As of this writing, nearly 4 million Americans have been infected; 145,000 have died. The pandemic has been an unfolding tragedy. But amid sadness and struggle, there’s also hope and heroism. Millions united to avoid complete catastrophe. Doctors, nurses, essential workers, and others did so much to protect us. Elected leaders and government institutions stumbled, costing us lives and livelihoods. But others, like Food & Water Action, rose to leadership.

Urged on by our supporters, we raced to the frontlines at pandemic’s outset. We knew the powerful would exploit the crisis to prey on the vulnerable. Reports surfaced immediately of utility companies shutting off the water of people in hard hit communities. This violation of public health guidelines endangered everyone: People who can’t wash their hands can’t stay healthy.

And as the movement to end systemic racism and institutionalized violence swept our country, we also knew that water shutoffs were an urgent matter of racial and environmental justice. Millions of Americans — two in five households — struggle with unaffordable water bills; the highest shutoff rates occur in low-income communities and communities of color. Our research found that Black communities face some of the most unaffordable water bills in the country.

Food & Water Action was the first national environmental organization to call to end shutoffs. Our supporters applied unrelenting pressure on governors and local officials. We mobilized, we organized, and we won. Because of your efforts, 15 states and 700 municipalities stopped water shutoffs. Our work touched nearly 210 million people. Together, we saved lives.

That’s the kind of leadership we’ve shown throughout the pandemic.

We fought to stop fossil fuel billionaires and Wall Street speculators from cashing in on one federal bailout after another.

We fought to get essential workers in meat processing plants...
Another Huge Win Against Fracking Infrastructure
Laura Shindell • New York Organizer, Food & Water Action

This May, after years of relentless pressure from Food & Water Action and our supporters and allies, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo officially rejected a massive new fracking infrastructure project, the Williams pipeline.

The project would have carried fracked gas from Pennsylvania under New York Harbor, churning up tons of toxic sediment, harming a fragile marine ecosystem and saddling New York with the inherent threats of fracking infrastructure. The pipeline’s $1.4 billion price tag surely would have been passed on to rate-payers. And the pipeline would have locked New York into decades of reliance on filthy fossil fuels.

As we’ve done so many times before, we used every tactic in the book to build a powerful grassroots coalition campaign. We hosted educational forums all over New York City. We canvassed shoreline communities, petitioning on the beaches last summer and urging local community boards and civic associations to fight the proposal. We generated tens of thousands of calls to Governor Cuomo’s office, demanding that he spike the project. We packed hearings rooms and flooded public comment periods. And we compelled every citywide elected official into publicly opposing the project.

The strength of this campaign was cemented by high-functioning teamwork among members of the Stop the Williams Pipeline coalition. Notably, almost all of the coalition leaders were women, enabling a strong working bond rooted in shared experience, trust, respect and friendship.

Governor Cuomo has denied fossil fuel projects before — often at our urging. But he’s also green-lighted plenty of them, and he’s stalled on developing large-scale renewable energy. We will keep holding his feet to the fire in the months and years to come. Together, we’ll keep pushing for clean, renewable energy to power our lives and protect the planet. Our fight continues!

Crisis Leadership (continued from page 1)

protective equipment as their industrial agriculture bosses insisted they work sick. And we demanded help for independent family farmers in getting food to communities in need.

We blew the whistle on derelict federal agencies, including the EPA and USDA, as they tried to gut food, water and climate protections because they thought we were distracted. We weren’t.

We helped introduce groundbreaking federal legislation to ban fracking, ban water shutoffs and ban factory farms.

And we’ve kept our focus on state and local campaigns across the country. In May, our strategy to stop the Williams Fracked Gas Pipeline in New York paid off. We now add that pipeline to the pile of dangerous projects we’ve killed in their tracks.

Because of your support, while others retreated in the face of daunting odds, Food & Water Action ran forward. And we’re working and planning now for a better, safer future. Our leadership today is creating the tomorrow we want and deserve.

There’s much more to do. Corrupt corporations and the government institutions they control are looking to seize any advantage. But you and thousands of people like you won’t let them. We’re focused on saving lives and our future. Together, we’re wrestling hope from the fists of tragedy.
Food & Water Justice

Trump’s assault on the environment won’t deter our campaigns to win a clean energy future, keep our water safe and ban factory farms. Our litigation team, Food & Water Justice, is working in the courts to support our campaigns and stop the attacks on our most important environmental protections.

The pandemic gave Trump cover to speed up federal environmental rollbacks. He’s trying to gut state control of fossil fuel projects, take waterways out of federal protection, reverse restrictions on methane emissions from gas plants and eliminate review of the climate impacts of major federal actions. We will keep fighting Trump’s illegal rule-making.

Our team works just as hard at the state and local levels, supporting grassroots campaigns with legal actions like suing the State of Iowa for allowing factory farms to pollute public waterways and suing to gain local control over fracking in Colorado.

Playing whack-a-mole with illegal pro-corporate laws and regulations won’t win the future we’re fighting for on its own. But just as our recent victory challenging North Carolina’s unconstitutional “ag-gag” law will enable whistle-blowers to expose the abuses of factory farms, our legal advocacy paves the way for our campaigns to build real power and enact long-term change.

Food & Water Justice Is Challenging:

- USDA’s rule to speed up hog slaughter line speeds
- The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s failure to consider climate impacts before approving fossil fuel infrastructure
- EPA’s rule allowing factory farms to conceal air pollution levels from rural communities
- FDA’s approval of genetically engineered salmon for human consumption
- USDA’s reckless financing of factory farms
- EPA’s inadequate water pollution protections for both slaughterhouses and factory farms
- FDA’s approval of an animal drug that threatens animal welfare and worker safety
- USDA’s refusal to disclose public records under the Freedom of Information Act

You Kept the Water On for Millions! (continued from page 1)

Food & Water Action was the first national group to fight water shutoffs. Our supporters stepped up to help on a massive scale. We put unrelenting pressure on utilities, local governments, governors and federal officials. Our demand was simple: stop water shutoffs now!

I’ve managed water programs at Food & Water Action for 5 years. I know how much people care about access to clean, safe, affordable water. But even I was stunned by the outpouring from caring, dedicated people during this crisis.

In the pandemic’s early months, we helped keep the water on in 15 states and more than 700 communities — in cities and towns big and small. Together, we helped protect 210 million people. That’s about 65 percent of the U.S. population! People sometimes wonder if supporting Food & Water Action really makes a difference in people’s lives. I can tell you this: our work not only makes a difference, it saves lives.

By June, some local shutoff bans began to expire (many were emergency, temporary measures). But we continued the fight through the summer to renew shutoff moratoriums and make them permanent — our work is keeping people safe. We even took the fight national, pushing for a federal moratorium on water shutoffs.

We’re leading a growing movement to protect access to clean, affordable water. Thanks to you and all Food & Water Action supporters who have pushed us so far and so quickly toward that goal!
New Food & Water Watch Research Exposes the Buildout of Factory Farms

Amanda Starbuck • Senior Food Researcher & Policy Analyst, Food & Water Watch

Compelling new work from Food & Water Watch reveals the dangerous trends associated with America’s web of factory farms. In the only analysis of its kind, we translated county-level data from the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture into easy-to-understand maps and graphs that trace factory farm livestock across the country.

Our research exposes the dangers of America’s factory farms, sector by sector. We reveal massive — and troubling — changes in American agriculture over the last 5 years alone. These include the devastating environmental impacts of factory farms, their toll on human and animal suffering and their stranglehold on rural communities.

For example, our research shows there are 190 million more animals on factory farms (up 14%) compared to 5 years ago. These additional animals produced 82 billion tons of manure each year (that’s more sewage than three New York Cities)!

The report also shows a hopeful path forward. It explains in clear terms the need for federal farm policies that work for farmers and consumers (not agribusiness giants). We describe common sense strategies like:

• Banning new factory farms and the expansion of existing ones;
• Expanding local markets and infrastructure to help farmers bring products to market;
• Closing loopholes that allow factory farms to hijack conservation funds; and
• Holding factory farms accountable to national environmental laws and regulations.

Industrial agriculture has made our food system weak, unjust and unsafe. Food & Water Watch’s research reinforces that dire lesson and shows how to take on agribusiness giants and move toward sustainability. The first step is clear: Let’s ban factory farms.

You can read the full report here: fwwat.ch/2020FarmMaps
Reimagining American Agriculture: The Farm System Reform Act

Krissy Kasserman • Factory Farm Organizing Manager, Food & Water Action

As millions sacrificed during the pandemic, giant industrial agriculture corporations and their web of factory farms tried to take advantage. They wanted to use the pandemic to consolidate their empires and take public dollars earmarked for emergency response. And they cozed up to Trump for long-wanted regulatory giveaways.

Meanwhile, the people working in meat processing facilities got sick at alarming rates; at least 133 have died. Their corporate bosses denied them even basic protections as they processed our food. The pandemic made it clear: Corporate agriculture endangers us all.

Food & Water Action supporters fought back. We demanded coronavirus relief support taxpayers, first responders and independent family farmers — not be used by industrial agriculture to consolidate their stranglehold on America’s food supply. And we went a step further by pushing Congress to reinvent American agriculture.

The groundbreaking Farm System Reform Act (or FSRA) is bold, transformational legislation that would overhaul agriculture. First introduced in the Senate by New Jersey’s Cory Booker and in the House by Ro Khanna of California, the legislation brings major reforms that uplift independent family farmers, protect rural communities and public health, and fix our broken food system.

Among its reforms is an immediate halt on the construction of new factory farms and a phaseout of existing ones by 2040. It would also invest $100 billion for farmer debt forgiveness, along with programs to transition to sustainable agriculture.

Hyper-concentration of agriculture has meant declining farm incomes, stagnant wages, more layoffs, and higher grocery store prices. Unaccountable corporations put profit above people. The pandemic exposed it all.

Two years ago, we were the first to call for a national ban on factory farms. Today, we’re fighting to not only ban factory farms but hold corporate polluters accountable, protect America’s farmers and create a more just food system. Tell your representatives in Congress: It’s time to pass the Farm System Reform Act now!

Food & Water Action adapted quickly to working virtually during the pandemic. Our top priority was the safety of our staff and supporters. We found powerful ways to push our work forward safely. Since March, we’ve held more than 50 virtual events — rallies, protests, webinars. We empowered our supporters to take more than 293,525 virtual actions — emails and texts to elected officials and petition signings. The pandemic has reinforced how relevant and urgent our work is.

Sign the FSRA petition to ban factory farms at fwwat.ch/passFSRA

How We’re Working Now

A Food & Water Action webinar on the threats to our food system held in June featuring U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut and other guests from around the country.
Borrow, frack, repeat. It’s a financial model that means ever-expanding fracking wells, pipelines, power plants, petrochemical refineries, and liquified natural gas (LNG) exports. The scramble for unbridled expansion has fueled huge public backlash against an industry that poisons our communities and warms our planet for profit. While Big Oil and Gas pushes for more, Food & Water Action mobilizes to stop them. We’re going to ban fracking!

The Trump administration greases the skids for its favorite industry; the pandemic was an easy excuse to fast-track fracking, roll back regulations and divert stimulus for industry bailouts. We worked with Members of Congress to draft and introduce the Resources for Workforce Investments, Not Drilling (ReWIND) Act, to help stop Trump’s shady rollbacks and bailouts. We joined hundreds of organizations to build support for this legislation and got more than 49 congressional cosponsors.

Trump also schemed to fast track fracking on federal lands by opening a million acres in pristine areas like the Greater Chaco Region and giving away fracking leases under outdated land management plans. Drilling in this region would impact lands in and near the Navajo Nation; because this region has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, meaningful public evaluation and comment from frontline communities was impossible. We went to work and won delays on plans to frack this region. With your help, we’ll continue to keep fracking out of our federal lands.

Key to industry expansion plans are a build out of LNG ports, petrochemical refining for plastics and new fracked gas power plants. Trump is happy to try to oblige industry, using diplomatic pressure and congressionally authorized resources to support “diversification” of energy in Europe, while rolling back environmental regulations in the United States.

Inspiring opposition to fossil fuel development comes from parties forming a coalition government in Ireland, who are moving towards a wholesale rejection of LNG, and governors in the northeastern United States who are rejecting power plants and pipelines in the region. This rejection of fossil fuels isn’t happenstance, it’s the result of Food & Water Action and our allies working diligently to mobilize and organize.

Unfortunately, Congressional leaders resist calls to shut down the fracking industry, touting false climate solutions like carbon pricing and sequestration. While leaders are failing, we’re working with rank and file Members of Congress to push policies to ban fracking and boost renewable energy infrastructure. As we head into the fall elections, we’ll continue to mobilize. We’re thankful to have you at our side.
Our Members Lead the Fight Against Climate Chaos

Carrie Dike • Food & Water Action Supporter

I have always looked to support organizations — like Food & Water Action — that speak the same language as me, share the same concerns, try to solve issues by creating groups around the country and taking action. The least I can do is to help financially support those groups that raise awareness and make things better.

The environmental issues I care about stem from both my professional and private life. I left England for the U.S. over 40 years ago and I’ve been here ever since. I mostly worked for a tiny nonprofit in Washington, D.C. where I was responsible for coordinating street tree plantings with adult volunteers, teaching groups and schools about trees and planting with school kids. I’m also a landscape gardener and have owned my own small business. I know that in the U.S. we waste so many — too many — resources.

We especially take our tap water and our electricity for granted — our health and that of the planet is suffering.

I don’t remember how I found Food & Water Action. When I subscribed and got their newsletters, I liked everything about them. Plus, and even better, they have an office in my backyard, Washington, D.C.!

Banning fracking is a big one for me. Banning factory farms to stop drinking water pollution and lessening corporate control over our food is also a big issue for me. Supporting a real Green New Deal and getting on solar technologies for our future makes so much environmental and economic sense! Getting the WATER Act passed. Banning plastic bottles, don’t get me started...

I am proud to be a Legacy Member of Food & Water Watch’s Future Fund. When I am gone, my efforts will live on and that makes me feel good. I’ve also enjoyed getting to know Royelen Lee Boykie over the phone. We’ve had many conversations and there isn’t much we don’t have in common. That’s a doubly good feeling!

Jane Fonda Fights Like She Lives Here

Water affordability is a national crisis. During the pandemic, Food & Water Action supporters launched a massive campaign to stop utilities from shutting off people’s water. Pioneering activist Jane Fonda was moved by our work to keep the water on. She joined our fight by producing an amazing video — you can watch it here: fwwat.ch/janefonda

Thanks to Ms. Fonda, hundreds more people took action to stop shutoffs. You and Jane Fonda and thousands of people like you kept the water on in communities across the country. We can accomplish anything when we fight like we live here!

Have you included Food & Water Watch in your estate plans? Please let Royelen know at (202) 683-2509 or by email at royelen@fwwatch.org
15th Anniversary Virtual Benefit

Celebrate with Food & Water Watch at our 15th Anniversary Virtual Benefit on Tuesday, September 29, 2020.

This is our 15th year mobilizing people to fight for safe food, clean water and a livable climate. On this special evening, we’ll honor Maude Barlow, international water rights expert, activist and Board Chair of Food & Water Watch and Adelaide Gomer, renowned anti-fracking activist, philanthropist and President of the Park Foundation Board of Trustees. We’ll also be joined by a very special guest, Academy Award winning actor, activist and organizer Jane Fonda!

Join us virtually as we celebrate 15 years of progress and be with us to work towards the next 15 years of creating a healthy future for all people and generations to come. Learn more, donate and purchase tickets at foodandwaterwatch.org/benefit. To get involved and for questions, please contact Tamara Tripp at (347) 774-4698 or ttripp@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 funding, so we are accountable completely to our members — people like you!