

# Clean Water Action



New England Sustainers Update

July-September 2007

## CWA Honors Ross Gelbspan



Maass. CWA Board Member Ellie Goldberg with awardee BOLD Teen Nebulla Stephens and Bill Loesch, Advisor for BOLD Programs.

*The BOLD Teens... Senator Edward Augustus... the Gold-certified Green Building... Ross Gelbspan*

These were just a few of the highlights and the awardees of this year's Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund Annual Party in the Springtime Benefit.

Our 13<sup>th</sup> springtime benefit party took place on May 20. The Massachusetts event was a great success, bringing together local activists, legislators, partner organizations, as well as Massachusetts Clean Water Action board members, organizers and members.

Having this year's party at the Doyle Conservation Center in Leominster was a fantastic chance to learn about green building design. The crowd was enthusiastic, the food was top notch, and the event a great success.

Thanks to all of our generous donors, we will move forward with our work across Massachusetts on global warming initiatives, eliminating mercury contamination, reducing waste, increasing recycling, protecting drinking water, and stopping toxic contamination of our food, homes, consumer products, and communities.

We hope to see you at next year's celebration!

## Don't Emit, Retrofit!

### Reducing Diesel Pollution in Massachusetts

How many diesel vehicles pass by your house or your office or your child's school each day? Probably more than you think. Youth organizers with the Chelsea Collaborative were shocked to count 4-5 times more diesels traveling on their streets than they predicted. In a short half an hour period, one group counted 45 trucks in an industrial area that borders a highly residential section of the city.

Massachusetts relies on more than 200,000 diesel vehicles to help build our roads and buildings and transport our goods and people. With these services, diesels also bring dangerous pollution. The Boston area has the third highest risk from diesel pollution in the country. Massachusetts has the highest health risk from diesel soot in New England.

Fine particle pollution from diesel emissions shortens the lives of an estimated 21,000 people nationwide every year. The cancer risk from diesel exhaust is 7.5 times higher than the total cancer risk from all other 133 air toxins tracked by the EPA combined. The asthma rate in certain schools in Massachusetts exceeds 20 percent and diesel pollution contributes greatly to lung cancer, heart disease, bronchitis, strokes, and respiratory complications for Commonwealth residents.

Urban areas are feeling the impact disproportionately. In Lawrence, girls from the Esperanza Academy counted alarming numbers of diesels in their school neighborhood. The girls then wrote letters to the mayor, educated their families and friends on this issue, and presented their findings to the Mayor's Health Task Force. Municipalities like Lawrence, Chelsea, and Springfield are uniting to pass city resolutions in support of state legislation

Clean Water Action, in coalition with the Diesel

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## New Hampshire Finally Passes Mercury Bans, Key Energy Bills

With historic changes in leadership in the New Hampshire legislature this session, much of Clean Water Action's clean energy and mercury reduction agenda got very favorable treatment by lawmakers.

### Renewable Energy

Most significant was passage of a long-awaited renewable portfolio standard for utilities, attaining a 253-37 margin in the House and 24-0 in the Senate, before being signed into law by Governor Lynch in May. It will require electric utilities to purchase a growing percentage of their power needs from renewable sources such as solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, tidal, landfill methane and biomass. Despite persistent lobbying from the trash incineration industry, lawmakers fended off efforts to include incinerators as a power source deserving of renewable energy credits. By 2025, the legislation will come close to achieving Governor Lynch's previously stated goal of 25% renewable power in NH. The state now joins others in New England requiring renewables in their electrical energy mix. The legislature also set up commissions to study tidal power and the production and distribution of biodiesel fuel.

### Mercury

Bans on the sale and disposal of mercury-containing products, which CWA has worked on since 1999, also passed overwhelmingly in both houses and was signed by the Governor. Items such as mercury-containing thermostats, measuring devices and switches will not be sold in New Hampshire as of July 2008, and all mercury products will be banned from landfills, transfer stations and incinerators as of January 2008. While the latter bill doesn't provide a mechanism for collecting these

products and retaining their mercury, a provision was included to study the options for proposing a manufacturer-funded thermostat collection program in the 2008 session. Again, NH now joins neighboring states in enacting these bans, taking another significant step in eliminating human sources of mercury to our environment and food chain.

### Incineration Ban

A permanent ban on the incineration of construction and demolition debris (C&D) was passed overwhelmingly this session. With growing pressure in the region to expand disposal routes for C&D, a number of schemes to incinerate C&D have been considered and challenged in communities around the state. As with trash incineration, burning C&D-derived wood is known to emit unacceptable quantities of mercury, lead and other toxic substances into the air. The bill makes permanent a temporary moratorium passed last session, and is accompanied by a bill to study appropriate methods and needs for recycling or disposing of C&D in lieu of incineration.

### Climate

A Climate Action Plan bill stalled in the House under unusual circumstances this spring. However, the Dept. of Environmental Services, with Governor Lynch's encouragement, did agree to develop a climate action plan this year. New Hampshire is the only New England state yet to take this key action, despite having agreed back in 2001 to do so. It is anticipated that a governor-appointed task force will be set up this fall to address the climate plan. Messages should be sent to Governor Lynch encouraging this move. **For more information on the Climate Action Plan**, contact Doug Bogen in the Portsmouth NH office, at (603) 430-9565 or [dbogen@cleanwater.org](mailto:dbogen@cleanwater.org).

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increase the amount of money available for the CT Energy Efficiency Fund ([ctsavesenergy.org](http://ctsavesenergy.org)), and avoid the need to build additional power plants and transmission lines for years to come.

### 3. 20% Clean Electricity by 2020

As Congress debated whether to require the country to move to 20% clean electricity by the year 2020, CT extended the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) which requires utilities to procure a portion of their electricity from clean energy sources (such as wind and solar power) from 7% by 2010 to 20% by 2020.

Clean Water Action will work to monitor these new laws to ensure they are correctly and fully implemented. **To learn what you can do**, join our Connecticut email list by emailing [rsmith@cleanwater.org](mailto:rsmith@cleanwater.org).

## Good news!

We are expanding our work to reduce diesel pollution in Rhode Island!  
Please help us.

Donate online and designate your support.

- Go to [www.cleanwateraction.org](http://www.cleanwateraction.org).
- Click on Contribute.
- In the comments box, write "Rhode Island."

Thanks!

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## Rhode Island Cleans Up School Buses, Takes Action on Climate

Clean Water Action had an exciting session at the Rhode Island State House this year with success on bills to clean up diesel fleets, prevent mercury pollution and prevent global warming. We also made significant progress on our campaigns to protect our water supply and prevent toxic electronic waste.

We worked hard to help pass a law to protect school children from toxic diesel pollution. This pollution leads to asthma, lung disease, heart attack, and missed days of work. The **Diesel Emissions Reduction Act** starts to tackle the problem of diesel pollution by requiring the cleanup of school buses. The bill also requires the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to develop a report on opportunities to clean up diesel state vehicles and waste haulers. Next year we plan to pass a law that calls on the state to clean up these fleets, which travel through congested neighborhoods and put Rhode Islanders at risk.

This year CWA also helped pass a law to implement the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)**. RGGI will curb global warming pollution from power plants and cut our electricity costs through investments in energy efficiency. This new law ensures that all of the proceeds from RGGI are used to benefit consumers. Reducing pollution and saving money is a win-win situation!

Clean Water Action led the successful effort to **ban the sale of mercury-added button cell batteries** in Rhode

Island by July 2011. The batteries had been previously exempted from the state's Mercury Reduction and Education Act.

Computers and televisions contain lead, mercury, cadmium and other toxics. Last year, legislation established a ban to prevent computers and televisions from being dumped in the landfill. CWA supported the **Electronic Waste Producer Responsibility Act** to require electronics manufacturers to pay for collecting and safely recycling discarded electronic equipment. The General Assembly decided to wait for a DEM recommendation due next session. Thanks to our organizing on the issue of electronic waste, we plan to pass a law next session.

CWA also coordinates the **Coalition for Water Security**, which advocates for a statewide water management system that protects natural resources and support economic development. Our work has generated media attention across the state and made the issue a top priority for the General Assembly and Governor.

In June, both the House and the Senate introduced legislation to address these issues, however, both chambers decided to wait until next year to adopt policies. We will continue to educate the public about wise water use so we can protect the environment, reduce unnecessary water use, and coordinate water withdrawals.

**To get more involved** in any of our Rhode Island campaigns, call (401) 331-6972.

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*(Retrofits continued from page 1)*

Pollution Solution, supports comprehensive legislation filed by Senator Jack Hart (Boston) and Representative Cheryl Coakley-Rivera (Springfield), *An Act to Protect Public Health and Air Quality by Reducing Harmful Diesel Emissions*. Over a period of years, the legislation requires state owned, leased or contracted diesels and municipal garbage and recycling trucks, to install retrofits filters. The legislation also sets up a fund to ensure private fleet retrofit their vehicles and maximize the receipts of federal dollars.

A new report by the non-profit Clean Air Task Force, *No Escape from Diesel Exhaust*, revealed that although we spend just 6% of our day on average commuting, that is when we incur 60% of our exposure to harmful diesel exhaust. Even those riding a bike, walking, or taking a ferry are subjected to high levels of pollution. Construction workers can be exposed to diesel exhaust almost anywhere as they operate or work around equipment such as, generators, rough-terrain forklifts, compressors, concrete trucks, packers, bobcats, cranes, front-end loaders, and

welding machines. The health risk from diesel exposure is greatest for children, the elderly, people who have respiratory problems, athletes and others who exercise regularly in diesel-polluted areas, and people who work or live near diesel exhaust sources.

Even children are disadvantaged if they ride school buses. Some studies show that the air inside a diesel-powered bus is actually more polluted than the ambient air outside, as the particles are more concentrated inside. Luckily for Massachusetts children, the state has earmarked \$22.5 million for school bus retrofits over the next 3 years.

**Take Action:** Call or write your state representative and senator today and urge them to support: *An Act to Protect Public Health and Air Quality by Reducing Harmful Diesel Emissions*. If you do not know who your legislators are, call the State House Switchboard at 617-722-2000 or visit: [www.wheredoivotema.com](http://www.wheredoivotema.com). For more information, contact Danielle Connor at (617) 338-8131 x205 or [dconnor@cleanwater.org](mailto:dconnor@cleanwater.org).

# \$10 Million for Cleaner School Buses and 3 Energy Victories in Connecticut

## Diesel School Bus Victory

In June, the Connecticut General Assembly and Governor approved a state budget bill which included \$10 million to retrofit school buses in Connecticut with pollution controls by 2010. Pollution controls on the engine will keep exhaust from entering the passenger cabin and tailpipe pollution controls will significantly reduce dangerous particulate matter pollution. This victory culminates years of effort by Clean Water Action members who met with their legislators, made calls, sent emails, wrote letters, and lobbied at the capitol to keep pressure on the legislature and state agencies to take action on diesel exhaust. Clean Water Action will continue the fight to clean up state transit buses and construction equipment working on state projects- stay updated on our website: [www.cleanwateraction.org/ct](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/ct).

## Energy Bill Victories

Clean Water Action worked with environmental and consumer groups at the state legislature to further good global warming and energy efficiency policies in this year's state energy bill. Three key victories:

### 1. Power Companies Pay for Global Warming

The Connecticut General Assembly set a national global warming precedent by requiring the Rell administration to implement the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a landmark 10 state program to limit CO<sub>2</sub> pollution from power plants. This bill will require the Rell administration to make power generating companies pay for each ton of their global warming pollution with proceeds reinvested in energy efficiency and new clean energy generation. This will send a message to power generators and their investors that coal and other highly polluting power sources with high global warming



Representative Denise Merrill (Co-chair, Appropriations) joins Clean Water Action to support diesel school bus retrofits in front of the Legislative Office Building May 2007. Pictured: Roger Smith of Clean Water Action, Senator Don Williams (Senate President), Senator Finch (Environment Committee Co-Chair) and CT Alliance Against Diesel Pollution groups.

emissions should not expect a free ride under state or national climate regulations. Revised CT RGGI regulations are expected this fall.

### 2. Energy Planning Efficiency First Requirement

For years CT has been hurt by a lack of any real energy planning. The energy bill creates a new "Connecticut Energy Advisory Board" (CEAB) bringing together consumer representatives and state agencies to help plan our energy future. Clean Water Action and consumer allies succeeded in making sure power generators were not on the energy board. The new CEAB will create comprehensive electricity plans and the energy bill mandated that policies to help consumers reduce their usage come before expensive investments in new supply. This should dramatically

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