A bruising midterm election marked by record spending on ads, low turnout, and shocking voting rights abuses enabled a group of die-hard reactionaries to be elected to Congress. Relying on TV ads to win seats in a handful of swing states has once again proven ineffective, and the Democrats’ “Republican-light” strategy has once again failed.

The fact is, no matter which party is in control of Congress, our way forward remains clear: we must continue to organize and keep elected officials accountable on the issues we care about.

Winning real change means we need to organize community-by-community to build the people power necessary for a 50-state strategy. And we know that when communities organize, we can win. We saw this as local fracking bans passed in California, Ohio and Texas, despite massive industry spending. In Oregon at print, the GMO labeling measure is still too close to call. But even if the measure loses, it is a testament to how grassroots organizing overcame the record $20 million spent by industry on ads.

We recently surveyed some of our members and came to realize that what many of you really like about Food & Water Watch is our ability to affect policy decisions in Washington, D.C. But few of those polled knew that the core of our work is organizing, and that this is why we have 17 offices across the nation. Our lobbying is backed up by the advocacy efforts of the hundreds of thousands of supporters like you. Whether it’s through turning out people to a protest through one of our field offices or delivering a petition from one of our online activists, we are only powerful when we harness the energy of our supporters.

Climate deniers and oil company boosters are expected to chair the key Senate committees that direct energy and environmental policy. Because of this takeover, we expect to see McCarthy-like tactics from government in concert with stepped-up attacks from industry. But we will not be cowed or frightened.

That’s why no matter the results of the elections at any given time, we must continue to raise our voices and engage politically if we have any hope of winning the world we want for future generations.

That’s what we’ll continue to do in 2015.
PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

NEW JERSEY

BULGARIA

ILLINOIS

WEST VIRGINIA

CALIFORNIA

ROMANIA

NEW YORK

LITHUANIA

PHILIPPINES
In the third quarter of 2014, working with our allies at the national, state and local level, we attained the following victories:

- Passed 21 more local resolutions calling for an end to the misuse of antibiotics on factory farms, including in San Francisco, Calif., Cincinnati, Ohio, and Albuquerque, N.M.
- Passed bans on fracking at the ballot in San Benito County, Calif., and Athens, Ohio.
- Passed a ballot measure in Reading, Pa. to give the public a vote on any future privatization proposals.
- Defeated water privatization at the ballot in Sussex, N.J.
- Blocked an effort to privatize Philadelphia Gas Works in Pennsylvania.
- Prevented New York Governor Cuomo’s administration from misusing the money in the state clean water revolving fund to pay for the Tappan Zee Bridge.
- Blocked attempt by Governor Hickenlooper to convene special session and pass legislation that would strip Colorado communities of their right to ban fracking.
- Successfully defended in court the right of the Department of Agriculture to issue rules for country of origin labeling, turning back a challenge from industry.
- As of this printing, we have continued to prevent FDA approval of genetically engineered salmon for the past four years.
- Successfully pressured the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Trade Representative to stop withholding aid from El Salvador in retaliation for El Salvador’s decision to allow domestic farmer cooperatives to provide seeds instead of Monsanto as part of its anti-hunger program.
- Passed four resolutions in local communities opposing the Pilgrim Pipeline in New Jersey.
- Passed a ban on fracking in Princeton, N.J. and a ban on fracking waste in Elizabeth, N.J.

Today, most drilling and fracking in the United States is for oil. Everyone would agree that using oil contributes to climate change. But while fracking for natural gas has been portrayed as better for the climate than coal or oil, the science is now clear that natural gas dependence impacts global warming more than was previously thought. Increased natural gas use releases too much carbon pollution — including methane, a powerful greenhouse gas — and it risks pushing us past the climate tipping point. This could trigger runaway global warming, and much worse climate instability than we already see.

To address this challenge, we must maximize the amounts of natural gas, oil and coal that stay underground. Spending billions on pipelines, compressor stations, export terminals and other gas infrastructure will only lock in future climate pollution, and cripple our chances to address the climate challenge.

Access this report as a free PDF download from Food & Water Watch at foodandwaterwatch.org/frackingreport.
IN HIS OWN WORDS

Bill Robinson
Chief Technology Officer

I have always enjoyed technology, but was not fulfilled working with for-profit companies. I did not feel like I was helping improve the lives of others, or the communities in which my family and friends live. This new realization brought me to Food & Water Watch, where I do what I love: use technology to improve our communities.

In 2013, President Obama’s Bureau of Land Management — an agency whose mission is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations” — released weak new rules for drilling and fracking on federal lands that will not protect these federal lands for future generations.

In response, Food & Water Watch and our partners called for a ban on fracking on public lands, and in August 2013, we delivered 650,000 public comments from people in support of this. This summer, we turned our attention to Congress to try to get a bill introduced to ban fracking on public lands. So far, almost 80,000 emails have been sent by Food & Water Watch supporters to their members of Congress asking for them to stand up and protect these places for future generations to enjoy.

Our U.S. national parks and public lands are some of our most treasured places. Yet the government allows drilling and fracking on 90 percent of public lands, including in our national forests and on land bordering our national parks. Fracking puts our public lands and nearby communities at risk of water contamination and air pollution, and contributes to global climate change.

Put Your Workplace Charitable Giving to Work Protecting Our Food and Water

Food & Water Watch is taking on the world’s most powerful corporations that are seeking to control our most essential resources, and making government do its job to put people over corporate profits. With our thousands of members, we are winning important victories to stop fracking and protect our food and water.

If your employer has a workplace giving program, designating Food & Water Watch as the recipient is a convenient and easy way to support all of our work to ban fracking and protect our most essential resources. There are a variety of workplace giving programs; some companies will match your donations to Food & Water Watch, while others will allow you to make a simple payroll deduction through annual workplace giving campaigns (such as through United Way). Check with your employer for more information.

If you are a federal employee, you can donate through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the world’s largest workplace giving campaign. Simply designate Food & Water Watch for your Combined Federal Campaign contribution during the 2014 open enrollment season. Look for CFC number 17460. Be sure to check the box to release your name to Food & Water Watch, so that the CFC will let us know you made a gift. This will enable us to properly credit your generosity.

I have spent several nights, weekends and holidays fending them off, but I found peace in the fact that those who sought to silence the communities’ voice to ban fracking had not succeeded. I have found out how to do two things I love.
Standing Watch Against Evil

Dr. Evil dropped by Food & Water Watch the other day. Well, not Dr. Evil himself. It was one of his minions — a minion of evil, so to speak.

Remember Rick Berman, the industry flack, nicknamed “Dr. Evil” by 60 Minutes? He runs a PR operation that has gone by many names, but he always promotes dangerous industry practices.

Fast food? We need more of it! Obesity-causing snacks and sodas? Refreshing! GMOs? It’s good for consumers to be science experiments! Animal cruelty at factory farms? Nothing wrong with that!

But he doesn’t do his worst merely out of the evilness of his heart — he is well compensated by industries that want to slow down the direction of history long enough to make a few more billions before enough people come to their senses and force change. Industry hires Dr. Evil when they are backed into a corner by effective opponents.

Now Berman has turned his evil eye on fracking. And Food & Water Watch.

Berman launched “Big Green Radicals” earlier this year with a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal to smear us and others. Unable to refute the serious and mounting concerns about fracking, he attacks the messenger. That’s his business model. Since Food & Water Watch is the only national environmental group calling for a full fracking ban instead of unenforceable regulations that are riddled with loopholes, we are an obvious target.

So precisely why did the minion of evil pay us a visit?

Refusing to give his name, he handed our program assistant a blank, sealed envelope. Inside was an unsigned letter, not on letterhead, asking for a variety of Food & Water Watch documents that are available by request to any member of the public. There was no address to deliver the paperwork — he said that he would come back when we had the documents ready.

It was all very cloak and dagger. Very mysterious. However, the letter stated that it was from one of the other evil minions who has written hatchet jobs on us in the past. Mystery solved.

We are a little bemused. But Dr. Evil is not.

Recently the financial ties to Dr. Evil from the Koch brothers have been uncovered. The Koch brothers are also pouring money into Colorado to block the anti-fracking tide that Food & Water Watch is helping to surge. And Dr. Evil is focusing on Colorado fracking in his attacks on us. For us, this request is all in a routine day’s work. For Dr. Evil, it’s a paycheck. For the Koch brothers, Dr. Evil is just a business expense while the pollution of our drinking water, earthquakes and rapid climate change are nothing of consequence.

So, we can depend on Berman’s anti-Food & Water Watch mud to pile up faster than toxic waste from a fracking well.

It looks as if Dr. Evil may be masterminding attacks on Food & Water Watch from a variety of sources including the Republican members of the Senate Environment

(continued on B-3)
These days it seems that too many people are only concerned with “issues” that impact them personally. Not Food & Water Watch members and supporters. You show by your actions and your contributions that you understand that we are all in this together on our fragile planet — that a threat anywhere is a threat everywhere. And that our most essential resources should be protected by all of us.

Ann, a regular Food & Water Watch supporter since 2008, lives in the state of Virginia, which hasn’t yet experienced much fracking. Last year she received one of our communications that talked about how we are working to ban fracking, and why. Right around that time, she also learned that her family’s land in Texas was being fracked, and she knew immediately that she didn’t want any part of it.

While fracking isn’t yet in her backyard in Virginia, it is happening all across the state of Texas, where Ann still has family. Ann contacted one of the researchers on staff to learn more about fracking and the companies that were fracking on her land. After the conversation, she realized that, in fact, she did want to be associated with fracking … by working to stop it!

I think Ann says it best:

“I am grateful that I live in Virginia, far away from the fracked wells that mar my family’s land. My nephew in Texas and his family were not so lucky. For the first six years of his life, my nephew’s son was constantly ill — from strep throat to ear infections — it was relentless. Rumors circulated among the community — my nephew’s child was not the only one with mysterious health issues. It was so severe that my nephew and his wife made the difficult decision to uproot their family to move out of state to a frack-free part of New Mexico. Since moving away from the heavily fracked area, the illnesses that had plagued their son have disappeared and he’s been healthy.

My family was able to get away, but if Big Oil & Gas have their way there will be fracked wells in backyards and playgrounds across the country. No family should have to worry about their children getting sick from fracking, or be forced to uproot their family to keep them healthy. I believe that together, we have the power to stop them, and that Food & Water Watch is the organization that will lead us to victory.”

Ann’s 2-to-1 Match

“I hope that you will support Food & Water Watch’s efforts to protect families like mine from the harms of fracking. If you donate before Friday, December 19, I will match your gift to triple the impact you can have to protect more families from fracking. That means if you give $50, I’ll give $100, so that Food & Water Watch and the movement to ban fracking will get $150 total! Thanks to your one gift!

Since last year, I have been supporting Food & Water Watch’s efforts to fight fracking because I believe that their approach is truly one of the best. I know that we have to hold our elected officials accountable for their actions — from small towns in Texas, all the way to the White House. Giving people the information they need to see through the smoke screens that big oil and gas companies put up is the best way to do this, and I think Food & Water Watch’s widespread grassroots campaigns, and the coalitions that they have helped form across the country, are really turning the tide toward victory for you and me, and hopefully toward the end of our dependence on extreme energy resources like fracked natural gas.”
Marching On in the Battle to Label GMOs

The national movement to label GMOs made tremendous strides this year. In the face of record-breaking industry spending, a ballot measure to support GMO labeling was defeated in Colorado. But in Oregon, two days after election night, the race remains too close to call — a feat in itself. Vermont passed a law to label GMOs without any trigger or conditions, and legislative efforts in numerous other states made significant, unprecedented progress.

In Oregon, despite a $20 million-plus barrage of false and misleading anti-labeling advertising from multinational chemical and agribusinesses like Dow, DuPont and Monsanto, the vote remains incredibly close at this time — closer than last year in Washington state. Oregon voters might just push past the overwhelming industry spending advantage to assert their right to know exactly what they’re buying and feeding their families.

About 5,000 volunteers from Oregon and around the country engaged in a huge voter contact drive, making more than 543,000 phone calls to Oregon voters, knocking on more than 24,000 doors, and initiating thousands of one-on-one conversations throughout the state. Food & Water Watch was proud that Julia DeGraw — our resident Portland organizer — four temporary organizers and other key staff worked hard on this campaign for months.

Win or lose, the Oregon labeling campaign is going to come closer than any previous labeling effort, despite being outspent more than 2-to-1. Ballot initiatives like this one in Oregon are difficult vehicles for passing measures that protect consumers and take on large corporate interests. This is because they allow corporations with vast wealth the ability to mislead voters with false and misleading messaging by flooding airwaves with expensive advertising. This highlights the flaws in our campaign finance system and the need for continued grassroots organizing and community power building.

Moving forward, we will organize around legislation in key states across the country as we continue to work with allies to make labeling of genetically engineered foods the law for everyone.

Food & Water Future Fund: Leaving a Legacy for the Future

At Food & Water Watch, we envision a future that is different than today. A future where all people have access to the healthy food and clean water they need to thrive, and one in which our energy needs are met by clean, renewable and sustainable sources. A world where people have real control over the most important decisions that impact their lives and are able to participate in a real democracy that is responsive to individual and community values.

Sadly, this is not the world we live in today. But through our combined efforts, we are working for this future. Together, we are challenging fracking and our wrongheaded reliance on dangerous fossil fuels. We are mobilizing to demand a food system that works for all people and their communities. And we are insisting that the right to water is a human right, and that this most essential resource must be protected and sustained for everyone. We make these demands, not just for ourselves, but also for our children and for generations to come.

Arrayed against us are greedy corporations that seek short-term profits from exploiting and controlling these resources. These “perpetual” institutions are blinded to the long-term harm of expanded fracking and industrialized agriculture. But they are very powerful and have used their money and influence to tilt the political system in their favor. It is up to us to counter their power by educating and organizing ourselves to stop them and ensure the future we want. A future we must have if our children are to lead the kind of lives we envision.

We know this is a long fight, but Food & Water Watch is in it for the long haul. And that is why we are so pleased to form a planned giving circle, the Food & Water Future Fund. When you designate Food & Water Watch in your will or other planned-giving instrument, you are joining a circle of supporters who want to ensure that the values that sustained them in life will also be sustained for future generations.

To become a member of the Food & Water Future Fund, all we ask is that you notify Food & Water Watch regarding the nature of your gift plan. And, because we want to recognize your leadership and commitment — and help inspire others — we ask that you provide us with information about how you want your legacy to be recognized (or to be anonymous).

If you want to join the Food & Water Future Fund or would like to discuss how you can leave a legacy gift, please contact Doug Lakey at dlakey@fwwatch.org or by telephone at (202) 683-2469.
Will Your Community Be Next?

Communities across the country are coming together to save antibiotics. Each pin on the map shows where a city council has passed a resolution calling for an end to the misuse of antibiotics on factory farms. As of early November 2014, 36 communities have successfully passed resolutions!

See our map at foodandwaterwatch.org/campaign-to-save-antibiotics for updated numbers, and stay tuned for more campaign news to save antibiotics for medicine, not factory farms!

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!