



July 2020



# CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE

Defending the Sea Since 1984

### A Statement on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

*“The ocean brings the world together and a healthy ocean sustains life on earth for all people. Clean Ocean Action (COA) stands against racial, social, and economic injustice and will work to ensure our mission is committed to diversity, equality, and inclusion. These are not words but actions that truly bind humanity together and are at the core of a sustainable livable world. For COA, this is a mindset that works to ensure that these values are enhanced by our mission.”*

— Cindy Zipf, Executive Director and Board of Trustees, Clean Ocean Action



## POLICY

Kari Martin, Advocacy Campaign Manager, Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org; Peter Blair, Esq., Policy Attorney, Policy@CleanOceanAction.org

### USEPA Issues Rule Changes to Clean Water Act

On Monday, June 1, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) released new implementing regulations for Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which govern the water quality certification process for proposed projects. The new rules will strip states' rights to protect water quality from pipelines. The changes are favorable for industry and for the recent Williams/Transco NESE Pipeline.



The rule will be published in the Federal Register and is expected to take effect within 60 days from that date of publication. Various national environmental groups have indicated legal action against the rule changes. Twenty-two states also submitted a joint letter opposing the rule changes during the public comment period.

### NJ Moves to be Lead in Offshore Wind Energy Industry



Governor Murphy announced plans for the construction of “The New Jersey Wind Port,” a 200-acre new port facility in Salem County, NJ. The port is expected to solidify New Jersey as a leader in the clean energy economy. COA applauds the choice to create a centralized development port in an already industrial area. By creating one centralized port, New Jersey is ensuring that the growth of the offshore wind (OSW) industry does not come at the expense of our coastal environment by increasing industrialization in important environmental areas.

As NJ’s offshore wind industry grows, COA urges leaders and companies to ensure that all offshore wind development is done in the most environmentally responsible manner possible. Many factors must be considered to ensure that the land-based facilities necessary for the offshore wind industry are designed to minimize their overall impact on the environment. These include, but are not limited to: placing all onshore facilities in environmentally preferable locations, making sure that all development is created with as small a footprint as possible, and ensuring that ports are energy efficient and resilient to climate impacts such as rising sea levels.

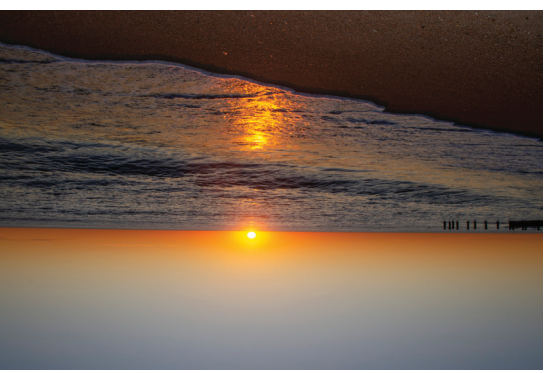
While offshore wind will play a role in New Jersey’s needed transition to a clean energy future, it is not the only answer. Other measures must also be taken to ensure the ocean is not needlessly industrialized based on human energy demands. This includes minimizing energy needs through energy efficiency and conservation. COA will evaluate all individual projects to ensure OSW meets these standards. Consistent with COA's mission, efforts to fight climate change will be a priority.

### COA Scientist Joins Letter to Trump and Congress

On June 8, World Oceans Day, COA’s Staff Scientist Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan joined more than 100 scientists to sign and submit a letter to President Trump and members of Congress urging them to halt the expansion of offshore drilling. Swarna’s support to this letter highlighting the potential catastrophic impacts to the climate and marine environment is a clear reflection of COA’s advocacy against offshore drilling. The scientists join the growing bipartisan opposition to offshore drilling plans, including governors on the East and West Coasts, hundreds of coastal communities, and thousands of businesses. The letter was coordinated by Oceana.



Sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean on World Oceans Day  
See inside for details.



- “Sea-ritic” Feedback for Virtual Summit, and more!
- The Future of Water Quality Monitoring
- A Statement on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

### Inside this Issue

Clean Ocean Action  
49 Avenel Blvd.  
Long Branch, NJ 07740  
www.CleanOceanAction.org  
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Follow COA on Social Media For Ocean Updates!

**BEACH**  
barre + meditation  
*strengthen, lengthen, breathe*

**WHERE**  
president ave + oceanfront  
(lavallette, nj)

**WHEN**  
7:30-8:30am  
Thursday + Friday  
July + August

100% of all proceeds benefit

Support COA by joining Solo Barre for Beach Yoga every Thursday and Friday morning through August!



Waves of thanks to student Naomi and her two friends at Compass Montessori school in Golden, CO for organizing a homemade cookie sale in their neighborhood this march to raise \$63 for Clean Ocean Action.



COA virtually welcomes interns Emily Ross, Communications and Resource Intern, and Jacob Sorrentino, Marine Debris Intern. Emily is inspired to make sure that our oceans are protected so that other kids growing-up on the Jersey Shore can continue to enjoy it just as much as she did. Jacob accepted the internship as an opportunity to gain practical experience in the field where science and environmental activism come together. Please join us in welcoming Emily and Jacob!



## Tributes

Photo courtesy of Joe Reynolds

### In Memory of:

- Pam Butler
- Carol Anne Ross
- Peter Cauterucci
- Barbara Jane Thompson
- Gordon N. Litwin
- Thomas C. Thompson

### In Honor of:

- Congratulations to Amanda Cusack
- Congratulations to Lord Abbett Co, LLC
- Matthew Goley
- Phoebe Frances Thompson, Wally’s baby sister
- Jalissa Jay
- World Ocean’s Day
- Isaac Kaplan
- Kelly, Noah & Ann Mascarenhas



## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Spencer Munson, Resource and Event Coordinator, [Programs@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Programs@CleanOceanAction.org)  
Laurie Bratone, Development Director, [LBratone@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:LBratone@CleanOceanAction.org)

### World Oceans Day: A Social Media Splash!

Each year on June 8th, World Oceans Day is internationally celebrated to remind people of the major role that oceans play in their everyday lives. While Clean Ocean Action treats everyday like it is World Oceans Day, we could never miss an opportunity to further celebrate and educate!

Throughout World Oceans Day, COA posted a series of short, inspiring videos to our social media accounts for our viewers to learn, celebrate, and remind them of their various connections to the ocean. From 7:30am to 8pm, the videos began with a peaceful sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean, ended with sunset colors over the ocean, and had ocean-related fun in-between. Joining our celebration were some of our favorite local ocean advocates, enthusiasts, and experts. Kathleen Gasienica and David Grant took viewers beachcombing at Sandy Hook, and searching for horseshoe crabs on nearby shores. Further down the coast, Bryan Zinski connected viewers with the ocean with surfing in Asbury Park. It truly was a splash!

Waves of thanks to Kathleen, David, Bryan, and to all who tuned-in from home to celebrate. COA also thanks Jersey Shore-based CBD For Life for hosting a sale on World Oceans Day to benefit COA. Remember to help keep our oceans clean so that they can continue to support life for generations to come!

### Help Keep Marine Life Safe This Summer



Photo by Marc Grauer, Sea Bright, NJ

As the summer months begin, many enjoy increased sightings of marine mammals in our waterways. With this in mind, boaters must proceed with caution for the safety of both boaters and animals. According to NOAA Fisheries, the law requires viewing of all whales to be from a distance of at least 100 feet, and the viewing of North Atlantic right whales to be from at least 500 yards (that's 5 football fields!). Dolphins, seals, and sea turtles must be viewed from at least 150 feet.

A Humpback whale entangled in fishing net was spotted under the Highlands Bridge by the Shrewsbury River on May 29, where it was struck by a passing boat. Boaters must proceed with extreme caution when traveling up the river and are asked to report any distressed whale sightings to Marine Mammal Stranding Center.

### City of North Wildwood Illegally Destroys Dunes



Recently, the NJDEP issued two notices of violation to the City of North Wildwood to stop unauthorized development on vegetated dunes. North Wildwood has removed 8 acres of mature dunes since last year without legally required permits and approvals. Through the investigation the NJDEP also determined that an ocean-front bulkhead installation and the construction of several buildings at the Seaport Pier boardwalk were done without NJDEP review or approval.

According to NJDEP, the work conducted by North Wildwood is in violation of the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act, Coastal Zone Management Rules, the Flood Hazard Area Control Act, the Freshwater Wetlands Act and the Water Pollution Control Act. These dunes helped protect the city from nor'easter Ida in November 2009, Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, Winter Storm Jonas in January 2016, and others.

## SCIENCE

Swarna Muthukrishnan, PhD, Staff Scientist, [Science@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Science@CleanOceanAction.org)  
Alison McCarthy, Watershed Protection Coordinator, [Outreach@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Outreach@CleanOceanAction.org)

### The Future of Water Quality Monitoring in the Two Rivers

Weekly water quality sampling at locations throughout the Navesink River has been suspended since March due to COVID-19. Mid-June marked the conclusion of the third year of the citizen science ambient water quality monitoring program in the Navesink River. The program as it has operated over the past three years will not continue for a fourth year, as the NJDEP Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring is prioritizing their core programs, especially those that impact human health. COA would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the many volunteer citizen scientists who dedicated hundreds of hours, in rain or shine, to collect water quality samples. These included volunteers from numerous Rally for the Navesink Alliance partners, including Monmouth Boat Club, Navesink Maritime Heritage Association, Navesink River Rowing, River Rats Sailing, and Jersey Shore Sierra Club.

Fortunately, COA has been selected to receive an EPA Equipment Loan for the third year in a row. With the equipment provided through this program, starting in July, COA will be able to monitor pathogen levels at targeted locations throughout the Two Rivers watershed to continue source trackdown efforts. COA's new Water Quality Intern, Jacob Sorrentino, will assist with sampling this summer, as well as other new exciting projects in the Two Rivers!

### Algal Blooms and Fish Kills in the Two Rivers



Photo by Gene Geer

Spring and summers on sections of the Two Rivers recently have been characterized by routine fish kills and, waters that are odorous and unaesthetic in appearance. This year, the area is already experiencing a higher than normal presence of algal blooms. Brown algae, *Prorocentrum minimum*, commonly known as "Mahogany Tide" coupled with fish kills have been observed in the Navesink and in Branchport Creek since May 2020. According to NJDEP, phytoplankton monitoring is conducted on the Two Rivers once a month, and also when adverse bloom events are noticed.

The most recent update from NJDEP states that the dinoflagellate bloom on the Navesink may be experiencing a natural die off and concentrations have declined to 6780 cells/ml from a high of 60000 cells/ml reported a month ago. Nutrient enrichment of our waterways from stormwater runoff coupled with warmer temperatures cause the proliferation of blooms in rivers and estuaries. When these die off, they cause an increased oxygen depletion in the waters and trigger fish kills. COA continues to monitor the status of the Two Rivers and encourages the community to observe any changes in the water conditions and promptly report any concerns to NJDEP Hotline (1-877-WARN-DEP).

### NJ Addressing Balloon Litter Support Bill to Stop Balloon Litter

At press time, NJ Assembly members Houghtaling and Downey (both NJ-11), planned to introduce a statewide bill prohibiting the outdoor release of balloons. Check COA's website for updates and to sign a petition supporting this bill's passing.

A COA supporter removed 56 balloons from the water at the tip of Sandy Hook, following Father's day & Graduation celebrations



Photo of Navesink River by Intern Emily Ross

## EDUCATION

Kristen Grazioso, Education Coordinator, [Kgrazioso@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Kgrazioso@CleanOceanAction.org)  
Kari Martin, Advocacy Campaign Manager, [Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org)

### COA Receives "Sea-rific" Feedback for Virtual Summit



5th Grader Amelia Supko participating in the Virtual Student Summit

In mid-May, Clean Ocean Action navigated our annual Spring Student Summit into the virtual world with 650 students participating from over 15 different schools. COA was humbled by the outpour of positive feedback from teachers and students alike. One student wrote: "This was a great experience even from home. The videos were at the appropriate comprehension level for middle schoolers and they even inspired me to want to take action in oceanography. This couldn't have been a more fun way to be educated."

When asked if they would recommend the program to other schools, 100% of teachers who responded to the Virtual Summit's teacher evaluation form answered "yes." One teacher wrote: "This program is an excellent way for students to learn first-hand... [and] makes students aware [of] how important [the] NJ shore is and what they can do to keep [the] NJ shore beautiful for everyone for years to come."

It was "shore-ly" a success!

### NJ is First in Nation on Climate Change Education

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) announced the approval of new statewide standards incorporating climate change education across its K-12 learning standards for public schools, as introduced by NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy. In addition to submitting comments to NJDOE during the standards' public comment period, COA held a four-day Virtual Student Rally in March to support the standards in which nearly 100 students participated. COA is thrilled to have participated in this important process, which makes NJ the first state in the country to implement a thorough curriculum on climate change phenomenon in K-12.



## POLICY

Kari Martin, Advocacy Campaign Manager; [Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org)  
Peter Blair, Esq., Policy Attorney; [Policy@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:Policy@CleanOceanAction.org)

### NJ Bill to Require Recycled Content



On June 17, COA's Policy Attorney Peter Blair, Esq., testified virtually before the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee on Senate Bill No. 2515, which would create recycled content requirements for several items sold in the state (i.e., plastic containers, glass containers, paper carryout bags, reusable carryout bags made of plastic film, and plastic trash bags). This legislation will help ensure the development of a market for post-

consumer recycled content, and thereby limit the need for newly produced plastic, and help ensure more plastic is routed to recycling centers, and not the ocean.

While COA is encouraged by and supports this legislation, we strongly advocate that it be a part of a legislative package that includes other plastic reduction measures. This legislation is a needed step that will make recycling more meaningful in New Jersey and help increase the public's level of trust in the process of recycling. To read COA's testimony, visit [CleanOceanAction.org](http://CleanOceanAction.org)