A handful of corporations controls every aspect of our food system, from how it is labeled to the pesticides we are exposed to. The main thesis of *Foodopoly* is simple: we must reestablish strong antitrust laws as part of the progressive agenda if we have any hope of fixing our broken, corporate-controlled food system. And to do that, we need to organize and force our elected officials to create laws that result in a food system that works for consumers and farmers.

How has consolidation enabled Monsanto, Tyson, Nestlé, Kraft, Cargill, McDonalds and other food/ag/chemical companies to write our food policy, and why is it about to get worse? The disastrous decision in the landmark Citizens United case now allows corporations to spend unlimited sums of money to buy the political system. The more than 50,000 comments that Food & Water Watch generated to President Obama and Congress opposing Moniz were possible because of the strong campaigns we are working to build with partners at the state and local levels.

*Foodopoly* delves into the history of food and farm policy to explain how we got to today’s massive consolidation of the food supply. For example, only four gigantic companies process 80 percent of the beef we eat, and only four retailers sell 50 percent of the groceries available in stores (with one out of every three dollars spent on groceries in the U.S. going to Walmart). The top 10 fast food companies control 47 percent of all fast food sales. Together, these industries have commandeered local economies, and now it is clear that the era of family farmers and mom-and-pop stores has ended.

Make no mistake: when those companies enjoy near monopolies and vast market power — both domestically and globally thanks to crooked free trade agreements — their profits enable them to contribute large sums of money to groups that lobby Washington very effectively.

Continued on page 2
At Food & Water Watch, our annual organizational budget to fight corporate control of the food system is about $12 million. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, the food industry spent $40 million lobbying the federal government in 2011. And the biotech industry has spent over half a billion dollars in campaign contributions and lobbying expenditures since 1999. Additionally, special interests spent $173.5 million lobbying on the 2008 Farm Bill.

Citizens United accelerates the corporate power grab of our democracy. Do you think Food & Water Watch should work more actively to reverse this court decision? Check out this quarter’s survey insert to let us know what you think.

Other issues affecting our essential resources are trade and the financialization of nature. This summer, President Obama will attempt to fast-track two trade deals — the Trans Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement — which are permanent power grabs by corporations and their financers. For Americans, this means increased natural gas exports and increased imported foods, an undermining of our domestic laws and increasing corporate ownership of our natural resources.

The changes needed to reform our food system and strengthen our democracy can only happen when people demand better from their leadership. We can’t shop our way out of this problem: we need to address the political reasons our food system is so broken. If you haven’t already, I urge you to check out our website at foodandwaterwatch.org to learn more about how these challenges will affect our issues for generations to come if we don’t act now.

Fracking Update continued from page 1

In New York, Governor Cuomo’s administration missed a key deadline to move forward with fracking, and we helped pass a two-year moratorium through the State Assembly. This is the direct result of organizing — turning out hundreds of people to hearings and bird-dogging the Governor no matter where he is in the state.

In Colorado, we have built a powerful coalition that is working to pressure fracking proponent Governor Hickenlooper. In New Jersey, we are organizing to overturn Governor Christie’s veto of a fracking waste bill, and in Maryland, we are turning our attention to Governor O’Malley, whose advisory commission is paving the way for fracking in the state.

Over the next year, we’ll be working to ratchet up the pressure and to make sure these politicians know that future voters will pay attention to whether they are moving to ban fracking or expand it.
On April 26, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) closed what will likely be its final comment period on genetically engineered (GE) salmon. This means that the agency could approve the first GE food animal for human consumption at any time. With your help, we collected over 100,000 comments opposing this frankenfish, and in conjunction with our coalition partners and allies we delivered more than a million comments to the agency.

Together, we’ve successfully stopped this approval for the last three years, and with your continued help, we’ll be committed to keeping GE salmon from reaching your plate. Only time will tell what the FDA’s decision will be, but if they approve it, we’ll be ready to take legal action to keep this GE fish from being produced. At the same time, we’ll continue to work toward getting labels on all genetically engineered foods so you’ll have a choice to avoid GE salmon if it does end up in supermarkets. Please consider making a donation to Food & Water Watch today to support our work to keep GE salmon from reaching your plate.

In His Own Words
Sam Schabacker, Mountain Region Organizing Director, Food & Water Watch

I grew up on a few acres of land in a rural part of Colorado. My parents taught my brother and me that Colorado was special: We learned to cherish our soaring Rocky Mountains, our clean air and our scarce water that grew food on the farms around our area. Food & Water Watch has been on the front line in Colorado to protect the things that make our state special. Working with our allies, we won a historic ballot campaign to ban fracking in Longmont; we’ve supported dozens of citizens who have passed moratoria on fracking; and we’ve launched a statewide coalition to ban fracking called Protect Our Colorado. At Food & Water Watch, I’m proud to work with people from across the Rocky Mountain West to take on the corporate interests that would seek to profit off of our precious resources—in order to keep this a great place to live.

Will GE Salmon Be on Your Plate Soon?

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Working with national, state and local allies, we achieved some significant victories in the last several months including:

- **We successfully pressured the National Organic Standards Board** to stop the use of tetracycline (an antibiotic) in organic apples and pears by 2014.

- **We’re Taking Back the Tap on college campuses!** The College of Wooster (OH) stopped selling bottled water in all campus dining locations. Central Michigan University is moving to phase out bottled water, and several campuses put in more refilling stations, including Bergen Community College (NJ) and New Mexico State University.

- **We stopped a bill in New Mexico** that would have made it nearly impossible for rural communities to protect themselves from factory farm pollution.

- **We celebrated local fracking victories across the country** including a ban on fracking waste in Baltimore, MD, and a six-month fracking moratorium in West Bloomfield, MI.

- **After a year-long campaign, we convinced California legislators** to introduce an indefinite fracking moratorium, and helped pass a two-year fracking moratorium through the New York Assembly.
Revealing the Foodopoly in Red Bank, NJ, and Beyond

On April 4, over 300 people across South Jersey packed Two River Theater in Red Bank, NJ, for “Fracking, The Foodopoly, and Our Future,” an event organized by Food & Water Watch and more than 20 local organizations concerned about fracking and our highly consolidated food system. Our executive director Wenonah Hauter was joined by Dean Nelson of Dean’s Natural Food Market, Stephen Cleghorn of Paradise Gardens and Farm, and Sean Dixon of Clean Ocean Action in one of the many events that Wenonah is participating in throughout the year to discuss her book, Foodopoly: The Battle Over the Future of Food and Farming in America.

Visit www.foodandwaterwatch.org/townhall to hear audio from her recent Town Hall meeting with Food & Water Watch supporters. Want advanced notice next time we hold a Town Hall with Wenonah? Call our development associate, Rachel Nissley, at 202-683-2445 to make sure we have your phone number — we’ll alert you by phone when you can join our next Town Hall meeting.