Thanks to You, This Summer We Sued the Trump Administration and Made Progress Toward Moving Off Fossil Fuels

Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director

Thanks to your support, our summer has been very busy as we continued to make progress toward protecting communities and our access to clean water and safe food. In July, we sued Donald Trump because his infrastructure plan is to enrich his Wall Street cronies, not fix our aging water infrastructure. His "Infrastructure Council," whose co-chairs both stand to profit from the deals they're supposed to be crafting, has been working in secret since January, and we have a right to know if Trump's friends will profit from any infrastructure plan that takes shape.

Meanwhile, Food & Water Action supporters are busy engaging with our new program, OFF Fossil Fuels, which is dedicated to building the grassroots power to stand up to Big Oil & Gas in communities across the country. Already, after only two months, more than 125 elected officials from across the country have signed the OFF pledge, committing to oppose new fossil fuel development and to work to transition to 100 percent clean, renewable energy in their communities by 2035.

At the urging of committed OFF activists, city and county council members, mayors and state legislators in over 20 states have now signed the pledge. Our volunteers have been working tirelessly to hold their politicians accountable to ensure a clean energy future, and more are joining this campaign every day (see OFF campaign update at right). And we launched a campaign to stop the Energy and Natural Resources Act of 2017 — we call it the Dirty Energy Bill — which would incentivize fracking and expedite pipeline approvals. As of this writing, Congress recessed without passing the bill, a testament to all the Food & Water Watch supporters who made calls and sent letters to their senators. But stopping this bill is just the beginning. Stay tuned for more updates on how your support is helping to move America off fossil fuels.

(continued on page 2)
OFF Volunteer Profile: Sandra Peeters

Sandra Peeters has been involved in local politics and activism from a young age. Living in Houston, Texas, she always considered herself an environmentalist, but was inspired by Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign to make organizing a priority again. “I actually felt like I had the power to change something,” she says. Sandra brought together a group of climate activists in Houston and was looking for a campaign for the group to take on. She said they wanted to focus on renewable energy at the local level: “I found Food & Water Watch... then I saw the OFF Fossil Fuels campaign and thought, ‘This is perfect!’”

After hosting a campaign launch event in May, Sandra and her group in Houston have met several times to plan their work. Their goal is to get Houston City Council members to sign the OFF Fossil Fuels elected official pledge, and eventually to pass an ordinance to make the city go 100% renewable. On why she is committed to the OFF Fossil Fuels campaign, Sandra said: “We have no choice, this is something that we have to do. We can work on all kinds of issues, but if you do not protect your air, your water or your environment then what is the point of anything else?”

Standing Strong Against Corporate Bullies and Spies

We’re no stranger to industry bullying. Rick Berman, the corporate lobbyist also known as “Dr. Evil,” launched an attack ad and PR campaign against us because we have been effective at protecting our environment. Meat industry lawyers that were suing the media network ABC over its reporting of lean finely textured beef (better known by its more colorful name, “pink slime”) demanded to see our emails — we refused to hand them over. And BP attempted to bully us into naming our members when we sued the corporation to close an unsafe facility operating in the Gulf of Mexico — again, we stood strong.

The latest intimidation comes in the form of corporate spying. Media reports earlier this summer revealed that Food & Water Watch was surveilled by TigerSwan, a private security firm hired by Energy Transfer Partners, the company responsible for building the Dakota Access Pipeline. We were named many times in TigerSwan reports and we found an infiltrator posing as a volunteer in our Chicago office, spying and collecting internal details about our organizing strategy.

The oil and gas industry’s spy tactics amount to a total disregard of our right to privacy and free speech. We take our privacy and the privacy of our volunteers, supporters and partners very seriously.

That’s why we’re asking Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan to investigate TigerSwan’s activities in Chicago on the grounds that our constitutional and civil rights have been violated. We’re demanding that TigerSwan hand over all unethically and illegally obtained recordings or footage.

With your help, we will continue to stand strong against these attacks and will continue fighting to protect our environment and communities.

OFF Campaign (continued from page 1)

country are asking their elected representatives to sign a pledge and to commit to support policies that stop new fossil fuel projects and transition us to 100% renewable energy by 2035. This is a big request and an ambitious set of goals, but so far, over 125 state and local elected officials have signed the pledge. This is a great demonstration of the political power of our movement, and a sign of more clean energy victories to come.
Working with allies at the national, state and local levels, we recently achieved the following outstanding victories:

**VICTORIES**

- Following a major signature gathering campaign, we passed a measure in Atlantic City, New Jersey preserving residents’ right to vote on any decision to privatize their water system.
- In Oregon, we helped stop a bad piece of state legislation that would have commodified our common water resources by allowing bottlers to pay a volumetric fee to access them.
- We helped a local coalition prevent Nestlé from bottling water in Goldendale, Washington.
- Our Take Back the Tap student program secured new water filling stations at Aquinas College, Central Michigan University (CMU), Rutgers, the College of William and Mary and the University of Montevallo. At CMU, the group got one campus store to stop selling single-use bottles, and the University of Denver agreed to stop handing out disposable water bottles at university admission and welcome events, saving 9,000 to 10,000 bottles a year. A referendum at Southern Oregon University showed that 84 percent of students support banning single-use plastic water bottles on campus.
- We sent 41,375 emails and generated 3,643 calls to senators opposing the Dirty Energy Bill, which we were able to prevent from passing before the August recess. The bill remains a major threat and a key focus of our work.
- In late June, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power announced it would put any plans to expand gas power plants on hold.
- We passed a local fracking waste ban in New Milford, Connecticut, bringing the total number of local bans to 21.
- We passed legislation in New York to give the state more control over fracked oil barge transport on the Hudson River, and convinced the U.S. Coast Guard to temporarily halt a plan to increase oil barge anchorages on the river.
- We worked with Representative Conyers’ office to introduce the WATER Act to fully fund public water infrastructure, with 22 original co-sponsors.
- We submitted an additional 47,306 public comments to the Army Corps of Engineers in opposition to approval of the Dakota Access Pipeline.
- We sent an additional 33,567 messages to members of Congress asking them to support the Keep It In the Ground Act.
- We organized opposition to Scott Pruitt as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with a 500-organization sign-on letter, while generating over 75,000 messages to members of Congress urging opposition to his nomination.
- We sent 58,411 messages to members of Congress asking them to protect funding for the EPA in the upcoming budget.

**MILESTONES**

- We filed a lawsuit in federal court against Donald Trump, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Commerce seeking to void all actions taken by Trump’s “Infrastructure Council,” whose co-chairs both stand to gain financially from the infrastructure deals they’re supposed to be crafting.
- We launched the OFF Fossil Fuels campaign, and have convinced over 125 state and local officials to pledge to move off fossil fuels and to 100% renewable energy by 2035.
- We sent over 15,000 messages to Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan urging her to investigate TigerSwan for spying on our staff, interns and volunteers.
- We participated in the People’s Climate March in Washington, D.C. and helped lead sister marches in Illinois and California.
- We submitted 14,435 messages to Congress urging them to reject proposed budget cuts to the EPA.
- We secured additional co-sponsors to the WATER Act bringing the total number of co-sponsors to 37.
- In June, Food Tank named our executive director Wenonah Hauter one of 22 Women Fighting for Food System Change for her nearly 30 years of work on food, water, energy and environmental issues.
SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: Lani Miller

At Food & Water Watch, we fight hard for healthy food and clean water for everyone. We rely on the passion, dedication and resourcefulness of our supporters to get involved and active in their communities — and we love being able to share how they’re making a difference.

Lani Miller, a former OB/GYN, was drawn to Food & Water Watch because of her background as a scientist. “I was amazed at how evidence-based [a Food & Water Watch booklet on fracking] was,” she says. “I fell for it, hard. It was scientifically impressive. As a scientist, that is really important to me.”

After reading our report on fracking, Lani met for lunch with our Regional Director of Development, Patricia Cronin, who inspired her to join with a group of other Food & Water Watch activists so she could get her friends politicized and involved. And she’s found the transition from delivering babies to full-time activism every bit as satisfying as her medical work.

“Working at the local level is more gratifying personally because you see the steps and how you can have an impact,” she says. “I feel that with time, over the last year, I’ve really connected with a lot of people who have been out there all along. That’s been one of the biggest rewards — not feeling like you’re alone doing the work.”

As Lani continues her efforts, she remains hopeful by looking at the little victories she’s racked up with the support of Food & Water Watch. “There are so many examples nationally and internationally of what’s happening — good stuff! We need to recognize what’s going well and what’s starting to take hold.”

Most importantly, Lani is grateful for the connections she’s built in her time as an activist. With help from Walker Foley, a Southern California organizer with Food & Water Watch, Lani has learned how to build a group of local activists who care about water access, pollution and conservation. She’s even gained name recognition in her community among local representatives and city council members, and is regularly quoted in newspapers for her points of view on water issues.

Now, Lani is using her passion and what she’s learned by building a campaign with other local activists to prevent corporations from gobbling up their water. “When you have connections with other people who are saying what they think is right and what they need, you are winning,” she says. “And then it’s only a matter of time.”

Having Fun and Doing Good: Fundraising for Food & Water Watch

Saving the planet is a team effort! Have fun and raise money to ban fracking and protect our food and water. Thomas Meyer, Food & Water Watch Senior Organizer, wanted to challenge himself with an ultra-marathon.

“It seemed like a perfect opportunity to raise money for Food & Water Action. I’m really excited about the work we’re doing to engage more volunteers and build political power, and it’s awesome to know that all my running is supporting this great organization!”

You can create your own fundraiser for any life event, too! Interested? Visit foodandwaterwatch.org/fundraise or contact Aliya Mejias, our Development Coordinator, at 202-683-2462 or aliya@fwwatch.org, and she’d be happy to plug you in!

Follow our Climate Ride and Climate Hike teams on Instagram at @Foodandwaterwatch!
Natalie Merchant Supports Food & Water Watch With Summer Tour

We are so proud that acclaimed musician and environmental activist Natalie Merchant decided to partner with Food & Water Watch on her tour this summer. While Natalie gave her fans a wonderful musical trip through her career, she reinforced the message of her music not only by donating some of the proceeds from her 3 Decades of Song tour to Food & Water Watch, but also by giving something even more precious — time on her stage to talk about the need to move America OFF Fossil Fuels and on to the clean energy future! Thanks to Natalie, we signed up scores of new volunteers in communities across the country and generated more than a thousand signatures on OFF Fossil Fuels petitions. We are grateful for her extraordinary generosity and are honored to be a partner with her in the fight to make our democracy work for people and the planet. Thank you, Natalie!

IN HER OWN WORDS

Krissy Kasserman
National Factory Farm Campaigner

I grew up in West Virginia where I spent summers swimming in the Ohio River, our nation’s most polluted river. I realized very early that our common resources shouldn’t be sacrificed for corporate gain. I came to Food & Water Watch with a deep understanding of rural issues and 15 years’ experience in environmental advocacy.

I’m grateful to work for Food & Water Watch because of an important lesson I learned during those 15 years — that once we start negotiating with a polluter about what level of pollution is acceptable or when monitoring will occur or which site is least harmful, we’ve already lost. Because those conversations happen within a regulatory system that’s designed to permit pollution, there is no space within the system for citizens to decide if a polluter has any place in their community at all. The system is broken, and even when we win “stronger protections” we still lose.

At Food & Water Watch we recognize that the system is broken — and so we work to change it instead of working within it. Banning fracking, standing against water privatization, calling for a moratorium on factory farms — these aren’t the easiest battles, but they’re the right ones, and I’m proud to work for an organization with the commitment and vision to fight them.
IN HER OWN WORDS

Laura Bernstein
Food & Water Watch Supporter

I’m a committed citizen-environmentalist, and have contact with many organizations. Food & Water Watch stood out for me, initially, because of its Take Back the Tap campaign to limit the use of bottled water: why use three times the water and create plastic pollution when tap water is safe and healthy? And why allow companies to privatize and profit from our public water supply? I took the pledge to avoid bottled water and have been attuned to this issue ever since.

I only have so much money, so I give to about 12 organizations. I’m very selective. But I have been very impressed with the work that Food & Water Watch has done. A lot of that has come from the information on GMO labeling that Food & Water Watch has provided. I selected Food & Water Watch after paying a lot of attention to that issue.

I think Food & Water Watch is both informative and active. It is the kind of organization that actually educates and engages people, as opposed to just one or the other. For example, the telephone town halls that Food & Water Watch hosts have been excellent. These types of conversations show that the organization is not just randomly asking for money, but it’s showing the work that this money goes toward. Food & Water Watch is engaging its supporters in a real way.

The campaign to label genetically modified organisms (GMOs) got my attention next, as we have a right to know what’s in our food. A trip to my state senator’s local office with some knowledgeable Food & Water Watch staff members resulted in the senator deciding to co-sponsor the labeling bill in the Illinois legislature. I was impressed by the staff members’ careful preparation for this meeting, and we managed to move my representative on the issue! I realized how important my participation was.

I support Food & Water Watch because of its willingness to be uncompromising on issues that are vital to the health of people and the planet. Food & Water Watch was the first organization to come out strongly against fracking, rather than wanting to help regulate it. This determination resulted in an anti-fracking victory in Maryland. I will be speaking to my local officials alongside a Food & Water Watch staff member next week to help prevent fracking in Illinois. With patience and persistence, we can make this happen.
We don’t take any government or corporate funding, which means that you and caring people like you power ALL of our campaigns to ban fracking and move America OFF Fossil Fuels. You are in the frontlines protecting our most essential resources — our food and water. And together, we are all standing up to big corporations and demanding that our democracy work for people and the planet.

None of this work would be possible without your actions and your donations. That’s why we’re taking this space to salute you and recognize your enormous contributions to building a powerful movement for a better world.

Thank you to our Leaders Circle members for your major gifts that are the seed money for our campaigns. Thank you to our Champions who make significant gifts throughout the year, and thank you to our monthly donating Partners [501 (c)(3) Food & Water Watch] and Action Partners [501 (c)(4) Food & Water Action] who make a big difference in all of our work through their monthly gifts. Thank you to our Steadfast Friends who have been making multiple gifts every year for five or more years and to some of our newest supporters who have made a big personal commitment through Climate Ride and peer-to-peer fundraising!

We also want to say thank you to those courageous private foundations who provide grants to support safe food and clean water.

And finally, we know that so many people are giving not just money, but their time as well. While we don’t have space to list everybody, we did want to give a shout out to some of our most committed volunteers who give so much of their time to support Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action.

We are deeply grateful to all of our members and supporters for their extraordinarily generous gifts of time and money!
“It’s been wonderful working with Eric [Eric Weltman, senior organizer in New York] and the group at Manhasset. Thanks for providing a vehicle to work from. So many organizations are interested in fundraising without offering such an opportunity to provide some organized personal effort.”

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Anonymous
Diane Beeaney
Colby Bosley-Smith
Elina Bouloubasis
Carol Calhoun
Susan Clancy
Ruth A. Cohen
Jean Cushman
Kathy-Jo de Vos
Jim Egedd
Daryl Gale
Andy Hinz
Barbara Hough
Doria Howe
J.J. Jackson
Sally Roylance Kiefer
Allison LaPlatt
Ceil Lavan, OP
Leola
Bernadette Maher
Margaret Maher
Deila Marx
Margaret Matsumoto
John Morrow
Elise Mysels
Leilani Nemeroff
Linda Powell
Brenda Probasco
Rev. William E. Riley
Ty Rogers
Jen Siskind
Lauren Sawain
Rohan Thadani
Joseph M. Varon
June Wallach
Alan Weinerman
Vivan Weinstein
Mel Whitehouse
Rashelle Jones Zelaznik

Don’t See Your Name Here?

This list was created to specially recognize people and institutions that have provided extraordinary support for Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action. If you would like to see your name listed next year, please see the “Ways to Give” section of our website at foodandwaterwatch.org/ways-give

or contact our Member Services Coordinator, Aliya Mejias, at amejias@fwwatch.org.

Many people and foundations asked to be anonymous, and we have honored their requests. If you feel your name should be on the list but is missing, please know that we absolutely respect our supporters’ privacy and have only listed the names of those individuals who gave us explicit permission to do so. We made every effort to get it right, but we apologize if we inadvertently omitted or incorrectly listed your name. If an error has been made, please contact Aliya at the email address above or by phone at (202) 683-2500.
Food & Water Action at the People’s Summit

Food & Water Action was at the People’s Summit in June, where energized progressives from across the country traveled to Chicago to help build the political revolution that we need to save our environment and our democracy. The convention drew thousands of people to strategize about how to take the country back from the hands of corporations and billionaires. The convention was organized by National Nurses United and co-convened by Food & Water Action, Progressive Democrats of America, People’s Action, People for Bernie, and others.