Administration moves to close loopholes

This spring, Environment Connecticut celebrated a big victory for clean water. After years of urging from the public, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a rule to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act that leave more than 3,000 miles of Connecticut’s wetlands and streams vulnerable to pollution.

This rulemaking comes after a decade of uncertainty over the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, following polluter-led Supreme Court challenges in 2001 and 2006. The rule, which may be finalized later this year, would restore Clean Water Act protections to many of the streams and wetlands that feed and filter our most iconic waterways, like Long Island Sound.

Waterways need restoration

If you’ve been to Long Island Sound, you know what’s at stake, whether it be swimming at Hammonasset Beach State Park, relaxing at Rocky Neck State Park or sailing on the sound’s waters. But in 2010, nearly 300,000 pounds of toxic pollution were dumped into Connecticut’s waterways—many of which flow directly into Long Island Sound.

And this summer, with the polluters’ lobby, led by corporate agribusiness and Big Oil, ramping up to try to block the rule in Congress, Environment Connecticut has launched a campaign to build support for the rule.

Together with our national federation, over this summer, we plan collecting more than 100,000 comments in support of the rule.

“We this summer, we’re running campaigns to close clean water loopholes in states across the country,” said Alexandra Fields, federal clean water advocate. “It’s no small undertaking but we know that building support for this rule is the best chance we have at protecting our country’s waters.”

EPA ruling will protect Long Island Sound
I hope this note finds you well and gearing up for summer fishing or swimming at Long Island Sound or in a local waterway closer to your home. After a winter like this past one, there’s nothing like being out in the fresh air and enjoying the warmth of the sun on your face.

For years, experiences like these are part of what Environment Connecticut has been fighting for—to make sure that Connecticut residents can experience their local environment without worrying about pollution, fracking waste, or development. This summer’s no different. We’ve launched a huge grassroots effort to protect the waterways that feed Long Island Sound and provide drinking water to more than half of Connecticut residents by closing loopholes in the Clean Water Act.

Together, we can strengthen the Clean Water Act and continue to protect the places we love for our children and generations to come.

Thank you,

Christopher Phelps
Campaign Director

Environment Connecticut and Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentConnecticut.org

Toward a greener future

Green Future Fund: A new way to honor supporters

Environment Connecticut’s new Green Future Fund honors donors who ensure a greener future for Connecticut by remembering Environment Connecticut or our sister group, Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center, in their estate plans.

Including Environment Connecticut in your planning costs nothing today, while protecting the places we love and the values we share for the future.

With your permission, we’ll recognize your gift in our publications, inspiring other members to make their own legacy gifts. Or you may choose to keep your gift private. Either way, any details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential.

To enroll in the Green Future Fund, or to learn more, call 1-800-841-7299 ext. 312, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentConnecticut.org

1,000 doctors, nurses decry fracking and its toxic waste

This winter, Environment Connecticut worked to shine a spotlight on the serious health risks of fracking. More than 1,000 health professionals signed letters to President Obama and state officials verifying that fracking and its toxic waste have real consequences for the health of nearby communities.

The concern doctors and nurses have about fracking backs up the health problems reported by communities close to drilling sites. Documented ailments include difficulty breathing, nosebleeds, skin rashess, and neurological and gastrointestinal issues.

As fracking expands in nearby states, we’ve been urging state legislators to ban the large amount of toxic waste generated in the drilling process from being dumped in Connecticut. And we will continue working to educate decision-makers and the public on the threats of opening more of our country to this dangerous drilling.
One-two punch in fight against global warming

Connecticut’s clean energy and energy efficiency policies are significantly cutting emissions of carbon dioxide, the leading driver of global warming, according to a new report released by federal affiliate Environment America Research & Policy Center.

The report, “Moving America Forward,” shows that Connecticut’s state-level energy efficiency policies, together with federal efficiency standards for lighting and appliances, reduced carbon pollution by at least 710,000 metric tons in 2012—an amount comparable to the annual emissions from more than 149,000 cars.

**Working toward leadership in clean energy**

We’ve seen significant progress in our efforts to move Connecticut away from dirty energy sources, such as coal and oil, and toward clean, renewable energy sources like solar.

Connecticut has more than 1,100 people employed by manufacturing and installing pollution-free solar energy, according to a national Solar Jobs Census released this February by The Solar Foundation. The report also highlighted that Connecticut added 420 new solar jobs between 2012 and 2013.

“The sun is an unlimited energy source that can play a huge role in cutting pollution from coal, oil and gas,” said Chris Phelps, Environment Connecticut campaign director. “This report shows that after years of neglect, Connecticut’s solar industry is putting people to work building new, clean, affordable solar power. In no small part, this has been made possible by the pro-solar energy policies adopted since 2011.”

Scientists say extreme weather events like Superstorm Sandy and Winter Storm Nemo are likely to become more frequent and severe if we don’t take action soon to curb emissions of carbon dioxide. Coal- and gas-fired power plants are America’s largest source of the carbon pollution, accounting for more than 40 percent of carbon emissions nationwide.

**Leading the way for carbon limits**

Environment Connecticut has also worked alongside its federal affiliate, eight other northeastern states, and many allies to set new, stronger limits on global warming pollution from power plants. In creating the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), an agreement between Connecticut and these other states, Connecticut has undertaken a groundbreaking effort to invest in the revenues in energy efficiency and clean energy initiatives.

The new, tighter limit is the result of more than two years of hard work to demonstrate broad support for a stronger program and to educate and encourage the most supportive governors in the northeast to act.

Despite serious resistance from fossil-fuel interests, we succeeded in advocating for Connecticut to do the right thing. In addition to reducing pollution and helping to build the clean energy economy, this victory helps lay the groundwork for federal action to limit carbon pollution from power plants.

**Conn. makes clean energy strides with RGGI**

Connecticut has been a leader in reducing global warming emissions by enacting a cap on global warming pollution, and introducing clean cars standards, renewable energy standards, and strong energy efficiency programs.

Working with eight other northeastern states, Connecticut has made strides toward a clean energy future by creating and strengthening the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

And we’re already seeing great results:

- Connecticut has pledged to get 20 percent of our electricity from renewable sources by 2020.
- RGGI has led to $37 million of investments in energy efficiency in Connecticut.
- RGGI states have cut carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 40 percent since 2005.

In addition to reducing pollution and helping to build the clean energy economy, this strong program will help lay the groundwork for federal action to limit carbon pollution from power plants.
President Obama took decisive action to protect our public lands this spring when he fully funded the Land and Water Conservation Fund, America’s premier land conservation program, in his budget. Over the years, this program has helped protect more than 27,000 acres of open space in Connecticut, such as Hammonasset Beach and Quinnipiac state parks.

Over the last year, Environment Connecticut and its state affiliates have collected thousands of public comments urging President Obama to protect our public lands and built a coalition of hundreds of conservation groups, businesses and local elected officials.

“We still have a lot to do to protect America’s last wild places but the recent progress we’ve made is noteworthy,” said Mary Rafferty, conservation program director. “We applaud the president so far for keeping his promise and taking action to make sure that the places we love across the country are protected for our children.”