We’re Focused on Winning

Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director

In our world today, so many distractions divide and fracture our attention. Trump and his corporate enablers know this and have spent the last three years working tirelessly to manipulate us through distraction, especially when it comes to the most dire issues related to our environment and climate. By heaping outrage upon outrage, they hope we’ll be too confused, too weak to fight back. It’s the classic strategy — death by a thousand distractions. But we are not fooled. We are not distracted and we will not be deterred from demanding what we all need to survive and thrive.

You and the fighters at Food & Water Action know that the best and only way to move a progressive agenda forward is to beat back the insidious forces that manipulated Trump into the White House in the first place — unchecked corporate greed, a reckless disregard for human dignity, and a complete focus on short term profits, not our long term needs. Together, for nearly 15 years, we’ve fought and won the battles that other, more easily distracted groups were afraid to wage. It’s how we banned fracking in New York, Maryland and, this year, Washington state. And we’ve stopped fracking in dozens of other communities across the country from Pennsylvania to California. And we’ve halted billions of dollars of investment in new gas infrastructure, pipelines, export facilities and power plants.

As Exxon and other greedy oil giants have tried again and again to distract us with lies about “clean” natural gas, or “clean” coal, or “green” biogas, or bridge fuels, or carbon offsets, we have answered clearly, confidently, persistently: Ban fracking. End fossil fuels. Renewables now.

We’ve been fighting Trumpism since before Trump.

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Think California is a leader in fighting climate change? It should be, but the Golden State is second only to Texas as a greenhouse gas emitter. As a major oil producing state, California has a long way to go in protecting our climate and communities from toxic fossil fuel emissions. In September, Food & Water Action published an important new report, California Leads: How to Break Fossil Fuel Dependence in the Golden State, which catalogues the massive web of oil and gas infrastructure across the state and what must be done to establish California as a true climate leader.

We reveal that California is home to 298 gas-fired power plants and 100,000 miles of oil and gas pipelines. Most of this dangerous infrastructure is located in the most vulnerable areas — low-income communities of color near homes, schools and parks. And California has issued nearly 2,400 new oil and gas drilling permits since the beginning of the year, while the frequency of toxic leaks and spills is on the rise.

While California is supposedly on track to achieve 100% renewable energy generation by 2045, (still 15 years too late to stave off the worst of climate chaos, according to the latest science) our report exposes plans to build seven new gas-fired power plants in the state. These plants would likely operate well beyond 2045. California also routinely allows oil companies to inject toxic drilling wastewater into the ground, in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Some counties even permit the irrigation of crops with wastewater.

During his campaign, then-candidate Gavin Newsom promised to point California away from dirty fossil fuels and toward clean, renewable energy. He also stated his intent to rein in fracking and shut down the Aliso Canyon gas storage facility, the site of America’s worst-ever gas blowout. Since taking office in January, the governor has yet to act on any of these promises.

California Leads shows that Governor Newsom has the authority to immediately take the actions he promised — authority that would be strengthened by declaring a climate emergency in the state.

In fact, our report makes several policy recommendations to the governor, including:

• Ordering an immediate halt to new fossil fuel drilling permits and developing a plan to phase out all fossil fuel production;

(continued on next page)
As an organizer with Food & Water Action, my job is to think every day about how to bring people together to fight — to fight to reclaim their own political and economic power, to fight the corporate interests that have hijacked our democratic institutions and to fight to win real solutions against catastrophic climate change. Most of the people I work with don’t necessarily think of themselves as activists. They’re ordinary people who want to make sure their families and local communities have clean water, safe food and a livable climate. They’re people who know the difference between fair and unfair, between right and wrong, and who are ready to fight back.

But rich and powerful corporations are lined up to try to stop them. These corporate giants believe that their profits are more important than people’s lives and they spare no expense to try to silence the voices of the real people harmed by their greed. That’s where Food & Water Action and organizers like me step in.

We know that bringing people together around meaningful policies is the best way to make change. While corporations and their government decision makers try to divide and isolate people, we mobilize and organize people to build strength and help them reclaim the power to shape their lives and futures. That’s what Food & Water Action is doing right now.

Finding people like you and working with grassroots groups to fight Big Oil’s efforts to deepen their grip on my state of Florida. They’re fighting to open up the state and our coasts to more oil drilling and fracking. But we’re fighting back. We’re gearing up to pass a statewide ban on fracking in the upcoming Florida State Legislative Session. With your support we’ve built a statewide network of Floridians fighting to keep their drinking water free from toxic fracking chemicals. And now with your continued support, we will run a hard-hitting campaign to hold Governor Ron DeSantis accountable to protect our health and drinking water in Florida instead of protecting Big Oil’s pocketbook.

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and elect congressional champions who will advance a federal ban on fracking, critical water infrastructure legislation, and a ban on factory farms; (3) elect champions to state and local office who will have the power to deliver on Food & Water Action campaigns to stop pipelines, fracking, and factory farms.

Although the political team is new, we’ve already had great success this year on all three fronts — with much more planned for 2020.

At the federal level, we have successfully moved fracking into the national debate. Up until a few months ago, there was only one United States senator who had publicly called for a national ban on fracking, but thanks in large part to our organizing that changed. In the lead up to the CNN climate town hall, we launched a petition calling on CNN to ask candidates about fracking and released a graphic comparing candidates positions on fracking, pipelines, and fossil fuel exports (see above). Subsequently, Senators Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, and Cory Booker voiced support for a federal ban on fracking. We are also on the ground in Iowa, where the national media is focused on the first Democratic contest, bringing attention to fracking and factory farm issues.

At the congressional level we launched our survey for 2020, which we will be using in determining endorsements and also demonstrating the breadth of support for Food & Water Action priority campaigns. Last cycle, through our candidate pledge, we got over 100 candidates to commit to supporting bold climate legislation if elected — and many candidates including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Katie Hill, who we worked to elect, have followed through on that commitment.

At the state and local level, earlier this year we helped elect new city councilmembers in Denver who are champions of our ban on fracking. And right now we are working on a slate of state and local races in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia. In 2020 Food & Water Action will be engaging in a larger slate of races across the country — including in California — in critical targeted areas that are needed to block pipelines, stop fracking, and move to 100% renewable energy.
FOOD & WATER ACTION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Banning Fracking Waste in Connecticut Was a Huge Win — But it Started Out Small

By Jennifer Siskind, Community Leader and Food & Water Action Member

After years of education and grassroots organizing, this July the governor of Connecticut signed into law a ban on the storage or processing of toxic, radioactive fracking waste.

The votes in the legislature that delivered this bill to his desk were overwhelming: 36-0 in the Senate, 147-1 in the House. But that doesn’t mean the fight was easy. And in fact, this big win started out small.

When Food & Water Watch decided to work on a waste ban, I developed a PowerPoint presentation and started giving lectures and connecting with people who wanted to take action. There is no drilling in our state, but I had seen the effects of fracking up close and personal. Drilling was inching ever closer to my parent’s home in Pennsylvania. Right now, fracking wells are only 2,000 feet from my mother’s bedroom window!

The dangers of fracking don’t just impact those living near a well; thousands of gallons of waste are generated by every well, a toxic mix of radioactive slurry, contaminated water and unknown chemicals. All that waste must go somewhere—and in fact the industry has even convinced some states that there are “beneficial” uses for fracting waste.

We knew that if Connecticut drafted rules to allow fracking waste, we would see spills at storage and transfer sites, which would threaten public health and our state’s clean water.

But to enact a state-wide ban, we knew we had to build a movement, town by town. And the first successful campaign started in Coventry, with a small citizen’s group of six, two of whom were women in their 80s. Their town charter allowed a petition initiative, which meant that if they collected enough signatures, their town council would be forced to hold a meeting and vote on the exact ordinance language the petition proposed.

The town manager and council weren’t happy that we’d opened up the democratic process, but we continued to build awareness. On the big day, 90 residents from this small rural town showed up to vote. It would have been unanimous, but one guy in the back, with a huge grin on his face, put his hand up when it was time to count the ‘No’ votes... much to the chagrin of his wife.

From that first victory a grassroots coalition continued to grow until it snowballed. From suburbs, farm towns, and urban environmental (continued on page 6)
Local Victories (continued from page 3)

It is your donations that enable Food & Water Action to support my work and the work of organizers around the country. We’re grateful for all the tools and all the support that make our work possible. In fact, the newest tool in our fight came this past summer, when Food & Water Action launched a new strategic plan.

The new plan focuses our work as a clear response to the risks that climate change poses to people, our food and our water. As someone who fights with communities to make change, I have seen firsthand how powerful people are when they come together. Together, we banned fracking in New York, Maryland and Washington State. We’ve stopped dangerous oil and gas infrastructure in states across the country. And we built the national movement to ban fracking everywhere and set the stage for a real Green New Deal.

But our work is just beginning. Food & Water Action’s new strategic plan highlights three core campaigns that we’ll be waging. Together, we’re fighting to: 1) Stop catastrophic climate change by working at the federal, state and local levels to eliminate the production and use of fossil fuels. 2) Make sure we all have access to clean and affordable water. 3) Ban factory farms and fight to create a just and equitable food system that protects our air, water, communities, family farmers and climate.

The challenges we are taking on today are the biggest issues we’ve ever faced. I’m proud to be fighting on the ground with the people and communities who bear the brunt of the climate crisis. And I’m proud that our approach focuses on action — it’s bold, it’s hard-hitting, and it works. I’m going to keep fighting to bring people together to make real change. We need people like you, your friends and family to join the fight.

Banning Fracking Waste in Connecticut (continued from page 5)

Justice communities, people rose up to take action.

By the time we had made it to almost 60 towns, state legislators could not ignore our momentum. Fossil fuel lobbyists even made a last ditch effort to derail our movement, but the vote totals speak for themselves.

Every day we’re confronted by a new Trump administration action that is an affront to decency and democracy. But our movements to take power back are growing. And that’s what makes it so rewarding to work with local leaders who are taking on important fights for a safe, livable future — and winning.
We’re Focused on Winning (continued from page 1)

And our focus has paid off. We’ve helped ordinary people across America to join together and fight for food they can trust, for clean, affordable drinking water and a livable climate. We’ve mobilized people to build political power and — through that — to fight effectively and boldly for the future of our planet.

We all know what the 2020 election means. But we can’t let the promise of 2020 distract us from the urgent work we have to do right now. We can’t afford to wait another year — or even another day — to win a different vision for America and for our future. Food & Water Action is doing that right now. Right now, we’re fighting on the ground in cities and towns across America to win the real solutions to save us and our children from climate chaos. Right now, we’re fighting to protect people and our most essential resources. And right now, we need you and your friends and families to join with us to fight like you live here.

We can’t be fooled. We won’t be distracted. Focused and fighting together, we will win the future we all deserve.

Thanks to YOU, we all can fight like we live here!

Our food, water and a livable climate are under assault by corporations that put profits over people. Together, we are mobilizing to fight back and protect our health, our communities, and our democracy.

We don’t take any corporate or government funding so that we can take the strong, independent stands necessary to protect people and what we need to thrive.

Truly, YOU are Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action.

As we head into a new year, we wanted to recognize and honor those people like you, who are true heroes for people and the planet. Thank YOU for all you do and all you give!

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Our Leaders make major gifts that allow us to strategically plan our campaigns to stop fracking and demand a clean energy future to protect people, our climate, and our food and water. We are very grateful for their investments in fighting for a better world.

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No matter how you choose to give, your donations make a real difference. We wanted to thank those members who make regular gifts at the time of their choosing throughout the year by recognizing some of our most consistent and loyal supporters!

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Thank you to those members who have made estate plans that include designations to support our work for safe food and clean water so that future generations can live in a better world.

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It takes vision and courage for private philanthropy to support our advocacy for trustworthy food, clean water and a livable climate. Thank you to these foundations for their grants and support for all of our work.

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What better way to save the world than by enlisting your friends to help! Thank you to those people who were part of peer-to-peer fundraising challenges. We hope you had fun while doing good!

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People are our secret weapon in the fight for safe food and clean water. We don’t have space to list all of those who have been part of our campaigns in 2019, but

Claude Guillemard
Vanna Haniff
Pat Harcarik
Stephen Hopkins
Jennifer Horowitz
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Joanne Koslofsky
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Why Isn’t MY Name Here?

We are publishing this list to honor and recognize those people and institutions that provided extraordinary support in 2019. If you are wondering why your name isn’t here... it could be in the future! We only listed people who gave us explicit permission, and only listed them in the format they requested. Many people and foundations wish for their names to be anonymous, and we have honored their requests. If you feel your name should be on this year’s list, and we missed it, please accept our apologies, but know that we erred on the side of caution and only listed the names of those who gave us explicit permission to list them.

We tried hard to get it right, and are very sorry if we inadvertently omitted or incorrectly listed your name. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Alexa by email at donate@fwwatch.org or by phone at 202-683-4941. Thank you again to all who agreed to be recognized — and to all who wished to remain anonymous — for your incredible support.

We would love to honor you and publicly recognize your contributions next year!
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!