On the verge of a clean water victory

**Protections for streams that feed the Sound**

When you ask Connecticut residents about their favorite parts of the state, many will say Long Island Sound. From Rocky Neck State Park to Hammonasset Beach, the Sound draws both Connecticut residents and tourists by the millions every year and is a cherished part of the state’s natural heritage.

And it’s not just the Sound. From the Farmington River to the Connecticut River and all the smaller waterways in between, Connecticut residents care deeply about our state’s waterways.

**On the verge of protections for more than half of Connecticut’s streams**

But despite their popularity, for many years our waterways have not been nearly as protected as they should be.

Thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions in the last decade, millions of streams across the country may not have been protected by the Clean Water Act—including more than half of Connecticut’s streams, many of which feed into cherished waterways like the Sound.

In February, the administration announced that it is in the last stage before officially finalizing new guidelines to restore protections for many of America’s streams and wetlands, including those that feed and filter waters like the Sound. Once they are final, this will be the biggest victory for our waterways in the last decade.

But our work is not done. As we build support for the president to finalize the guidelines, many in Congress are working to stop him.

As of May, there were four separate rollback attempts in the House and Senate. Environment Connecticut is committed to defending these new protections.

From Long Island Sound to the Connecticut River and all the smaller waterways in between, Environment Connecticut is thrilled that the Obama administration is about to take this historic step to protect our waterways. Thanks to the support of our members, we hope to soon have a victory we can all celebrate.

**Take action online**

President Obama just took a major step to restore Clean Water Act protections to Long Island Sound—but with polluters eager to block these protections, we’ve got to stand up for the Sound: [www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org](http://www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org)
To our members

For my staff and me, summer means one thing: It’s time for the canvass.

In the coming months, our outreach staff will go door to door in communities across Connecticut, talking to people face to face about the threats facing Long Island Sound—and getting them involved to make a difference.

It’s the voices of concerned citizens like you that make all our victories possible. In Hartford and in Washington, D.C., polluters’ dollars talk pretty loudly. But our leaders still listen when hundreds of thousands of citizens like you demand protections for a favorite lake, river or stream, or speak out for limits to the carbon pollution that threatens our health and fuels global warming.

Your support makes the difference. So if your doorbell rings this summer, I do hope you’ll answer—and say hi to our folks for me!

Sincerely,

Johanna Neumann
Regional Director

---

Recent action

How to build a better, greener America

American families could cut global warming pollution from buildings by 30 percent and save about $450 every year on their heating bills by 2030 if we invest in energy efficiency today.

These findings were included in “Building a Better America,” a report released by Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center staff.

In December, the Obama administration announced the Better Buildings Challenge, which included 60 chief executives, mayors, university presidents and labor leaders. The leaders have committed to invest nearly $2 billion of private capital into energy-efficiency projects to upgrade the performance of office, industrial, municipal, hospital, university, community college and school buildings.

The administration also announced a $2 billion commitment to energy upgrades of federal buildings using long-term energy savings to pay for up-front costs, at no cost to taxpayers.

Nuclear plants threaten Conn. drinking water

Last year’s nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan shone a spotlight on the risks associated with nuclear power. A recent Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center report revealed the threat nuclear facilities pose here in Connecticut.

According to the report, “Too Close to Home,” the drinking water supplies for 1.5 million people in Connecticut lie within 50 miles of active nuclear power plants—the distance the Nuclear Regulatory Commission uses to measure risk to food and water supplies.

“Nuclear power’s risks hit too close to home,” said Environment Connecticut’s Christopher Phelps. “This report finds that the drinking water supplies of millions of people in Connecticut and across the country are at risk of contamination in the event of a nuclear accident like the one in Fukushima, Japan.”

---

How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Connecticut or the Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center.

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

---

According to the report, “Too Close to Home,” the drinking water supplies for 1.5 million people in Connecticut lie within 50 miles of active nuclear power plants.
In March, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed limits on carbon pollution from new power plants. If passed, they will be the first nationwide limits on the largest single source of the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

As scientists, doctors and other experts have been warning us for years, cutting this carbon pollution is critical because global warming will bring everything from dirtier air and more deadly heat waves to more devastating floods and extreme weather.

In the path of the storm
In the weeks before the EPA’s historic announcement, Environment Connecticut released a report documenting why action to cut carbon pollution and tackle global warming is needed.

The report, “In the Path of the Storm,” found that every Connecticut county has been hit by at least one recent weather-related disaster in the past five years. Furthermore, we documented the latest science warning that global warming could lead to certain extreme weather events becoming even more common in the future.

We also launched an interactive online map, available at www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org, where citizens can see state-by-state and even county-by-county which weather-related disasters hit when, and then take action in support of EPA carbon pollution limits (see sidebar). The report and map received extensive press attention, including stories in The Washington Post and USA Today.

The real battle began after the EPA’s announcement, as utilities, coal companies and other corporate polluters began spending millions to convince the Obama administration to weaken or abandon the standards altogether.

Scare tactics
Through paid ads and armies of lobbyists within Congress, the polluters are trying to scare the American public and the Obama administration into thinking that we can’t afford to adopt these commonsense standards.

We know that we can’t afford not to adopt these standards for power plants, so Environment Connecticut and our allies launched a push to educate and mobilize citizens in support of the standards.

Our on-the-ground organizers are gathering public comments in support of the standards, holding press events to help raise the profile of the issue, and reaching out to public health groups and local environmental groups to demonstrate broad support.

If all goes well, the EPA is expected to finalize these carbon pollution standards for new power plants by the end of 2012, and begin developing standards for existing coal-fired power plants in the near future as well.

Learn about extreme weather’s local impact
Extreme weather is happening—and it’s already causing extremely big problems here in Connecticut.

Visit us online to see our interactive map of recent weather-related disasters in Connecticut and across the country.

The interactive map displays county-by-county information of federal disaster declarations. You can see how many declarations were made in the last five years, and the types of weather that caused the damage.

Fairfield and New Haven counties have suffered the most disasters, with five federal emergencies declared since 2006—the result of 2011’s Hurricane Irene, as well as three severe storms and one snowstorm.

Litchfield, Hartford, Middlesex, New London and Windham counties each experienced four disasters, and Tolland County experienced three.

Visit www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org to check out the map and see how your county was affected.
As the first program in the country to limit global warming emissions from power plants, the Northeast Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has helped show the nation that a program that sells pollution permits and uses the money to invest in clean energy options can work.

Unfortunately, fossil-fuel interests have mounted a well-financed campaign to roll back this landmark program in some of the other 10 states participating in RGGI, including New Jersey, New Hampshire and Maine.

Connecticut was a founding member of RGGI, and our staff are supporting our sister organizations working to defend the program in other states. We’re also urging Gov. Dannel Malloy to strengthen the program to reduce current carbon emissions even more. In December, we worked with allies to enlist 250 environmental groups, clean energy businesses and public health officials on to a set of principles to strengthen the program.

Environment Connecticut and our state affiliates in the Northeast are mounting a region-wide campaign to strengthen the program. Our goal is to reduce current carbon emissions 20 percent by 2020, 40 percent by 2030 and at least 80 percent by 2050.