



## ENVIRONMENT MAINE Your Fall Report

# The EPA announced plans to repeal the ‘Dirty Water Rule.’ Here’s what’s next.

Ready to say goodbye to the Trump administration’s Dirty Water Rule? So are we. Thankfully, we took a big step in that direction.

This summer, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its plan to repeal and replace the “Dirty Water Rule”—a Trump administration policy that left the drinking water of millions of Americans at risk from polluters.

It’s the latest round in a decades-long debate over the Clean Water Act—and for our research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, it’s progress years in the making.

### Decades-old protections restored

Fifty years ago, water pollution ran virtually unchecked, putting public health and the environment at risk. The solution? The 1972 Clean Water Act, which set enforceable, clear limits on what polluters could dump into our waterways.

For decades, the Clean Water Act yielded progress toward cleaning up and protecting our waters. But in 2006, a Supreme Court ruling left 20 million acres of wetlands and more than half our nation’s streams without clear protection under the Act.

From the Chesapeake Bay to Puget Sound, streams and wetlands protect our larger waterways, filtering out pollutants and providing wildlife habitat. Plus, the streams put at risk by the 2006 ruling help provide drinking water to 117 million Americans.

In the face of this dirty ruling, our national network got to work.



*Senior Director of our Clean Water for America Campaign John Rumpler preparing to testify before Congress on behalf of our clean water protections in early 2020.*

Environment America Research & Policy Center and the rest of Environment Maine’s national network worked to bring the Clean Water Act back to its full water-saving potential.

We assembled more than 1 million supporters and 1,000 influential voices, including business owners, elected officials and more. Our research partners issued reports on the necessity of water protections while our advocates lobbied 50 congressional offices and advocated in front of Congress and the EPA.

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Photo credits: Corey A. Gray; Top photo: Jerry Whaley via Shutterstock.

Thanks  
for making it  
all possible

## 59,000 supporters, 40 lawmakers tell Whole Foods to put 'planet over plastic'

A massive environmental crisis requires a massive call to action.

That's why our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with our friends at U.S. PIRG Education Fund and the Student PIRGs, delivered a letter to Whole Foods on May 6, 2021—signed by nearly 60,000 supporters,

Maine passed a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags, as well as our nation's first ban on polystyrene foam, back in 2019. Those bans went into effect on July 1, 2021, but that wasn't the only plastics victory in store.

On July 13, Gov. Janet Mills signed extended producer responsibility for packaging legislation, once again taking a first-in-the-nation step to stop plastic pollution. The legislation will hold producers financially responsible for the waste they create and incentivize reduced production while providing relief for local recycling programs.

"Back in 2018, Environment Maine supporters submitted 7,800 petitions to win our nation's first polystyrene ban—and seven states have followed suit," said Environment Maine State Director Anya Fetcher. "Now, we're ready to lead once more and shift the cost of plastics from consumers back to the producers who made them."

## Report: After years of advancement in clean energy technology, it's clear that 'We Have The Power'

It's time for Maine to move beyond fossil fuels—and fortunately, we have the power to realize our clean, renewable energy potential.

That was the finding of the "We Have The Power" report, released in June by our national research partner, Environment America Research & Policy Center. According to the report, America has the technical potential to meet all its electricity needs many times over with wind and solar energy.

"To a visitor from an earlier century, America in 2021 would be unimaginably advanced in all ways but one: We still rely on dirty and dangerous fossil fuels to meet our energy needs," said Susan Rakov, chair of Environment America Research & Policy Center's Clean Energy program.

"But it doesn't have to be that way. This report shows that between the sunshine and the wind, we have the potential to run our society on clean energy, today and in the future."

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentmaine.org>.



Staff

Our national network's Oceans Associate Reino Hyyppa (top, center) joined legislators and supporters for a virtual rally against plastic waste.

including 40 state lawmakers—calling on the grocer to phase out single-use plastic packaging in its stores. Once an environmental leader that stopped providing plastic bags to its customers at checkout in 2008, Whole Foods recently earned an "F" for its plastic policies in a report by environmental group As You Sow.

"Nothing we use for just a few minutes should pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years," said Kelsey Lamp, Protect Our Oceans campaign director for Environment America Research & Policy Center, our national research partners. "That's why the companies that rely on single-use plastic to package their products must adopt more sustainable packaging options or eliminate single-use plastic packaging altogether."

"Change is possible, and Whole Foods should lead the way to a future where we put the planet over plastic."

## Maine's plastic bans go into effect as state enacts producer responsibility legislation

In July, Maine took two nation-leading steps to tackle our plastic pollution crisis.



### Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Maine or Environment Maine Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMaine.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMaine.org)



## Page 1 story continued: Repealing the Dirty Water Rule

And in 2015, we won: The Obama administration enacted the Clean Water Rule, which protected our waterways once more.

### Restoring hope after attacks

Then, the Trump administration vowed to repeal the Clean Water Rule on day one—and it even planned on replacing it with a policy known as the Dirty Water Rule.

So, Environment America Research & Policy Center stepped up again—organizing thousands to stop the Dirty Water Rule.

Despite our best efforts, the Dirty Water Rule was finalized in 2020 and reopened the floodgates for polluters. This new rule has left half our remaining wetlands and thousands of streams without federal protection.

But all hope was not lost: That same grassroots support—yours included—fueled our campaign to repeal the Dirty Water Rule.

First, we joined other groups in suing the Trump administration’s EPA. Second, we made sure the incoming Biden administration saw the overwhelming public support for stronger clean water protections.

Then, we saw progress: The EPA announced its intention to reverse the Dirty Water Rule.

But intention is not implementation—our work is far from over. Many of our waterways are still at the mercy of polluters. So we’re calling on the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permanently protect our waterways.

The Clean Water Act turns 50 next year—and with your support, we will work to ensure that all our nation’s waters are protected under this bedrock environmental law.

*By John Rumpler, Clean Water for America campaign director*

*In 2014, a coalition led by our national network delivered more than 700,000 comments from Americans to the EPA in support of restoring protections to the nation’s streams and wetlands.*



Thank you for supporting our work to take on the vast environmental challenges we face and to create a greener, healthier, more sustainable world. In these pages, you’ll find the stories of the advocacy you made possible.

Your action and support allow us to keep working for a better world. Thank you.

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State Director

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# Environment Maine

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## Your Fall Report

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### Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Maine, Inc, a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Maine's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Nation's strongest bee-saving legislation becomes law in Maine

A new law in Maine raises the bar for bees.

On June 30, Gov. Janet Mills and Environment Maine participated in a bill-signing ceremony after passing the nation's strongest safeguards for bees. With an Environment Maine Bee-Safe mask on, Gov. Mills signed legislation prohibiting certain neonic pesticide use in outdoor residential areas—a measure that could help avoid the collapse of ecosystems that scientists warn

would follow the loss of bees.

“There is no justification for the use of these pesticides in our residential areas,” said Anya Fetcher, Environment Maine state director. “Signing this legislation into law is meaningful because it ups the odds that Maine’s meadows and gardens continue to buzz with the sound of bees.”

Environment Maine rallied more than 10,000 Mainers as well as 60 beekeepers, scientific, public health, farming and environmental organizations to show decision-makers their support for the law. With this victory at home, Environment Maine is now calling on the world's largest retailer, Amazon, to stop selling bee-killing pesticides.

*Gov. Mills, wearing an Environment Maine Bee-Safe mask, signs LD 155 into law. To her right, Environment Maine State Director Anya Fetcher stands with bill sponsors and advocates.*



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