Mixed Reviews on President Obama’s Climate Change Speech

While some environmental groups were praising President Obama’s June address on climate change, we here at Food & Water Watch couldn’t help but wonder — how is the President’s support of natural gas consistent with a policy to reduce dangerous greenhouse gas emissions?

Some were pleased that the President mentioned that he wouldn’t approve the controversial Keystone XL pipeline (which would transport tar sands oil to the U.S.) unless it could be determined not to have a negative effect on the climate. He also said that he’d direct the EPA to regulate carbon emissions from power plants.

But we’re displeased that the President equated natural gas with clean energy in his speech. There’s nothing “clean” about natural gas. The drilling and fracking process being used today to extract gas has been found in some studies to contribute to global warming, not to mention the impacts it’s having on our communities, our health and our air and water resources.

While some see the President’s speech as a step in the right direction, we’re not impressed with the rhetoric on natural gas. As long as fracking is a part of the President’s energy policy, the U.S. will keep using fossil fuels and delay the development of truly climate-friendly policies like renewables, energy efficiency and conservation.

Working to Label Genetically Engineered Foods

This last quarter saw tremendous progress in the movement to label genetically engineered (GE) foods. In Connecticut, Governor Dannel Malloy signed the country’s first law that would require labeling of GE foods. The bill passed overwhelmingly after a compromise was reached that delays labeling requirements until several

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Fracking Update, continued from A-1

would have stripped communities of the ability to ban fracking, and we have been working with communities across the state to place local measures to stop fracking on the ballot, following the success last year in Longmont.

Nationally, Americans Against Fracking continues to expand, and the coalition added several new members including MoveOn, Waterkeeper Alliance and Oil Change International. The coalition recently mounted a massive campaign to ban fracking on federal lands in response to President Obama’s call for expanded fracking as part of his climate action plan — a campaign that culminated with 650,000 comments calling on the President to ban fracking on federal lands, which were delivered by actress and activist Daryl Hannah, Food & Water Watch and our partners.

Also significant, this quarter Josh Fox released his incredible new documentary, Gasland II. Food & Water Watch helped organize screenings of this important film across the country; we developed a screening guide in partnership with the film and Americans Against Fracking, and our supporters held house parties around the HBO premiere.

All of this momentum leads into October 19 — Global Frackdown 2. Last year, it was an incredibly powerful international day of action to ban fracking. This year will be even better, allowing us to continue to make the case in a major way that fracking is inherently unsafe, cannot be adequately regulated and must be banned.

If You Thought What ALEC and the Koch Brothers Are Doing Was Bad...

We’ve all seen the results in states across the country of the influence that ALEC and the Koch Brothers have amassed. And if you think that’s bad, you should really hate the new “trade” deals being negotiated to hand even more power to corporations at our expense.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is being secretly negotiated by 12 countries, and the Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) includes the 27 nations of the European Union. Both of these proposed trade agreements threaten U.S. food safety rules, infringe upon public and private land with an increased push for fracking, undermine efforts to develop local food systems and increase the privatization of water systems.

While their supporters talk about them as “trade” deals, in reality the TPP and TAFTA would be a permanent power grab by corporations and their financers. They would permanently enshrine the very economic system that has led to greater imbalances in income and wealth and increasing economic crises. These deals would also allow foreign corporations to sue the federal, state and local governments over laws and policies that violate the “trade” deal but protect us from unsafe food, dirty water and dangerous fracking.

The American people aren’t being told what’s in the deal, and members of Congress are being shut out of the negotiations, but representatives of more than 600 corporations and corporate interests are able not only to see the text of the agreement, but also to help influence what goes into it.

We need to stop these trade deals before they give even more power to corporations.

This was adapted from a blog on our website by Mitch Jones, Director of our Common Resources program. To read more of our blogs, go to foodandwaterwatch.org/blogs.
This quarter, working with our allies, we achieved the following significant victories:

- After years of pressure, the FDA announced its intent to set limits on arsenic in apple juice.
- The USDA released rule-strengthening country-of-origin labeling on food in response to an adverse World Trade Organization ruling.
- We defeated Ag-Gag bills across the country including in Illinois, Indiana, and Nebraska.
- We got legislation passed in Connecticut, which was signed, that would require labeling of genetically engineered foods if conditions are met. Similar legislation passed in Maine, and New Jersey’s labeling bill passed out of committee.
- We defeated a Monsanto-backed bill in Oregon that would have taken away communities’ right to ban or label GE crops or foods.
- We defeated a bill in North Carolina that would have lifted the state’s moratorium on fracking.
- We maintained a bottled water ban in Concord, MA, following a close vote at the town meeting.
- We banned bottled water sales on campus at Western Washington University and Evergreen State University in Washington; removed bottled water from dining halls at Rowan University; and implemented a pilot program to phase out bottled water on campus at Denver University.
- We passed an 18-month extension of the fracking moratorium in Boulder County, and a year-long moratorium in the city of Boulder, CO.
- We stopped a plan to lease Allentown, PA’s water and sewer system to a large private company; instead the city voted for a local non-profit authority.
- We defeated a ballot initiative in Portland, OR, that would have added fluoride into the city’s water.
- We defeated legislation in Florida that would have kept fracking chemicals secret and paved the way for fracking there.

Genetically Engineered Foods (continued from A-1)

other states pass similar legislation. While this means that Connecticut residents will not immediately see new labels at the grocery store, it does represent a big step closer to labeling, and is the result of grassroots organizing by a broad coalition of groups.

Similar legislation passed in Maine and is awaiting the signature of Governor Paul LePage; a labeling bill passed out of committee in New Jersey; and in Illinois and New York, there were public hearings this summer. In Oregon, we worked with our partners to defeat an industry-backed bill that would have stripped communities’ ability to label or ban GE foods.

This fall, all eyes will be on Washington State, where a measure to label GE foods is on the November ballot. Food & Water Watch has been on the ground there since January to support this measure, and we will continue to work with our partners in the movement to fight until GE labeling is the law across the country. Your support has been essential to our efforts.

WHAT’S COOKING

This fall we’ll be ramping up our efforts to pass federal legislation to ban the overuse of antibiotics on factory farms. More than 80% of antibiotics used in the U.S. are used by the agriculture industry, and most of it goes to healthy animals, contributing to the increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria that are a major public health problem. We’ll keep you updated on our efforts to pass this federal legislation, and on more ways you can get involved!
Welcome to Food & Water Watch!

You’ve taken an important step by joining America’s most powerful national advocacy organization working in communities across the country to ensure the food and water we consume is safe, accessible and sustainably produced. Founded in 2005, Food & Water Watch works with our hundreds of thousands of members and supporters to challenge corporate practices that threaten our food and water. Our legal team uses a range of legal tools to take on the big polluters — from industrial agriculture to the oil and gas industry — and force government to protect our waterways.

But the heart of Food & Water Watch is our commitment to winning critical fights that help protect people’s food and water. That is why our real focus is in communities nationwide. From our 17 offices in 16 states, Food & Water Watch has a team of dedicated organizers that are partnering with local grassroots groups, activists and our members to help communities:

• Stop fracking for oil and natural gas
• Take charge of where our food comes from, how it is produced and how it is labeled

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Working Together to Build a Movement

It “takes a village” to win meaningful policy changes to protect our food and water or to challenge entrenched or emerging corporate practices that threaten our most vital resources. That is why being a part of local, state and national coalitions and supporting local activists is critical to all of our work. We could not win as many victories or make as much progress without our partnership with other grassroots and national groups, from the smallest volunteer group to the largest professional organizations. We don’t want to miss anyone by trying to list them all, but we want to salute those activists and groups who work with us to advance our common goals, and to recognize that none of us can achieve separately what we can achieve together.
• Keep clean, affordable, public tap water flowing freely to our homes
• Be part of a national movement to reclaim our democracy and force government to do its job to ensure that our most essential resources are safe, healthy and accessible to all.

**How Can We Win the Changes We Need to Protect Our Food and Water?**

We are taking on the incredibly powerful corporate interests that benefit from the way we produce and distribute our food, or from privatizing water markets, or from fracking for oil and gas without regard for the best interests of real people. Across the board, mega-corporations, along with the politicians and media that enable them, are fighting to maintain and expand their control of our most essential resources. Their pay-off is ever increasing profits. Our “pay-off” is degraded lands, polluted air, unhealthy food, unclean water sources and a diminished democracy.

**We Know We Can Win — Because We’ve Won Important Victories Already**

While we will never equal the financial resources of Big Oil and Gas or Big Ag, together with people like you, we’ve already won some important victories:

• Our two-year campaign resulted in a victory when Starbucks agreed to stop using milk produced with artificial growth hormones.
• After a decade of work with our global allies, the UN General Assembly voted to recognize the human right to water, a victory that was strengthened by California’s passage of historic legislation affirming the human right to water in the state.
• We played a leadership role in the effort that resulted in the Food Safety Modernization Act in 2010, the first update of the FDA rules regarding food safety in nearly 75 years.

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• After a two-year campaign, we helped pass legislation in the poultry-producing state of Maryland banning arsenic in chicken feed, making it the first state in the nation to implement such a ban.

... And We’re Winning in Our Fight to Stop Fracking

When Food & Water Watch launched our national campaign to ban fracking, we were the only national organization calling for a complete ban. Much of the country is sitting on top of shale formations, and we’re all threatened by oil and gas fracking. That’s why we are developing campaigns to meet the unique challenges in local communities. We are building strong partnerships with hundreds of grassroots, regional and state organizations in the many states where we are trying to ban and stop fracking. While no single organization can take all (or even most) of the credit, we have played a critical leadership role:

• We helped launch Americans Against Fracking — a national coalition organized for a ban on fracking that includes over 200 national, state and local organizations.
• Food & Water Watch played a major role in forming New Yorkers Against Fracking — a powerful statewide coalition that has been the driving political force in the state keeping fracking out of New York.
• Working as part of a broad coalition in multiple states, we helped maintain a moratorium on fracking in the Delaware River Basin.
• We played a leadership role in organizing and passing a ballot measure in Longmont, Colorado, to ban fracking in that community and are helping other communities to pass local bans through a statewide coalition we formed, Protect Our Colorado.
• As a movement to ban fracking, we have passed hundreds of local measures against fracking.

YOU Are Food & Water Watch!

Our members engage in so many innovative and creative ways: as students who lead our Take Back the Tap campaigns on college campuses; as volunteers who get petitions signed or attend legislative meetings; as activists who write letters and phone bank their neighbors; as online action takers who forward the latest email action alerts to friends. And yes, our members play a crucial role by donating money. Some ways you can help include:

Being a Food & Water Watch Member

Your donation makes you a member of Food & Water Watch. As a member you receive our quarterly newsletter (like this one!) and other regular communications about our work and how to get involved.

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the largest workplace giving campaign in the world, is a great opportunity for federal employees to make a difference. Simply designate Food & Water Watch for your CFC contribution during the next campaign. Look for CFC #17460.
Becoming a Food & Water Action Partner
Our Food & Water Action Partners make a small, monthly donation — one that fits their own monthly budget while making a big impact on the issues we all care about. Their regular donations provide the reliable funding we need to support our state campaigns to stop fracking. Action Partners receive regular updates that provide more in-depth information about our work and our campaigns.

We hope you will use the form in this newsletter to join our Action Partners!

Joining our Food & Water Leaders Circle
Our recently launched Food & Water Leaders Circle is for those individuals who are able to make significant gifts to support our work. Our Leaders Circle comprised some of our most committed and generous individual supporters who provide the financial resources we need to challenge corporate control and abuse of our resources and make government do its job. Food & Water Leaders have access to more in-depth information about issues of special concern to them, and receive regular program updates and quarterly special reports, as well as invitations to individual briefings and special events.

Other Ways You Can Help Build a Movement for Safe Food and Clean Water
Planned Giving: A designated gift from your estate can help provide the resources that Food & Water Watch needs to protect the values that you hold dear. Contact us to find out how you can leave a bequest in your will to protect our food and water for future generations.

Workplace Giving: Find out if your workplace has programs to increase your giving: some companies will match your donations to Food & Water Watch, while others will allow you to make a simple payroll deduction through different workplace giving campaigns (such as the Combined Federal Campaign CFC for federal workers).

Charity rating services allow prospective donors to check out a charity’s credibility before donating. Many donors like to use these services to ensure donations are being put to good use. Food & Water Watch is proud to be a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity and a Guidestar Exchange Gold Participant.

Publishers Weekly calls Foodopoly, “...a meticulously researched tour de force...”

Learn more about Foodopoly, by Food & Water Watch executive director Wenonah Hauter, at foodopoly.org.
WHERE’S WENONAH?

Our executive director Wenonah Hauer may be coming to your area to discuss her new book, Foodopoly. For more information on the book and these upcoming events, go to foodopoly.org.

September 17 at 7:30 p.m.
Boulder Book Store
Boulder, CO

September 28 at 3 p.m.
Blue Ridge Meats of Front Royal, Inc.
Middletown, VA

October 7 at 7 p.m.
Southwest Regional Library of Durham Public Libraries
Durham, NC

October 10 at 7 p.m.
Malaprop’s Bookstore Cafe
Asheville, NC

October 23 at 7 p.m.
Fact and Fiction
Missoula, MT

November 9 at 10 a.m.
TEDx
Montclair, NJ

Become an activist!
Want to see the latest ways you can help drive the movement to end corporate control and abuse of our food and water supplies? Visit our website at: foodandwaterwatch.org/take-action

Become a member!
Your donation will help make our food and water safe and clean. Join us at: foodandwaterwatch.org/support-us

Or, please send your check for $20 to:
Food & Water Watch
1616 P St. NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036

Already an activist and a member?
Spread the word! Join us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and more!

Did we miss something you want to hear about? Have ideas to improve our newsletter? Contact us at info@fwwatch.org to give us your feedback.