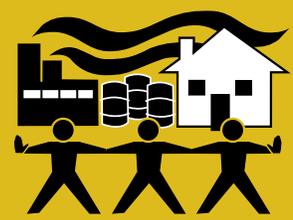




Toxics Action Center



2007 Annual Report



To Our Members



Alyssa Schuren
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This year is Toxics Action Center's 20th anniversary. In 1987, Toxics Action Center, then named the Massachusetts Campaign to Clean Up Hazardous Waste, was born out of lessons learned in Woburn, Massachusetts, where mothers discovered their children had leukemia caused by toxic chemicals in their town's drinking water wells.

Over the past 20 years, we have expanded our reach throughout New England and worked with more than 550 communities. We've helped communities face everything from cleaning up hazardous waste in the mid- to late-1980s to preventing future toxic exposures throughout the 1990s and the new millennium.

Our work was varied in 2007, from fighting back against old-fashioned and antiquated coal-fired power plants to exposing seemingly high-tech household products that contain high levels of pesticides and other toxins.

In this annual report, you'll learn more about our work across that spectrum:

- In Wiscasset, Maine, we worked to stop polluting industries that attempted to repackage old, dirty coal under a new scheme called coal-gasification. Read the full story on page 7.
- In Massachusetts, we helped stop the state from spraying toxic pesticides along the highways and roadways. Read the full story on page 2.
- Across New England, we helped communities fight the source of so many toxic problems: waste. Read about our report on the ground-breaking concept of zero-waste on page 9.

Our 20th year was a successful one, and when you read more within, I hope you will feel as proud of this work as we do. But before you get to the rest of this report, let me take this opportunity to thank you. It's your support that makes our work possible, as we strive with you to create a safer, healthier future for New England residents. I look forward to working together in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alyssa Schuren". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Alyssa Schuren
Executive Director

Reducing Pesticide Use

Blocking a statewide pesticide plan

In 2007, Toxics Action Center led a coalition of groups that stopped the Massachusetts Highway Department's plans to spray toxic pesticides along state roads to control weeds.

We launched the Massachusetts Coalition for Pesticide Reduction early in the year. The coalition's long-term goal is to phase out dangerous pesticide use throughout the Commonwealth. The coalition is made up of more than 35 groups from across the state, including the Hilltown Anti-Herbicide Coalition, Environment Massachusetts and Protect Our Water Resources.

The first issue we took action on was roadside pesticide spraying, because the widespread use of pesticides has had devastating implications for the environment and public health. In Massachusetts, highway embankments and medians have been sprayed with pesticides that pose a particular threat to drinking water supplies.

Pesticides have a history of damaging health

From 1998-2004, the highway department used lawn mowers and weed whackers to control weeds. But in 2005, the highway department sprayed pesticides, which, like road salt, oil, grease and other contaminants, can

run off of highways in storm water and pollute lakes, rivers and groundwater. The pesticides proposed for use last summer—Oust and Accord—have been linked to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, learning disabilities and birth defects.

Over the course of the summer, we made grassroots mobilization a real priority. We contacted residents living in the 50 towns targeted for spraying and asked them to call the Department of Transportation to ask them not to spray. We gathered hundreds of petition signatures from citizens opposed to spraying. At one event, we asked concerned citizens to hand-write letters to Department of Transportation Secretary Bernard Cohen, and more than 100 people did.

Grassroots activity was enough to convince 13 legislators to endorse the campaign, and in late summer, we held a press conference to bring the issue to light in the media once again. Just over a month after that press conference, the highway department cancelled their plans to spray. No pesticide spraying occurred on Massachusetts' highways in 2007.

The coalition is continuing to work with the highway department to phase out spraying for good. ■



Toxics Action Center's Sylvia Broude speaks at the press conference announcing the grassroots work of the coalition in the summer of 2007.

“ We are thankful for the help Toxics Action has provided us. They have given us the support, understanding and knowledge to succeed. And just as importantly, because they believe in us, we now believe in ourselves. ”

Linda Hiesiger & Jo-Anne Bessette, co-Chairs of Citizens United for a Healthy Future

Minimizing The Impact Of Landfills

Maine & Mass. residents defeat Casella landfill proposals

In 2007, residents of Hardwick, Mass., and Lewiston, Maine, stood up to long-time polluter Casella Waste Systems. The Hardwick group shut down a polluting landfill in their neighborhood and the Lewiston group stopped the company from setting up shop in their town. Not only did the residents fight back against a notorious polluter (Casella is the fastest-growing waste hauler in the region and a repeated recipient of Toxic Action Center's "Dirty Dozen" polluter award), they set a region-wide precedent for communities fighting back against waste and the pollution that accompanies it.

The Environmental Protection Agency says that all landfills eventually leak—even landfills with new state-of-the-art technology. Our water supplies can't afford the risk. From the poisoning of thousands of drinking water wells, to the historical dumping of hazardous waste, to the use of toxic pesticides, precious water supplies are under duress all over New England. With municipal supplies continuing to dwindle, citizens and public officials must be increasingly vigilant and focused on protecting these resources.

Residents' diligence pays off

Residents in Hardwick, Massachusetts, won a major victory last February when they successfully shut down a

polluting landfill run by Casella. Five years ago, Casella had purchased the town's old dump and reopened it, proposing to aggressively expand the landfill. The Hardwick Landfill sits directly over the Muddy Brook Aquifer, the primary drinking water supply for the neighboring town of Ware. The landfill is also less than two miles from the Quabbin Reservoir, which supplies the greater Boston area with its water. Toxic chemicals have appeared in monitoring wells around the dump.

Kristen Wiktor and her neighbors formed STOP (as in STOP this landfill), which focused on preventing expansion of this landfill. Over the course of the last five years, Toxics Action Center and STOP worked together to hold back Casella's destructive proposal. In 2005, we presented Casella with one of our "Dirty Dozen" Awards.

In early 2007, Hardwick residents had the opportunity to vote on expanding the landfill. As the day for the vote approached, Casella purchased full-page ads in the largest regional newspaper and sent out glossy mailers to every home in town. To combat Casella's well-funded campaign, Toxics Action Center community organizer Sylvia Broude headed out to Hardwick to join neighbors and volunteers who were "working the phones." Together, we encouraged residents to turn out and vote to protect water resources and stop dump expansion.



STOP members call fellow Hardwick residents to turn them out to the town vote, generating a large enough crowd to defeat Casella.

On the day of the vote, opposition to the dump was strong enough to stop the expansion, and Casella announced one month later that it would close the dump for good.

Blocking Casella expansion

In January 2007, Dan and JoAnn Gregoire had no idea that they would soon be leading the fight in their hometown to keep Casella from taking over the local landfill.

Casella announced its interest in operating the Lewiston, Maine, landfill in the spring. The company made plans to ship thousands of pounds of out-of-state construction and demolition debris into the municipal landfill. The health effects associated with construction and demolition debris were a source of concern, as the waste would have included treated wood, asbestos tiles and paint chips.

Dan and JoAnn and their newly formed group, Don't Dump on ME!, contacted Toxics Action Center. We helped them develop a plan targeting the City Council, the body that had the power to stop Casella's proposal in its tracks.

The Gregoires and their group faced an uphill battle, however. Lewiston's powerful city manager, Jim Bennett, had Casella connections, having welcomed the company to other Maine towns in the past.

Toxics Action Center State Director Harris Parnell and Don't Dump on ME! set out to educate Lewiston residents about the proposal, the plans for out-of-state waste, and the dangers of construction and demolition debris. We helped the group get the message out and build support through the media, door-to-door outreach, public hearings and City Council meetings. At one meeting, there were so many people that it had to be moved from the Council chambers to the municipal gymnasium!

In September, more than 200 Lewiston residents gathered at a public hearing to urge the City Council of Lewiston to vote no. The public support that Don't Dump on ME! built empowered the City Council to stand up to the town manager and turn down the Casella proposal.

Moving forward

Casella Waste Systems is beginning to catch on to the power of citizens organizing against landfills. Unfortunately, the company is pursuing an equally dangerous alternative—trash gasification. Gasification is incineration in disguise, and its by-products are just as toxic as landfills. The real solution is to reduce how much we throw away in the first place. Having helped so many towns fight polluters like Casella, Toxic Action Center has embarked on a proactive campaign for zero-waste. You can read more about this project on page 9. ■



Toxics Action Center's Jessica Edgerly and local residents at a press conference in opposition to a local landfill.

Cleaning Up And Preventing Pollution

In 2007, Toxics Action Center worked with more than 50 communities in New England to address environmental and public health problems. Below are brief descriptions of some of these campaigns.

Landfills & Recycling

Toxics Action Center, along with our partner group Recycling Action, is dedicated to working with residents across the region to stop dangerous landfill and incinerator projects, reduce waste and increase recycling.

1. **Northampton, Mass.:** Members of Citizens United for a Healthy Future are worried that the pollution coming from the local landfill will only get worse if a landfill expansion is approved. The leaking landfill sits atop the Barnes Aquifer, a drinking water source for more than 60,000 people in the region. The group is working to convince the city council to cancel its expansion plans for the landfill.
2. **Boston, Mass.:** While certain regions in Massachusetts have met recycling challenges head-on, Boston's rates of recycling have remained abysmally low. Mayor Thomas Menino has pledged to turn that around and make Boston a beacon of recycling for the state—increasing the number of recycling bins in city parks and subway stations. Recycling Action is working with Mayor Menino and city councilors to make this goal a reality.
3. **Bath, Maine:** The smell coming from the 70-year-old landfill in Bath isn't just gross—it's an indication of potentially deadly toxins. At times, the stench from the landfill has been so bad that the town has put residents up in hotels. A local group of concerned citizens won a huge victory when the town council agreed to close the landfill for good in 2008.
4. **Williston, Vt.:** The Chittenden Solid Waste District is proposing digging a new landfill. This landfill would be within a football-field's distance of a community of homes. VOCAL—Vermont Organized Communities Against Landfills—has been working to promote zero-waste and demonstrate that there truly is no need for another landfill in the state.

Toxic Chemicals

The tens of thousands of man-made chemicals used in products and services have untold toxic consequences. The effects of chemicals used in plastics, building materials, pesticides, flame retardants, electronics and pharmaceuticals could be more toxic to children than to adults, but testing is still in the works for many.

5. **Maine:** In May, the State Legislature voted almost unanimously to pass An Act to Protect Pregnant Women and Children from Toxic Chemicals Released into the Home, which banned the use of deca-PBDE, a toxic flame retardant. Toxics Action Center worked as a member of Maine's Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow to help pass this legislation and protect all Mainers from this terrible toxic chemical.
6. **White River Junction, Vt.:** Dry cleaning chemicals—including PERC—have made their way through groundwater systems after being dumped by Parkway Cleaners years ago. The chemicals are now seeping into basements in local neighborhoods. The White River Junction Toxics Action Committee recently started working to convince the state to fully fund a clean-up.
7. **Richmond, R.I.:** Charbert Dyeing Company, a textile mill, has been storing chemicals in an uncovered lagoon behind the facility. The chemicals are contaminating the nearby river and polluting the air. The concentration of chemicals in the air is so high that residents often get light-headed when they go outside. The mill is set to close down in early 2008, and residents worked throughout 2007 to make sure the company included a full cleanup of the shutdown plants.
8. **Stratford, Conn.:** Throughout much of the 20th century, Raymark industries combined the toxic waste from their factory (where they produced asbestos brake linings, among other things), mixed it with soil, and handed it out to residents around town. They even used this contaminated soil to build a baseball field at the community park. Shortly after Raymark closed up shop, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identified more than 20 different hazardous waste sites around town. Residents with SaveStratford.org are currently working to convince the EPA to fully clean up all of those sites.

Dangerous Facilities

Residents throughout New England face threats from dangerous industrial facilities such as quarries, asphalt plants, biomedical labs and trash transfer stations. Toxics Action Center is working with these residents to ensure that existing facilities are either managed properly or cleaned up and closed, and that new facilities are not built in densely populated residential areas.

Throughout New England

“The wonderful thing about working with Toxics Action Center is that they focus on guiding us to our own truth and support us in our goals, acting as mentor, advisor, trainer and friend.”

—Aleece Herlihy, member of Concerned Citizens of Gorham

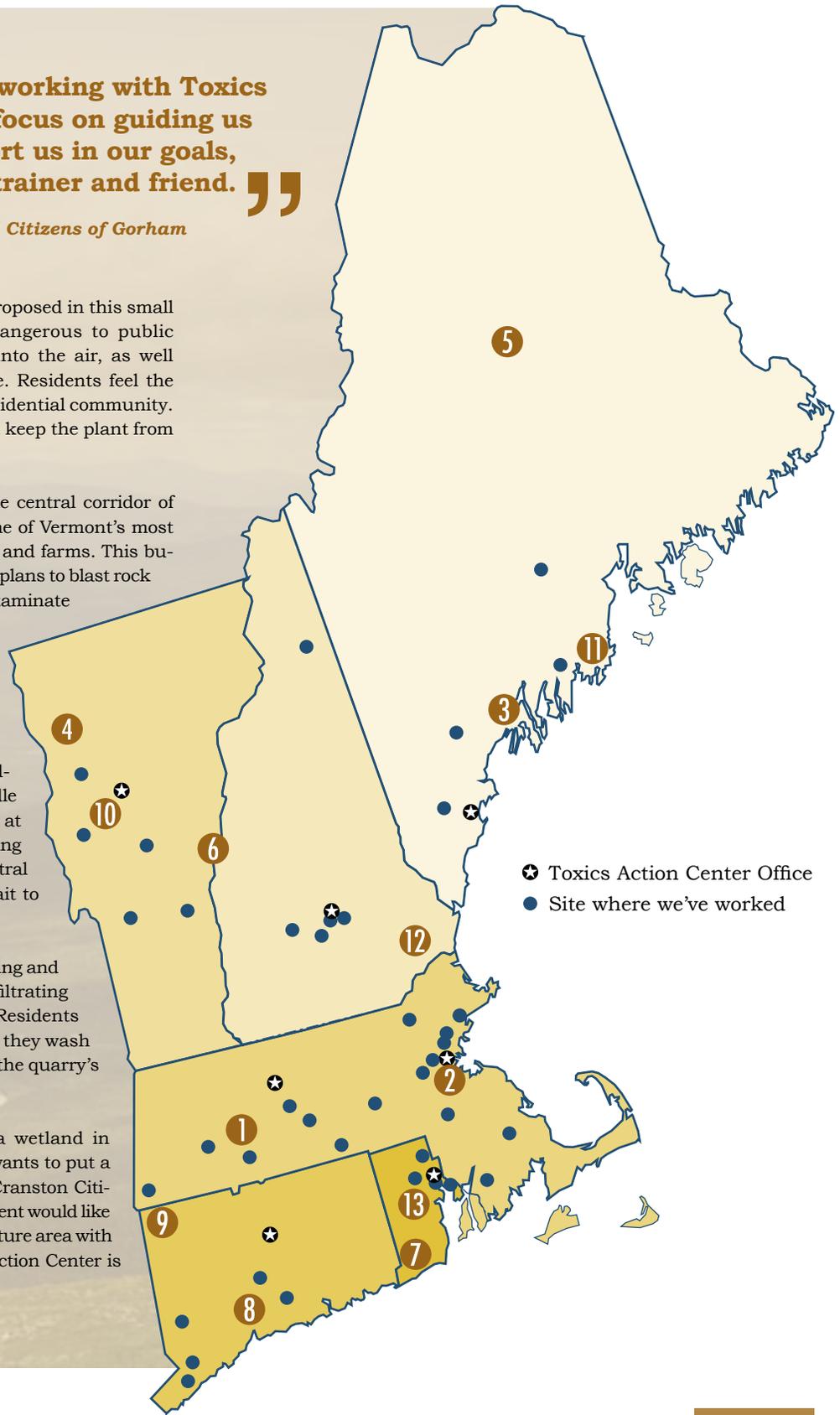
9. **Canaan, Conn.:** An asphalt plant is being proposed in this small town. Asphalt plants are extremely dangerous to public health, spewing asthma-causing soot into the air, as well as cancer-causing benzene and toluene. Residents feel the asphalt plant should not be sited in a residential community. They are working to protect their air and keep the plant from coming into town.

10. **Moretown, Vt.:** Route 100B winds down the central corridor of Vermont, following the Mad River. It's one of Vermont's most scenic drives, dotted with horse ranches and farms. This bucolic setting is threatened by a developer's plans to blast rock out of the valley walls, which would contaminate drinking water supplies as well as the picturesque Mad River. Members of the Mad River Neighborhood Association are using Vermont's permitting process to halt the building of this quarry.

11. **Rockland, Maine:** A company in Rockland allows its tourist trains to idle in the middle of a residential area, putting residents at risk for lung problems. Neighbors are asking the train company to either move its central station or shut off engines while they wait to start their routes.

12. **Windham, N.H.:** The chemicals used in blasting and extracting rock in a nearby quarry are infiltrating a neighborhood's drinking water wells. Residents report that their hair turns orange when they wash with tap water. They are working to stop the quarry's operations and clean up their wells.

13. **Cranston, R.I.:** Two rivers converge into a wetland in downtown Cranston, where a developer wants to put a concrete plant. Residents involved with Cranston Citizens for Responsible Zoning and Development would like to see this green space maintained as a nature area with bike paths and canoe launches. Toxics Action Center is helping them make this vision a reality.



Keeping Our Air Safe To Breathe

Wiscasset wins fight against proposed coal plant

A short drive up Route 1 from southern Maine brings you to Wiscasset, dubbed the “Prettiest Village in Maine.” Wiscasset is situated on the Sheepscot River and is a gateway to Midcoast and Down East Maine. Residents have begun to capitalize on Wiscasset’s location and picturesque setting—an artists’ community has blossomed and there are dozens of boutiques and restaurants that attract tourists.

In July 2007, Twin River Energy, a subsidiary of Connecticut-based real estate developer Natural Resources, decided to seize upon Wiscasset’s burgeoning economy by proposing to bring a coal gasification plant to town, on the site of the now-closed Maine Yankee nuclear reactor.

Coal gasification facilities, often marketed as “cleaner and greener” coal plants, are quite dirty. They produce the same emissions as traditional coal-burning power plants, and the remaining coal waste is full of highly concentrated toxics.

In addition to the dangerous health and environmental impacts of having a coal gasification plant in Wiscasset, coal

would be brought in on barges up the Sheepscot River, destroying rich lobstering, fishing and clamming grounds.

When the company announced its intentions, residents in Wiscasset smelled a rat. Willy Ritch, a lifelong sailor, contacted Toxics Action Center for help. We started working with Willy’s group, Back River Alliance, in late summer 2007. We helped them convince a majority of Wiscasset voters to reject the proposal on the November ballot.

Leading up to the vote, Toxics Action Center worked with the Back River Alliance to educate the community, identify supporters to add to the group, conduct door-to-door outreach, and run a media campaign. The group used a lobster boat parade, in which lobstermen demonstrated their concern about the coal barges by parading reporters up the route the barges would take, showing the many lobster beds that would be destroyed.

As Election Day approached, we worked with Back River Alliance to turn out supporters. On Nov. 6, Wiscasset voters rejected the proposal by a 10 percent margin, soundly defeating the coal plant. ■



Supporters of the lobstermen and those opposed to the coal plant lined the banks of the Sheepscot River during the lobster boat parade.



Keeping Our Neighborhoods Clean

Cumberland group "STOP" stops transfer station

In January, residents from the group Stop Trashing Our Place (STOP) declared victory when the town of Cumberland, Rhode Island, rejected the permit for an inappropriately-sited construction and demolition debris (C&D) trash transfer station in town.

Proposals for trash transfer stations are springing up across the region as cities produce more waste and send it to landfills farther away. These stations are a part of larger trends in waste management, as towns close local dumps and mega-waste haulers turn a profit shipping in waste from all over the region. Toxics Action Center advocates stemming this tide by increasing the amount that is recycled, composted or returned to manufacturers.

Residents in Cumberland recognize a short-term need for transfer stations, but fought this plan because of its proximity to a residential area. In Cumberland, Redwood Realty proposed building the station downtown after similar facilities were proposed along the northern Rhode Island rail corridor.

Unless properly regulated by local or state governments, facilities such as trash transfer stations can have detrimental effects on neighborhoods. Increased truck traffic means noise pollution, air pollution and traffic hazards. The trash itself attracts rodents and seagulls, and the dust can be toxic. The proposed site is near the region's largest Boys and Girls Club, and Cumberland's largest block of affordable housing.

Toxics Action Center worked with Walter and Renee Ducharme to create the citizens' group STOP. The group organized their neighbors, generated media attention, and testified at public hearings to stop construction of this dangerous facility. Ultimately, the group elevated their issue to become a topic of discussion during the city elections. Because of their diligence and strong message of public health, STOP convinced newly elected Mayor Dan McKee to work with the city building official to revoke the permits for the transfer station.

At our annual conference in 2007, Toxics Action Center awarded STOP with an Outstanding Activist Award for their work and commitment to the health and well-being of Cumberland residents. ■



Toxics Action Center's Paul Schramski (left) and Molly Clark of the American Lung Association (right) present Renee and Walter Ducharme with an Outstanding Activist Award.

“ **Toxics Action Center brought a much-needed, disciplined focus to a group of residents who previously did not know one another ... or share common political views.** ”

—Tom Smith, member of SaveStratford.org

Rethinking Waste

Toxics Action Center spreads zero-waste message

In 2007, Toxics Action Center embarked on a new campaign to stop the very source of the toxic pollution we help communities fight: waste. Because landfills, incineration and other means of disposal are all inherently toxic, we're helping cities and states across New England reduce and eventually eliminate this source.

Part of reaching that goal is recycling. We have run Recycling Action to promote municipal and statewide recycling programs because it's good for the environment and it keeps waste out of landfills.

But recycling alone is not going to fix the problem. Our towns, our states, and our region need an all-inclusive way to think about the lifespan of the materials we make and use every day—from the raw materials that go in to the waste product that comes out. And ultimately we need to ask: how many more landfills, how many more incinerators and how much more waste can we take?

Our answer is zero. In a zero-waste system, products are created to be used over and over again, before cycling through reprocessing and being put back to use. The copy machine company Xerox has already started putting this into practice. It now leases, rather than sells, its products. At the end of the lease, the copier is returned to Xerox to be refurbished with new parts replacing the worn-out ones, and it is put back out on the market.

Zero-waste means composting food scraps, deconstructing and salvaging used building materials, rebuilding computers, and recycling paper, metal, and glass. A solid waste management district in Vermont has set up an award-winning composting program as its first step to achieving zero-waste district-wide. Toxics Action Center is working to take that program statewide, making zero-waste Vermont's solid waste goal.

Over the last year, we've been in the press, publishing a series of op-eds and letters to the editor. And in April of 2007 we took an important first step when the Vermont Legislature passed a bill to create a statewide committee focused on real solutions for solid waste. In 2008, we will be focused on establishing benchmarks that will move the state toward the ultimate goal of zero-waste. As the Vermont program becomes more and more successful, we'll be exporting these strategies to other New England states.

Banning toxic incineration in New Hampshire

In New Hampshire, with the support of Gov. John Lynch, a bipartisan coalition of concerned legislators, commu-

nity groups, and environmental and public health organizations across the state, Toxics Action Center led the grassroots effort that banned the incineration of construction and demolition debris in New Hampshire, priming the state to be the next to take on a goal of zero-waste.



Gov. John Lynch signs the moratorium on incineration of construction and demolition debris in New Hampshire, which was a stepping stone to a full ban.



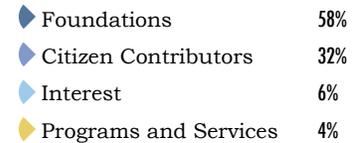
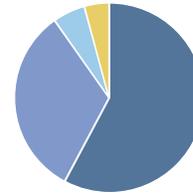
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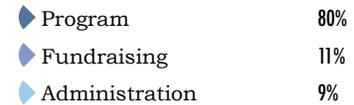
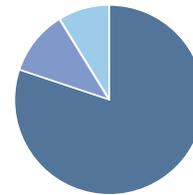


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EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE
44 Winter Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 292-4821

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE
233 North Pleasant Street, Suite 32
Amherst, MA 01002
(413) 253-4458

CONNECTICUT OFFICE
198 Park Road, 2nd Floor
West Hartford, CT 06119
(860) 233-7623

MAINE OFFICE
39 Exchange Street, Suite 301
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 871-1810

NEW HAMPSHIRE OFFICE
30 South Main Street, Suite 301B
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 229-1331

RHODE ISLAND OFFICE
9 South Angell Street, 2nd Floor
Providence, RI 02906
(401) 421-0007

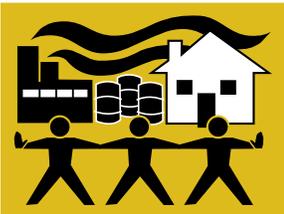
VERMONT OFFICE
141 Main Street, Suite 6
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 223-4099

info@toxicsaction.org
www.toxicsaction.org

www.toxicsaction.org

“ Whether the issue involves solid waste, pesticides or hazardous waste, I am confident that [Toxics Action Center will be] furthering important and necessary goals to create healthy and vibrant communities. ”

—Sen. John Campbell, Majority Leader of the Vermont State Senate



Toxics Action Center
44 Winter Street, 4th Fl.
Boston, MA 02108

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