We Lead by Winning
Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director

People everywhere are hungry for leadership. For years in Washington D.C., we’ve seen worse than a failure of policies and ideas; we’ve seen a failure of integrity, imagination and institutions. As the systems that we’ve built over decades to safeguard our democracy, protect our food, water and climate, and ensure social and economic justice crumble under the weight of Trump, people everywhere are asking who will step forward to lead, to set us on the right course.

Here’s the real answer: We are the leaders we’ve been waiting for.

Because of you and tens of thousands of other dedicated Food & Water Action members, we’ve proven what real leadership looks like. When others backed down to oil companies and frackers, we stood up. When others ran away from the hard fights to block deadly pipelines or save public water, we charged forward. And when others grasped at dirty money from the greedy corporations that frack our land and pollute our water, we refused any corporate funding.

Food and Water Action leads by winning. In the last 15 years, your support and leadership has inspired victories across the country. You banned fracking in New York, Maryland, Washington State and in dozens of counties and local communities. You stopped dangerous pipelines and other polluting fossil fuel infrastructure projects across the country. You’ve secured safe, affordable public drinking water for people in cities like Baltimore and elsewhere. You’ve fought polluting factory farms that are making people sick and negatively impacting our climate.

Our fights — and our victories — continue. At this moment, we are waging more than 60 specific campaigns across the country to save our climate and protect our food and water. We’re fighting in city halls, state legislatures, and the halls of Congress. We’re fighting in courts of law and in the court of public opinion. And we’re fighting on the ground, hand-in-hand with people who

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I began my career working in environmental hazard remediation programs in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. I learned firsthand how time consuming and costly it is to remove toxic waste and chemicals from our environment. For 10 years, I’ve worked on regional food systems development projects that intersect with food justice. I’ve had the honor of serving many diverse groups and organizations, including the Northern Youth Project where developing rural youth leadership is helping to continue heritage agricultural traditions in New Mexico.

I chose to work at Food & Water Action because it’s only possible to develop sustainable regional food systems and economies if we fight to take power back from corporate agriculture and the giant oil and gas companies that pollute our soil and water. We’re working in New Mexico to build an environmentally sustainable future for the state. It’s a critical moment for New Mexico; we’re committed to renewable energy, but there’s tremendous pressure from the outside to exploit oil and gas resources. There are empty promises of money, jobs, and economic development, but New Mexico continues to be one of the most economically disadvantaged states in the nation. We are a “sacrifice zone,” bearing the brunt of the environmental degradation caused by oil and gas and other toxic industries.

But we’re fighting back. This year, we’re mobilizing a coalition to end the wide-spread pollution caused by factory farms in southern New Mexico. We’re fighting to protect Chaco Canyon, and will continue to build political power and advocate for an end to fossil fuel extraction near the heritage site.

Oil and gas development bring a host of problems to New Mexico, including billions of gallons of wastewater. In the environmentally fragile southwest, where water is a precious resource, we’re faced with talk of reusing toxic fracking wastewater for agricultural production and even drinking water. But we’re committed to preventing further damage to our precious landscape and the resources we depend on for life.

Trading the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink for corporate profit is not a fair trade!

We Lead by Winning
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want nothing more than safe food, clean water and a livable climate for them and their children.

Already this year, we’ve worked to push out the first national legislation to ban fracking everywhere. The federal Fracking Ban Act is a culmination of 15 years of leadership and it points the way to years of victory ahead.

You know we’re past the time of talking about threats to our food, water and climate. The realities of climate chaos are here. But you also know that we can’t and won’t wait for others to step forward and stand up to save us. We are the leaders we need.
Mobilizing for Victory: The California Model

Mark Schlosberg • Managing Political Director, Food & Water Action

California has been increasingly impacted by the climate emergency – while wildfires have ravaged the state, fossil fuel production is poisoning communities and worsening climate change.

For years, Food & Water Action has been leading hard hitting campaigns to move the state off fossil fuels. We’ve banned fracking in seven counties across the state, including Monterey County despite millions spent by the oil and gas industry. And we’ve stopped dirty power plants in Los Angeles and Ventura while passing major renewable energy measures.

In 2019, working with our partners in the Last Chance Alliance coalition, we pressured California Governor Gavin Newsom to take some small steps towards reigning in fossil fuels. He announced extra reviews for fracking permits, a process for addressing health impacts of oil production, and a moratorium on high pressure steam injection.

While this is heartening, it falls far short of the real measures needed to address the fossil fuel driven health and climate crisis.

That’s why in the coming year, with support from members across the state and nation, we’re ramping up campaigns to ban fracking in California, place a moratorium on new permits, and pressure Newsom to finally shut down the Aliso Canyon gas storage facility — something he has promised to do, but not yet done.

At the same time, we’ll continue to hold the line at the local level, working in Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, and across the state to fight oil and gas projects.

California is often seen as an example of progressive environmentalism but the state has just as often fallen short. 2020 will be a turning point year in our work to make California a true leader on climate.

A Big Clean Energy Win in the Garden State (continued from page 1)

overwhelming 63 to 37 margin, voters in Piscataway approved a special ballot question to create a 100% renewable program. We won in a landslide, and it was a historically significant victory: This was the first time voters had directly approved the creation of such a clean energy program.

Winning wasn’t easy. Early in the year we got to work with a group of residents to form the Clean Air Piscataway campaign, going door to door to collect over 1,400 petition signatures forcing the Township Council to vote on our policy.

But the council decided to leave the matter up to voters. So we put boots to pavement once again, knocking doors and talking to over 5,000 voters about the benefits of community aggregation: Clean air, clean energy and lower utility bills.

This wasn’t our first community choice win; right next door to Piscataway, we helped create a groundbreaking 100 percent clean energy program in New Brunswick. These campaigns are not just about getting politicians to put nice words on paper; these victories represent real action that will have real impact on New Jersey communities. And we’re not resting on our laurels; we’re already on the ground in 15 additional towns and cities, with a plan to move over one million New Jersey residents onto 100% clean renewable energy in 2020.
2020 Victories (So Far!)

Food & Water Action members have achieved major victories at the local, state, and national levels in the first three months of 2020:

**Protecting Our Food**
- Championed the first piece of federal legislation to ban factory farms — introduced by Senator Cory Booker.
- Secured bipartisan support for statewide legislation in Iowa to place a moratorium on factory farms; the first Republican sponsor has joined us.
- Pressured Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to ban the spreading of manure on frozen ground.

**Protecting Our Water**
- Championed landmark legislation, introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders, to ban PFAS — the forever chemicals that contaminate our water.
- Built momentum for the WATER Act, national legislation to fix our aging water systems and ensure that every person has access to safe, clean water; we now have 83 congressional co-sponsors!
- Mobilized overwhelming support in Baltimore for the Water Accountability and Equity Act, which ensures water bills will be made permanently affordable for all low-income households.
- Moved Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot to place a moratorium on water shutoffs and a water affordability program that provides relief for up to 20,000 households.
- Pushed back water privatization efforts in communities across the country, including Jacksonville, Florida; Pleasantville and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Bull Head City, Arizona.
- Defeated a pro-privatization state bill in New Jersey which would have stripped away voters’ right to referendum on the sale of their wastewater system and facilitated rate hikes after privatization.

**Protecting Our Climate**
- Championed the first-ever federal legislation to ban fracking nationally. This urgent and critical ban, just introduced in Congress, would immediately halt all new federal permits for fracking and ban fracking once and for all by 2025.
- Pushed Governor Murphy to oppose Meadowlands Power Plant in New Jersey, which would have been the largest source of climate pollution in the state.
- Passed a first-of-its-kind clean energy measure at the ballot box in Piscataway, New Jersey, creating a community energy program that will move the town to 100% renewable energy by 2035.
- Took another huge step to free the Golden State from fossil fuels by winning a moratorium on oil drilling in Ventura County, California.
Volunteers Mark 15 Years of Leadership
Royelen Lee Boykie • Planned Giving Steward, Food & Water Action

Every organization wishes it had enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers like Karen and Alan Warren. Food & Water Watch is especially fortunate to have Karen and Alan involved with our 15-year anniversary event being planned in New York City. Their support of Food & Water Watch is inspired by authentic experience with issues they care about both locally and nationally and was shaped by their feeling overwhelmed and helpless following the 2016 election.

Karen says of Food & Water Watch staff, “The people that I met were passionate, knowledgeable and happy to explain all the steps in organizing and advocacy. I highly recommend others volunteer. It’s rewarding and you feel like you are making a contribution. When someone says they can’t believe all this happened, I tell them, ‘do something, sign the petition, send money, get involved.’”

The Warrens are also shining a light; they talk to their friends about their connection to Food & Water Watch and the work we are doing together. They send emails and they post on online. They find social media to be especially impactful among their friends.

All of this, and more, made them perfect to be lead sponsors for our anniversary event. As a professional in conference planning, Karen has significant event experience. It is apparent with her expertise and special touches for the benefit. She says, “I was enthusiastic to get involved this year and helped research venues. We have a beautiful location, with amazing views of Manhattan and an uplifting experience planned. Live jazz musicians have donated their talent to serenade us. Our goal is a plant-forward menu with a delicate addition of humanely farmed meat raised in a carbon neutral process. Even the wine, a ‘No Frackin’ Way White™,’ is consistent with Food & Water Watch’s mission.”

In 2020, as Food & Water Watch celebrates the progress we’ve made over the past 15 years mobilizing people to advocate for bold and uncompromised solutions to the most pressing food, water and climate problems of our time, we are inspired by our members, volunteers and supporters.

Karen and Alan agree about Food & Water Watch: “They are a great bunch of people to work with, every time we talk to someone — volunteers, staff, or Wenonah — they are all amazing.” But we have to say, the feeling is mutual, Karen and Alan. They are true leaders in the fight for our food, water and climate.

Fighting In Numbers
Right now, with support from our members, Food & Water Action is fighting more than 50 state and local campaigns to stop or shut down fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure.

- **19** campaigns to stop drilling and fracking
- **12** campaigns to stop pipelines
- **7** campaigns to stop fracked gas power plants
- **3** campaigns to close or stop gas storage facilities
- **9** other campaigns to stop refineries, export terminals, and other infrastructure projects
New Research from Food & Water Watch Exposes the Spin Behind Fracking

Oakley Shelton-Thomas • Researcher, Food & Water Watch

Food & Water Watch’s latest research report, Fracking’s Bridge to Climate Chaos: Exposing the Fossil Fuel Industry’s Deadly Spin, shows how proponents of shale gas development push for continued drilling and fracking while communities across the globe experience the impacts of catastrophic climate change.

These proponents falsely claim that fracked gas is a “bridge fuel” to move us from traditional fossil fuels like oil and coal to renewable energy like wind and solar. But this so-called bridge has led only to more fossil fuel dependence, locking us in to decades of worsening climate chaos. With help from their trade associations and industry-supported “green” groups, frackers have claimed natural gas production was necessary to shift the country from coal and provide back-up for intermittent renewables.

Fracking’s Bridge to Climate Chaos shows how natural gas has not lived up to those false promises. Our review of scientific literature demonstrates substantial and persistent methane leakage from every step of the fracked gas supply chain. Using these estimates of methane leakage, Food & Water Watch modeled the greenhouse gas emissions from power plants to show that a full and rapid transition from coal to natural gas would leave electricity emissions on track to increase through 2050.

Rather than closing coal plants as proponents claim, a move to natural gas blocks clean renewable energy and locks us into fracked gas infrastructure designed to last for decades.

You can read the full report on our website: foodandwaterwatch.org

15 Years of Activism: You Are Leading a Movement for Change

As Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action look back on the past 15 years, we are proud of the victories you have helped us achieve. From banning fracking in New York (and then Maryland and then Washington) to stopping a giant Nestlé water bottling plant in Oregon, time and time again you have shown that we can win when we stand together and mobilize regular people.

While giant corporations like Exxon-Mobil, Nestlé, and Monsanto have nearly unlimited money to fight for their profits — they can’t stop you and people like you. Every time you give to Food & Water Watch, you’re reminding greedy corporations and the politicians who enable them that we — not them — hold the real power to shape our future.

You are not alone when you support Food & Water Watch/Action. Our growing strength is reflected in just how many people support our work. In 2010, at the end of our first 5 years, we had almost 17,000 donors/members who had provided support to our work. Now, a short 10 years later, nearly 300,000 donors/members have made all of our work possible.

The movement you’ve supported is growing every day. Without you and people like you, none of our work is possible. But with you and your 300,000 friends and neighbors, we can’t be stopped. Together, we will win the future we need and our children deserve!
Last winter, we watched in horror as climate chaos struck Australia. Millions of acres went up in flames while one billion animals perished in the “mega blaze.” For two Food & Water Watch supporters, an annual family trip to Sydney brought the reality of climate change disturbingly close to home.

Chicago residents Sue Crothers (who is originally from Sydney) and Bill Gee spend winters “Down Under” to visit Sue’s family. Fortunately, their family was not directly impacted by the fires. But when they arrived in December 2019, they were greeted by a dark shroud of smoke and haze. Terrible air quality was a constant reminder that people nearby were fighting to save their homes and wildlife.

Sue and Bill, longtime supporters of Food & Water Watch and other progressive organizations through their family’s foundation, have been fighting to halt climate change for some time. But these catastrophic fires bring a new urgency to this battle and a need to stop the misinformation machine and leadership void that slows progress.

“An organization like Food & Water Watch is trying to keep people clear eyed and factual about what is going on, while trying to engage the population. I don’t see this in Australia,” Bill says. “The Murdoch media empire is pushing a false narrative by skewing the statistics, so it minimizes the positive actions we make and takes the focus off the fossil fuel problem. On the flip side, you have the more responsible media talking about climate change in the big picture context. So it all depends on where people get their information.”

Bill and Sue see the lack of leadership in the United States as having a direct impact on places like Australia, and feel that if the U.S. would take meaningful action, Australia would follow.

“The Australian government is actually quite effective when it institutes change. America’s lack of leadership is causing a mixed reaction in Australia and they are just not jumping into solving the issue as they normally would.”

While governments languish on the issue, the couple believes there are things each of us can do in our daily lives to combat this problem. They see philanthropy as only a small part of what can be done.

“Being thoughtful about every investment, every purchase, and every charitable donation you make creates impact. If we are all more thoughtful about our actions, we’d be so much closer to where we need to be.”

Getting involved in your local community is critical, and Sue sees Food & Water Watch as a main force in local fights. “Grassroots activism and mobilization on the local level is key. It’s really where it all starts because it’s personal. Food & Water Watch recognizes that supporting local groups pushing for environmental policy changes with their local governments is a fundamental strategy to move the needle with policy change on the national and international level.”

Bill says, “I wish we had an organization like Food & Water Watch in Australia. Not having that type of support here makes you realize how important it is, and not seeing it in Sydney makes me realize how important it is to have Food & Water Watch in Chicago and elsewhere in the U.S.”
Planning for a Better Future:

New Law Impacts Your IRA

In late 2019, a new law called the SECURE Act took effect which impacts people with Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and some IRA beneficiaries. The new law will continue to allow people aged 70½ to make a donation of up to $100,000 per year to Food & Water Watch or other qualified charitable organizations. In addition to the charitable component, some of the new changes include:

- Previous age limits on making contributions to your IRA have been repealed and individuals can continue to contribute to your account past the age of 70½.
- Those born after July 1, 1949, do not have to take a required minimum distribution until age 72.
- The SECURE Act also impacts non-spousal beneficiaries. Non-spousal beneficiaries must withdraw the entire amount within 10 years.

If you want to make a qualified charitable distribution, it’s easy! Please contact your financial institution or take advantage of our easy-to-use online tool: [www.freewill.com/qcd/foodandwaterwatch](http://www.freewill.com/qcd/foodandwaterwatch)

As always, please speak to your financial advisor before making changes to your plan, including a charitable donation.

If you would like to talk more about the options for making a gift from your retirement funds or other planned gift options, please contact Royelen Lee Boykie at (202)683-2509 or e-mail royelen@fwwatch.org.

Food & Water Watch is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that educates and advocates for safe food, clean water and a livable climate.

Food & Water Action is our affiliated 501(c)4 nonprofit that mobilizes people to win campaigns that protect us all and builds political power to make elected officials accountable to people, not giant corporations.

Your donations to Food & Water Action fund our hard-hitting political work, and are not tax deductible; gifts to Food & Water Watch are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

We hope you will use the enclosed form to make your special contribution to help stop the global climate crisis and protect your food and water. We don’t take any corporate or government funding, so we are accountable completely to our members — people like you!