



2017 Annual Report

ORGANIZING WITH RESIDENTS TO
CLEAN UP AND PREVENT POLLUTION
IN NEW ENGLAND SINCE 1987



To Our Members



Sylvia Broude
Executive Director

Now, more than ever, we need to fight back against emboldened polluters and build the power of our movement to win even bigger victories down the line.

Dear friends,

Thirty years into our work, it's easy to feel like we're further than ever from our vision of a better world. From devastating climate change-fueled storms ravaging Haiti, Houston and Puerto Rico to a drinking water crisis facing millions across our country. DuPont, St. Gobain, and other companies manufacturing the cancer-causing chemicals found in Teflon wield so much influence over our government that they avoided regulation for decades. And it's not only the petrochemical industry that we're up against—it's efforts to divide our society and dull our movement, whether through fueling bitter divisions or through rollbacks that assault our core values of equity, justice and human rights.

Our work is needed now more than ever. With federal efforts to dismantle environmental and health protections, the communities we serve are the last line of defense and on the frontlines of the gravest threats to our region. Now, more than ever, we need to fight back against emboldened polluters and build the power of our movement so that we can win even bigger victories down the line.

And, despite what we're up against, our strategy is working! At Toxics Action Center, we know that community organizing works—that this is exactly how people join together across difference and find common ground—and we've been doing this together with your support for the past 30 years. Our work has always been based around the idea that hard times can bring us together to spur political action, and that neighbors banding together and drawing bright lines between right and wrong, between David and Goliath, will bring us closer to our vision of a healthier and more just world. As we move forward over this next year, I'm proud to stand with you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sylvia Broude', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sylvia Broude
Toxics Action Center Executive Director

Organizing for a Healthier and More Just World

With a lack of leadership at the federal level, local organizers are taking matters into their own hands to tackle the worst threats and envision solutions. Your support means we're on the ground with people fighting for an end to toxic pollution and the beginning of healthy systems for our energy and our economy.

Coalition Leads Boston to Zero Waste

We know waste isn't just an issue of sustainability—it's a public health issue for communities who live near landfills or incinerators, often poor communities and communities of color. Thanks to the leadership of our Zero Waste Boston coalition, Boston announced a planning process to bring the city to zero waste. We're working with coalition partners representing all parts of our city to make sure that Boston commits to a strong plan and that the benefits of a zero waste economy are shared equitably.

Bringing Toxic Water in Prisons to Light

Everyone deserves clean water, but for incarcerated people at the prison in Norfolk, Mass., it can be nearly impossible to come by. The water at the prison is contaminated by iron and manganese, and buying bottled water is often too expensive. We've been organizing with the Deeper Than Water coalition, a multigenerational, multiracial coalition of formerly and currently incarcerated people, allies, and abolitionists, to bring this problem to

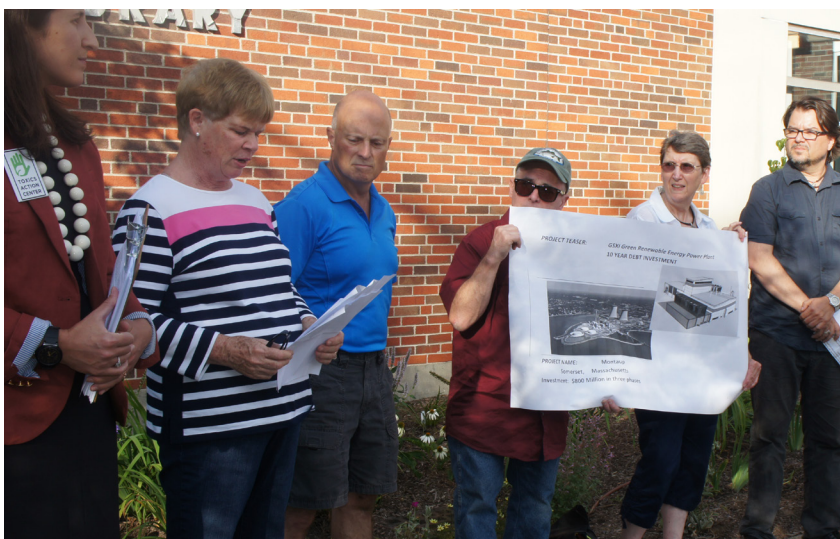
light and make sure Massachusetts provides safe drinking water to all incarcerated people.

From Coal to Clean Energy Jobs

In Somerset, Mass., winning the closure of Brayton Point, the state's last remaining coal-burning power plant, is a major victory for a community that has faced high levels of asthma and cancers. And for a town that depended on dirty energy jobs and dollars for its tax base, we know we need a just transition to a clean energy economy. We're working with Connie Brodeur, Pauline Rodrigues, and other leaders of the Coalition for Clean Air South Coast in Somerset to support offshore wind projects that will transition the state to clean energy and grow the local economy.

Fighting for a Toxic-Free Vermont

Children are the most vulnerable to the health effects that come with being exposed to toxic chemicals, and Toxics Action Center Campaigns is working to ensure Vermont gives parents the information they need to make smart choices for their kids. We're calling on the state Legislature to close loopholes in the Toxic-Free Families Act to provide more consumer-friendly information on dangerous chemicals in our kids' products, and to improve the process for getting dangerous chemicals out of children's products altogether.



Connie Brodeur and other Coalition for Clean Air South Coast leaders hold a press conference in Somerset to support replacing the newly retired Brayton Point coal plant with clean, renewable energy.

"I wish I could write a thousand recommendations on how Toxics Action Center gave me hope and inspiration, how they guided my own child on becoming an activist and not a victim of climate change, on how they changed my life for the better."

—Tiffany Mellers

co-founder of the Healthy
Connecticut Alliance in Bridgeport

Growing the Power of our Grassroots Movement

This year, we saw incredible mobilizations of newly energized activists coming together to fight for change. We're experts in helping first-time activists create winning campaigns and get involved beyond their backyards, and this year, we connected more people than ever into the movement for change.

30th Local Environmental Action is Region's Largest Gathering of Grassroots Leaders

In 2017, we celebrated our 30th annual Local Environmental Action conference with record-breaking numbers of activists from across the region. More than 350 community leaders, environmental justice advocates and activists from all six New England states joined us at our anniversary conference to learn, connect and build skills. Our conference has always been a crucial part of building our movement—we bring together activists to share winning strategies, learn about new issues, and broaden our vision of a just, healthy world.

Last year we hosted two incredible keynote speakers: Kandi Mossett of the Indigenous Environmental Network and Lois Gibbs of the Center for Health, Environment & Justice. Kandi, a visionary leader in the movement to stop the Dakota Access pipeline at the Standing Rock Reser-

vation, told the long history of environmental injustice against Native people. Her moving talk was a reminder of why we do this work—to protect communities from the dangers of an extractive economy and move to a future where everyone benefits from clean air, clean water and healthy communities.

Lois, the nationally recognized mother of the toxics movement, shared her story of finding out that her neighborhood was located on top of a toxic waste dump—reminding us of how far we have come, and how much work we have left to do.

2017 BY THE NUMBERS

93 calls to our hotline for help

124 community organizing group trainings

2,461 activists trained

484 leadership coaching sessions

53 environmental health experts added to our network

98 side-by-side actions with groups

20 victories!



From left: Toxics Action Center Deputy Director Lena Entin, Elena Letona of Neighbor to Neighbor, and keynote speaker Kandi Mossett of the Indigenous Environmental Network lead a workshop at Local Environmental Action 2017.

Organizing for Clean Water and Clean Energy

National Coalition Forms at Water Contamination Conference

Recently, tens of thousands of families across the U.S. learned that the water coming out of their tap was polluted by toxic chemicals known as PFAS. These chemicals, used to make Teflon and other non-stick and non-slip coatings, are linked to cancer, kidney disorders and more. For decades, chemical manufacturers like DuPont, 3M and Saint-Gobain have exploited loopholes in our country's drinking water laws—meaning that most communities are not required to test for these chemicals, much less clean them up. Toxics Action Center was in North Bennington, Vt., just hours after news broke that families had been unknowingly drinking toxic water for years. Faced with increased calls from communities facing drinking water contamination across the Northeast region and the country, we've been working with courageous activists to fight for clean water and hold polluters and our government accountable.

Together with Northeastern University, Silent Spring Institute, and the community group Testing for Pease in Portsmouth, N.H., Toxics Action Center held a national conference for communities facing PFAS contamination in drinking water last June. We convened nearly 200 citizen

leaders, leading scientists, public health advocates, attorneys and government officials in Boston for two days to discuss the problem and brainstorm solutions. At the conference, we gathered community leaders from across the country dealing with the aftermath of PFAS contamination—fighting for clean drinking water, answers to health questions, and accountability from polluters—for a special meeting to connect and strategize. That meeting resulted in the creation of the National PFAS Contamination Coalition, made up of community leaders from more than a dozen states who are leading the charge nationally to make sure every town and city has the tools and skills to get the clean drinking water they deserve.

Mass Power Forward Grows

As we mobilize activists to fight new fossil fuel pipelines, power plants and compressor stations, we're training a new set of leaders in the movement for clean energy. Leaders like Cathy Kristofferson from StopNED, and Carlos Rodriguez from Action for a Healthy Holyoke and Neighbor to Neighbor, didn't stop fighting when they halted the pipeline or retired the coal-fired power plant—they went on to work for 100 percent renewable energy for all. It makes sense that communities with the most at stake are leading these campaigns, and we are committed to building their capacity to lead.

In Massachusetts, we're building this movement for clean energy in Massachusetts through our coalition Mass Power Forward. Three years ago, we founded this coalition to take a proactive approach to transitioning Massachusetts to a clean energy future. As activists successfully stop big dirty energy projects like the 250-mile Kinder Morgan pipeline, or Spectra's Access Northeast expansion, we connect them with Mass Power Forward to keep that energy and momentum going.

In just three years, we've built a powerful coalition of more than 200 organizations, 500 small businesses, and dozens of healthcare professionals and faith leaders—and our movement is still growing. This fall, we launched a three-month protest at the Statehouse to pressure Gov. Charlie Baker to show support for clean energy. The protest started with just two people asking for a meeting with the Governor and grew everyday, culminating with 300 Mass Power Forward members standing in at the Statehouse—catching the attention of the media and the Legislature.



Mass Power Forward members came together for a retreat to mark three years of the coalition, deepen our commitment to environmental justice, and plan for the work ahead.

2017 Campaigns: Cleaning Up and Preventing

12 Concord, N.H.: Working Regionally to Curb Power Plant Pollution

In New Hampshire, Massachusetts and across the region, we've been organizing to bring equity to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI is a nine-state agreement that limits emissions from power plants that burn fossil fuels, and while it's been successful in reducing emissions, it's been criticized for not having adequate protections for environmental justice communities. We've been working with New Hampshire Pipeline Awareness Network, Coalition for Social Justice, Arise for Social Justice, North American Indian Center of Boston and others to ensure that all communities can benefit from reduced pollution and energy savings.

21 Merrimack, N.H.: Citizen Health Survey

We're fighting for answers alongside residents in Merrimack whose water has been polluted with PFAS from Saint-Gobain's factory there. Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water is working to build awareness about the contamination in town and the potential health risks associated with PFAS contamination, and to get an official health survey and biomonitoring from the state.

22 Former Pease Air Force Base, N.H.: Mothers Spark Movement for Safer Water

PFAS is a serious threat to people's health, and leaders like Andrea Amico, Alayna Davis and Michelle Dalton from Testing for Pease have helped call attention to this issue nationwide. Drinking water at the former Pease Air Force Base was discovered to be contaminated with PFAS, affecting thousands of workers and children who attended daycare there. This group of moms led the charge to get answers, and now, they're organizing with our National PFAS Contamination Coalition to make sure all communities are protected from this toxic threat. Their work resulted in a national mandate for a PFAS health study and recently, \$7 million was appropriated to fund it. This study is the first of its kind and will hopefully give communities more answers to their health-related questions.

22 Portsmouth, N.H.: Planning for a Coal-Free Future

This year, Toxics Action Center Campaigns worked with a champion on the Portsmouth City Council to introduce a redevelopment initiative that would send a clear message to potential buyers that Portsmouth is an eco-municipality, which values clean air and healthy economic development. The City Council expressed support and is waiting to act until the new owners make their intentions clear.

27 North Bennington, Vt.: Families Win Clean Drinking Water

The night neighbors realized their well water had been contaminated with PFAS—a class of chemicals used to make non-stick, stain-resistant and waterproof products—Toxics Action Center was in Bennington listening to residents and helping strategize. Neighbors had lots of concerns, but they needed clean drinking water immediately. After years of concerted organizing, state leadership, and legal action, residents won \$20 million to connect 200 families formerly drinking contaminated well water with the public drinking water system. This is a major victory for families who had been relying on bottled water, and we're continuing to fight for justice for all who have been affected.

37 Hinesburg, Vt.: Quick Action Protects Lake Iroquois

Last spring, residents living along Lake Iroquois were surprised to learn that the pesticide fluridone had been used to kill weeds on their lake. Fluridone is so toxic that it would keep residents from safely watering their gardens or lawns for the whole year—nevermind the dangers to people enjoying the lake, to drinking water wells nearby, and to the ecosystem. We helped residents mobilize, call for public hearings, and bring more than 100 people out to support a toxic-free lake. And we won—last year, residents enjoyed a summer on Lake Iroquois without the threat of toxic pesticides.

56 Maine and Massachusetts: Get the Lead Out

The crisis in Flint, Mich., alerted people to the ongoing risk of lead in drinking water. But even schools have been slow to update their water systems to prevent toxic exposure. In Massachusetts and Maine, we've been working to bring this issue to light. We held press conferences to call attention to lead in school drinking water and called for action to protect our children from lead exposure.

82 New Bedford, Mass.: Building Support for 100 Percent Clean Energy

The port city of New Bedford has long been overburdened with environmental threats. We've worked with community leaders to win remarkable victories, like stopping Spectra from locating dangerous liquefied natural gas tanks nearby, and now we're building support for the goal of 100 percent clean, renewable energy. Local leaders are coming together to do more than stop environmental threats—together, we're planning for a clean and just energy future.

Pollution Throughout New England

85 Northampton, Mass.: New Networks to Protect Pollinators

Toxic pesticides have always been a serious environmental concern, from the farmworkers' movement to stop spraying to the fight for safe, toxic-free communities today. Pesticides don't just impact human health—they have deadly consequences for the pollinators we rely on to keep our food system healthy. In Western Massachusetts, we're working with community leaders with the Western Mass Pollinator Network, who are building a regional network of pesticide-free, bee-friendly landscapes. They are creating a safe environment for pollinators to nest and forage along the way—keeping our health and our food system safe.

89 Berkshires, Mass.: Activists Form Environmental Justice Alliance

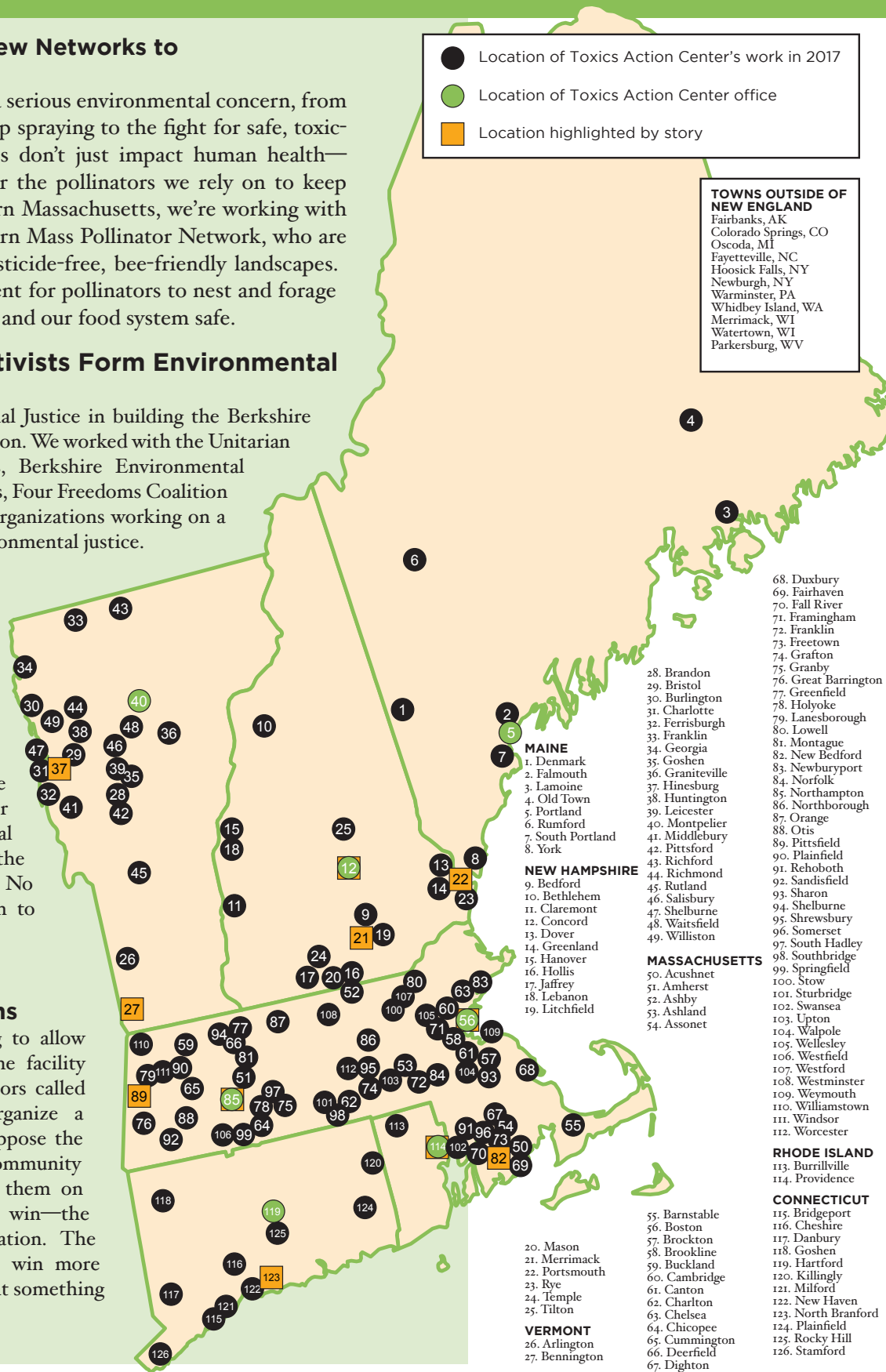
In 2017, we supported Arise for Social Justice in building the Berkshire County Environmental Justice Coalition. We worked with the Unitarian Universalist Society, 350 Berkshires, Berkshire Environmental Action Team, No Fracked Gas in Mass, Four Freedoms Coalition and the NAACP, bringing together organizations working on a wide range of issues to focus on environmental justice.

114 Providence, R.I.: Residents Say No to Dangerous LNG Facility

This year, we stood in solidarity with Providence residents who are opposing the siting of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in their neighborhood. The proposal to locate the facility in a low-income neighborhood already home to 11 major polluters is a case of environmental injustice, and we're standing with the amazing community leaders from No LNG in PVD in rejecting this plan to deepen our reliance on fossil fuels.

123 North Branford, Conn.: Sustained Activism Wins

When a proposal to change zoning to allow construction of a dangerous propane facility was hidden from the public, neighbors called Toxics Action Center to help organize a campaign to stop the project and oppose the town's corruption. We worked with community leaders to develop a plan, coached them on organizing skills, and helped them win—the town rejected the facility's application. The group has now launched efforts to win more transparency in their town and prevent something like this from happening again.

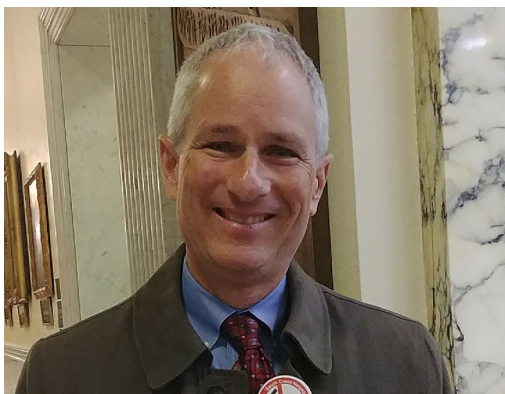


Leaders Moving Beyond the Backyard



◀ **Jesse Lederman, Springfield City Councilor**

Jesse was 14 years old when he took action to stop a proposed incinerator in Springfield, Mass. He quickly became a leader on the McKnight Neighborhood Youth Council and got connected with Toxics Action Center and seasoned organizers from the low-income rights organization in Springfield, Arise for Social Justice. Jesse organized other high school kids to get involved, and over the next few years, he became an outspoken advocate for clean air, democracy and environmental justice. During and after college, Jesse worked as a community organizer with Arise. This year, he was elected to the Springfield City Council—and the incinerator he started fighting over ten years ago has not been built.



◀ **Roger Cabral, South Coast Neighbors United**

When Roger found out that Spectra was proposing to build storage tanks for high-pressure, liquefied natural gas (LNG) right next to his suburban neighborhood in Acushnet, Mass., he jumped into action. A banker, a father and a long-term Rotary Club member, Roger had never considered himself an activist, but he knew the tanks posed a serious health risk. He helped create the South Coast Neighbors United and led the group to victory, defeating Spectra's dangerous proposal for now. Roger has since gotten even more deeply involved in his community—this year, he was elected to serve on the Board of Selectmen in Acushnet.



◀ **Sue Phelan, GreenCAPE**

Surrounded by views of the ocean and bay, it's no wonder Cape Cod residents care a lot about water. In addition, all residents of the Cape depend on a sole source aquifer for their drinking water. That's why when the company NSTAR proposed to spray toxic pesticides along hundreds of miles of electricity lines across the Cape, Sue Phelan took action, along with members of GreenCAPE (www.GreenCape.org). Years later, Sue has stayed on top of local water threats facing the Cape, including taking action around PFAS contamination of drinking water in Hyannis and Barnstable.



◀ **Elizabeth Deutsch, Concerned Citizens for Lake Iroquois**

Elizabeth was one of the first people to stand up against toxic pesticide use on Lake Iroquois in her hometown of Hinesburg, Vt. She's a nurse and a mom who quickly became a leader in the campaign to protect health and water around the lake. Elizabeth was initially nervous about talking to her neighbors about the risks of spraying toxic pesticides, but when a reporter covered the story, she got in front of a TV camera to explain what was happening in Lake Iroquois to people across the state. She helped lead the group to win protections for their lake, and since then, she's gone on to organize for health care reform—participating in civil disobedience, speaking at press conferences, and being interviewed by national media.

Cities And Towns Leading The Way

Change happens from the bottom up. We spend our time working locally because local victories build momentum for state and national policy changes, create models for the rest of the country to follow, push the envelope on what's possible, and inspire others to take up the fight in their own backyards.

Communities Stand Up to Fracked Gas

Activists across Massachusetts are joining together to block new fossil fuel infrastructure and push the state to invest in clean, renewable energy. Residents in Sharon, Grafton, Norfolk and Acushnet are fighting—and winning—battles against Spectra, the biggest energy company in the country. Spectra, which recently merged with Enbridge, has proposed a host of major fracked gas projects in Massachusetts of the kind that carry risk of explosions and leak cancer-causing chemicals into the air. Activists across the state—calling themselves the Spectra Fighters—have brought these health and safety concerns to light. Through our coalition, Mass Power Forward, the Spectra Fighters are calling on Gov. Baker to take a stand against more fossil fuel infrastructure and invest in clean, local, renewable energy.

N.H. and Mass. Towns Reject Landfills

Towns across our region are closing landfills for good. This year, residents in Southbridge, Mass., won the closure of a polluting landfill that had leaked toxic chemicals into

their drinking water, contaminating well water for more than 80 homes, a nearby stream, and wetlands with lead, arsenic and more. Despite that, the landfill sought to expand. With our help, residents organized, launched a lawsuit and held press conferences—and shortly after, the landfill announced plans to close entirely. In Bethlehem, N.H., residents have been fighting a landfill expansion as well. The group Growing Without Garbage has come together to stop the polluting landfill from securing another 20-year contract and dumping trash on more of their town. Community leaders know that landfills come with dangerous consequences, and they are fighting for a better future for Bethlehem.

Maine Cities Going Organic

Toxics Action Center Campaigns has been working with the Portland Protectors for nearly three years to win safeguards against dangerous pesticides throughout the city. This year, the Portland Protectors pushed city councilors to unanimously pass one of the nation's strongest bans on toxic pesticides on all public and private property. Starting this summer, Portland will practice city-wide organic land care. This work follows the leadership of activists in South Portland, who passed a similar pesticide ban in their city in 2016. The ground-breaking organic land care ordinance was one of the first of its kind, and community leaders hoped that it would kick-off a trend in Maine and beyond—and it did.



Members of No Sharon Gas Pipeline stand against new fracked gas infrastructure and call for a commitment to renewable energy.

“The strategy session with Toxics Action Center was invaluable to our group in creating a specific path forward, and served to help us understand the issue and focus our energies to maximize our efficiency.”

— Philip Pitha,
Beth Rodio
and Bri McAlevey
No Sharon Gas Pipeline leaders



Toxics Action Center
294 Washington St., Ste. 500
Boston, MA 02108

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Our Offices

Eastern Massachusetts Office

294 Washington St., Ste. 500
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 292-4821

Western Massachusetts Office

2B Conz St.
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: (413) 253-4458

Connecticut Office

2074 Park St., Ste. 210
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 233-7623

Vermont Office

141 Main St., Ste. 6
Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone: (802) 223-4099

New Hampshire Office

Phone: (603) 229-1331

Rhode Island Office

Phone: (401) 421-0007

Maine Office

142 High St., Ste. 624
Portland, ME 04101
Phone: (207) 871-1810

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Headshots – Kimball Nelson

Our Staff



Sylvia Broude
Executive Director



Megan Stokes
*Development
Director*



Lena Entin
Deputy Director



Shaina Kasper
*Vermont State
Director*



Claire Miller
*Lead Community
Organizer*



Andy Jones
*Community
Organizer*



Ben Weilerstein
*Community
Organizer*



Kelsey Whiting-Jones
*Community
Organizer*



Andrea Taillon
Donor Associate



Sofia Owen
*Attorney and
Community
Organizer*



Ruthy Rickenbacker
*Communications
Coordinator*



Mary Jones
*Community
Organizer*

Fellows & Interns

Melissa Bonaccorso
Lia Gabrielle
Kassandra Hishida
Jonah Miller
Mikaela Osler