



CLEAN WATER ACTION

18th Annual

BREAKFAST  
*of*  
CHAMPIONS

# 2020Awardees

DAVID R. GERRAUGHTY AWARD  
FOR LIFETIME COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

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**JERRY ELMER**  
Conservation Law Foundation

ELECTED OFFICIAL  
OF THE YEAR

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**KATE WEYMOUTH**  
Barrington Town Council

BUSINESS LEADERS  
OF THE YEAR

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**ANNA BURNLEY**  
Mission NPT

**SCOTT KIRMIL**  
Diego's

LOCAL LEADERS  
OF THE YEAR

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City of Providence  
**RACIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE COMMITTEE (REJC)**  
and  
**OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY**



Our mission is to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life. Clean Water Action organizes strong grassroots groups and coalitions, and campaigns to elect environmental candidates and to solve environmental and community problems.

*18th Annual Breakfast of Champions*

# KATE Weymouth



Kate Weymouth has served on the Barrington Town Council since first winning election in 2004 and has been the vice-president for the past eight years.

Her family moved to RI in 1959 and she has lived in Barrington most of her adult life. She holds a BA degree from Connecticut College, and Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Architecture degrees from RISD. In 1986, the year her older son was born, she became a registered architect. She has been married to Scott, an architect, for 40 years. They have two sons - Peter, 33, and Stuart, 29.

In 2012, Kate led the effort as Barrington became the second municipality in New England and the first in RI to pass a plastic bag ban. In 2015 Barrington was forced to develop and pass an amendment to the otherwise successful ordinance due to a loophole in the original ban's language which allowed for the introduction of thicker plastic bags. The town closed the loophole and moved on to pass RI's first polystyrene ban in 2018. Kate has also been active in statewide efforts to reduce single-use plastics, advocating for strong policies at the State House.

She is hopeful and excited to now be part of the environmental community's efforts to pass state-wide plastic reduction bills. It is high time for the Ocean State to take serious and responsible steps to reduce plastic pollution.

# ANNA Burnley / SCOTT Kirmil



Anna Burnley and Scott Kirmil are the owners of the prominent Newport restaurants Mission and Diego's, respectively.

In the summer of 2019, Clean Water Action completed the Rhode Island pilot phase of our *ReThink Disposable* program, created by our California program office in 2011. *ReThink Disposable* works with restaurants, food trucks, and other businesses and institutions to reduce the distribution of single-use disposables in the food service industry. After an initial assessment, CWA staff works with restaurant owners and managers to implement alternative products and practices in order to divert single-use products from the waste stream, eliminate preventable plastic pollution, and reduce costs for businesses.

Through generous grants from the Rhode Island Foundation and 11th Hour Racing, we were able to bring this program to Rhode Island. Anna and Scott's restaurants were the very first to participate in and complete the *ReThink Disposable* program in our state. They were able to divert 121,745 individual single-use products, amounting to nearly 600 pounds of trash, from the wastestream. Additionally, they were able to save almost \$2,600 annually by replacing disposable products with reusable ones and changing behaviors for staff and customers. Their leadership will serve as models for other food service establishments across the state.

# REJC of Providence



## **Mission**

The Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC) of Providence exists to organize and facilitate BIPOC decision-making to ensure that Providence policies and governance benefit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities and move us towards a just transition.

## **Vision**

REJC envisions a regenerative future for Providence communities, one in which local, regional and national policies and structures are designed by frontline communities to center and embody racial, environmental, and climate justice.

# OFFICE OF Sustainability



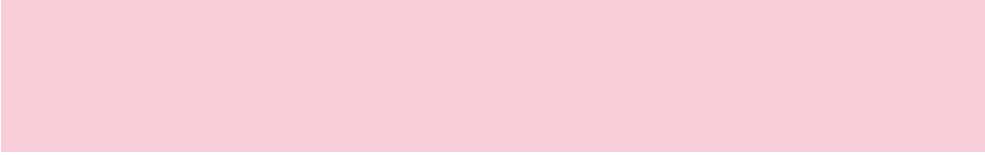
## **Mission**

The mission of the Office of Sustainability is to provide a better quality of life for all residents while maintaining nature's ability to function over time by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy, as well as reducing energy consumption in city-owned facilities, to cost-effectively lower utility operating costs, and to ensure occupant comfort and safety in city facilities.

The Office is advised by a community-led group, the Environmental Sustainability Task Force, which holds monthly public meetings.

# JERRY Elmer





Jerry Elmer is a senior attorney who has worked for Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) since August 2006. Jerry is a graduate of Rhode Island College (summa cum laude) and Harvard Law School (cum laude).

Jerry's responsibilities include advocacy and litigation in Federal and state courts and before administrative agencies primarily in the areas of climate change and renewable energy. He has litigated in the Public Utilities Commission and in court to enforce Rhode Island's renewable energy laws, litigated in the First Circuit Court of Appeals to prevent siting of a liquefied natural gas facility in densely populated Fall River, Massachusetts, and litigated in Rhode Island Superior Court to prevent the expansion of Champlin's Marina in Block Island's Great Salt Pond.

Jerry is a principal author of several of Rhode Island's major renewable energy statutes, including: (1) The Long-Term Contracting Statute (2009) that has given rise to the nation's first-in-the-water off-shore wind project (Deepwater Wind); (2) The Net Metering Statute (2011) that creates a comprehensive statewide legal framework net metering; and (3) Distributed Generation Standard Growth Program (2014), which creates a comprehensive statewide legal framework to encourage development of small-scale, local renewable energy projects.

Jerry was CLF's chief case strategist and litigator in the long-running battle against the permitting of a new 1,000-megawatt fossil fuel power plant in rural Burrillville, Rhode Island. The permit for this facility was denied earlier this year.

# 2020 Legislative Priorities

## **H 7399 and S 2165: Resilient RI Act - Act on Climate 2020**

**Introduced by: Representatives Blazejewski, Abney, Bennett, Carson, Ruggiero**

**Senators Euer, Lynch-Prata, Conley Sosnowski, Goodwin**

The Act on Climate 2020 bill updates the original Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014 to establish mandatory and enforceable carbon emissions reductions across the three major sectors of Rhode Island's economy: electricity generation, buildings, and transportation. Additionally, it updates the emissions reductions targets set in the original bill and puts Rhode Island on a path to be net-zero by 2050. It uses existing state agencies to create a comprehensive plan to reduce emissions across the state's economy and meet the incremental, measureable milestones set out in the legislation.

## **H 7306 and S 2003 Sub A: Plastic Waste Reduction Act**

**Introduced by: Representatives McEntee, Shekarchi, Bennett, Craven, Knight**

**Senators Ruggerio, Sosnowski, Coyne, Euer, Miller**

This bill would prohibit the distribution of thin-film single-use plastic check-out bags in Rhode Island and require reusable bags to be at least a certain thickness and made with stitched handles. This bill will help prevent plastic pollution in Rhode Island's waterways and communities, including Narragansett Bay, reduce contaminated recycling loads, and help municipalities save money by avoiding tipping fees and fines associated with diverted recycling. This bill has already passed in the Senate and is awaiting action by the House.

## **H 7216 and S 2235: Limits on PFAS in Water**

**Introduced by: Representatives Speakman, Cortvriend, Carson, Cassar, Donovan**

**Senators Lynch-Prata, Satchell, Euer, Sosnowski, Miller**

This bill directs the Department of Health to establish mandatory allowable limits for PFAS in drinking water and groundwater in Rhode Island.

## **H 7307 and S 2068: Elimination of PFAS from Food Packaging**

**Introduced by: Representatives Cortvriend, Marszalkowski, Speakman, Shekarchi, Ranglin-Vassell**

**Senators Satchell, Sosnowski, Quezada, Seveney, Coyne**

This bill will prohibit the use of PFAS (per and polyfluoralkyl substances) from being used in food packaging. PFAS chemicals repel both oil and water, but with this special chemistry comes a special problem: they are so highly persistent that scientists call them “virtually indestructible.” Their widespread usage has made them global pollutants that threaten both environmental and public health. PFAS are currently found in only 40% of food packaging products, so safer alternatives already exist. The state of Washington banned PFAS in 2018, Maine in 2019, and nine other states are considering similar legislation.

## **OTHER SUPPORTED LEGISLATION:**

### **H 7163: Single-Use Plastic Straws - ‘Ask First’ Bill**

**Introduced by: Representatives Bennett, Canario, Jackson, Vella-Wilkinson, Handy**

### **H 7164: Polystyrene in Food Service Containers**

**Introduced by: Representatives Bennett, Canario, Jackson, Vella-Wilkinson, Handy**

### **S 2513: Beverage Container Deposit Recycling Act of 2020**

**Senators McKenney, Sheehan, Cano, Valverde, Sosnowski**

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**Senators McKenney, Sheehan, Cano, Valverde, Sosnowski**

# CWA 2020 Staff

**Michelle Beaudin**

Canvass Supervisor & Program Organizer

**Johnathan Berard**

State Director

**Maya Fromme**

Field Manager

**Amber Schmidt**

Canvass Director



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# CWA's 2020 Programs

## Rhode Island Green Infrastructure Coalition

The Green Infrastructure Coalition (GIC) was established in May 2014. It is comprised of nearly 60 members, including nonprofit organizations, municipalities, private businesses, state agencies and individuals. Clean Water Action serves on the GIC's leadership team.

The GIC's goal is to foster implementation of nature-based solutions for managing stormwater in the state's urban communities to mitigate stormwater flooding and pollution and enhance climate resilience. The GIC's work is currently focused in two urban areas of the state: the metro-Providence region and Aquidneck Island.

Green infrastructure refers to natural or engineered systems, that use soil and vegetation to capture water, reduce ambient temperatures, and otherwise protect and enhance both environmental quality and public health. Urban green infrastructure includes trees, rain gardens, vegetated swales, pocket wetlands, constructed wetlands, open space, urban agriculture and farming, and vegetated median strips and engineered techniques such as green roofs, tree boxes, infiltration planters, and permeable pavement.

The GIC has several priorities for 2020: 1) To support policies designed to incentivize the installation of green infrastructure as well as provide sustainable, dedicated funding for stormwater BMP installation and maintenance; 2) to continue installing green infrastructure projects across Rhode Island and develop standards for maintaining them long term; and 3) to expand our communications and outreach work to bring knowledge of and support for nature-based solutions by telling stories about the impact that green infrastructure projects have had on communities across the state.

## Toxics

Clean Water Action is a member of the Safer States organization, a nationwide coalition devoted to removing toxic chemicals from consumer products. We participate in the Mind the Store program, which applies direct pressure to retailers to move to chemically safe versions of products like cosmetics, furniture and electronics that are found in virtually every American home. We are also working with the City of Providence to develop purchasing regulations that will eliminate products containing toxic chemicals from offices, hospitals and schools as well as ways to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals used in pesticides.

## Climate Crisis Campaign

The climate crisis is accelerating and will prove to be one of the greatest challenges that our state has ever faced. While our leaders have acknowledged the need to act, the measures that have so far been taken are not enough to adequately address the magnitude of the problem.

The Climate Crisis Campaign, comprised of over 100 organizations, coalitions, and individual Rhode Islanders is organizing to urge elected officials and state leaders to action. Rhode Island must dramatically reduce emissions from all sectors of the economy: transportation, heating and buildings, and power generation. The state must also prioritize investments in low-income communities and communities of color and prepare and retrain displaced fossil-fuel industry workers. Finally, while emissions reductions will stave off the worst effects of climate change, the state must still invest in adaptation and resilience projects to protect both existing communities and natural ecosystems.

## ReThink Disposable/ #breakfreefromplastic

Nearly one-third of the plastic items that we consume end up in the environment. As the production of plastic goods and packaging increases, this means that we will only see more and more plastic pollution in our communities and waterways. Experts estimate that, at the rate we consume plastics, there will be more plastic by weight in our oceans by 2050 than marine life. For years, we have tried to recycle our way out of the problem but here in Rhode Island, recycling rates have been low and stagnant for close to a decade.

We will be expanding the scope our *ReThink Disposable* program in the coming year. This program, developed by our California office in 2011, allows us to work directly with businesses to reduce the amount of single-use plastic food serviceware they distribute through alternative products, staff training, and other best practices, saving them thousands of dollars and diverting thousands of pounds of plastic waste and carbon emissions per year.

We will also continue our work to help Rhode Island break free from plastic. This includes working with communities to encourage behavior change through individual incentives and local policies. We are also continuing to work with our partners in the advocacy community and at the state level to enact statewide legislation designed to stop plastic pollution at its source.

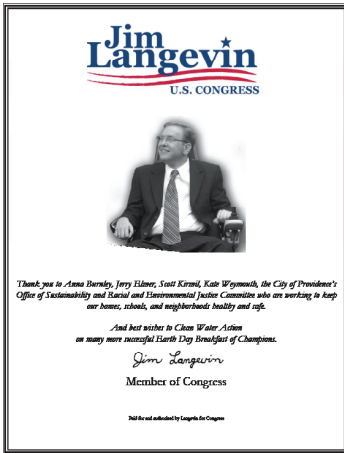
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# Making Rhode Island public schools *great* for every child.



Lawrence E. Purtill, President  
Valarie Lawson, Vice President  
Robert A. Walsh, Jr., Executive Director

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Cranston, Rhode Island, 02920  
(401) 463-9630



**JACK REED**  
United States Senator for Rhode Island

Best Wishes To  
Clean Water Action RI  
for your efforts to protect our  
environment, health, the economic  
well-being of our community.

United States Senator  
Jack Reed

*Paid for by The Reed Committee*

**Congratulations,  
Jerry Elmer,  
and all of this year's  
Clean Water Champions.**

Conservation Law  
Foundation is proud to  
partner with Clean Water Action  
to protect Rhode Island's  
precious waters today and for  
generations to come.

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Thank you for your  
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**Thank you to  
Clean Water Action  
for the great work  
that you do.**



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