While many individuals and organizations can take great credit for working on climate change over the years, I believe that Food & Water Watch has played an important role in pushing the environmental movement to demand immediate action to get off of fossil fuels because of the threat of climate change to food, water and our very survival. This shows that our strategy and approach are working, and it’s all thanks to your support.

In 2011, we made the decision to call for a ban on fracking because it was polluting our water resources. It was a bold decision at the time, making us the first national group to join frontline communities calling for a ban, and putting us at odds with the rest of the environmental community that was merely calling for better regulations. We were told that our position was extreme or naïve. But we persisted, supporting grassroots organizations and playing a key role in building the ban movement.

For years we worked relentlessly to ban fracking in New York, and shortly after that we helped bring about a ban in Maryland (and 2019 could be the year we ban fracking in Florida). We went up against establishment Democrats who were either actively enabling the fossil fuel industry in their states or looking to open up their states to fracking by establishing regulatory regimes.

Now, we’re seeing the issue that we’ve toiled on for so long move out of the realm of environmental concerns to widespread acknowledgement that climate change is affecting every aspect of our lives — with our own staff living the effects of storms and floods, wildfires...
“Inspected and Passed”? No, Despite What Our Meat Labels Say

Data obtained by Food & Water Watch under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that hundreds of meat plants, including three involved in recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recalls, had inadequate staffing in 2018 to complete required inspection tasks. The vast majority of the 6,400 plants listed in the agency’s directory reported non-performed inspection tasks over the same period. So-called extraneous materials — like wood and rubber — were found in products from Perdue, Inc., Tyson Foods and others.

Yet somehow, “Inspected and Passed” labels and stamps are still being slapped on meat packages in spite of how many of these tasks aren’t being performed. An obvious question becomes: what weight do these labels carry if, sometimes, the products were not fully inspected? “That these plants were permitted to use the USDA inspection label ‘inspected and passed’ on their product packaging when there was inadequate inspection is tantamount to fraud,” says Tony Corbo, senior lobbyist with the food program at Food & Water Watch.

Americans rely on agencies like the USDA to keep us safe and to ensure a benchmark of trust in the foods that corporations are allowed to sell us. It should be unacceptable for that responsibility to be skirted, ever.

Florida Fracking Ban (continued from page 1)

set up a dedicated team of fighters in the organization, launched our campaign and have been a thorn in the side of the oil and fracking industry in the state ever since. We also formed a coalition of about 60 organizations and more than 250 Florida businesses.

During the 2018 Florida elections, our Food & Water Action team placed constant pressure on all of the candidates for governor to pledge to end fracking. Amazingly, every single candidate, regardless of their party, pledged to ban fracking if they won the seat. Our volunteer Ginger Goepper even got the now-governor on video committing to a fracking ban (see story on page 7)!
Cabot Is Going After Ray Kemble — Targeting All of Us That Speak Out on Fracking

Cabot Oil & Gas doesn’t like anyone meddling in its dirty business in Pennsylvania. So they are targeting Ray Kemble, an outspoken Dimock resident whose water was tainted by Cabot’s operations. Ray, a local 63-year-old who just survived his fourth cancer surgery, was slapped with a $5 million lawsuit for speaking out about his experiences with contamination.

Cabot has settled a number of lawsuits brought by Dimock homeowners who claimed that the company had poisoned their groundwater, decreased their property values and threatened their health and safety. Ray was among the plaintiffs who signed a settlement agreement that included unknown nondisclosure terms. This is how Cabot silences its victims: by using a secrecy provision that state and federal regulators have cited as a roadblock to a full investigation into the impact of fracking on groundwater and public health.

Cabot is not just targeting Ray. A spokesperson from the company recently tried to deflect from its persecution of Ray by saying that it is really going after groups that have provided financial support to him and others who have been victimized by Cabot’s irresponsible fracking operations.

Food & Water Watch has been proud to stand alongside Ray and all the other victims of Cabot and other fracking companies in Dimock, across Pennsylvania and around the country. We’ve provided funding so that people in Dimock who have had their drinking water taken from them have access to clean water, and to assist these courageous frontline advocates who have been fighting hard against crooked companies and bought-and-paid-for elected officials who look the other way. And we will continue to do so even in the face of corporate intimidation.

Wenonah Hauter joined UC Irvine professor James Randerson in calling for a public takeover of the troubled California utility PG&E in a recent op-ed published in the San Francisco Chronicle. The California Public Utilities Commission has found that PG&E diverted $100 million from safety and operational improvements to executive bonuses and shareholders over the course of 15 years. Seventeen out of 21 major California fires in 2017 were due to PG&E’s equipment failures and the company’s power lines touching trees.

“PG&E is offering people of California a false choice between a chaotic bankruptcy and a taxpayer-funded bailout for its shareholders,” Hauter and Randerson wrote. “The alternative is California continues to persist with a failing corporation that lawmakers have refused to hold accountable. Enough is enough.”
Living Through an Unnatural Climate Disaster

Krissy Kasserman, National Factory Farm Campaigner

Behold: Mount Furniture (as we affectionately called it).

This is what our home in Pender County, North Carolina looked like before we fled flooding from Hurricane Florence last September. We moved everything we owned up by three feet. Our sofa, our beds and our desks were all on sawhorses, on tables or on our kitchen island. Everything else was piled up on top.

Three feet, it turned out, wasn’t enough. We knew the damage would be bad, but we didn’t know that, seven months later, we’d still be unable to return home.

After the hurricane, we found 4.5 feet of water in our living space — and we had floodwater in our home for around eight days. We had to gut everything from the floor up to eight feet high. We maxed out our flood insurance with $150,000 in structural damage and $50,000 worth of lost contents. We lost nearly everything. We expect to be out of our home for several more months while we rebuild.

The flooding that affected my home and thousands of others was bad enough, but there was also something potentially deadly in the water. Thousands of factory farms are located in the floodplains of eastern North Carolina. Many of these are hog farms that store hog waste in open-air lagoons, a haven for deadly pathogens like *E. coli* and Salmonella. Dozens of lagoons were flooded or breached during the storm, sending millions of gallons of toxic and dangerous factory
How a Factory Farm Is Keeping a Baby Away From Her Grandparents’ Home

One of the 436 factory farms built or expanded in Iowa in 2018 is right next door to the Nelsons, who had hoped to retire in peace. But their new granddaughter can’t visit their home because the hog farm next door creates too much pollution. That’s because Iowa Select decided to build a 7,500 head factory hog farm right next door.

Around the same time that the Iowa Select facility was under development, the Nelsons’ daughter and her husband welcomed a beautiful baby girl into their family. The baby was born prematurely, but she’s a fighter and is now at home with her mom and dad. Unfortunately, the little girl will never be able to visit grandma and grandpa at their home in Calhoun County — not with her respiratory issues that are a result of her premature birth — because the hog farm next door is spreading manure and polluting their air with hydrogen sulfide, ammonia and particulate matter.

This is why we joined with allies to demand a moratorium on factory farms in Iowa. While our recent moratorium bill in the state didn’t pass, we’ll keep fighting. A moratorium on factory farms is the only real solution to the crisis facing the Nelsons and countless other families, our rural communities, family farms and our water.

IN HER OWN WORDS: Jasmin Vargas

It was eight years ago, working at Greenpeace, that I found myself orchestrating a massive march and rally during Los Angeles’ inaugural Ciclavia, an event first developed in Colombia to activate the streets of Bogotá by blocking cars and traffic to allow for runners, skaters, cyclists and, in this case, protesters. We took over the South Lawn of L.A. City Hall and planted the seeds for the fight for 100 percent clean energy by 2030 in the city.

This was the beginning of my career working on environmental justice. Now, I’ve started this new phase of my organizing with Food & Water Watch because I believe communities on the front lines of fossil fuels have the solutions and should lead. So many people in Los Angeles are touched by dirty fossil fuel infrastructure, mostly communities of color like mine — not to mention the long-term impacts on our climate if we continue to burn the planet. Our city’s health and well-being are on the line, in addition to a stable climate. This is what drives my work every day.

Unnatural Climate Disaster (continued from page 4)

farm waste downstream into countless homes, including my own.

This disaster is bookended by twin environmental crises: the burning of fossil fuels, which causes climate change and makes intense weather events more commonplace; and factory farming, a threat to communities even before such a disaster strikes. While my life has been upended by the hurricane, I am still grateful. Countless others didn’t have flood insurance at all and will have a much harder time rebuilding their lives. And I am fortunate to come to work every day to fight against factory farms and climate change and to advocate for solutions, thanks to your support.
In the past several months, working with our allies, we achieved the following victories and milestones:

- We introduced the WATER Act in the U.S. House and Senate, with 43 co-sponsors in the House (see page 8).
- We defeated plans to build the wasteful and costly Twin Tunnels in California, which would help large corporate agribusinesses.
- Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced that he would not spend money to rebuild natural gas power plants and would instead transition L.A. off of gas.
- We successfully pressured Minnesota’s newly elected governor Tim Waltz to appeal approval of the Line 3 oil pipeline.
- Florida Governor Ron DeSantis issued an executive order calling on the state’s environment department to oppose fracking and offshore drilling, a major step in the campaign to ban fracking in Florida.
- Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf ordered the state’s environment department to suspend review of all permits for Energy Transfer Partners pipelines due to non-compliance, including outstanding permits for the Mariner East 2 pipeline.
- The Cape Atlantic Reliability Project, a controversial gas pipeline proposed to run through the New Jersey Pinelands, was defeated when the company announced it dropped its plans to convert a coal power plant to fracked gas.
- The Franklin Park Borough Council in western Pennsylvania voted down a proposal to sign a lease that would allow a company to frack in a public park.
- Oakmont, Pennsylvania, a municipality in Allegheny County, passed a strong zoning ordinance to limit fracking to industrial areas.
- A bill that would prevent Baltimore residents and churches from losing their homes due to unaffordable or incorrect water bills passed the Maryland House of Delegates.

Our food, water and climate are too precious to every family, person and being on Earth to allow big corporations to continue destroying them. That’s why people are fighting back to stop these huge companies that seem to care only about profits, and are coming together to take back the institutions that were built to protect us; to make our government work for us, not greedy corporate giants. Our lives and our futures depend on winning this fight!

That’s why Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action don’t take corporate or government funding. And why we hope you will use the enclosed envelope to renew your membership or to make a special gift right now.

All of your work and support is leading to big victories for people and our planet in states and localities across the country — like the recent move in Florida to ban fracking and our campaign to stop new factory farms in Iowa. These local and state wins are inspiring more and more people to join with us, leading to a real shift in the national debate around our food, our water and a livable climate.

Now is the time to ramp up our efforts to build on this momentum, to protect our world and ensure a livable future for coming generations. At this critical moment, what happens next all depends on you. If you can afford to do so right now, please use the enclosed envelope to make a gift so that we can keep fighting for our home and our lives!
Volunteer Ginger Goepper Scores Major Win in Florida Fracking Fight

Food & Water Action volunteer Ginger Goepper has been integral to the fight against fracking in Florida. Here’s her account of how she got Republican Governor Ron DeSantis to pledge to ban fracking in the state:

I spoke with his lovely wife Casey first. She asked me who I was with. I told her Food & Water Action and that we’re trying to protect people from toxic poison. I asked her if her husband knew about us, and she said she wasn’t sure but she would ask him. She smiled and politely moved on to another voter. I realized then that if I don’t move forward on this, it won’t happen. Change only happens if we make it happen. So I gently and cautiously tip-toed to the edge of the railing and waited for him to glance in my direction, and very gently and cautiously put my hand out.

So here I am, a sweet little old lady with gray hair, smiling pleasantly to shake his hand. He came over, and then I remembered exactly what Brooke [a Food & Water Watch organizer in Florida] had told me — “don’t let go of his hand until you get your answer.” I remembered Brooke’s coaching, telling me to thank Mr. DeSantis for supporting a ban on offshore drilling on our Florida coastline, and then to immediately say, “Do you also support a ban on fracking in Florida?” It was extremely crowded and noisy, and it was hard for him to hear me, but he emphatically said yes. Then he let go of my hand and my job was done.

The Gift of Planned Giving: A Legacy That Matters
Royelen Boykie, Planned Giving Associate

When you make a big life change, like a change in location, you know the drill. There are tasks that are essential to the actual move, and then there are follow-up tasks. Recently, I sold my home of 25 years, and the lists and details were extensive. I finally arrived at the second-tier tasks. One of those is adjusting my will, because my assets are now distributed differently.

I’ve supported Food & Water Watch over the years in ways that were possible given my financial circumstances. Perhaps you’ve contributed for similar reasons.

For me, working with Food & Water Watch has imbued me with a deep trust in the leadership of Wenonah Hauter and in the organizing team that fights for us, fights for a sustainable and fair future, and does so without compromise or corporate influence.

In addition to my yearly giving, by including Food & Water Watch in my estate plans, I’ve been able to:

- Extend my modest financial support for Food & Water Watch well into the future
- Get the rewards of knowing I have a like-minded and successful organization furthering my legacy
- Deepen my relationship with an organization that I admire and that I know is cultivating, training and mobilizing people to work for the values I think are important, including:
  - A healthy and livable environment
  - Human dignity
  - Justice for all
  - Economic fairness
  - Real democracy

Now that I’m revisiting and adjusting my will to make sure that Food & Water Watch receives the apportionment I desire, I’m energized all over again about my decision to make a planned gift to Food & Water Watch. I am confident that they will help me attain my goal of a legacy of which I can be proud.

Contact me if you’d like to talk about how to create a legacy of which you can be proud, or if you have put Food & Water Watch into your estate planning, at (202) 683-2509 or by email at royelen@fwwatch.org.
In February, Food & Water Watch stood with allies and members of Congress to introduce the Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability (WATER) Act, which would provide $35 billion a year to fund public water by rolling back Trump’s corporate tax cuts. Hoosick Falls, NY resident Michael Hickey (photo, left) attended the press conference, and is pictured with his congressional representative and co-sponsor of the legislation, Rep. Antonio Delgado (D-NY) and Food & Water Watch organizing co-director Emily Wurth. The Senate Bill was introduced by Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and the House bill was introduced by Reps. Barbara Lawrence (D-MI) and Ro Khanna (D-CA).