.org).*

 *The trouble with these chemicals doesn’t end in the bath tub. “They are getting back into our waterways,” says Davis, who explains that these are just two of the many chemicals and toxins we are washing down our drains. Our cosmetics, household cleaners, pesticides and prescription drugs all eventually find their way through our plumbing and into the environment. This chemical cocktail can wreck havoc on ecosystems, wildlife and community water supplies. Some of these chemicals have been linked to damaged aquatic ecosystems, where frogs are sprouting six pairs of legs and male fishes are developing female reproductive organs.*

## Bathe without chemicals: get informed and read labels

Neither formaldehyde or 1,4-dioxane are intentionally added to baby bath products, which means they do not appear on the ingredients list. Instead, the chemicals are contaminants that combine and degrade during the manufacturing process or in the bottle. Reduce your risk of exposure by reading labels and avoiding any products with the following ingredients.

Formaldehyde may be found in products containing:

- quaternium-15
- diazolidinyl urea
- DMDM hydantoin
- imidazolidinyl urea

1,4-dioxane may be found in products containing:

- PEG-100 stearate
- sodium laureth sulfate
- polyethylene
- cetareth-20

Formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane are not the only potentially dangerous chemicals in our bath products, and there is no comprehensive list of safe options. You can reduce your exposure:

- Choose products with fewer ingredients.
- Avoid products that use synthetic fragrance or dyes.
- Use fewer products overall.
- Read labels and avoid the ingredients listed above.
- Research your favorite products at [www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com)
- Contact your elected officials to support regulation of the cosmetics industry.
- Share concerns, fears and frustrations with manufacturers.
- Read the report at [www.safecosmetics.org/toxictub](http://www.safecosmetics.org/toxictub)

## RESTORING THE CLEAN WATER ACT MUST TOP CONGRESS' AGENDA

The Clean Water Restoration Act, introduced in April by Senator Russell Feingold, (D-WI) and almost two dozen co-sponsors, would restore critical Clean Water Act protections lost during six years of the Bush Administration's "No Protection" Policy. Reversing these policies has been a top priority for Clean Water Action since late 2002 and it should be Congress' priority now.

Beginning in 1975, the Clean Water Act was interpreted to protect all of the waters of the United States. For decades, it was presumed that every body of water fit this description, and qualified for federal protections. Now, in the wake of confusing and ill-defined U.S. Supreme Court rulings (*Rapanos v. United States* and *SWANNC v. Army Corps of Engineers*), the opposite is true. Now, federal Clean Water Act enforcers must undergo a resource intensive analysis

for every stream, creek, wash, wetland, tributary and river before it can retain protections under the Clean Water Act.

Confusion over Clean Water Act protection has led to delays in permitting decisions, to the dismay of developers; and a lack of protection enforcement, to the dismay of environmentalists. Hundreds of pollution enforcement cases and development applications have been dropped

*Continued on page 6*

## FOR CALIFORNIA WOMAN, PROTECTING A RIVER CAN COST YOU A JOB

Heather Wylie traded her job for a river. And she'd do it all over again.

In 2008, Wylie joined a handful of protestors for a kayak trip down the Los Angeles River, earning the wrath of her employers and the attention of a nation. Why? At the time, Wylie was a biologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The agency had just designated the LA River "non-navigable"—putting the watershed at risk and setting a dangerous precedent. Wylie and her compatriots set out to prove the Army Corps wrong. If they could make the journey then the LA River must be navigable which was a critical first step in retaining Clean Water Act safeguards.

Wylie's passion for water began in college when she worked as a canvasser with Clean Water Action. "That was really fun," she remembers. After college, Wylie worked with the Army Corps. Wylie's enthusiasm for environmental protection matured into opposition of the Army Corps' policies. By 2008, she was frustrated enough to grab a paddle to prove her point.

The trip succeeded—triggering events involving the Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, Congress, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and other organizations and individuals. By the end of the summer, the EPA had wrested jurisdiction of the LA

River system from the Army Corps. In December, Wylie lost her job.

Some people say Wylie lost her job over a kayak trip but that's not true. She'd probably still be working for the Army Corps if she'd chosen a different river. Wylie lost her job over a word: navigable.

Why the fuss over a single word? Navigable, according to current interpretation, is the only word that matters when protecting America's waters. Only waterways deemed navigable qualify for federal oversight and protection under the Clean Water Act. Wylie proved the Army Corps wrong. She lost her job.

Despite its importance, no clear guidelines define navigable as it applies to the Clean Water Act. The law itself broadly defined "navigable" as "the waters of the United States," regardless if water had, or could, be navigated. For decades, it was presumed every body of water fit this description, and qualified for federal protections. In the wake of confusing, ill-defined U.S. Supreme Court rulings, the opposite is true. Now, federal Clean Water Act enforcers must undergo a resource intensive analysis for every stream, creek, wash, wetland, tributary and river before it can retain protections. The farther away a creek or wetland is from a body of water you can float a boat on, the harder it is to keep it protected. Designating waterbodies



as being navigable-in-fact has become a critical first step in retaining Clean Water Act protections on the creeks and wetlands that drain to them.

The result of this confusion has been a sudden halt to the permitting process, uniting environmentalists and developers in frustration. Hundreds of pollution enforcement cases and development applications have been dropped with thousands more indefinitely delayed. Lately, it's hard to find anyone—environmentalist or developer—who believes the Clean Water Act's regulatory process is working.

With a kayak and some personal sacrifice, Wylie proved herself right. The EPA is reviewing the LA river system. Wylie is hopeful it will soon be officially defined as navigable.

But this story extends beyond LA. This is about our lakes, rivers, and streams, and how we choose to protect them.

The consequences are felt in our homes and communities, from the tap to the

*Continued on page 6*

# WHAT YOU WON'T SEE IN THOSE 'CLEAN COAL' ADS: DIRTY AIR, A WALL OF SLUDGE, POISONED RIVERS

Surely you've seen the ads scattered around the internet and splashed across our newspapers and magazines. Commercials interrupt our favorite television shows and invade our local radio station's airspace. They are everywhere. But that doesn't make them true.

No PR campaign, no matter how well executed, can make coal clean.

Advocates for "clean" coal argue that technology exists—almost—that will allow coal-fired power plants to capture their carbon emissions and store the climate-changing gas deep under ground. Technically, this may be true. Realistically, this is extremely expensive, and doesn't begin to address impacts on our water from continued coal mining and reliance on it to produce electricity. From mines to power plants, the process of wresting energy from coal is dirty and unhealthy for our waters, our communities and our bodies.



When the Kingston Fossil Plant dam failed on December 22, 2008, decades of hazardous coal ash and sludge were released along the Emory River in Tennessee. An estimated 1.1 billion gallons of contaminated water oozed downstream. Homes were destroyed and many wild creatures were killed, but no one knows what the long term impacts might be.

Already, water samples collected by Appalachian Voices have revealed frightening levels of contamination. Arsenic was present at 30 to 300 times the allowable limits. Lead was present at 2 to 21 times the legal limit for drinking water. In fact, every water sample collected by Appalachian Voices had elevated levels of arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, nickel and thallium. The Tennessee Valley Authority, responsible for both the dam and its rupture, claim that their water samples reveal acceptable levels of contamination for drinking water. Whether or not you believe their results, the question remains: Did they drink the water?

Would you?

*To find out more about coal power and its impact on water, visit us online at: <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/currents/spring2009>*

## Restoring the Clean Water Act *(continued from page 5)*

entirely, and thousands more have been indefinitely delayed. The Clean Water Act is broken and must be fixed.

Restoring the authority of the Clean Water Act to protect water resources must top Congress' water agenda. Current policies threaten protections for sources of drinking water for more than 110 million Americans. Waterways at risk range from most of a 53-mile stretch the Los Angeles River basin, declared exempt from Clean Water Act protection by the Corps of Engineers, to Avondale Creek in Birmingham, Alabama, a continuously flowing

stream that flows into residential neighborhoods, a lake and eventually a large river.

There is wide support for Congressional action to fix the Clean Water Act and restore the protections that were in place just six short years ago. Earlier this year, more than 160 scientists sent a letter to President Obama urging him to support the Clean Water Restoration Act, which would clarify in law the connection between waterways—connections well understood by scientists. Committee action in the U.S. Senate is expected in May.

 For more information on the need for Congress to act now on the Clean Water Restoration Act, visit us online at <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/restorationact>

## Protecting a River Can Cost You a Job *(continued from page 5)*

stream. We need a water protection process that makes sense. The Clean Water Act is now broken and over half of our nation's waterways—and our health—may no longer be protected. It's time to pass the Clean Water Restoration Act and restore the original intent of the Clean Water Act.

Wylie doesn't regret her lost Army Corps job. She insists she'll grab that paddle again if needed. But we cannot protect our water resources by floating a kayaker down every river. We need to revive clean water protections in our nation. "Our nation's waters will continue to be in a state of crisis until the Clean Water Restoration Act is passed," says Wylie. Once again, she's right.

**MAKE EVERY DAY EARTH DAY!** Take advantage of one of the easiest and most convenient ways to support Clean Water! You can make a gift to Clean Water Fund by payroll contribution through **EarthShare's** workplace giving program at numerous private companies, many state and municipal government organizations, and in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), by selecting CFC # 10636 on your pledge form. Clean Water Fund is a member of EarthShare, a nationwide federation of the country's most respected environmental and conservation charities. For more information about how you and your workplace can support Clean Water Fund, please call (800) 70-WATER x169.



## Marine Debris *(continued from cover)*

California legislature that focus on marine debris solutions. These include:

**AB 1358 (Hill and Nava)**—a ban on polystyrene food take-out containers.

**AB 68 (Brownley and Nava)**—a 25 cent fee on grocery bags (paper and plastic) at the check-out counter.

**AB 283 (Chesbro and Nava)**—requires the state to create a program requiring producers of designated products, including packaging, to take them back, which provides incentives for product manufacturers to reduce waste.

**SB 4 (Oropeza)**—bans smoking on state beaches. Cigarette butts are a significant component of beach debris.

**AB 925 (Saldana)**—like the pop-tops on aluminum cans in the '70's, this bill requires that plastic beverage bottle caps be integrated into the beverage container and thereby more likely to be recycled.

Join us in taking action to prevent marine debris! Write the Governor and tell him to prevent marine debris by signing into law these measures that are also supported by the Governor's appointed OPC in its Strategy to Reduce Ocean Litter.

## Using Water Twice

*(continued from page 2)*

gray water. That process is currently underway and we are working to ensure its proper implementation.

Ideally, a statewide gray water code would exempt single family homes from permit requirements if they meet certain prerequisites that ensure that the water meets water quality standards. Once adopted, this code would become the minimum standard for municipalities around the state.

We'll be asking for your help on this issue in the coming months—stay tuned!!

## Five More Things you can do to save water!

1. **Update your fixtures.** Most water agencies are offering significant rebates for high-efficiency toilets and washing machines, and many give away aerated faucets and showerheads. The reduction in your water and sewer bill will pay off the residual cost in two to five years.
2. **Fix leaks.** Many water agencies give away leak detection kits or will do a free water audit and find leaks for you!
3. **Install smart irrigation equipment** that doesn't work on a timer, but is triggered by the moisture content of the soil—so it only waters when needed.
4. **Support conservation measures at your local utility or town council.** Some measures that can be enacted locally include instituting a rate structure that encourages using less water, requiring that homes and businesses retrofit plumbing fixtures when the property is sold, and enforcing water waste prohibitions (like prohibiting irrigation water to overflow into the gutters).
5. **Support state conservation legislation.** Call your legislators and ask them to support two important conservation measures; AB1408 (Krekorian) that establishes standards to promote "water neutral" developments and AB 49 (Feuer and Huffman) that implements the Governor's call for a 20% reduction in per capita water use by 2020.

## Clean Water Action Sponsors AB 1358 (Hill and Nava)

### *A Ban on Polystyrene Food Take-Out Containers*

Polystyrene (PS), known by its trade name Styrofoam (tm), represents a serious environmental problem, threatens public health, and costs taxpayers billions each year in litter clean up costs.

PS is the second most common type of beach debris in California and it comprises 15% of street litter. Styrene, a chemical in PS, is a known animal carcinogen and a human neurotoxin. It migrates easily into food and beverages when foam containers are heated or come into contact with acids (like lemon juice) and fats or oils. A study of human fat tissue by the US EPA in 1982 found that all Americans have Styrene in their bodies.

Clean Water Action is sponsoring AB 1358 (Hill and Nava) because polystyrene bans, adopted by more than 30 local communities in California, really work. For example, San Francisco's ban resulted in a 36% reduction of PS street litter after the first year it was implemented. A ban on PS food containers is likely to save local jurisdictions and taxpayers a lot of money, while reduced use could help reduce the amount of styrene Californians are exposed to.

Clean Water Action believes generally that people should choose non-disposable food containers. However, when "to go" containers are necessary, they should be safe for people and sustainably produced. There are safer more sustainable options on the market, such as recycled (post consumer waste) paper and compostable products.



## GETTING THE LEAD OUT

Clean Water Action is co-sponsoring an important bill to protect our waterways from lead contamination. SB 757 (Pavley) will ban the manufacture, use, and distribution of lead wheel weights in vehicles.

Weights are attached to wheels to balance them. When they fall off and are ground down on the road, the lead dust ends up in our waterways. In fact, lead wheel weights are the largest source of lead in our waters. This is a serious problem because lead is a potent neurotoxin in both humans and wildlife. It is particularly dangerous to children whose brains and bodies are still developing. Childhood impacts can include learning disabilities, mental retardation, and impaired growth, motor function, vision, and hearing. Lead is also linked to hypertension, cancer, and reproductive problems in adults.

Fortunately there are safer alternatives to lead. The best alternative is stainless steel, which is environmentally benign and does not pose a threat to public health. Leaders in the automobile tire and wheel industry are voluntarily moving away from lead. However, they face competition from overseas lead wheel weight manufacturers. As a result, they are supporting SB 757 because in addition to protecting our ecosystems and our communities, it will also create a level playing field in which our manufactures can fairly compete.

### You can help!

Banning lead wheel weights and replacing them with safer alternatives such as stainless steel is common sense. Clean Water Action members can help pass



this important bill by urging their local assembly member to support it. You can also use your consumer power to reduce the use of the lead weights. While some auto businesses are voluntarily moving away from lead, others are not. Don't forget to ask for stainless steel wheel weights when you are having your car serviced.

## CHEMICAL POLICY REFORM MOVES FORWARD *By Andria Ventura*

The state Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) is developing a regulatory implementation plan for two bills passed by the Legislature in 2008—AB 1879 (Feuer) and SB 509 (Simitian). Clean Water Action has taken a lead role, along with our allies in the CHANGE (Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy) Coalition, in DTSC's public stakeholder process to ensure that the new chemical regulation program will truly protect the environment and human health and drive the development of "green" chemical alternatives.

AB 1879 breaks new ground by giving DTSC the authority to regulate chemicals in products, while SB 509 establishes

a publicly accessible clearinghouse of information on those chemicals.



Clean Water Action and our CHANGE allies developed guidelines to ensure that DTSC gathers necessary data on chemical use and hazard traits, identify chemicals of concern, develop appropriate regulations on their use, and prioritize which regulatory actions must be taken first. The guidelines require DTSC and other state agencies to:

- Assess chemicals and their alternatives based on the hazards they pose to health and the environment.
- Require a mandatory set of reliable, *publicly available* data for all chemicals in commerce, including environmental and health data.

- Reverse the burden of proof so that companies demonstrate their products are safe instead of the government and the public having to prove harm after chemicals enter the marketplace.
- Avoid "paralysis by analysis." A lack of complete information must not be used as a justification for further delay when sufficient information exists for making decisions that protect the public and the environment.
- Consider the impacts of chemical use on workers, who are exposed at higher levels and longer periods of time than the general public.

*To learn more about DTSC's process to implement AB 1879 and SB 509, visit us online at: [www.cleanwateraction.org/ca](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/ca)*

### Take a tip to protect your water!



Flushing medicines down the drain or toilet can harm aquatic life and waste water treatment is not sufficient to remove all of these chemicals. You can help by bringing your unused or out of date drugs to local collection sites for proper disposal. Bay Area residents can find such sites at [www.Baywise.org](http://www.Baywise.org). If your town is not on the list, call 1(800)CLEANUP to find out where you can dispose of your medicines safely. Thanks for doing your part!