When we were the first national organization calling for a ban on fracking four years ago, people told us it was crazy. Such a position, they said, was not politically feasible. The best we could get was disclosure of the chemicals used and, maybe someday, better regulations. But Food & Water Watch believes we must demand the policies that really protect our water, food, public health and environment.

So we set out to ban fracking in states from New York to California, and communities in between. Our field organizers, working out of 17 offices around the country, are collaborating with grassroots organizations to make the seemingly impossible possible.

And, in New York, in December 2014, Governor Andrew Cuomo banned fracking — responding to the great pressure from around the state. Working with our allies, we changed public opinion and gave the governor the political space to do what was right. Food & Water Watch is proud to have contributed to this groundswell of democracy and justice for people who want to protect their communities from this dirty industry.

We could not have made it this far without your support. But we’ll continue to need it. Big Oil and their cronies in Congress are taking notice of the gains we’re making. They call us radical and try to paint us as extremists, and they hope that their attacks will distract us from the work at hand. But we won’t be bullied by the likes of the Koch Brothers, Exxon and the elected officials whose campaigns they support.

This tremendous victory showed us what’s possible, and we look forward to growing our model of organizing in 2015 across all the issues we work on, from labeling of genetically engineered food (GMOs) to water privatization to trade. Will you continue to stand up with us?

Your Support Made the New York Fracking Ban Possible

Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director

TPP UPDATE

In the last Congress, along with a broad coalition, we stopped Fast Track legislation to speed approval of dangerous trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In the new Congress, trade is being talked about as one of the areas that President Obama and Republican leaders agree on, but these trade deals won’t help our economy or create more jobs — and they could undermine our efforts to ban fracking, label GMOs and protect our food safety system.

New Fast Track legislation is being written and will be introduced early in this Congress, but the coalition that stopped it last time is ready to do so again. Already, tens of thousands of you have emailed Congress and asked them to oppose Fast Track. Combined with the efforts of the environmental, labor, health and faith groups that we’re working with, we are confident that we can stop Fast Track and the bad trade deals that depend on it again.
The New York Campaign —
And the National Movement to Ban Fracking

The decision by Governor Cuomo to ban fracking in New York is not just a tremendous win for the people of New York — it’s a big win for the national movement to ban fracking, and is something we can build on.

When Food & Water Watch became the first national organization to call for a ban on fracking, following the lead of our grassroots allies, we were told it was politically infeasible. Instead of listening to the naysayers, we worked to change the political reality, forming the coalition New Yorkers Against Fracking and working with our allies for a ban in New York.

But the tremendous campaign in New York and the strength of the coalition led us and our allies to form other coalitions. Two years ago, we started Americans Against Fracking — a national coalition for a ban on fracking that now has over 275 groups, including many leading national organizations. This structure has allowed us to weigh in with a stronger voice on federal issues like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed power plant rules (about which Food & Water Watch and our allies submitted over 200,000 comments and a letter signed by over 250 organizations).

We have worked with allies to form other state-based coalitions based on the same model, including Californians Against Fracking, Pennsylvanians Against Fracking and, in February, Coloradans Against Fracking. Our goal is to take a strong stand, to fight for what we believe in and to reach out to individuals, organizations and businesses on the ground to raise our voices collectively and compel our elected officials to do the right thing: Ban Fracking Now.

It all mattered.
It all prevailed.
Because that’s what truth does.
There are many things that went into winning the ban on fracking in New York, but one of the most critical was the formation, development and growth of the coalition that Food & Water Watch co-founded, New Yorkers Against Fracking (NYAF).

When Food & Water Watch, Frack Action, Catskill Mountainkeeper, United for Action, Citizen Action, Working Families Party and Water Defense launched NYAF in 2012, the conventional wisdom was that fracking was inevitable and that the most people could hope for was strong regulation. We formed NYAF to push back against that view — to provide a base for those who wanted to fight to change that political reality, and a forum for us to use our combined resources to build what Governor Cuomo came to call the most powerful protest movement in the state.

Food & Water Watch was a driving force in NYAF, and, working with other members of the coalition, we built out groups representing various constituencies including faith, businesses, farmers and chefs, and we placed organizers in key locations across the state to build a truly statewide movement to ban fracking. These organizers worked with community organizations to gather petitions, make phone calls to Governor Cuomo, write letters to the editor, get on buses to rallies and follow the governor wherever he went — organizing massive “ban fracking” rallies outside his public events.

The coalition grew to over 250 organizations, and our aggressive organizing campaign — a singular and direct focus on Governor Cuomo as decision maker, and a strong and unwavering demand to Ban Fracking Now — served to elevate the growing science and health studies showing fracking to be unsafe.

"From working to build the New Yorkers Against Fracking coalition to providing key organizing resources that mobilized people from all over the state to gather petitions, make phone calls, get on buses, and attend rallies, and much much more, Food & Water Watch was critical to winning the ban on fracking in New York."

– Sandra Steingraber, biologist, author, activist and co-founder, New Yorkers Against Fracking.

The result was one of the greatest victories for the environmental movement in recent years. None of this would have been possible without the generous support from the Park Foundation, the 11th Hour Project, Tides Foundation, the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation and the Cloud Mountain Foundation. We are grateful for their support and excited to spread the message and lessons of the campaign to other states.
Pollution Trading: Enabling Polluters to Keep Polluting

The federal government and polluting industries are promoting pollution trading as a way to allow cost-effective pollution control while preventing agricultural wastes from destroying our waterways. But it’s no solution at all. Pollution trading is a market-based approach that enables polluters to keep polluting, leading to the continuing decline of many of our nation’s waterways.

Pollution trading is built on several faulty premises. First, it’s a form of water privatization that serves to undermine our public trust. Second, it turns on its head the notion that pollution is illegal and that industries don’t have a right to poison our shared water and airsheds. Third, it allows polluting industries the option to avoid cleaning up their discharges by purchasing questionable discharge credits from other sources of pollution. Fourth, it threatens the 40+ years of documented Clean Water Act successes in cleaning up our waterways. Lastly, it’s yet another step toward deregulating industry.

Food & Water Watch is currently working to stop pollution trading in the courtroom and across the country — in California, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere — because we believe that markets have no place in maintaining our precious natural resources: the clean water, air and a healthy planet that we all need to survive.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Eric Weltman
New York Organizer

On September 9, 2014, I woke up at 4 a.m. to go to Governor Cuomo’s polling location in Westchester County. It was the day of the primary, and our mission was to talk with Cuomo about banning fracking in New York. He seemed caught off guard, although he shouldn’t have been — Food & Water Watch and our allies had been following him around for several years, rallying outside of fundraisers, press conferences and other public events.

As a guy with a naturally loud voice, I was often called upon to lead the chants at these actions. It’s difficult to believe that now I won’t be called upon every week to shout “Ban Fracking Now!” until I’m hoarse. But in December, Cuomo courageously stood up to the oil and gas industry and announced a ban on fracking in New York.

People have been asking what I’m going to do now. Well, for one thing, I’d like to spend more time with my seven-year-old son, Zach, and my wife, Sarah. But we still have plenty more victories to win, and, having built the power to defeat the fracking industry, we have even more capacity to do so.
This quarter, working with our allies at the national, state and local levels, we accomplished the following victories:

- Worked with Representatives Mark Pocan (D-WI) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) to get landmark legislation introduced that would ban fracking on all federal lands.
- Convinced Governor Andrew Cuomo to ban fracking in New York, following a multi-year campaign and escalating evidence of the health and environmental impacts of fracking.
- Passed measures in New Jersey banning fracking on county-owned property in Union County and on fracking and fracking waste in Edison Township.
- Reached 50 municipalities across the United States taking action to stop the misuse of antibiotics on factory farms, including the passage of a measure by the Baltimore City Council. Other cities taking action included Minneapolis, Burlington, Vermont and Santa Fe.
- Successfully opposed an expanded oil project by Seneca Oil Company in the community of Piru in Ventura County, California. In Carson, Calif., we forced Occidental Petroleum to abandon a 200-well proposed project.
- Passed a local resolution supporting labeling of GMOs in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.
- Stopped water privatization in Port Royal, Virginia.
- Continued to make major strides in our Take Back the Tap campus campaigns, with New York University’s D.C. campus successfully banning the sale of bottled water on campus, as well as the funding of new water filling stations at the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, Beloit College and Marist College. At Lafayette University, students secured a commitment to change the student meal plan to not include bottled water as a drink with a meal.

MILESTONES

- Launched Pennsylvanians Against Fracking, a statewide coalition to ban fracking in the Keystone state.
- Sent 36,683 actions to President Obama asking the federal government to block the Cove Point fracked gas export facility, and to stop the approval of other export facilities that are being considered.
- Generated 25,961 letters to the U.S. Department of Agriculture asking them to stop the field trials of unapproved GMO crops.
- Sent 33,676 letters to members of Congress asking them to oppose the Pompeo Bill that would stop states from labeling GMO foods.
- Collected 34,698 petitions to President Obama asking him to take action to Save the Bees and 41,733 petitions to Lowe’s to ask the home improvement chain to stop selling pesticides that kill bees.

Climate Deniers in Congress

The start of the new Congress means that new chairmen are heading key committees overseeing energy and environment, determining what legislation makes it to the floor of Congress. Unfortunately, these chairmen include many Senators and Congressmen who deny the reality of climate change. And they have one other thing in common: they all took big contributions from the oil and gas industry.

Senator James Inhofe is back as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. He once wrote a book about climate change called The Greatest Hoax. Senator Ted Cruz is now chairman of the Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness, which oversees NASA. In the House, new Ways & Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan says he doesn’t know what causes climate change, and he doesn’t think science knows either. We’ll be watching the climate deniers throughout this Congress.

Supporters took 2,138,656 actions with Food & Water Watch in 2014.
In 2014, Food & Water Watch worked very closely with our coalition partners and thousands of grassroots volunteers in Oregon to try to pass a ballot initiative to label genetically engineered food. The initiative was so close — losing by only 837 votes — that it triggered an automatic recount by the state, which unfortunately didn’t change the overall outcome of the election.

Food & Water Watch had five organizing staff on the ground who made thousands of phone calls, knocked on hundreds of doors, organized dozens of events and turned out many first-time voters from college campuses across Oregon. In total, the campaign talked to more than 250,000 voters who had been identified early on as key swing voters that could give us a path to victory.

Just as in previous ballot initiatives in California and Washington, the “No” campaign was well funded by big food corporations and chemical companies, which spent more than $21 million on ads to confuse voters about the initiative. The fact that the “Yes on 92” campaign came within 900 votes of victory, closer than any campaign before, shows that we can fight back against the seemingly unlimited funds of the agribusiness industry with one-on-one conversations and people power.

More Americans than ever want to know what they’re eating, and we’ll continue the fight to label genetically engineered foods until we have labeling nationally. This winter and spring, we’re working in state legislatures across the country, including putting extra staff on the ground in New York and Illinois, to continue to move us closer to victory on GMO labeling.

Oregon GMO Labeling Ballot Initiative Narrowly Defeated

Have You Renewed Your Membership for 2015?

Food & Water Watch takes no government funding and accepts no corporate support. We depend on members like you to make our work possible. Together, we accomplished so much in 2014 — first and foremost, banning fracking in New York! This unprecedented win against the oil and gas industry shows how your support can make a huge difference, even when we’re up against the richest and most unscrupulous companies on Earth.

And Food & Water Watch has big plans to turn the tide against fracking across the country. In states from Maryland to California, we are helping lead powerful coalitions that are standing up to Big Oil and Gas and winning important victories to stop fracking. We helped get a bill to ban fracking on public lands introduced in the last Congress, and will be working to build support for this legislation that is the strongest federal bill on fracking ever considered in Congress. With your continued support, we are ramping up our public education and grassroots organizing, calling for what we want rather than what’s deemed politically possible, and focusing on the health message that resonated so strongly in the New York campaign. Your support has made all of this possible … and we can’t stop now.

(continued on page 8)
On February 7, 8,000 Californians came together in Oakland to send Governor Jerry Brown a simple message: Climate Leaders Don’t Frack. The 130 partner organizations that came together for this event represented labor, faith, social justice, climate justice and other movements.
2015 Membership Renewal
(continued from page 6)

Thanks to you, we are making important progress on a range of issues that impact our food and water and the health of our families and communities.

But there's even more to do in 2015 to ban fracking on public lands and in other states, to pass more GMO labeling laws, to maintain public control over local water systems, to protect the federal budget from cuts to food safety regulations, and to educate and mobilize concerned people everywhere to protect our food and water.

We can't win these campaigns without you. Please take a moment today to renew your commitment to safe, healthy food produced in a sustainable way and clean drinking water available to all, by renewing your membership in Food & Water Watch.

To make a tax-deductible donation, please use the enclosed envelope or renew online at foodandwaterwatch.org/membership.

To maximize the impact of your contribution and support more aggressive efforts to protect our food and water, please consider becoming a Food & Water Partner by making a regular monthly gift to Food & Water Watch.

Thank you for our vital ongoing support — we couldn't do any of this critical work without you!

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.