

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



Annual Report
2015

Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Inc.

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

CCE's MISSION

CCE's mission is to build widespread citizen understanding and advocacy to protect land and water resources, wildlife, and public health. CCE carries out this mission through public education, research, lobbying, organizing, and public outreach.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) celebrated its 30th year in 2015. CCE continued to advance environmental programs, which benefit the residents of New York, Connecticut, and the Nation.

CCE's five program areas include:

- Water Protection
- Public Health and Toxic Chemical Contamination
- Open Space, Habitat and Wildlife Protection
- Climate Change and Energy Policies
- Environmental Policy Advancement

The following is an overview of work CCE carried out in 2015.

CCE is a 501 (c)(4) not-for-profit organization registered as Long Island Citizens Campaign, Inc., which is doing business as Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Inc.

WATER PROTECTION

New York and Connecticut are water-rich states. Ensuring clean and plentiful water resources is a core CCE program priority. Below are CCE's major campaigns aimed at achieving water protection in 2015.

BANNING PLASTIC MICROBEADS

Tiny plastic microbeads contained in personal care products such as facial scrubs, soaps, and toothpastes are making their way into our waters. Researchers have found the plastic beads at high levels in the Great Lakes and waters in New York and Connecticut. That's bad news, as the plastic microbeads can accumulate toxic chemicals and be consumed by fish and wildlife.

In 2015, CCE continued to push for a ban on harmful plastic microbeads in personal care products in New York, Connecticut, and nationwide. CCE conducted a large-scale public outreach and education campaign to ban these harmful beads from products being sold in NY and CT. In CT, CCE generated more than 4,500 letters to key elected officials and collected over 10,500 signatures in support of eliminating plastic microbeads in products that are available for sale in CT. As a result, CT passed one of the first and strongest microbead bans in the nation!

In NYS, CCE was successful in getting state legislation introduced in the NYS Senate and passed in the NYS Assembly. Unfortunately, the legislation did not pass the Senate. In order to put pressure on the state and nation to act, CCE then began a grassroots campaign to pass bans on plastic microbeads at the county level throughout New York. CCE successfully worked to pass the strongest microbead ban in the nation in Erie County, which was then followed by bans passed in Suffolk, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Albany, and Tompkins Counties.



CCE also continued to push for a federal ban on microbeads, working with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. In late 2015, building off the momentum and pressure from state and local governments passing microbead bans, CCE successfully advocated for a ban on plastic microbeads in personal care products nationwide!

STOPPING SEWAGE POLLUTION AND PROVIDING THE PUBLIC WITH THE RIGHT TO KNOW ABOUT OVERFLOWS

Overflows from aging and failing sewage treatment infrastructure in New York and Connecticut release billions of gallons of raw sewage and industrial waste into local waterways each year. These overflows expose citizens to disease carrying pathogens and

dangerous toxins, close beaches, kill wildlife, and hurt local businesses. To address this growing problem, local, state, and federal governments need to make significant investments in fixing failing sewage infrastructure. In 2015, CCE conducted large scale grassroots campaigns to advocate for infrastructure investments, generating thousands of letters and petition signatures from members of the public to elected leaders. At the federal level, we were successful in maintaining funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which is the nation's primary source of funding for sewage infrastructure improvements. In New York State, we were successful in advocating for the 2015 Water Infrastructure Improvement Act in the 2015 NYS budget. The program will allocate \$200 million in community grants for clean water infrastructure over three years.

Providing the public with the right to know about sewage overflows allows individuals and families to make more informed choices and protect themselves from unnecessary exposure to harmful sewage pollution. In 2012, CCE was successful in getting Sewage Pollution Right to Know laws passed in both New York and Connecticut! Both New York and Connecticut have partially implemented the law, and CCE continues to work in both states to achieve full implementation.

In New York, CCE worked to make significant improvements as the state works toward full implementation. In 2015, the draft regulations to implement the law were finally released by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. CCE also successfully advocated for \$500,000 in the 2015 state budget to help communities install the monitoring and modeling necessary to provide accurate and timely information about sewage overflows.

OCEAN PROTECTION

Over 2,000 miles of tidal shoreline define New York and Connecticut. Our many bays, rivers, and estuaries provide miles of beaches and habitat for fish, shellfish, and wildlife. CCE supports proactive local, state, and federal measures to protect our water resources and the historical use of our waterways. CCE continued collaborations with a number of environmental organizations in the NY Ocean and Great Lakes Coalition to advance ocean and Great Lakes protection and restoration and ensure state funding for these vital programs.

In 2015, CCE actively supported the joint effort by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of State (DOS) comprehensive 10-year Ocean Action Plan (OAP). The plan includes important measures that would help protect and restore New York State's ocean resources and to address urgent issues facing these resources and coastal communities. CCE traveled to Albany with our coalition partners to meet with DEC and DOS to discuss 2016 priorities, which included funding for necessary water protection and resiliency programs in the NYS Environmental Protection Fund, and monitoring programs for whales and sea turtles.



CCE's Annie McClelland and Jordan Christensen at the World Oceans Day celebration at the NY Aquarium.

GREAT WATERS COALITION

In 2009, CCE participated in the launch of a new national coalition—the America's Great Waters Coalition. America's Great Waters Coalition is an alliance of national, regional, state and local organizations working to protect, preserve and restore America's Great Waters. The coalition is bringing the community together to "raise all restoration boats."

CCE united with over 30 other organizations to restore water ecosystems to protect people, wildlife, and the economy from the Great Lakes to the Florida Everglades. The coalition aims to help leverage the vast political support among citizens from across the country. The mission of the coalition is to protect, preserve, and restore America's Great Waters, which include, but are not limited to, the Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Louisiana, the Everglades, Great Lakes, Gulf of Maine, Long Island Sound, Mississippi River, Puget Sound, San Francisco/Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. In 2015, CCE continued to participate in the coalition to leverage support for critical restoration efforts in New York and Connecticut, including Long Island Sound and the Great Lakes.

THE GREAT LAKES

Protecting, restoring and improving the Great Lakes, the largest freshwater ecosystem on the globe, is a core CCE program area. In 2015, CCE's Great Lakes efforts focused on the following priorities:

SUSTAINABLE WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT FOR LAKE ONTARIO AND THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

For the past 50 years, the St. Lawrence Water Control Board of the [International Joint Commission \(IJC\)](#) has controlled St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario water levels for commercial interests, following the installation of the Moses-Saunders hydropower dam. Decades of artificially controlled water levels have damaged the environment by eliminating significant habitat for fish and wildlife. A new, modern plan to allow more natural lake levels and flows has been developed, known as Plan 2014. Plan 2014 represents a once in a generation opportunity to restore 64,000 acres of wetlands and other critical habitat along the lake and river.



After 14 years of scientific study and public input, the International Joint Commission (IJC) finally recommended a new, modern plan for regulating water levels and flows in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The plan, known as Plan 2014, will help restore 64,000 acres of degraded wetland habitat, providing significant economic benefits and increasing renewable hydropower production. In 2015, CCE delivered an additional 4,000 petition signatures and 1,000 letters from New York residents to Secretary of State John Kerry calling for the adoption of Plan 2014! To date, no final decision has been made.

THE GREAT LAKES ST. LAWRENCE BASIN WATER RESOURCES COMPACT (COMPACT)

Ratified by all eight Great Lakes States and Congress, the Compact became law in 2008. The NYS Water Withdrawal legislation, which was passed into law in NYS in 2011,

established a program to regulate large water users, develop water conservation and efficiency standards, and ensure that NYS is in compliance with the Compact.

In 2015, CCE continued to work on program implementation for the Great Lakes Compact and New York's statewide water withdrawal program, working to ensure that large water users are receiving only the water that they need, and implementing strong water conservation measures. CCE also worked to educate state elected leaders about a proposed diversion of Great Lakes water to Waukesha, WI. CCE is working to protect the integrity of the Compact by ensuring that any exceptions meet the high standards set in the Compact.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE (GLRI)

The GLRI is an annual federal investment in addressing priority issues to protect and restore the lakes, which includes cleaning up toxic hot spots, combating invasive species, reducing polluted runoff, restoring wetlands and other habitats, and providing monitoring to ensure investments are spent wisely.

In 2015, CCE joined with our local, state, and national partners to successfully advocate for continued GLRI funding at \$300 million. CCE also successfully advocated for the U.S. House to authorize the GLRI at \$300 for five years, although the U.S. Senate did not act on this legislation in 2015.

HEALING OUR WATERS (HOW) GREAT LAKES RESTORATION CONFERENCE

CCE is an active member of the Healing Our Waters (HOW) Great Lakes Coalition and co-chairs the New York Healing Our Waters coalition. HOW is a diverse coalition of more than 100 organizations working to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

CCE participated in the eighth annual HOW Great Lakes Restoration Conference in Chicago, IL. With more than 200 of the leading stakeholders from non-governmental organizations, government, tribes, industry, and the public attending, the HOW conference was the largest Great Lakes restoration conference in the nation. CCE staff worked together with Great Lakes stakeholders to develop strategies to protect and restore our Great Lakes, networked with advocates from all eight Great Lakes states and Canada, and attended local Great Lakes field trips.

GREAT LAKES DAY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

CCE participated in Great Lakes Day in Washington, DC, in March of 2015. CCE staff joined hundreds of Great Lakes activists throughout the basin to meet with members of Congress to ensure continued investment in Great Lakes protection and restoration by funding the GLRI.





STANDING WITH CONGRESSMAN HIGGINS TO PROTECT THE GREAT LAKES

In 2014, an algal bloom in Lake Erie resulting from excess nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen caused half a million people living in Toledo, Ohio to lose access to clean drinking water. In 2015, CCE supported Representative Brian Higgins as he introduced legislation that would

provide funding to upgrade sewage treatment plants throughout the Great Lakes region in order to prevent excessive nutrients from being discharged into the lakes. CCE continues to push for the bill's passage.

ESTUARY PROTECTION

New York State and Connecticut are fortunate to have over 1,500 square miles of bays and estuaries, and 120 miles of ocean shoreline. The Long Island Sound and the South Shore Estuary Reserve are critical to the regional economy, our culture, and maritime heritage. CCE works to preserve, protect, and restore our ecologically important bays and estuaries.

LONG ISLAND SOUND (LIS) PROTECTION

CCE remains committed to Long Island Sound (LIS) protection efforts and is an active member of the Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the CAC's communications workgroup, and its policy subcommittee.

The CAC's objectives include completion and implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for LIS protection and restoration, advancement of the Sound's water quality and habitat restoration goals, ample funding for important LIS programs, and improved public education on the health of the Sound and its watershed.



In 2015, CCE's Long Island Sound Protection work focused on the following priorities:

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE LIS RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP ACT

The combined LIS Restoration and Stewardship Act provides for up to \$65 million annually to fund Long Island Sound programs in New York and Connecticut. The Act expired in 2010 and congress has since failed to reauthorize it, despite the growing and diverse needs of the LIS watershed. CCE advocated in support of reauthorization and for adequate funding for LIS programs in 2015. CCE participated in a LISS CAC trip to Washington DC to educate congressional leaders on the importance of the Sound and increased funding.

SAVE PLUM ISLAND COALITION

CCE has been an active member in the Save Plum Island Coalition, which is a diverse coalition of environmental and community groups working to protect and preserve the rare, 840+ acre Plum Island. The island has tremendous ecological value, as it serves as a critical wildlife habitat for hundreds of species of flora and fauna, including rare orchids, oaks, and carnivorous plants. Plum Island is also a vital breeding ground for over 80 species of birds, including Piping Plovers, Roseate Terns and other endangered species. It is also an important stop over point for birds and marine mammals from all over the world!

Plum Island's USDA animal disease research facility is being relocated, and the U.S. General Services Administration is seeking to sell Plum Island at public auction. This sale could jeopardize critical wildlife habitat, threaten water quality in Long Island Sound, and seal the island off from public access into the foreseeable future.

CCE worked successfully in 2015 to introduce federal legislation that would reverse the 2008 requirement that the island be sold, in favor of a plan to preserve Plum Island for future generations.



CCE's Adrienne Esposito, Maureen Murphy, and Lou Burch toured Plum Island in 2015.

DREDGED MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

CCE continued its decades-long campaign to end dredge dumping in Long Island Sound. While routine dredging is necessary in order to maintain navigable waterways, open water disposal of the resulting dredged material is not. In 2005, CCE helped facilitate an agreement between New York and Connecticut to phase out open water disposal of contaminated dredged material into Long Island Sound. This bi-state agreement called for the development of a Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) that focuses on alternative technologies for dredged material and establishes the phase-out of open water dumping.

In August of 2015, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a draft DMMP and Environmental Impact Statement that proposed to continue the disposal of up to 50 million cubic yards of dredged material in Long Island Sound over the next 30 years. It is CCE's position that the draft DMMP did not establish a meaningful beneficial reuse program for dredged material, and that the draft EIS did not adequately consider the cumulative impacts that open water disposal would have on the LIS bottomlands. CCE



continues to advocate that the EPA, USACE, and the State of Connecticut work to end the antiquated practice of dumping in Long Island Sound, and to advance the use of beneficial reuse practices for dredged material.

LONG ISLAND SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE (SSER)

In 2015, the NYS Department of State (DOS) continued to implement key recommendations of the South Shore Estuary Management Plan. CCE continues to serve as Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

WESTERN BAYS CAMPAIGN

CCE continues to work with the Western Bays Working Group for the restoration of Western Bays. The Working Group is made up of elected leaders and stakeholder organizations, including Nassau County Legislator Denise Ford, Nassau County Executive Mangano's Office, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Operation SPLASH, Point Lookout Civic Association, Sludge Stoppers, and The Nature Conservancy. The goal of the Working Group is to restore the Western Bays, by upgrading the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant, ensuring there is denitrification technology installed, and constructing an ocean outfall pipe.

Superstorm Sandy completely debilitated the Bay Park Plant, releasing 2.2 billion gallons of raw and partially treated sewage into the Western Bays. To date, more than \$830 million in federal funds has been secured for repairs and upgrades at the plant, and \$150 million has been secured for denitrification technology. However, more is needed to pay for extending the plant's outfall pipe to the ocean. It is critical that upgrades to this facility include nitrogen removal and an ocean outfall pipe that extends 2-3 miles into the Atlantic to prevent future spills and protect the health and well-being of Long Islanders.

In 2015 CCE:

- Co-hosted a **rally to fix the Bay Park Sewage Plant**. CCE was joined by politicians, civic groups, concerned citizens, and commercial fishermen at a [rally](#) in Freeport on Long Island to urge the state to fund an ocean outfall pipe for the Bay Park sewage treatment plant.
- CCE organized a meeting of the Western Bays Coalition, Senator Todd Kaminsky, and the Long Island Federation of Labor with Governor Cuomo's top staff members to educate them on the necessity of an ocean outfall pipe and the need for the state to fund the pipe.
- CCE worked with our partners in creating a holiday video message to the Governor, entitled, "All I want for Christmas is an Outfall Pipe."



FORGE RIVER

The Forge River has experienced poor water quality since the early part of the twentieth century. The combination of antiquated cesspools, failing septic systems, polluting duck farms, population growth, and polluted stormwater runoff have severely degraded the river. The upper Forge River is included in the NYS DEC 303 (d) list as an impaired waterbody for pathogens, nitrogen, dissolved oxygen/oxygen demand.

In 2015, CCE attended community meetings and forums to educate the community on the need to install sewers and the positive impact sewers will have on water quality. CCE also participated in a press event with U.S. Senator Schumer and local elected leaders to call upon the Federal Aviation Administration to expedite approval of the location of a new sewage treatment plant. The sewage treatment plant would provide sewerage for businesses and over 5,000 homes while reducing nitrogen pollution in the Forge River. CCE also joined with Mastic Beach Mayor Sperry for a Mastic Beach wastewater forum. The forum focused on the ongoing problems with nitrogen pollution from septic systems in the village.

NORTHPORT HARBOR WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

The Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee (NHWQPC) was established in 2010 and has since successfully developed a comprehensive plan to restore water quality in the Northport/Centerport Harbor complex. Members include community groups, local governments, and businesses. The plan focuses on reducing nitrogen loading in the bays using stormwater runoff mitigation and upgrades to sewage infrastructure. The plan also includes a subcommittee on education and outreach that aims to increase resident awareness about limiting fertilizer and pesticide application, as well as controlling runoff on private properties with natural vegetation. Many of the committees' established efforts are underway or completed.

Through the NHWQPC, CCE worked aggressively to secure funding for upgrading the Northport Sewage Treatment Plant. The new upgrades included denitrification at the plant and fixing the piping system. The plant met an August 1, 2014 deadline for reducing nitrogen output, reducing the nitrogen loading coming from the plant from 19.4lbs per day to 6.9lbs per day.

The signs of progress were seen throughout 2015. In July of 2015, Centerport Beach reopened for public use for the first time in eight years, and Northport Harbor experienced no red tide. CCE continues to meet quarterly with the NHWQPC to continue dredging projects, stormwater reduction measures, and sewer and septic upgrades that can further restore the waterway.



CCE's Adrienne Esposito stands with Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, NY Assemblyman Andrew Raia, Suffolk Legislator William Spencer, and Huntington Supervisor Frank Petrone to announce re-opening of Centerport Beach.

ONONDAGA LAKE

Listed on the Federal Superfund National Priority List since 1995, Onondaga Lake is undergoing efforts to remediate legacy pollution and a reputation as one of the most polluted lakes in the world. A total of 82 tons of mercury and other chemicals were discharged into the lake over the last century. CCE is an active stakeholder in the Onondaga Lake Bottom cleanup plan.

CCE continuously works to promote the health of Onondaga Lake and ensure public access to this resource. CCE is involved with several groups such as the Onondaga Lake Watershed Partnership (OLWP) and the Community Participation Working Group (CPWG). Due to toxic contamination of the lake, fishing and the consumption of fish is ill advised. CCE is working to ensure proper fishing advisories are placed around the lake in order to inform the public of the hazards of consuming fish.

In addition to the toxic remediation being conducted by Honeywell, Onondaga County is working to reduce its sewage overflows into the lake and its tributaries by encouraging Onondaga County residents to “Save The Rain.” CCE continues to work with DEC and EPA to ensure transparency, oversight, and meaningful citizen participation in all aspects of cleanup and remediation for the lake. CCE works to ensure that the cleanup meets public expectations, uses best available remediation techniques, provides maximum protection of human health and the environment, and restores a treasured resource that has been tarnished for far too long. The remediation of the lake bottom is expected to be completed in late 2016, and CCE is working to ensure that there will be continuous monitoring of the lake bottom cap long after the remediation has finished.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

CCE works with organizations across the nation to support a strong federal *Clean Water Act*. CCE serves on the Water Management Advisory Committee to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), DEC CAFO (confined animal feeding operation) Work Group and Agricultural Environmental Management Steering Committee to help prevent agriculture runoff. CCE also serves the Water Quality Coordinating Committee for Albany County, and serves on the Erie County Water Quality Committee.

In 2015, CCE successfully advocated for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to adopt a critical [water protection rule](#) that will restore federal protections to the drinking water of 117 million Americans, including nearly 14 million New York and Connecticut residents. After 14 years of rollbacks to clean water protections, the new rule will restore the promise of the Clean Water Act and protect the streams and wetlands that supply our drinking water.

LONG ISLAND GROUND WATER



Long Island is a sole-source aquifer region, which means residents rely on groundwater for 100% of their drinking water. A clean, healthy aquifer system is vital to maintaining Long Islanders' quality of life. Contamination of groundwater negatively impacts drinking water supplies and rivers, lakes, streams, and bays. Groundwater is vulnerable to contamination due to a variety of land-use activities, which include pesticide applications, improper disposal of household hazardous wastes and

pharmaceutical drugs, excessive use of fertilizers, failing septic systems, and sewage treatment discharges.

A report, by the Suffolk County Health Department entitled "*Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Management Plan*," documents the troubling trends in Long Island's drinking water supply. Nitrates, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), pesticides, and pharmaceutical drugs all threaten our drinking water supply. In particular, the report documents a sharp rise in nitrogen concentrations in both the upper glacial and magothy aquifers.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment joined with Group for the East End, Long Island Pine Barrens Society, and The Nature Conservancy to create **The Long Island Clean Water Partnership**, a grassroots initiative to restore and protect Long Island's water resources on a comprehensive level. CCE engaged in the following in 2015:

- CCE, in collaboration with the Long Island Clean Water Partnership hosted the 4th Annual "**Water We Going To Do?**" Conference in May of 2015. Over 150 people attended the conference to hear about the \$5 million in state funding allocated for clean water, the strategies employed by Cape Cod to address its issues with nitrogen from sewage, and the progress that is already happening to protect water on Long Island.
- CCE **launched a large scale grassroots campaign** to educate members of the public on water quality problems linked to nitrogen pollution from sewage. We encouraged members of the public to get involved by writing letters and signing petitions to elected leaders calling for a finalized Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan and funding for an ocean outfall pipe for the Bay Park STP. In 2015, CCE generated 20,000 letters and 50,000 signatures.

- CCE participated in the annual Long Island Lobby Day, in which we urged Assembly and Senate members to invest in critical infrastructure and environmental improvement projects, including an ocean outfall pipe for the Bay Park sewage treatment plant. CCE fought for increased funding for New York's [Environmental Protection Fund](#), significant investments in pharmaceutical take-back programs, and sewage infrastructure upgrades.



- In 2015, the first advanced onsite septic system in Suffolk County was installed, and CCE's Adrienne Esposito joined Suffolk County officials and County Executive Steve Bellone for a press conference to unveil the new system. This system is the first of 19 awarded through a county-wide septic lottery and is part of a pilot program aimed at reducing nitrogen pollution from wastewater systems throughout the county.
- CCE testified in support of legislation in Suffolk County that would facilitate a smooth transition to advanced nitrogen-removing septic technology. The resolution was passed and will ensure the liquid waste industry is prepared for the coming changes.

CCE testified in support of an agreement between the Town of Islip and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services that would allow the county to install additional monitoring wells at the site of the illegal dumping discovered at Roberto Clemente Park to test groundwater for toxic chemicals. This agreement, which passed unanimously, is critical to protecting public health and properly monitoring drinking water moving forward.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND TOXIC CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION

BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY CLEANUP

In 2015, CCE continued its activity on the Community Advisory Council (CAC) to Brookhaven National Laboratory. CCE evaluated cleanup options, associated costs, and environmental and public health impacts for several remediation scenarios. Additional reviews included groundwater sampling reports, wetlands restoration progress for the Peconic River, decontamination and decommissioning of the High Flux Beam Reactor and the Brookhaven Graphite Research Reactor, as well as modification to the discharge permit for the sewage treatment plant. CCE continues to be a watchdog for environmental remediation efforts at this facility.

TOXIC CHEMICAL REFORM

For many years, CCE has been working to eliminate toxic chemicals from children's products and other consumer products, such as couches. CCE continues to work for comprehensive toxic chemical reform in both New York and Connecticut. Neither state is equipped to review and address the mass of toxic chemicals that are routinely introduced into the market, which leaves the public, and particularly our children, vulnerable to exposure. CCE has worked at the local level to protect local residents and put pressure on the states and the federal government to act on toxics reform. In 2015, CCE successfully advocated for bans on toxic chemicals in children's products in Suffolk, Albany, and Westchester Counties in New York.

REDUCING DISPOSABLE BAG POLLUTION

According to the EPA, between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. These bags are used for an average of 12 minutes, but they remain in our landfills, oceans, parks and beaches for thousands of years. Both plastic and paper disposable bags are costly, environmentally damaging, and completely unnecessary.

CONNECTICUT

According to the Connecticut Office of Legislative Research, CT residents consume as many as 400 million plastic bags annually. CCE has been an integral player in state and local efforts to eliminate plastic bag consumption and pollution in Connecticut since 2009, when we worked to help the town of Westport, CT pass the east coast's first municipal plastic bag ban. In 2015, CCE worked to introduce legislation to establish a 10 cent fee on all single use disposable shopping bags in the state. While that legislation ultimately did not pass, CCE remains committed to reducing pollution from single use disposable bags in CT.



WESTCHESTER

Throughout 2015, CCE worked with municipalities throughout Westchester County to advocate for local ordinances to reduce the use of single-use disposable bags. After bringing together stakeholders from over 20 municipalities to discuss county-wide efforts to reduce bag pollution and to share resources, CCE began working these stakeholders as part of the Sustainable Westchester Solid Waste Committee to push for local and county-wide actions to reduce plastic bag use. Throughout the year, CCE participated in numerous public education events explaining the negative environmental impacts associated with disposable bags and the benefits of reusable bag use.

NEW YORK CITY

In 2015, CCE worked with the Clean Seas Coalition and several NYC Council Members to advance legislation placing a fee on disposable plastic and paper bags at check-out counters. In March and again in August, CCE joined bill sponsors Lander, Chin, and Reynoso, along with student groups, environmental justice organizations,



and the public, at press conferences on the steps of City Hall. The coalition and sponsors called on the City Council to pass legislation that would place a 10 cent fee on disposable bags and encourage reusable bag use. Throughout the year, CCE made presentations to student groups, participated in reusable bag give-a-ways, spoke about the issues with plastic bag pollution at educational events, and gathered public support for the NYC bag legislation through an [online petition](#)

In 2015, CCE also joined the EPA's Trash Free Waters Partnership, with agencies, elected officials, organizations, and scientists in NY and NJ working to reduce plastic pollution. CCE is an active member of the plastic bag reduction working group.

LONG ISLAND, NY

Throughout 2015, CCE worked with the Village of Patchogue to pass a ban on single-use plastic bags. CCE worked with Patchogue Trustee Joe Keyes and other key stakeholders as a member of *Protecting the Environment in Patchogue* (PEP) committee, which worked to educate businesses and members of the public on the problems with plastic bags, and gain support for the plastic bag ban. CCE held a public forum with marine debris experts to discuss how banning plastic bags would benefit the local environment, and worked with the PEP committee to get reusable bags designed with original artwork from local students to help ease residents' transition away from plastic. The ban passed in June of 2015, and CCE continues to work with the PEP to achieve successful implementation of the law.

PESTICIDES

CCE works to educate the public and policy makers about the adverse impacts pesticides can have on public health and the environment, while working to reduce the use of pesticides for lawn care and for mosquito control. In 2015, CCE's work on reducing pesticides focused on the following priorities:

PROTECTING CHILDREN IN CONNECTICUT

CCE is an active member of the CT Safe Grounds Coalition, a diverse group of environmental and health based non-profits working to promote safe, healthy environments for children by reducing or eliminating the use of toxic pesticides where kids learn and play. In 2015, CCE successfully worked to pass legislation prohibiting the use of toxic pesticides on public playgrounds to protect children's health. This legislation also contained a provision requiring enhanced notification of pesticide applications on public and private school property.

LI PESTICIDE PLAN

After more than a decade, the DEC finally released the [Long Island Pesticide Pollution Strategy](#), which went into effect July 11, 2014. The strategy lays out a plan that seeks to prevent pesticide contamination by implementing various measures focusing on alternatives, best management practices, and the ability to restrict products. The plan recognizes the need to protect Long Island's waters from toxic pesticides and is a solid blueprint for protecting human health and the environment. The strategy, implemented swiftly and correctly, can reduce pesticides in our ground and surface waters. CCE continues to participate in the process and work to address pesticide

contamination, [especially from the three most prevalent pesticides found in Long Island waters.](#)

HAZARDOUS WASTE LANDFILL

In November of 2015 it was announced that the CWM hazardous waste landfill had reached full capacity. For the first time in 45 years, PCBs and other hazardous waste are no longer being landfilled in Niagara County, NY. This is welcome news, as CWM has been the state's only active hazardous waste landfill, which is located just a mile from the Lewiston-Porter Central Schools, two miles from the Niagara River, and three miles from Lake Ontario. In 2015, CCE continued to oppose CWM's application to expand and build additional landfill in Porter, NY, which would bring in more than 4 million cubic yards of additional waste for decades to come.

PHARMACEUTICAL DISPOSAL

Pharmaceutical drug contamination in our groundwater, rivers, estuaries, lakes, and bays is an emerging issue throughout NY, CT, and the nation. Flushing unwanted or unused medication has been the common disposal practice, despite the fact that our sewage treatment plants, septic systems, and drinking water infrastructure were never designed to remove these contaminants. A nationwide study done in 1999 and 2000 by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found low levels of drugs such as antibiotics, hormones, contraceptives, and steroids in 80% of the rivers and streams tested. CCE works to provide the public and healthcare facilities with increased access to safe disposal options for unused or expired pharmaceutical drugs.

In 2015, CCE partnered with King Kullen, the Suffolk County Water Authority and United Water to launch a first-of-its-kind, cutting-edge program for members of the public to safely and conveniently dispose of unwanted and expired over-the-counter and prescription drugs for free. In its first year, the program has led to the safe disposal of 2,000 pounds of unwanted pharmaceuticals, preventing their impact on Long Island's aquifers. CCE also promoted and participated in government-sponsored drug take-back events throughout the year.



SANDLAND

Sandland, a huge sand mining operation that appears to be acting as a solid waste facility on Long Island, submitted an application to expand its operations. The 50-acre mine is located within a Special Groundwater Protection Area, a critical area for protecting the quality and quantity of Long Island's drinking water.

NYS Assemblyman Steve Englebright held a hearing to discuss the threats of illegal dumping and sand mining on Long Island and solutions needed to address them. CCE provided expert testimony and fought for regulatory and legislative steps needed to handle existing and future dumping, conduct cleanup efforts and monitoring, and address serious sand mining issues. With industry representatives claiming that environmentally

harmful sand mining could actually be good for groundwater, we were glad to be the voice of reason. CCE was instrumental in leading a successful opposition effort to the expansion of the Sand Land sand mine.

ROBERTO CLEMENTE PARK

50,000 tons of asbestos-laden, contaminated construction and demolition debris was illegally dumped at Roberto Clemente Park, in the Town of Islip, NY. Dangerous heavy metals found at the soccer fields and in the recharge basin (designed to recharge Long Island's sole source drinking water supply) include antimony, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, copper, zinc, and cobalt. The Suffolk County D.A.'s tests also revealed the presence of banned pesticides, including chlordane (banned in the U.S. in 1988), DDT (banned in the U.S. in 1972), and Dieldrin (no longer produced in the U.S. because of harmful effects on humans, wildlife, and fish). In January, CCE testified in support of an agreement between the Town of Islip and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services to allow the county to install additional monitoring wells at the site to test groundwater for toxic chemicals. CCE also joined a Citizens Advisory Committee to oversee the cleanup and ensure the safety of residents.



In December, Assemblyman Steve Englebright held a hearing to discuss the threats to air, water, and public health, as well as necessary steps to prevent future illegal dumping. CCE gave expert testimony and fought for the regulatory and legislative steps needed to handle existing and future dumping, cleanup efforts and monitoring, and sand mining issues.

OPEN SPACE, HABITAT AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Preserving open space and critical habitat and wildlife in New York and Connecticut is a significant CCE program focus. Open space conservation of forests, parks, farmlands, and coastal areas is essential to our region's natural beauty, environmental health, and quality of life.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND (EPF)

The EPF, created by the NYS Legislature in 1993, provides a reliable and dedicated funding source for key environmental programs, including Great Lakes and Oceans protection and restoration, municipal recycling, open space and farmland preservation, reducing toxics, and much more. Each year, the NYS legislature must appropriate this revenue to the EPF. In 2015, CCE and its partners were able to continue the trend of restoring the EPF with an additional \$15 million increase over 2014, to a total of \$177 million.

FARMS AND AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY

Farms and agricultural property are important examples of working landscapes and land preservation. CCE works to promote better environmental practices on farms in New

York, including efforts to achieve effective nutrient management policies and regulation of concentrated animal feeding operations. CCE serves on the Agricultural Environmental Management Steering Committee for New York and the Albany Soil and Water Conservation District Committee.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY POLICY

In 2015, CCE continued aggressive campaigns at the local, state, and federal level designed to increase our energy independence, maximize energy efficiency, increase the renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, and protect public health and the environment from waste created from fossil fuel dependence.

FEDERAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2015, CCE supported and worked to engage its members on an important U.S. EPA rule to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants, known as the Clean Power Plan. In August of 2015, the EPA released its historic Clean Power Plan, which will cut carbon pollution from existing power plants throughout the nation 40% by the year 2030.



WIND POWER

In 2015, CCE continued to advocate for New York and Connecticut to reach their potential for wind energy development. CCE continued to push for the development of wind farm off the coast of Montauk at meetings of the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA). In addition, CCE closely followed a potential site for an offshore wind farm off the coast of Long Beach, which is being evaluated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. In 2015, this same site that is being considered for offshore wind was also considered for the Port Ambrose liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal. CCE attended community meetings, testified at public hearings, and joined hundreds of New Yorkers to rally against Port Ambrose and fight for that site to be used for wind power instead. In November, the Port Ambrose project was rejected and BOEM is still evaluating the site for offshore wind.

SOLAR POWER

Harnessing the power of the sun creates local jobs, improves air quality, and stabilizes volatile energy costs. The solar energy potential for New York State is greater than Germany, the current world leader in installed solar capacity. CCE worked to support the implementation of large scale solar to meet rising energy demands and to prevent those demands from being met with increasing dependence on fossil fuels. CCE also promoted large scale solar as a less impactful development option in areas being considered for higher intensity development.

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING, GAS STORAGE, AND FRACKING WASTE

CCE was successful in banning hydraulic fracturing (a.k.a “hydrofracking”) in New York with the release of DEC’s Final Findings Statement on June 29, 2015. Continuing our efforts to protect New York State from the dangers of hydrofracking, CCE has worked to prevent the storage of hydrofracked gas and the disposal of hydrofracking wastes. CCE staff worked to generate over 550 petition signatures and hundreds of letters to Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation opposing the construction of gas storage facilities at Seneca Lake. These facilities put the drinking water of over 100,000 people and the regional tourism industry at risk. Additionally, CCE staff worked to limit the impact of hydrofracking wastes in New York State. Excessive amounts of wastes from hydrofracking operations have deposited in New York landfills. In 2015, CCE submitted testimony to the NYSDEC concerning the expansion of the Chemung County Landfill. This landfill has accepted more hydrofracking waste than any other landfill in New York. CCE highlighted concerns that an expansion would lead to the facility accepting more radioactive hydrofracking waste, which would threaten the region’s soil, air, and drinking water quality.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ADVANCEMENT

CCE helps to foster progress through legislation, lobbying, advocacy, committee work, grassroots networking, and reports. CCE works with officials at the local, state, and national levels of government to promote policies to protect public health and the environment. CCE served on approximately 20 advisory committees, providing sound advice on environmental policies and actions. CCE used printed materials, newsletters, and other documents to support its efforts in the various areas of interest. CCE staff testified at many public forums and hearings in New York, Connecticut, and Washington, DC. CCE visits schools, attends civic meetings, and participates in other venues to provide presentations on a broad spectrum of environmental and public health issues.

LONG ISLAND LOBBY COALITION

The Long Island Lobby Coalition was formed in May, 2009 to provide a single, solid message to Albany to advocate for positive legislation that will guide the future of Long Island. The coalition includes environmental organizations, small businesses, labor unions, civic associations, and chambers of commerce who wish to advance meaningful improvements to Long Island’s quality of life and our economy.



In 2015, CCE and members in the Long Island Lobby Coalition headed to Albany for the seventh annual Long Island Lobby Day. The Coalition represents over 40 groups united by one common goal: to preserve, protect, and enhance quality of life for all Long Islanders. The Coalition met with Long Island Assembly and Senate members, as well as Governor

Cuomo's staff, to advance small business assistance, offshore wind and other renewable energy development, post-Sandy relief, and sewage infrastructure improvements.

BROOKHAVEN COMMUNITY COALITION

CCE has been a leading organization in the Brookhaven Community Coalition (BCC) since it was formed in March 2011 to stop large quantities of sewage sludge from being disposed of at the Brookhaven Town Landfill. Odors from the sludge seriously degraded the quality of life and threatened public health in the community. After overwhelming public opposition organized by the BCC, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) terminated the town's sludge permits. Since this victory, the BCC has expanded the scope of our mission and continues to work on public health and quality of life issues connected with the Landfill as well as working to enclose the Long Island Compost (LIC) facility. The BCC is currently working to address community concerns about airborne particulate matter and odors coming from the landfill.

Dust and odors emanating from the Landfill have affected the health and ability of residents to enjoy a normal life in their homes, which are constantly plagued by odors and dust. In 2015, The Brookhaven Community Coalition (BCC) and Citizens Campaign for the Environment succeeded in getting the Town and the DEC to provide for air testing. The results have revealed the presence of VOCs and concerning levels of benzene in the air. CCE also created a Facebook Group for concerned residents entitled, "Brookhaven Landfill Community Watch: If You *SMELL* something, *POST* something". The membership quickly shot up to over 400 within a few days and now has 613 members. Through that group, official odor complaints were made to the DEC, helping to apply pressure for more extensive air monitoring. CCE and the Brookhaven Community Coalition continue to push for expanding air monitoring efforts to ensure the public health is not put at risk.

2015 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

CCE works to advance legislation that will protect our natural environment and public health, while working to oppose legislation that will have an adverse impact on our shared environment.

114TH CONGRESS - FEDERAL AGENDA



FEDERAL BAN ON PLASTIC MICROBEADS IN PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS – VICTORY!!!

In 2015, The U.S. House and Senate passed legislation banning plastic microbeads from personal care products, and President Obama signed the bill into law. The bill was sponsored by Senator Gillibrand.

INVESTING IN GREAT LAKES RESTORATION

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has provided \$2 billion to more than 2,000 projects, proving to be a huge success over the past five years, including \$300 million in 2015. And, while the GLRI has provided a much-needed funding boost to restoration efforts, the program has never been officially authorized by Congress. Without an authorization, the GLRI could be at risk from changing administrative and congressional priorities. To ensure the long term success of the GLRI, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014, which would authorize the program at up to \$300 million per year for five years. While the Senate has yet to pass the legislation, CCE continues to push for final passage in both houses of Congress.

INVEST IN CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewage pollution threatens public health from exposure to pathogens, closes beaches, degrades water quality, and consumes valuable oxygen necessary for healthy fisheries. Drinking water infrastructure is also in a state of constant disrepair, with communities facing ever-increasing water main breaks every year and numerous "boil water advisories" due to contaminated drinking water. In 2015, successfully advocated for Congress to maintain funding levels for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which fixes failing sewage infrastructure and invests in green infrastructure, as well as the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which upgrades and maintains drinking water infrastructure.

LONG ISLAND SOUND RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Residents of New York and Connecticut depend on the Sound for recreational opportunities, including fishing, sailing, and swimming, and it contributes between \$17-\$36 billion annually to the regional economy. CCE supports reauthorizing both the Long Island Sound Restoration Act and the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act to continue effective project implementation to improve the Long Island Sound ecosystem. In June, CCE joined Senator Gillibrand and stakeholders from New York and Connecticut for a press conference on the importance of funding for the Long Island Sound and the role of the Long Island Sound Stewardship and Restoration Act in protecting the estuary.

NO SUBSIDIES FOR NUCLEAR OR FOSSIL FUEL POWER

CCE opposes dispensing taxpayer dollars that saddle our economy to fossil fuels and nuclear power, which does not advance our nation's sustainable energy future.

OPPOSING THE "DARK" ACT

CCE opposed legislation know as the DARK (Denying Americans the Right to Know) Act, which would preempt states from enacting laws to require on package labeling of foods that contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

NEW YORK LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CCE supported the following legislative and budget items in 2015:

MICROBEAD-FREE WATERS ACT (S.3932 – O'MARA/A.5896 – SCHIMEL)

Phase-out plastic microbeads in cosmetic products.

LABELING FOR GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD (A.3525 – ROSENTHAL/S. 3835 – LAVALLE)

Requires labeling of genetically engineered food.

SOLAR RIGHTS FOR HOMEOWNERS (A.6878 – GALEF)

Prohibits Homeowners Associations from banning solar panels.

CLOSING THE HAZARDOUS WASTE LOOPHOLE (A.6859 – ENGLEBRIGHT/S.884 – AVELLA)

Requires that waste generated from oil and gas activities be tested for hazardous materials.

ENERGY STAR STATE GRANTS (S.3034 – HOYLMAN/A. 664 – HEVESI)

Requires capital improvement funds be used for energy efficiency.

COAL TAR SEALANT PROHIBITION (A.418 – ROSENTHAL/ S.2595A – MARCELLINO)

Bans coal tar sealants from pavement products.

CHILD SAFE PRODUCTS

Regulates toxic chemicals in children's products.

PAINT STEWARDSHIP

Establishes statewide paint stewardship program.

VICTORY! INCREASE TO THE NYS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND

Successfully advocated for a \$15 million increase the NYS EPF

VICTORY! \$2 MILLION FOR STREAM GAGES IN NEW YORK STATE

Urges New York State to allocate funding for stream gages in the SFY 15-16 budget.

VICTORY! FUNDING FOR PHARMACEUTICAL TAKE-BACK PROGRAMS IN NY

Urges New York State to expand its existing healthcare pharmaceutical take back program and provide great public access to safe disposal options.

VICTORY! \$500,000 FOR SEWAGE RIGHT TO KNOW IMPLEMENTATION

Urges New York State to assist municipalities in improving their technology for sewage overflow reporting.

CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

VICTORY! ELIMINATING PLASTIC MICROBEADS FROM PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Bans the use of plastic microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products in CT.

VICTORY! ESTABLISHING A LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN AND INVENTORY

Establishes a LIS Blue Plan and resource use inventory to ensure that the environmental, cultural, and economic interests of the Long Island Sound community are managed in a manner that is consistent with the values and current uses of the Long Island Sound Community.

EXPANDING CONNECTICUT'S CHILD-SAFE PLAYING FIELDS LAW

Expands the State's K-8 school pesticide ban by prohibiting toxic pesticides on municipal and state owned lawns and athletic fields.

VICTORY! BANNING PESTICIDES ON PUBLIC PLAYGROUNDS

Prohibits the use of pesticides on public playgrounds, and requiring enhanced notification of pesticide applications on school property.

REDUCING POLLUTION FROM SINGLE-USE SHOPPING BAGS

Establishes a 10 cent fee on all single-use paper and plastic bags to reduce litter and promote reusable bag use.

ESTABLISHING A STATEWIDE TIRE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM FOR CONNECTICUT

Creates a producer-funded stewardship program that ensures scrap tires are managed in a way that is consistent with good recycling practices and protective of human health.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING FOR NATURAL GRASS PLAYING FIELDS

Establishes a grant program that would assist municipalities with the costs related to training facilities staff and purchasing the equipment needed to successfully implement a non-toxic lawn care program.

BANNING TRIPHOSPHATE FLAME RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

Bans the use of triphosphate flame retardants in products manufactured for children under the age of twelve.

**Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Annual Report, 2015
Program Expenses**

Program Areas Expenses

- Water Protection Programs \$ 525,100
- Public Health and Toxic Chemical Contamination..... \$ 375,085
- Open Space, Habitat and Wildlife Protection \$ 125,000
- Climate Change and Energy Policies \$ 300,100
- Environmental Policy Advancement \$ 175,053

TOTAL 2015 PROGRAM EXPENSES..... \$ 1,500,338

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For a copy of CCE's 990 Financial Report, please contact the New York State Department of State Bureau of Charities Registration, 41 State Street, Albany, New York, 12231 or contact CCE's main office in Farmingdale, NY, 516-390-7150.