Hitting the Road —
And the Streets — With Frackopoly

Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director

It’s been a whirlwind summer, and I’ve had the good fortune to meet so many people on my book tour for Frackopoly. During this election season when there is so much to fear about the future, I was really inspired by the fortitude and commitment of people to fight for the future of life on this planet.

The real highlight of the summer was the March for a Clean Energy Revolution outside the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, where 10,000 people braved 95-degree temperatures to demand a quick transition away from fossil fuels. Convened by Food & Water Watch and our coalition partners in Americans Against Fracking and Pennsylvanians Against Fracking, the march was the largest demonstration at either party convention, and the largest anti-fracking gathering in American history. The previous day, on July 23, we brought together 300 activists, academics and community leaders for a day of panel discussions and trainings focused on anti-fracking and pro-renewable energy organizing.

As temperatures dip and as the election nears, with your support we are continuing to fight to keep fossil fuels in the ground and to transition to 100 percent renewables. This is the only way we will avoid the worst of climate chaos ahead of us.

Strengthening Our Public Water Infrastructure with the WATER Act

Food & Water Watch’s Public Water for All campaign worked with Representative John Conyers (D-Mich.) to introduce legislation in May to provide billions in dedicated funding a year to modernize U.S. water infrastructure. The Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability (WATER) Act would create a dedicated, sustainable source of federal funding to update essential drinking water and sewer systems and to replace aging, lead-ridden pipes.


(continued on page 3)
An Update on the DARK Act

Unfortunately, President Obama signed a bill in July to prevent states from adding clear, easy-to-read GMO labels to food packages. The law immediately preempted the Vermont GMO labeling law that went into effect on July 1 and eliminated labels like the one pictured here.

The law replaces these transparent GMO labels with 800 numbers, QR codes or bar codes that shoppers must scan with a smartphone to access information about possible GMO ingredients. This is not GMO labeling — it’s cumbersome, elitist and, above all, a giant hassle.

The law also does not mandate recalls, penalties or fines for noncompliance, and many loopholes in the bill will likely leave plenty of GMO ingredients exempt from any labeling requirements. This is a slap in the face to all of us who have been fighting so hard for transparency.

While we ultimately lost this round, over the last year, with your support, we fought off the biggest corporate agribusinesses such as Monsanto, Dow, DuPont, Pepsi, Nestlé and others to allow the Vermont law to go into effect on July 1. Thank you for all of your letters, calls, deliveries, conversations and actions fighting for your right to know what’s in your food.

Monsanto and its cronies spent over $100 million to defeat genetically engineered food labeling laws. The system and the power are stacked against us, but we’re more determined than ever to fight back against Monsanto’s attempts to take over our food system. Check out our website for more information and find out how you can take action: foodandwaterwatch.org.

I Was Barred From a Nobel Laureate Press Conference by a PR Consultant With Monsanto Ties

By Tim Schwab

Recently, 107 Nobel laureates signed a letter blasting Greenpeace over its opposition to genetically engineered (GMO) “golden rice,” and much of the resulting media condoned the message that “scaremongering” activists are getting in the way of scientific progress on GMOs.

Working at Food & Water Watch, I’m very familiar with the industry tactic of blaming the failures of GMOs on activists, although I’m surprised to hear this message from Nobel laureates — almost none of whom have any expertise in GMOs or agriculture. Also, just a few months ago, a peer-reviewed study examined the failures of “golden rice” and announced that Greenpeace was not to blame: “golden rice” has failed due to technical problems with genetic engineering, the authors concluded.

There is a lot about this campaign that isn’t adding up. I went to the official press event at the National Press Club in Washington in search of answers, but as soon as I disclosed my affiliation with Food & Water Watch, a man guarding the door refused my entry. A representative from Greenpeace also was turned away.

And then I realized who this bouncer was: Jay Byrne, a former Monsanto communications executive who now runs a private consulting firm that works with biotech companies.

To be sure, the Nobel campaign doesn’t change the fact that hundreds of PhD scientists continue to raise questions about the safety of GMOs — or that the biotechnology industry’s promises of silver-bullet GMOs coming down the pipeline remain just that: industry promises.
“Decades of underinvestment have made water a luxury for far too many,” said Congressman Conyers. “I introduced the WATER Act because our children, families and communities deserve access to clean, safe drinking water, and that starts with making the proper investments in our critical water infrastructure.”

For more on our Public Water for All campaign, visit foodandwaterwatch.org/campaigns.

IN HER OWN WORDS

Julia DeGraw
Senior Northwest Organizer

It’s not every day that you get a major victory against one of the world’s biggest, most powerful multinational corporations. But that’s exactly what happened the evening of May 17, election day in my home state of Oregon. This day was almost eight years in the making.

As the senior northwest organizer for Food & Water Watch I have worked hard to build up a broad coalition of groups for the duration of my seven years at the organization to stop a Nestlé water bottling proposal in the iconic Columbia River Gorge. Oregonians from all walks of life didn’t want to see the Gorge or any part of our state marred by Nestlé’s aggressive, often destructive and unethical water bottling practices.

The campaign saw three governors in a row do nothing to stop a state agency from moving forward with a water exchange deal that would open the doors to Nestlé’s water grab. If it weren’t for the efforts of Food & Water Watch and our partners, Nestlé would have opened up shop years ago.

The campaign came to a head last year as Governor Kate Brown announced a nearly state-wide drought that included Hood River County, the county where Nestlé wants to open up shop. This got the Warm Springs and Umatilla tribes expressing their opposition to the proposal, and it got local citizens active in trying to stop the project. (Even after announcing a drought emergency, Governor Brown still refused to tell her state agency to stop the water exchange deal that would make publicly owned water available to Nestlé.)

This was when local citizens from the town of Cascade Locks, where Nestlé wants to build its plant, got together with citizens from throughout Hood River County to create the Local Water Alliance — a group of citizens that, with our support, would run the most well-organized ballot measure campaign Hood River County has ever seen. The historic ballot measure made commercial water bottling illegal in the entirety of the county. In the end, we won 69 percent of the vote in a conservative county — the definition of bi-partisan support. We had this landslide victory despite Nestlé pouring over $105,000 of cash into a campaign in a county with only 18,000 voters. The Local Water Alliance spend about a fourth of what the opposition spent.

This victory shows the real power of grassroots organizing. Nestlé grossly underestimated the power of neighbors talking to neighbors and taking the time to really educate voters before an election. Unfortunately, the state agencies are proceeding with the water exchange, and we anticipate a potential lawsuit from Nestlé. It’s also possible that Nestlé will follow companies like Monsanto and try to pass a bill through the state legislature that would prevent localities from adopting rules regarding water use (these bills are usually referred to as preemption laws). All I can say is we are now fighting with more power than ever before to make sure that we kill any bad bills, win any legal battles and are set up to build the political pressure to push Governor Brown to do the right thing.
March for a Clean Energy Revolution at the DNC

On July 24, on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, more than 10,000 people marched through the streets of Philadelphia calling for a just transition from dangerous energy to clean renewable power.

The March for a Clean Energy Revolution was endorsed by more than 900 organizations from all 50 states. We organized into 16 contingents, representing a vast range of communities and concerns. And we were clearly seen and heard: the march was covered by dozens of media outlets, from national television stations to local newspapers, and it was featured in a front page photograph in The New York Times.

Of course, we can’t declare victory — the Clean Energy Revolution has only just begun. With your support, we look forward to continuing to build our movement and to force the next president and Congress — and our state and local leaders — to take real action to eliminate our reliance on dangerous energy.
We’re excited to welcome renowned scientist Robert Howarth as the newest member of Food & Water Watch’s board of directors. Howarth is an earth systems scientist and ecosystem biologist at Cornell University, and he’s been influential and vocal in debunking claims about the climate benefits of fracking.

Howarth’s influence on the knowledge of how fracking impacts our climate has been huge. In 2011, he published the first comprehensive analysis of the greenhouse gas footprint of shale gas in *Climatic Change Letters* and provided an invited commentary on shale gas in *Nature*. This work was cited in over 1,500 newspapers globally, winning Howarth an honorable mention as one of “50 People Who Matter” in the annual *Time* magazine Person of the Year issue for 2011.
Working with partners and supporters at the national, state and local levels, we achieved the following victories this quarter:

**VICTORIES**

- In Oregon, the Hood River Water Protection Measure passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Sixty-nine percent voted in favor of banning commercial water bottling countywide.

- In April, the County Council of Prince George’s County, Maryland voted unanimously to ban fracking, after months of public pressure from Food & Water Watch and our allies.

- We’ve worked with community organizations and volunteers to pass a total of 42 municipal and county resolutions opposing the Pilgrim Pipeline, which includes all 30 municipal governments along the proposed pipeline route and the New Jersey Assembly and Senate.

- In response to opposition from Food & Water Watch membership in New Mexico as well as coalition partners, the Bureau of Land Management removed more than 2,000 acres of public land in the Chaco region from a scheduled lease/sale, stating that they failed to consult local residents regarding the proposed land.

- Following the successful campaigns to ban fracking and stop the Port Ambrose liquefied natural gas facility in New York, Food & Water Watch once again mobilized thousands and worked with groups across the state to urge Governor Cuomo to reject the Constitution pipeline, which he did on April 22, 2016.

- In August, Food & Water Watch and allies delivered more than the required 98,492 signatures to qualify two measures for the statewide Colorado ballot: one to restore local control and one to implement a 2,500-foot buffer zone from all oil and gas wells.

- With our coalition partners in Floridians Against Fracking, we helped pass another 13 local measures opposing fracking, including several new county and city ordinances banning fracking altogether. This has brought the total number of resolutions calling on legislators to oppose fracking to 88.

- In June, Oregon LNG announced that it was abandoning its proposal to export liquefied natural gas from the north-coast town of Warrenton.

- Working with our Californians Against Fracking partners and CREDO, Care2, Rootkeeper, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Environmental Health, Center for Food Safety and Breast Cancer Action, we launched a statewide and national petition to Governor Brown asking that he stop the growing practice of irrigating crops with toxic wastewater from oil drilling operations.

- In Monterey, California, we worked with the Coalition to Protect Monterey County to support a ballot measure to ban fracking in the county. In May, the Coalition delivered over 14,000 signatures to qualify the measure, which was formally certified in June.

- In June, we made strong progress toward banning fracking in Alameda County, California and won a unanimous vote 6-0 at the Planning Commission to advance an ordinance to ban fracking.

- Food & Water Watch successfully supported Frack Free Butte County in winning a major fracking ban in Butte County, California, with 71.5 percent of the vote on the June 7 primary ballot.

- Working with STAND-LA and 350.org, we held a major march in Los Angeles on May 14 to call for an end to urban oil drilling, in tandem with international Break-Free from Fossil Fuels events.

- In Michigan, we hit a major benchmark in our campaign to pass local resolutions calling on the governor and attorney general to stop the flow of oil through Line 5 under the Straits of Mackinac. To date, 54 local municipalities, 9 indigenous nations and the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (an inter-tribal organization representing all 25 federally recognized tribes located in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin) have passed resolutions calling on the governor and attorney general to halt Line 5.

**MILESTONES**

- In late May, the Water, Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability (WATER) Act was introduced. (See story, page X). As of early August, we had sent 27,153 letters to members of Congress asking them to co-sponsor the WATER Act.
PARTNER PROFILE: Protect Monterey County

Madeline Clark is a local organic farmer and a leading proponent of a measure on the November 7 ballot to ban fracking in California’s Monterey County.

The thought that the oil industry can contaminate our water supply is mind-boggling,” she said.

The Protect Monterey County coalition, which organized the ballot campaign, is a broad coalition that includes farmers like Clark, restaurateurs and Latino community groups in Salinas. Clark says the coalition has tapped into a broad, non-partisan interest. “I consider myself a staunch conservative. This is not about being a tree-hugging environmentalist. The issue is our health and safety.” Meanwhile, oil companies are pouring in millions of dollars to defeat the initiative.

Clark hopes that in the end, virtually unlimited fossil fuel money will prove no match for Protect Monterey County’s small army of volunteers. If the measure passes, Monterey will become the sixth California county to ban fracking. Clearly, momentum is rising throughout California for a full statewide ban on fracking.

Victories and Milestones (continued from page 6)

- We sent 36,593 letters to President Obama and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency opposing the EPA’s revised Protective Action Guides for responding to radiological releases that would increase allowable radiation levels in drinking water.

- We delivered 24,530 comments to the Democratic and Republican National Committees asking them to ban fracking as part of their party platforms.

- We sent 21,825 letters to Congress and President Obama asking them to oppose the “Energy Policy Modernization Act” — a bill that would fast-track even more fossil fuels.

- We sent 21,276 comments to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) asking them to fix the process for approving genetically engineered crops.

- On June 23, Senator Roberts (R-Kan.) and Senator Stabenow (D-Mich.) introduced their “compromise” version of the Deny Americans the Right to Know (DARK) Act. We had already been mobilizing our members, and between April and the end of June our supporters sent 119,982 letters to their Senators, and from January through July our supporters made 29,139 calls into Senate offices. Unfortunately the DARK Act passed through both the House and the Senate in early July and was signed into law by President Obama on July 29, 2016.
New Food & Water Partners

U.S. senators just voted on a “deal” that would ban all state labeling of genetically engineered foods, including the Vermont labeling law that was set to go into effect on July 1. In the lead up to and after this terrible vote, we asked our members to join our monthly giving group, Food & Water Partners, since we know this will be a long-term fight – and we need to know that you are with us and are committed to the long haul effort. We were also fortunate to have a very generous donor who offered to match all new monthly contributions for the rest of the year, and the response from our members was incredible: 422 of our members joined as Partners to take advantage of this opportunity to keep our food safe and protect your right to know.

While the DARK Act “compromise” appears to have killed state GMO labeling laws for the time being, we are not giving up. And we now have 422 new Partners working with us to ensure that people have the right to know what’s in the food they eat. Building our base of monthly Partners gives us the steady, dependable funding we need to plan our longer-term campaigns and to respond to new challenges to safe food and water as they arise. We call our monthly donors “Partners,” as they truly are our partners to stop fracking, protect our most essential resources, and make our democracy work for people, not bigger corporate profits. We hope you will consider making a monthly gift (which you can cancel at any time) and become our newest Food & Water Partner!