



ENVIRONMENT **NORTH CAROLINA** 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 pollutants.

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 North Carolina’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. Continued on page 3 ►

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,

peril. But it's better to show than tell.

That's why our national network hosted a virtual talk with Brian Skerry, an award-winning photojournalist who has worked with National Geographic since 1998, to share photos from his four decades of diving. His message: Human activity, notably via the fishing industry, is doing untold damage to our oceans—but strong action can return ocean life and ecosystems to health.

We were also joined by sailor, artist and trustee of the New England Aquarium, Linda Cabot.

"I believe we are living at a pivotal moment in history ... for the very first time in human history we understand both the problems and the solutions to solving these environmental issues," Skerry said. "The only question is, will we bear witness to the destruction? Or will we, as [French explorer Jacques] Cousteau urged a generation ago, protect what we love?"

Executive order promises to boost North Carolina's offshore wind production

North Carolina has the potential to meet all of its electricity needs more than 30 times over with wind and solar energy—and the state just took a major step toward tapping this potential.

On June 9, Gov. Roy Cooper issued an executive order that commits North Carolina to producing 8 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2040. The move, which follows a flurry of national and regional offshore wind advancements, also establishes a task force on offshore wind.

"Harnessing the massive potential of wind off our coast is a key component to transitioning our state to 100 percent clean energy," said Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center Advocate Krista Early. "With some of the greatest potential for offshore wind in the country, North Carolina stands to gain a lot from offshore wind investments."

Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center staff and members will continue advocating for clean energy policies and calling on Gov. Cooper to take bold climate action.

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentnorthcarolina.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."

Brian Skerry, renowned nature photojournalist, joined us to talk about the wonders of our oceans

Advocates can tell you that our oceans are otherworldly, beautiful and increasingly in



Toward a greener future

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

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNorthCarolina.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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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 North Carolina, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting North Carolina'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.

Over 47,000 supporters tell Amazon: Stop selling bee-killing pesticides

To save the bees, our staff have asked the world's largest online retailer to stop selling the pesticides that kill them. And we're not alone.

In March, Environment North Carolina and our national network kicked off our campaign to convince Amazon to take neonicotinoid pesticides (or "neonics")—the substances linked to a troubling decline in bee populations—off its (virtual) shelves.

By August, campaigners with our network had collected more than 47,000 petition signatures online and in 10 communities across the country.

"We need to reduce the use of this pesticide that's contributing to the collapse of our most important pollinators," said Malia Libby, our national Save the Bees campaign associate. "Amazon should join other retailers in doing the right thing and taking it off its shelves."

Our ask is far from unprecedented: The Home Depot and Lowe's have already pledged to phase out the use of neonics on their live plants, and Lowe's has committed to taking the pesticides off its shelves altogether.

Our national network's summer canvassers talked to tens of thousands of people across the country about our campaign to get Amazon to stop the sale of bee-killing pesticides.



Staff