

LABEL

CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE
May 2020

NJ First Lady Tammy
Murphy visits with
friends of COA
(see inside)



- NESE Comment Extension
- 2019 Beach Sweeps Report
- Virtual Student Rally, and more!

Inside this Issue

Clean Ocean Action
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day

"These are certainly challenging, uncharted times due to the pandemic. But there is comfort in that our world is an extraordinary natural wonder unlike any other, filled with special places and ecological treasures. In fact, we've searched billions of light years into space and found nary a life form. And on this remarkable planet, there is one ultimate truth: Mother Nature is the boss. She has rules and we break them at our own peril. Whether the pandemic, devastation from climate change, the plastic plague or other misuses of chemicals, we are ultimately at her disposal. The good news is that Mother Nature is healing, nurturing, benevolent, and very flexible. We need only to pay heed to her warnings. To ensure a healthy future, Earth Day should be our constant state of mind and purpose...always, and not just a day," said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action.**

CARES Act Opens More Ways to Give

For our true-blue supporters, did you know that the CARES Act adds a new above-the-line deduction that allows an individual who does not itemize to deduct up to \$300 of cash contributions to a qualified charity? This is in addition to the standard deduction. After supporting our first responders and those in need, we hope you will consider supporting Clean Ocean Action as we continue our work to combat ocean pollution. Please visit www.cleanoceanaction.org – with thanks!

Tributes

Photo courtesy of Joe Reynolds

In Memory of:

- Peter Cauterucci
- Joe Galacki
- Theodore Josberger
- Gordon N. Litwin
- Zachary Misch
- Carol Anne Ross
- Andrew W. Thompson
- Barbara Jane Thompson

In Honor of:

- Happy Birthday to Dora Badyanova
- Congratulations to Amanda Cusack
- Congratulations to Franklin Cougar
- Mellencamp Grosso, IIV
- PJ Hyduke
- Krista, Elizabeth and Robby
- Kelly, Noah & Ann Mascarenhas
- Margo Pellegrino
- Beca Stone

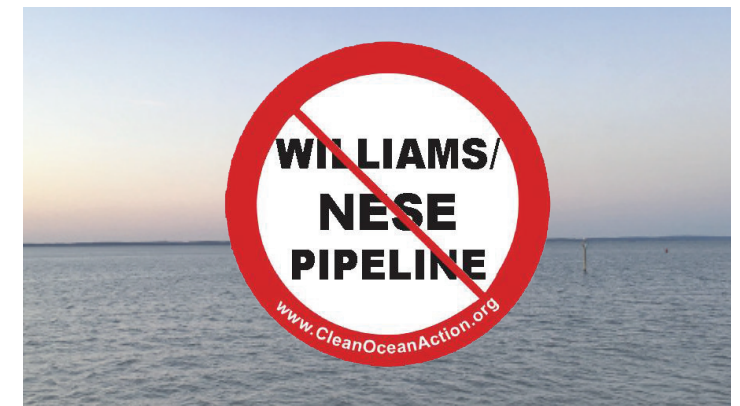


POLICY

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Extension: NESE Public Comments

COA thanks the citizens, groups, towns, and officials who sent comments opposing NESE to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in April. Following the original April 6th deadline, COA learned that NJDEP reopened the public comment period at the request of the company behind the proposal, Williams/Transco. Public comments are now being accepted until May 7 at the following link: www.nj.gov/dep/nese. Further, the current health crisis resulted in later deadlines and decision dates on various NESE permits (see below for details).



Upcoming NESE Decision Dates:

- May 7 - Public comment deadline to NJDEP on NESE project (pipeline & compressor station)**
- May 17 - NY Governor Cuomo's decision on relevant NESE permits**
- June 2020 - NY Public Service Commission (PSC) decision on National Grid report**
- June 5 - Federal offshore permit**
- June 12 - NJ Governor Murphy's decision on Federal Water Quality Certificate (WQC)**

New Webinar on Fracking & Methane Gas Projects

COA and other groups working to stop NESE co-sponsored an April 16th webinar with author Justin Nobel, entitled "Fracking and Radioactivity: The Downstream Dirt on Health Impacts of Fracked Gas." Justin Nobel's Rolling Stone article "America's Radioactive Secret" looks at the dangers of the natural gas industry, fracking, radiation, and the practices and regulatory issues that put people and communities at risk. During the webinar, Justin discussed why unneeded gas projects, like NESE, are harmful. Over 100 citizens attended the call. Contact COA for a recording of the call.

NEW Expert Report Proves NESE is "Un-NESE-sary"

National Grid, a multinational utility company, claimed that there will be an increase in natural gas demand in the coming years for its Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island, NY service territory. The company entered into a contract with Williams/Transco to purchase supply for the proposed NESE Project. When NESE was denied by regulators in both NY & NJ, National Grid placed a moratorium on all new gas service connections. The NY Public Service Commission (PSC) opened a regulatory proceeding to investigate whether the moratorium was proper. A settlement was made, and National Grid agreed to pay \$36 million in penalties and was ordered to develop a Long-Term Capacity Report, which was published on February 24.

The Eastern Environmental Law Center contacted Synapse Energy Economics to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Capacity Report. Synapse published their report entitled "Assessment of National Grid's Long Term Capacity Report" on April 6, 2020. The Synapse report confirms that there is absolutely no need for the NESE Project, or any other large-scale fossil fuel infrastructure investment. The report outlines several critical errors and omissions associated with National Grid's Capacity Report, which led the company to falsely conclude that they needed additional natural gas capacity. Indeed, this information is clear evidence that NESE is "UN-NESE-sary". COA supported the report. Visit CleanOceanAction.org -for a copy of the Synapse Report.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Spencer Munson, Resource and Event Coordinator, Programs@CleanOceanAction.org
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Run the Hook is Going Virtual!

Looking to get out of the house for healthy exercise and ocean advocacy? Participate in this year's virtual Run the Hook 5K/10K!

Due to the recent health crisis, Gateway National Recreation Area - Sandy Hook has cancelled all events through May including the Annual Run the Hook event. You will still receive your RTH t-shirt plus a 20% discount for Run The Hook 2021.

Virtual runners can run their race anytime, anywhere as many times as they want and submit their best time to Split Second Racing between April 26th and May 10th. Results will be posted online so you can see where you stacked up against the competition.



Despite the change to the event, Joey Garofalo, owner of Beacon Events, has pledged to make the usual donation from the proceeds to COA. Waves of thanks to Joey for his inspiring generosity in the face of these unprecedented obstacles! Visit runthehooknj.com for more info and to purchase tickets.

Welcome, Kristen Grazioso, to the COA Crew!



COA welcomes Kristen Grazioso, Education Coordinator, to our team! In March, Kristen jumped right in during these challenging times, and hit the ground running on programs and materials to educate students of all ages about ocean pollution issues. Her knowledge and experience, as well as a true zest for environmental education and a passion for the environment, has prepared her well to be part of our crew.

Kristen graduated from University of California – Santa Barbara with a degree in environmental studies and a minor in education. Kristen has experience in a school setting, and with nonprofit organizations and youth centers and camps. Prior to her employment, COA was already familiar with Kristen's ability to communicate environmental issues and solutions. Kristen was training to become a COA Education Ambassador, and served as a workstation and field trip leader in recent Student Summits.

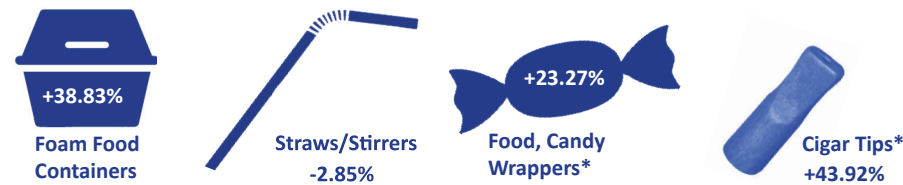
Kristen will lead and develop our education programs and initiatives. She is working on the launch of our new SEAL program for high school students, thanks to funding from Impact 100 Jersey Shore. Kristen is also blazing the virtual education trail for COA by transforming our Spring Student Summit into a fun, informative, and engaging virtual experience for middle school students this May. Kristen brings her bi-coastal experiences to COA's team. Welcome aboard, Kristen!

SCIENCE

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Alison McCarthy, Watershed Protection Coordinator, Outreach@CleanOceanAction.org

Over 7 Million Reasons to Salute Beach Sweeps

COA released the 2019 Beach Sweeps Report last month, documenting the results of a record 10,744 volunteers who removed a record 496,291 items from the beach in just 6 hours during last year's Spring and Fall events. The report highlights: the cumulative items removed over the past 34 years of Beach Sweeps -- an astonishing 7,239,232; the twelve most commonly collected items ("The Dirty Dozen"); the most outrageous finds ("The Roster of the Ridiculous"); as well as how data was used to promote policies to reduce sources of marine debris.

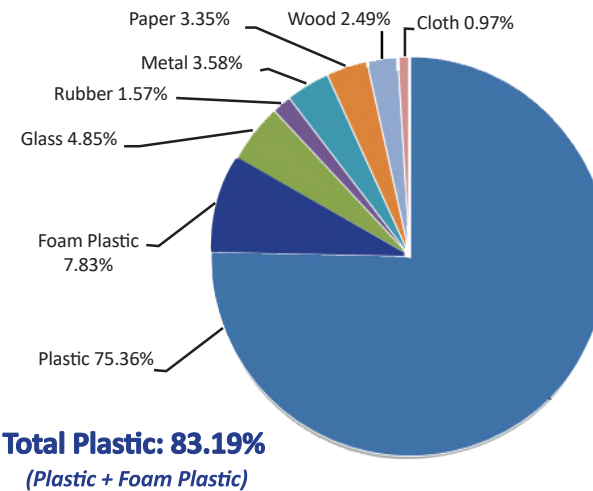


As in recent years, persistent and harmful plastic and foam plastic items accounted for 83.19% of the total items collected in 2019. This is in part due to substantial increases in the number of single-use plastic items found during the Sweeps. For example, cigar tips showed a 43.92% increase in the amount collected when compared to 2018.

The evidence is clear: though some plastic items appear to be on a declining trend, overall, society's epidemic use of disposable plastic items is increasing and adding litter to beaches, harming marine life, and negatively impacting water quality. Plastics collect contaminants and break down into smaller and smaller bits, ultimately becoming microplastics. Overall, plastics are causing significant threats to the food chain.

To view the 2019 Beach Sweeps Report visit CleanOceanAction.org.

2019 Data Breakdown by Category



Rally for the Rivers Eco-Fest Postponed

The Rally for the Rivers Eco-Fest, originally planned for the end of May, has been rescheduled to ensure public safety. Save the date for Saturday, October 3, when many local organizations and towns in the Two Rivers area will be "connecting the drops" at the 3rd Annual Rally for the Rivers Eco-Fest by highlighting the importance of keeping the rivers clean through free, family-friendly educational programs and activities. For the third year, Clean Ocean Action and the Rumson Environmental Commission are co-coordinating the event at Victory Park for the Rally for the Two Rivers project—an alliance of over 20 organizations and eight towns to help protect water quality in the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers.

POLICY

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Industry Lobbies Towns in Crisis to Bag the Bag Bans

NJ Food Council (NJFC) President Linda Doherty sent a letter to all NJ towns with ordinances banning plastic bags, suggesting that the Governor's Executive Orders during the COVID-19 health emergency require towns to stop enforcing plastic bag reduction laws. NJFC says plastic bag laws "impede the ability for citizens to obtain goods and/or may inadvertently cause further spread of COVID-19 by requiring the use of reusable bags."



In response, seven organizations, including COA, sent a letter to the towns urging them and local stores to maintain local single use bag policies and time-lines. The groups cited there are no stipulations in the Executive Orders that suggest the need to stop enforcing local ordinances. Furthermore, no evidence exists that single-use plastic bags are safer or more sanitary than reusable bags. In fact, according to a new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the virus can live up to three days on plastic. The NJFC is also attacking the use of reusable bags during the health crisis, which the groups have found to be a baseless argument based on sound science.

It is important to make sure that single-use plastic bag advocates cannot use the COVID-19 public health emergency as an excuse to stop plastic bans in New Jersey. We can have a clean environment and protect employees and customers at the same time.

COA is encouraged to know that some towns have chosen to stay strong on their plastic bag ordinances, and other towns, including Oceanport and Belmar, have passed plastic reduction ordinances in April. For more about plastic reduction ordinances, go to CleanOceanAction.org.

BP Oil Spill: 10 Years After



April 20th marked the 10th Anniversary of the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster that devastated the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico and the livelihoods of the surrounding coastal communities. This year, it was ironically the day that oil prices fell below \$0 for

the first time ever. An international oil supply war combined with stay-at-home restrictions due to the COVID-19 health crisis, created an oil glut, lowering the price of the fossil fuel into negative territory.

Recent scientific observations demonstrate the impacts of fossil fuel use. Air pollution has declined, showing the large impact fossil fuel use has on air and water quality. Noting the improvements to our air, now is the time to move away from fossil fuels and to pivot jobs and investment to energy efficiency and conservation, as well as renewables.

Two-years ago on this date, NJ Governor Murphy passed the "STOP Offshore Oil and Gas" Bill to protect our coast, since then over 10 other states have adopted similar legislation. The impacts from spills and disasters and the pollution from using fossil fuels are reasons why COA urges elected officials to take actions toward a fossil fuel-free future, including denying projects such as NESE.