

Boston Headed for Zero Waste

On April 4, during a surprise Spring snowstorm, the City of Boston and the Boston Recycling Coalition (BRC) — a collaboration between Clean Water Action and other environmental and worker justice organizations — joined forces to co-host a Zero Waste Municipal Leaders Summit. Despite the weather, this was a high point of a six-year campaign: a good day to talk trash.

Over 20 city officials, most of whom had never discussed their department's role in regulating waste, joined in the state-funded talks with visitors from nine other towns across Eastern Massachusetts. Adding to the mix were three special guests from accomplished Zero Waste-driven municipal programs: Los Angeles, Austin and San Francisco. Nationally known Zero Waste experts facilitated, and the BRC team assisted in discussions.

The goal was to explore what has been done elsewhere, successfully and not, and to consider steps Boston can take to capture economic gains by diverting waste from incinerators and landfills. Eventually, recommendations for a community-driven Zero Waste planning process will be delivered to Mayor Martin Walsh.

Discussions included contract structure that drives climate goals and is fair for industry workers, under-utilized technologies like anaerobic digestion



Boston Recycling Coalition (BRC) members at Fenway Park on Earth Day.

of organic waste, financing Zero Waste programs and education, leveraging regional collaboration to advance “extended producer responsibility” and even using recycled materials to spark a local manufacturing resurgence.

And on April 22, Earth Day, Mayor Walsh highlighted his commitment to moving towards Zero Waste, acknowledging BRC members who attended his speech at historic Fenway Park. This was a welcome recognition of the coalition's efforts and a burgeoning partnership with the City.

Time will tell what comes of all these heady developments, but one thing's for sure: we won't solve this problem without everyone at the table.

Have you seen the new CleanWaterAction.org?

CleanWaterAction.org has always been THE resource for information about the fight to protect clean water; to learn how we can put drinking water first; and the ways you can hold polluters accountable for their pollution. You can do that and more at the new CleanWaterAction.org. And you can do it on the go if you have a smart phone or a tablet.

Take a tour today. Check out the action center, read our new blog, or make a donation.

MASSACHUSETTS

A Major Victory in the Fight Against Flame Retardants

In 2014 Massachusetts updated the state's fire code, giving schools, hospitals, and other public meeting spaces the option of purchasing flame retardant free furniture. Unfortunately the city of Boston had its own fire code that required furniture in public spaces be treated with large amounts of toxic flame retardants, leaving Boston behind. This changed April 8th when Mayor Marty Walsh signed a bill to bring Boston's code in line with the rest of the state and major cities throughout the US.

This victory was the culmination of years of organizing and advocacy by Clean Water Action and partners like the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, scientists at Silent Spring Institute, Boston Firefighters Local 718, sustainability departments of universities, businesses, and hospitals, students

TAKE ACTION: Ask your state legislators to protect your health and your family's health from toxic flame retardants. Go to: <http://bit.ly/1Te58c9>

from Northeastern University, and even furniture manufactures like Red Thread in Boston.

The toxic chemicals in flame retardants have been linked to serious adverse health impacts like cancer and reproductive problems. The chemicals increase the cancer risk for firefighters while doing little to slow fires. They have also been found in human breast milk and in many animals all over the world.

This is an important local victory, but the work goes on. Public spaces are not the only places that people are exposed to toxic fire retardant chemicals — they can also be found in furniture, children's products and computers. On May 19, the Massachusetts Senate unanimously passed legislation to ban the sale of many toxic flame retardants in children's products and residential furniture and Clean Water Action is pressing the House to pass the bill as well.

Many of these furniture manufacturers are already using non-toxic fire prevention methods in their products — the switch should be easy.

We have a historic opportunity to move ahead of the pack and protect public health.

Working to Pass Carbon Pricing Legislation

Massachusetts Campaign for a Clean Energy Future is a growing coalition of environmental, business, faith and civic organizations dedicated to passing carbon pricing legislation and assuring that Massachusetts continues its national clean energy leadership.



▲ Grassroots organizers from across Massachusetts gathered to launch our Volunteer District Captain program at our grassroots summit April 9, 2016 in Framingham, MA.



▲ Channel 7's Urban Update host Alberto Vasallo talks carbon pricing with our MA Campaign for a Clean Energy Future coalition members Marc Breslow, Cindy Luppi, Quinton Zondervan & Emily Kirkland.



▲ Clean Water Action's New England Director Cindy Luppi, Coordinator for the MA Campaign for a Clean Energy Future, speaks at the UMASS Lowell "Accelerating the Green Energy Transition" event April 6, 2016.



◀ Coalition Partners Phil Reason of Community Labor United and Launa Zimmaro from the League of Women Voters give testimony in support of carbon pricing legislation at the public hearing on carbon pricing legislation in front of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Hearing October 27, 2015.

MASSACHUSETTS

Kinder Morgan is Down for the Count — We're Fighting Forward!

We are at an incredible moment. This April, Kinder Morgan announced they are suspending work on their massive, multi-billion dollar fracked gas pipeline proposal. This is a huge victory for New England, for Clean Water Action and for our many partners who have fought the project for years.

Working with groups like Toxics Action Center and Better Future Project, Clean Water Action launched a statewide coalition, Mass Power Forward, last fall, and partnered with a new interfaith network to bring the moral voice to the energy debate. We've also worked with allies like Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast to engage in state and federal proceedings, disputing the need for new pipelines.

We cannot do this work alone, and today, we celebrate the thousands of residents who stood up to defend their homes, conservation land, family farms and climate from a greedy, extractive corporation that sought to bully and bulldoze its way through our state.

This pipeline would have been a terrible mistake for many reasons. Analyses by Attorney General Healey and other energy stakeholders show we don't need



Kinder Morgan pipeline protest.

the gas. Building the Kinder Morgan pipeline would have us double-down on fossil fuels at a time when we are trying to combat the growing dangers posed by climate change. The pipeline threatened our land, our health, our waters.

The fight isn't over. We are going to work to pass comprehensive clean energy legislation, ensure Kinder Morgan stays down for the count and challenge its biggest competitor, Spectra Energy, which is trying to build several other pipeline projects. But we are stronger as a movement for the victory, and we'll count on your support to get us to the next stage.

An Energy Revolution on the Horizon

We talked to our energy intern, Jheykeell Cole, about his experiences at Clean Water Action. Here's what he had to say:

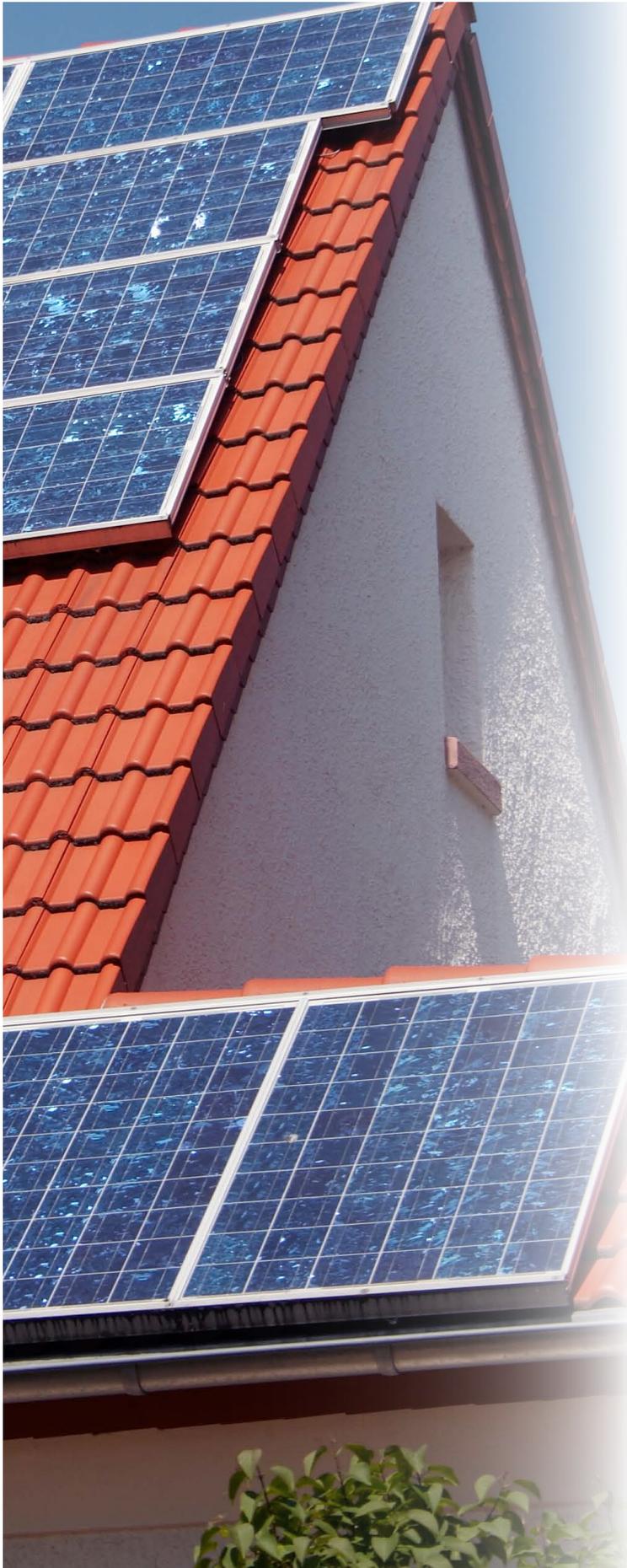
From the beginning of my internship, I heard a lot about Brayton Point power plant in Somerset and the energy revolution that can begin at the site after it closes.

I had the opportunity to visit Brayton Point this spring. Prior to my visit to retiring coal plant I helped revise a report issued by Synapse Energy Economics Inc. The report assessed the options to reimagine the site and turn it into an energy generator that is more green and sustainable. It was the work on the document that really showed me the possibilities for Brayton Point are and what future the people of Somerset and the Southeastern MA region were going to look forward to.

When I arrived in Somerset the first thing I saw were the large cooling towers. They resemble a nuclear power plant and had large stacks of steam spewing out. My first thought was this is what draws the eye to the town of Somerset, and if the plant can have this effect on me, just imagine what the effect a green energy hub could have on anyone else who comes to the area.



PHOTO: TOXICS ACTION CENTER



CONNECTICUT

A Raid on Clean Energy

At the end of the 2016 session legislators struggled to balance the state's budget by raiding \$22 million from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), funding that is supposed to be dedicated to clean energy. Clean Water sprung into action and coordinated with the CT Green Bank, solar and energy efficiency trade associations and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The alliance succeeded — the legislature was “only” able to take \$3.5 million from RGGI. Energy Program Manager Melissa Everett set the direction for next year's efforts by connecting clean energy and economic wellbeing in an April 18 op-ed in the CT Mirror, “To Close the Budget Gap, Scale Up Solar.” You can bet Clean Water won't be waiting for next session to build support for that vision.

Scaling Up Renewable Energy

2015's flagship “shared solar” legislation was reduced to a small pilot program which has been stalled in negotiations ever since. So, to seriously scale up renewable energy in Connecticut, environmental organizations worked in 2016 with new energy, unity, and coordination.

Along with Acadia Center and the CT Fund for the Environment, Clean Water built partnerships with the most enthusiastic supporters of “solar for all” — residents of apartments and condos, business tenants, and others whose buildings don't qualify for conventional rooftop solar installations. This new coalition quickly got to work to get the pilot approved with a portion set aside for small projects by in-state installers.

CONNECTICUT

Fighting to Protect Families and Firefighters



Above left: Lead bill sponsor, Representative Diana Urban, co-chair of the Children's Committee, with Coalition kids! Above right: Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT members advocating for a bill banning toxic chemical flame retardants.

Together with the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT, we worked hard on a bill to ban certain chemical flame retardants from children's products and furniture. We were thrilled that for the first time, the bill was voted unanimously out of the Children's Committee and ultimately out of the House with strong bipartisan support! Advocates, citizens, firefighters from all over the state sent hundreds of emails and calls to legislators, provided testimony, organized a press event and published numerous letters and opinion pieces in major papers across the state. Unfortunately, the bill was not called for a vote in the Senate before the Session timed out. The team did an amazing job and will be back again next session to advance our work to get rid of these toxic chemicals from products sold in CT!



The "sweetheart" deal negotiated by Bloomfield and Niagara exposed significant gaps in Connecticut's management of drinking water supplies.

Water Fights Come to Connecticut

In 2015 Niagara Bottling, a California water bottling company, lobbied behind closed for approval from the town of Bloomfield to withdraw 1.8 million gallons of water per day out of the local reservoir. Outraged residents organized and sought Clean Water's guidance.

The "sweetheart" deal negotiated by Bloomfield and Niagara exposed significant gaps in Connecticut's management of drinking water supplies. Clean Water partnered with local residents and communities, organized an advocacy and media campaign, and worked with state legislators on a broad bill to require state oversight and permitting for withdrawals over a certain limit along with protections against withdrawals during drought.

Residents and advocates were thrilled when the bill passed the State Senate by wide margin. Unfortunately, despite overwhelming community support, special interests representing the bottling industry and the Metropolitan District Commission, who originally approved the deal, successfully stopped the bill from a vote in the State House. Clean Water Action will continue to work with these the people of Bloomfield and communities across the state to bring the bill back in 2017.

RHODE ISLAND

Towards a Less Toxic State

Many of the everyday products people use on a daily basis contain substances that aren't always good for public health or the environment. Many personal care products, furniture, or food packaging contain toxic substances that can easily make users sick. Clean Water Action is engaged in several initiatives to help reduce Rhode Islanders' exposure these toxic chemicals.

Clean Water is a member of the Safer States organization. Safer States is a nationwide coalition devoted to removing toxic chemicals from consumer products. The Mind the Store program 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.

With allies in the State Legislature Clean Water has successfully introduced several pieces of legislation aimed at making homes less toxic. One of these bills, H 7977, would prohibit the use of an entire class of chemical flame retardants — called phthalates — in furniture, bedding, and children's products. These chemicals have been linked to increased risk of cancer, learning disabilities and reproductive ailments. Most at risk are children facing long-term exposure from consumer products in their homes and firefighters who face a toxic mix of smoke, carbon monoxide and chemicals in intense blazes.

Another bill, H 2915, would require cosmetics manufacturers to disclose all ingredients in their products. Current federal law allows elements of fragrance and flavor to remain a secret. Those formulas often contain dozens of chemicals, and independent testing has found carcinogens and endocrine disruptors in fragrance. Consumers need full disclosure to make informed choices about the safety of products they put on their bodies.

Clean Water Action is also working with the Rhode Island Department of Administration to develop purchasing regulations that will eliminate products containing toxic chemicals from state offices, hospitals and schools.

This stinks!

And I want to know why!



Above: An image from the marketing campaign on cosmetics disclosure.

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Green Infrastructure in Rhode Island

Over the past decade, Rhode Island has seen increasingly frequent storms that continue to grow in intensity. When these storms hit, they overwhelm local storm sewer systems, flooding neighborhoods and causing extensive damage to homes and businesses. Climate change and unsustainable development has put communities at risk because existing infrastructure can no longer handle the volume of stormwater that comes with these storms.

Clean Water Action has worked for the past two years with a coalition to encourage the implementation of green infrastructure in the state's urban communities to reduce flooding and make communities more resilient against climate change.

Green infrastructure refers to natural or man-made systems that use soil and plant life

to capture stormwater, allowing it to infiltrate naturally into the ground rather than whisked down storm drains and into waterways. Urban green infrastructure includes trees, rain gardens, vegetated swales, pocket wetlands, constructed wetlands, open space, urban agriculture and farming, vegetated median strips, and permeable pavement.

The Green Infrastructure Coalition has directed most of its efforts to date to Providence and Newport. The coalition's current work consist of the installation of demonstration projects around both cities and conducting public outreach to educate the public about stormwater and green infrastructure and boost support for more extensive watershed-scale stormwater management across the state.



Left: The depaving project at the Dexter-Bucklin intersection in Providence will remove the segment marked by white stripes and install a bioswale with trees and natural grasses.

PHOTO BY DAVE GERRAUGHTY

Right: The Red Shed Bike Shop at 50 Aleppo Street in Providence will have a green roof installed this summer with 160 vegetated shortgrass modules that will retain and filter over 700 gallons of stormwater.



Rhode Island's New State Director!

In February, Clean Water Action welcomed **Johnathan Berard** as the new Rhode Island State Director. Johnathan is a policy analyst, community organizer, and activist with a background in water resource management and conservation. He also specializes in environmental justice issues, sustainable development, collaborative governance and civic engagement, and political campaigns.



Johnathan most recently served as the public policy director at an environmental non-profit in Maryland, where he worked on a statewide campaign to protect the Chesapeake Bay from water quality degradation due to polluted stormwater runoff and helped to pass the nation's first ban on microbeads in health and beauty products. He also worked directly with Baltimore communities on trash and litter reduction strategies and environmental justice issues. Previously, he worked with the District of Columbia Department of the Environment to identify and propose solutions for inequities in access to healthy foods across the city.

Johnathan actually began his advocacy career with Clean Water Action in 2010, where he served as grassroots campaign organizer on diesel emissions reduction and extended producer responsibility campaigns.

He is excited to be back in his home state of Rhode Island, and is particularly excited to be back at Clean Water Action!

NEW ENGLAND CURRENTS

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