



Helping Residents  
Fight Pollution  
in Our Communities



**Toxics Action Center**  
2001 Annual Report



July 15, 2002

Since September 11, the security of ourselves, our families and our country has become our nation's top priority.

Indeed, we're all looking for a sense of emotional and physical security. Yet terrorism is not the only reason we feel insecure. Many residents across New England are also insecure about the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the soil on which we live, work and play. Exposure to toxic chemicals is a major source of fear and anxiety.



This insecurity is rooted in both what we know about toxic threats and what we don't know. We may know the location of toxic sites and the chemical content of what nearby smokestacks are spewing into our air, but we know very little about which toxic chemicals have drifted into our backyards. And what is even more frightening is how little we know about the impact these chemicals have on our health and our children's health.

As individuals, there's little we can do to prevent future terrorist attacks. But as communities, we can address the very real and urgent environmental and health risks posed by toxic pollution.

As you will read in this year's annual report, individuals and communities across New England have already taken major steps to protect the environment and public health.

In the coming years, when new communities face a toxic threat, you can be sure that Toxics Action Center will be there every step of the way, working to bring security to the communities of New England.

Sincerely,

Matthew Wilson  
Director, Toxics Action Center

# Victory Against Coal Ash Goliath

## Freetown Kicks PG&E Out of Town



Donna Brightman, Laurie Peckham, and Nanci Lown (pictured above) beat all odds when they took on the corporate utility giant PG&E and won, stopping the company from dumping toxic coal ash in their town.

Coal ash produced in Massachusetts by PG&E's two dirty coal-fired power plants in Salem and Somerset, is contaminated with heavy metals such as mercury, arsenic, and nickel.

The Concerned Citizens of Freetown began their battle with a petition to the Freetown Board of Health requesting that PG&E stop dumping toxic coal ash in an unlined dirt pit above down-gradient drinking water wells.

At a public hearing, the group turned out more than 300 residents in support of the petition. After a favorable vote from the board and a legal appeal from PG&E, Freetown residents passed a landmark ordinance to permanently ban all coal ash disposal within town limits.

"PG&E was shocked that the people of Freetown kicked them out of town," said Nanci Lown, one of the leaders of Concerned Citizens of Freetown. "I think they were banking on this small town just letting them dump on us forever."

Toxics Action Center worked with Freetown residents for over a year, helping them build their group, secure media attention, and bring in experts and other groups from across the state.

Freetown residents are now working with a coalition of groups, including Toxics Action Center, to enact regulations at the state level to regulate coal ash disposal.

### January

*Uncasville, Conn., Concerned Citizens celebrate a DEP decision that will require NRG Company to clean up its toxic waste that contaminated resident drinking wells.*

*Norridgewock Concerned Citizens group forms to fight dangerous expansion of the Crossroads Landfill in Maine.*

### March

*350 activists from across New England attend 15th annual **Toxics Action 2001** conference at Northeastern University in Boston.*

# Residents Stop Toxic Pesticide Use

## Boston Halts Spraying For West Nile Virus

Last summer, through an aggressive outreach and education plan, residents of Boston succeeded in stopping city officials from spraying toxic pesticides to control the West Nile virus.

State and local officials across New England also dramatically cut back on their spraying, thanks to public pressure.

"The risks of spraying pesticides outweigh the risks of the West Nile virus. Mayor Thomas Menino and officials across the Commonwealth did the right thing by sticking with strong 'No Spray' policies," said Margaret Connors, a member of the Neighborhood Pesticide Action Committee, which conducted an education and outreach campaign in Jamaica Plain, a neighborhood of Boston.

Public pressure forced officials to take preventative measures against West Nile. Prevention, is proven to be more effective than spraying to kill adult mosquitoes.

Toxics Action Center worked with residents (including Linda Hillyer and Virginia Pratt pictured below) to stop the spraying and released a report detailing the dangers of the toxic pesticides used to control mosquitoes.

"The spraying of pesticides to address the West Nile virus has not been proven safe or effective. It should not be a part of a control plan until its benefits have been proven to outweigh its public health and environmental costs," said David Ozonoff, MD, MPH, chair of the Department of Environmental Health at the Boston University School of Public Health.



**"Toxics Action Center allowed us to develop our own ideas and guided us to find the answers to our own questions. By doing so we have evolved into confident, self-assured individuals prepared to protect the health and welfare of those living in our neighborhood."**

*John Ciriello of the Woburn Neighborhood Association, which is fighting to close a landfill that threatens the health and environment of North Woburn, MA.*

### April

Over 100 activists attend 3rd annual Connecticut Toxics Action conference to learn and share information and strategies to stop pollution.

The day before Easter, Carver, MA residents overwhelmingly vote to oppose a proposed 1,000 tons per day dump.

Hartford, Conn., Environmental Justice Coalition awards Toxics Action Center an Environmental Justice award.

# One Signature Away From Cleaner Air

## Gov. Rowland Veto Stopped Sooty Six Cleanup

In June of 2001, Connecticut was one step closer to having clean air, when for the first time, a bill to clean up the "Sooty Six" power plants passed in both chambers of the Connecticut Legislature, only to be vetoed by Governor John Rowland.

"We were shocked and angry that the governor vetoed what would have been the strongest clean air regulations in the country," said Andy Bauer, resident of Portland, Conn., and member of the Middlesex Clean Air Association.

Due to a loophole in the Clean Air Act, the "Sooty Six" power plants were made exempt from modern pollution standards. They are the largest industrial polluters in the state.

During the legislative session, Toxics Action Center and the Coalition for Clean Air, made up of residents groups, doctors, religious and environmental organizations, made clean air the most important environmental and public health issue in the state. They won the support of both Senate and House leadership and secured a majority of votes in both chambers.



"Never had the public or the Legislature so strongly supported clean air," said Alyssa Schuren, clean air organizer for Toxics Action Center.

"That's why we refused to give up. The people who live nearest these belching smokestacks simply do not have the luxury to compromise on their health."

*Similar legislation to the 2001 bill was passed and signed by Governor Rowland in May of 2002. More details on our **successful** Sooty Six campaign to come in the 2002 annual report.*

### May

*Brunswick Pesticide Watch (Maine) stops toxic pesticide use above the town's drinking water.*

### June

*Toxics Action Center holds its first advanced leadership retreat for fifteen community leaders from across New England.*

### July

*Toxics Action Center releases **Overkill: Why Pesticide Spraying For West Nile Virus May Cause More Harm Than Good** in Massachusetts and Connecticut.*

# Living and Learning On A Toxic Dump

## Cleanup Begins in Hamden

With the help of Toxics Action Center, residents of Hamden, Conn., formed the Newhall Coalition to clean up a hazardous waste site on which part of their school is built.

The Newhall Street neighborhood, a low-income community of color, was built on a site where, for years, the Olin/Winchester chemical factory dumped toxic ash, batteries, and barrels of chemicals. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, lead, and other heavy metals have been found in the soil of a middle school and on the properties of homes in the neighborhood. Exposure to these chemicals can cause brain damage, developmental disabilities and cancer.

"Neither the school nor the neighborhood would have been built on a toxic waste dump, and the problem should have been taken care of long ago," said Elizabeth Hayes, a Newhall Coalition member, referring to the environmental injustice her neighborhood is facing.

So far the group has persuaded the state to remediate the most highly contaminated areas on and around the school property. Now the group is working to get the rest of the neighborhood cleaned up.

"Every day the cleanup is delayed, Hamden's health is unnecessarily threatened," said Kim DeFeo, Connecticut Field Director for Toxics Action Center.



**"I am impressed by the professionalism of their staff... Not only are they good trainers, but they stick with us through our long campaigns and work with us to make sure we win. And we do win!"**

*Mark Mitchell, MD, is the president of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, which works with communities of color across the state to fight environmental and public health threats.*

### July

Portland, Conn. residents stop plan to fill local quarry with contaminated soil.

Thirty community leaders from across Massachusetts meet at Pesticide Summit to coordinate efforts to reduce toxic pesticide spraying across the Commonwealth.

### August

Two hundred Weymouth, Massachusetts residents turn out at a public hearing to demand answers about arsenic poisoning in their community.

# Dumpsite Not The Right Site For A School

## Cumberland Citizens Halt School Construction

Cathy Willauer was shocked when she found out that the Cumberland and North Yarmouth, Maine school board was proposing to build a new middle school right next to an old dump. She did not want her children attending school near a contaminated site.

Although Cathy and the whole community were concerned about the dangers of the proposed site and advocated for other safer sites available, the school board pushed forward with their plan.

Fortunately, with the help of Toxics Action Center, Cathy found out that high levels of methane gas and other pollutants from the dumpsite could threaten the health and safety of students and teachers.

Then Cathy formed Concerned Citizens For A Safe School Site. The group conducted an effective public education campaign that reached all the way up to state government officials. Upon learning about the risks involved, state officials told the town they would not provide funding for the proposed school if it were built next to the dumpsite.

"Toxics Action Center gave us the information and the support we needed to stop this dangerous proposal" said Willauer.

Residents are continuing to watchdog the process as the school district begins looking for a new site for the school.



### August

Portland Pesticide Watch (Maine) holds a rally to stop the city's Department of Public Works from spraying toxic pesticides.

### October

Toxics Action Center releases **Toxic Sludge In Our Communities**, detailing the public health threats associated with the land application of sludge in Maine.

Connecticut Coalition For Clean Air holds mock birthday parties for aging fossil fuel power plants excluded from modern air pollution standards.

# Uncontrolled Pollution

## Orphaned Vassalboro Dump Finally Adopted By State

Responding to public pressure, Maine officials have agreed to clean up a leaking sludge dump in Vassalboro.

Statler Tissue Company began dumping sludge into a quarry in 1976. By 1979 the state had ordered the dump closed because of a number of violations. Ever since, the dump has been leaking hundreds of gallons of wastewater everyday. Because Statler went bankrupt, the dump became “orphaned” with no one responsible for cleaning up pollution.

Laurah Brown, an organic farmer living across the street and downhill from the dump, became concerned when she learned that high levels of arsenic were found near the landfill.

Laurah and her neighbors formed Friends of Vassalboro's Environment and with the help of

**“Toxics Action Center is like a ray of hope at the end of a long tunnel. Prior to their coming we had very little help or hope... Now we are organizing and working together.”**

*Gordon and Elizabeth Flewelling from Maine who fought the spreading of toxic sludge on a neighboring farm.*



Toxics Action Center asked the state to clean up the dump. After several meetings with environmental regulators, they convinced the state to take responsibility for the cleanup.

“Six drinking wells are just downhill from the dump. The state did the right thing. I'm happy they've already begun the cleanup,” said Brown.

### November

*Over a hundred residents of Woburn, MA attend a public forum to express their public health concerns about the town's landfill.*

*Toxics Action Center targets twelve of the worst polluters in Massachusetts and Connecticut with its annual Dirty Dozen Awards.*

*Lois Gibbs, director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice, and leader of the Love Canal battle, speaks at the Maine Toxics Action 2001 conference at Bowdoin College.*



# Toxics Action Center Financial Statements

For The Year Ending June 30, 2001

## BALANCE SHEET

### Assets

Total Current Assets	\$	410,387
Net Property & Equipment	\$	3,420
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>413,807</b>

### Liabilities & Group Equity

Total Liabilities	\$	97,652
Total Fund Balance	\$	316,155
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>413,807</b>

## INCOME STATEMENT

### Support & Revenue

Grants	\$	328,050
Conference Income	\$	22,092
Interest Income	\$	26,034
Membership	\$	37,413
<b>Total Support &amp; Revenue</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>413,589</b>

### Expenses

Program Services <sup>1</sup>	\$	340,910
Operating <sup>2</sup>	\$	14,602
Fundraising Expense	\$	5,364
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>360,876</b>
<b>Net Income FY01</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>52,713</b>

*These figures represent combined financial information for Toxics Action Center Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization, and Toxics Action Center Campaigns, Inc., a 501(c)(4) organization.*

<sup>1</sup> Program services include the funds used to help residents clean up and prevent pollution in more than 90 communities throughout New England.

<sup>2</sup> Operating expenses include rent and overhead costs incurred in support of our neighborhood assistance work.

“Due directly to the work of Toxics Action Center, families across New England are safer, healthier and empowered. With the staff’s assistance, citizens are fighting for safer communities and doing so with results. Toxics Action Center brings both a ray of sunlight and an effective toolbox to neighborhoods across New England fighting for a healthy environment for their kids.”

*Mindy Lubber, Regional Administrator  
for EPA / New England, 1998 to 2001*

In 2001, Toxics Action Center provided assistance to more than 90 neighborhood groups across New England. Our work was made possible from contributions by more than 2,000 individuals. The following donors contributed more than \$100.

Joshua P. Abrams

John Andrews

Androscoggin Lake  
Improvement Corporation

Judy Anthony

David Appleman

Thomas Azar

Arthur Baggs

Laura Bagnall

Valerie A. Bailey

Karin Baker

Jamie Banks

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Stephanie Tournas Bass

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Helen Storm Corsa

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Kevin Counihan

Carole Cowie

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Christopher Landee

Dorothy Larsson

Suzanne Lee

Sarah Leinbach

Beverly Lewis

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Gayle Wells  
M. Winifred West  
Kate White  
Pam White  
Daniel Wilkening  
Virginia Williams  
Lisa & Joseph Willwerth  
Elizabeth Wilman  
Anne Wilson  
Ernest & Rosaw Winsor  
Jeremy Wise


Woburn Neighborhood  
Association  
Karen Worth  
Walter Zagroski  
Marc Zeitlin  
Rochelle Zohn

**The following  
foundations and  
institutions also  
contributed financial  
support to Toxics  
Action Center  
in 2001**

Boston University School of  
Public Health  
Carolyn Foundation  
Civil Justice Foundation  
Environmental Support  
Center  
Gravestar Foundation  
Haymarket People's Fund  
Jessie B. Cox  
Charitable Trust  
John Merck Fund  
Maine Initiatives  
Sun Hill Foundation  
Toxics Use Reduction  
Institute  
W. Alton Jones Foundation

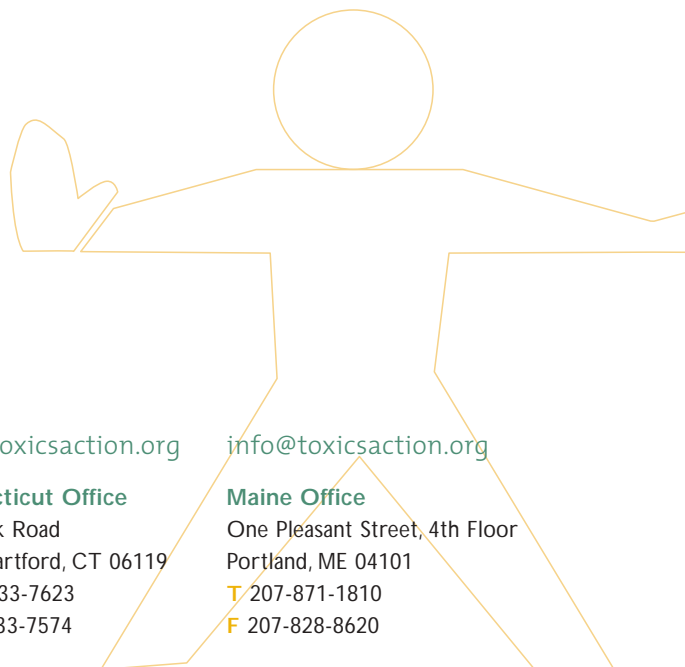
**“For over fourteen years, Toxics Action Center has worked to promote grassroots democracy and environmental protection in New England. It is a dynamic organization, still growing, developing, and achieving impressive results.”**

*Daniel Faber, Assistant Professor of Sociology,  
Northeastern University.  
His groundbreaking report,  
Unequal Exposure To Ecological Hazards: Environmental  
Injustices In The Commonwealth Of Massachusetts  
documented the extent of toxic contamination  
in poor and minority areas of the Commonwealth.*



“Toxics Action is our *Light of Hope*. Their help means so much to us in this time of frustration and fear. We could not have accomplished so much without them.”

*Kathy Baxter, co-founder of Burlington Residents Against Toxic Wastes. Baxter's neighborhood abuts four gas stations that have leaked thousands of gallons of gasoline, contaminating the ground in her Massachusetts neighborhood.*



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