



TOXICS ACTION CENTER

2011 Annual Report

25 Years of Mobilizing the Grassroots for a Cleaner, Healthier New England



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

To Our Members

The Early Years: 1987-1996



Meredith Small
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that 25 years have passed since Toxics Action Center first started organizing with communities to clean up and prevent toxic pollution. We were inspired into being by the parents of Woburn, Mass. who took action to protect their children's health when W.R. Grace polluted their drinking water with cancer-causing chemicals. Toxics Action Center was founded in 1987 to help residents who faced their own Woburn-like situations.

Over the years, we've expanded into every New England state, organized with more than 700 neighborhood groups, and directly trained more than 10,000 community leaders in the skills needed to tackle local pollution problems. Our experience has taught us critical lessons that influence our work every day:

First, we know that toxic chemicals are harming our health. With increased exposure to toxins from industrial sites, pesticide spraying and consumer products, we've seen incidences of leukemia, brain cancer and other cancers rise by more than 20 percent since the mid-1970s.

Second, we know that companies can go to extraordinary lengths to avoid taking responsibility for their messes. For example, between 2008 and 2010, it's estimated that the chemical industry spent more than \$60 million dollars lobbying and advertising to defeat legislation to limit use of the dangerous chemical bisphenol A.

The third and most important lesson we've learned is that residents must join together to make their concerns heard, to hold polluters accountable, and to force government to take action. We see time and time again that by building support and making their voices heard at the local level, community groups can win big.

This annual report is a celebration of 25 years of victories—of safer water, cleaner air and of communities that are healthier because one person stood up, formed a group and took action.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of the thousands of people who support Toxics Action Center financially every year. Because of your support, we can organize with communities across the region for free and have never once predicated our service on a group's ability to pay—a tradition we intend to continue.

Thank you,

Meredith Small
Executive Director

P.S. Check out our anniversary website at www.ToxicsAction25.org and help spread the word



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Overview

Toxics Action Center was founded in 1987. Known in those days as the Massachusetts Campaign to Clean Up Hazardous Waste, our staff began organizing residents to pass ballot initiatives to protect people from harmful toxic waste. The first initiative aimed to increase enforcement, cleanup, and citizen access within Massachusetts' Superfund system.

Residents Aided in Effort to Connect With Clean Drinking Water

Groton, Mass.—In 1986, people living on Gratuity Road in Groton, Mass. discovered high levels of TCE in the private drinking water wells of 70 families. Claudia Saball and other Groton residents suspected for years that the chemicals in their water were likely causing the epidemic of learning disabilities in neighborhood children. They formed Concerned Citizens Against Contamination and Claudia quickly emerged as the group's leader. With our help, Claudia and her neighbors built up the community support needed and within six months, the neighborhood was connected to clean water from unaffected town wells. The community group also went to court and ultimately won financial compensation for the families and funding for a health study to determine the connection between the toxic chemicals and learning disabilities. Cleanup of the contamination began in 1991.

"I always knew that if I had a question, all I had to do was pick up the phone and that Toxics Action Center would be on the other end and I would get an answer. They were willing to help us with no cost involved whatsoever. They were willing to come out here, work with us and show us what to do."

- Claudia Saball of Groton, Mass.

School Made Safe for Students and Staff

Needham, Mass.—In 1988, a 21-acre plume of groundwater contaminated with trichloroethylene (TCE) was found flowing under Hillside Elementary School in Needham. Chemical vapors seeped into the school library and children at the school complained of headaches, stomachaches and fevers. Toxics Action Center Director Matt Wilson worked with community leaders to force the temporary closure of the school until the chemicals could be controlled. A long-term cleanup was eventually ordered and stronger regulations were put into place.

Radioactive Dumps Rejected

Massachusetts—In 1994, the Commonwealth passed an act paving the way for a radioactive waste dump to be built despite widespread public opposition. By 1995, the Don't Waste Massachusetts campaign organized more than 35 towns to refuse the presence of the dump, despite attractive financial offers by radioactive waste companies. Victory came in March 1996 when state officials abandoned their search for a location in Massachusetts.



Mary Lampert, leader of Don't Waste Massachusetts, speaks to the media about the dangers of radioactive waste.

Our organizing prevents the Clean Harbors toxic waste incinerator from being built in Quincy, Mass. within a mile of 100,000 residents.

Lori Altobelli from Leominster generates national news when she draws the connection between autism and toxins in her town.

The Canton Environmental Action Committee wins a full cleanup of PCB and dioxin contamination in the neighborhood.

Rob Sargent founds the Massachusetts Campaign to Clean Up Hazardous Waste and organizes our first annual citizens' conference.

Matt Wilson becomes the second director, and serves in that role for 14 years.

Contaminated Citizens of Carver convinces five companies to pay for a full cleanup of the local leaking landfill.

The Holliston Action Committee wins a town-wide vote for clean drinking water after the Charles Bird landfill contaminated 13 drinking water wells.

A front-page story in the Boston Herald leads to the closure of a water bottling plant that was selling water contaminated with cancer-causing chemicals.

1987

1988

1990

1992

1996

The Expansion Years: 1997-2006

Polluters Forced To Pay

Tewksbury, Mass.—Judy Fittery and her neighbors started Tewksbury Organized Against Illness and Contamination (T.O.X.I.C.) in 1992 to clean up Rocco's Landfill. It was leaking high levels of arsenic into groundwater after illegally accepting and dumping hazardous waste for decades. Judy called on Toxics Action Center, which she calls “the 911 of the environmental movement,” for help. She organized for more than eight years to document the threats posed by the landfill. Judy's work finally paid off when the landfill was officially designated a federal Superfund site, paving the way for a full, safe cleanup.



The leaders of the Sooty Six campaign stand in front of the Middletown power plant, which has seen an 86 percent reduction in soot pollution since 2005.

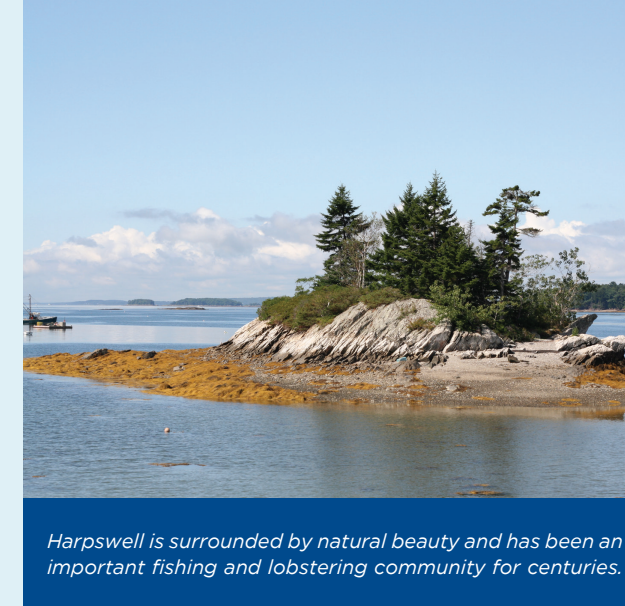
Oldest, Dirtiest Power Plants Cleaned Up

Sooty Six, Conn.—Toxics Action Center partnered with Clean Water Action to launch the Sooty Six campaign. The goal was to remove loopholes exempting power plants built before 1977 from modern pollution standards, resulting in 2-10 times more pollution from these aging power plants. We united more than 150 citizen-based organizations in coalition between 1997 and 2002, and years of persistent grassroots action paid off when the governor agreed to sign the first law in the nation to sharply reduce soot pollution from all power plants starting in 2005. As a result, sulfur dioxide pollution from power plants in Connecticut has reduced by more than 86 percent.



Judy Fittery of Tewksbury speaks out for the Make Polluters Pay ballot initiative.

Community Organizing Led To Victory In Harpswell, Maine



Harpswell is surrounded by natural beauty and has been an important fishing and lobstering community for centuries.

Harpswell, Maine.—In 2004, two of the largest fossil fuel companies in the world, Conoco-Philips and Trans Canada, proposed building a liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant on the coast in Harpswell, Maine. Two community groups formed to oppose the plant: Fishing Families for Harpswell and FairPlay Harpswell. Not only would the proposed pipelines threaten aquatic ecology of the bay and the associated fishing and lobstering economies, but with LNG plants there is also a constant risk of explosion.

Among other things, Toxics Action Center trained residents to craft a message and accompanying materials that would capture the hearts and the minds of the community. It worked—residents voted down the proposal at the ballot box with 58 percent of the vote, protecting Harpswell residents from a toxic powder keg in their community.



To see these community leaders talk about their victory in their own words, visit www.ToxicsAction25.org/videos.



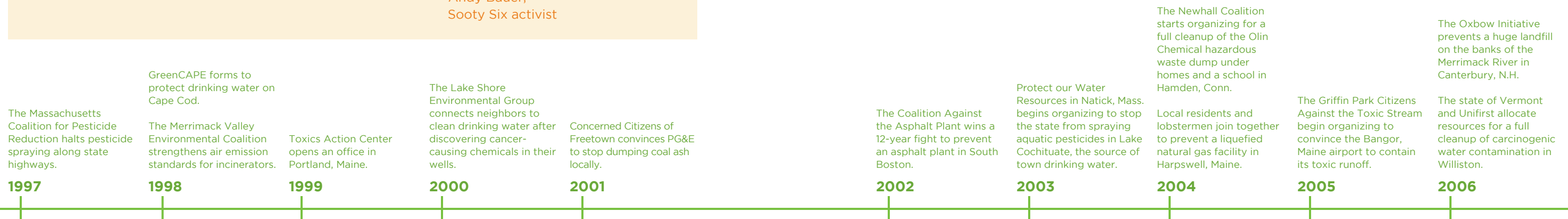
Aerial Pesticide Spraying Curbed

Downeast Maine—Residents living near blueberry fields face a serious health threat: aerial pesticide spraying. When pesticides fall from helicopters or planes, chemicals get carried on the wind and drift away from their intended target. Many pesticides typically used on blueberries can cause a range of problems, from skin rashes and respiratory problems to hormone disruptions and cancer. In 2004, Joan McMurry, an organic blueberry farmer, called Toxics Action Center because she

was concerned about aerial spraying. We connected Joan and other residents with the National Environmental Law Center. Together, we took on the largest growers. Using the state's own data, we threatened to sue these companies for Clean Water Act violations. Seeing the writing on the wall, they voluntarily agreed to stop aerial spraying.

“I doubt we would've won without Toxics Action Center. Toxics Action provided technical data, materials, organizational support, and tips on testifying at hearings and talking to the media. Once we were armed with the truth and how to use it, a positive ending was only a matter of time.”

– Andy Bauer,
Sooty Six activist



The Recent Years: 2007-2011

Burning Construction Waste Banned In New Hampshire

For years, local towns had been calling Toxics Action Center to try and stop existing or proposed construction waste incinerators. But given the state's weak laws, a larger and more permanent solution was needed. We decided to organize all the concerned residents and groups to pass a statewide ban on the burning of construction waste in New Hampshire. Toxics Action Center coordinated a coalition of citizen groups and professional organizations and though our experts' testimony at hearings was helpful, the real power was the grassroots support from communities across the state. In 2007, the Legislature passed the ban and the governor signed it into law.

"Toxics Action Center takes a lot of small groups, gives them what they need to grow into a citizen movement and fight the Goliaths they're facing in their community and knits them together to be an effective force in the Commonwealth and beyond. We couldn't have closed the Montaup coal plant without Toxics Action Center, and we're grateful for their help."

- Pauline Rodrigues,
Somerset Coalition for Clean Air

Coal Plant Shut Down

NRG Energy had committed to clean up or close down its old Somerset coal plant by 2010 in order to meet clean air regulations. Instead, the company applied for permits to convert to gasification and burn a toxic mix of coal and waste for fuel, continuing to emit almost 2 tons of lead into the air every year. Toxics Action Center and local residents called on the company to uphold its promise. After two years of intense grassroots organizing, in January 2010, the old and dirty coal plant shut down. When the company later announced plans to rebuild as an incinerator, Toxics Action Center helped local leaders keep the pressure on, and in a major victory last February, NRG announced they would remain closed. Coalition for Clean Air leaders didn't stop there. Early last summer, they generated the support needed to pass a bylaw at town meeting instructing the town to develop a reuse plan for the old power plant site. Just last month, the plant was sold. It's being dismantled, and residents are hopeful that their vision for redevelopment of the coal plant site will be realized in the near future.



The Coalition for Clean Air's campaign successfully shut down a coal plant in Somerset and prevented it from being revived as an incinerator

Residents in Bradford, R.I. convince a polluting textile dye factory to control air emissions.

Local group Don't Dump on ME! blocks Casella Waste System's attempt to expand a landfill and increase trash disposal in Lewiston, Maine.

Local group STOP blocks Casella from expanding an already leaking landfill in Hardwick, Mass. Shortly after, the landfill shuts down.

Action for Chester's Tomorrow prevents an industrial quarry from opening next to a regional high school.

Citizens for a Green Camden bans pesticide spraying on public lands and sparks a regional movement to limit pesticide use on lawns and school grounds

Local group VOCAL (Vermont Organized Communities Against Landfills) prevents the building of a new landfill and moves the Chittenden Solid Waste District in Vermont towards zero waste.

2007

2008

2009

A Long-Term Cleanup of Hazardous Waste Continues in Tiverton, R.I.

Toxic waste was discovered in 2002, when a work crew digging a routine sewer line unearthed blue soil. Residents soon learned that the soil contained arsenic, cyanide, lead and other toxins. Although Southern Union Gas continues to deny any wrongdoing, evidence indicates that the company is responsible for dumping gasified coal waste in the neighborhood as recently as the 1970s. Over the past decade, affected residents have been prisoners in their own homes, unable to sell homes or get home-equity loans needed to do minor improvements. Homeowners cannot dig into their yards or gardens and are unable to spend time outdoors without worrying about exposure to contaminated soil and dust. Gail Corvello and her neighbors formed the Environmental Neighborhood Awareness Committee of Tiverton (ENACT) and have been working with Toxics Action Center for a full cleanup of the neighborhood. Toxics Action helped connect the group with legal assistance, and more than 90 households filed a lawsuit against Southern Union's local subsidiary to force a cleanup. The group won a big victory when they helped to increase polluter fines in Rhode Island, making it less profitable for polluters to continue ignoring contamination. Unfortunately, the cleanup of their neighborhood continues to this day.



Toxics Action Center awarded Gail Corvello (center) and other members of ENACT a "25 Years of Victories" award.

"We were a small group of citizens up against an international corporation with seemingly unlimited resources. International Paper kept telling us that they were determined to test-burn tire-derived fuel, but we were even more determined to keep our air, water and soil safe."

- Joanna Colwell,
People for Less Pollution

Burning Tires For Energy Stopped

International Paper in Ticonderoga, N.Y. is considered one of the dirtiest facilities in the country and one of the largest sources of air pollution for all of Vermont. The paper mill proposed a switch from burning oil to burning tires, releasing even more carcinogens, heavy metals and fine particulate pollution. Joanna Colwell reached out to Toxics Action Center and together, we devised a strategy to get Vermont officials to speak out against burning tires, attended public hearings and educated the public. In the final days before the proposed burn, the group held daily media events. International Paper burned tires for five days under heavy scrutiny and then abandoned their plan.

Milton CLEAN wins a multi-year effort to clean up a massive, polluting junkyard.

Safe Power Vermont convinces the Vermont Senate to vote to close down the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant on time.

Alton Community Action in Rhode Island shuts down a dangerous and polluting mill and secures funding for access to clean water.

Organizing efforts in Old Town, Maine convince Casella to withdraw their proposal to expand the Juniper Ridge landfill.

Residents of the Last Green Valley block an incinerator ash landfill on the banks of the Shetucket River in Franklin, Conn.

2010

2011



8 Gorham, Maine: Plan to reopen unlicensed dump thwarted

Local companies in Gorham pressured to reopen a closed, unlicensed landfill and dump five thousand tons of abandoned construction and demolition waste. Toxics Action Center learned that the dump already posed a threat to groundwater, and our work with local residents led the planning board to reject the site plan.

17 Searsport, Maine: Activists opposed new LPG tank in local harbor

In 2011, Toxics Action Center began working with Thanks But No Tank, a local group organizing their town to oppose the construction of an enormous liquefied propane tank in the local harbor, which we believe would threaten the safety of the town and disrupt local economies.

30 Meredith, N.H.: Report helps Lakes Region communities and organizations work toward chemical free lakes

Our recently released “Chemical Free Lakes” report profiled harmful herbicide use, non-toxic alternatives and case studies within the Lakes Region. Toxics Action Center is now working with the Squam Lakes Association, Green Mountain Conservation Group, and residents from Tuftonboro, Moultonboro, Meredith, and Wolfeboro on this issue.

37 Cabot, Vt.: Demanding an end to AgriMark’s spreading of chemicals on local farm fields

AgriMark, the corporate owners of Cabot Creamery, disposes of 185,000 gallons of factory waste daily by spreading it on Vermont farm fields. The waste includes a range of industrial cleaning chemicals and metal polishes. Why To Go, a community group concerned about the environmental and health impacts of the chemical-spreading, is calling on AgriMark to abandon the practice and build a wastewater treatment system.

57 Williston, Vt.: Seeking mitigation and lead-free alternatives for local sportsmen

After tests showed dangerous levels of lead contamination in the neighborhood stream, Lead-Free Williston formed to ensure a cleanup. The group is calling on the North Country Sportmen’s Club, the apparent source of the pollution, to take responsibility for decades of accumulated lead shot and switch to steel or another safer metal.

64 Boston, Mass.: Improving the city’s recycling program and the green jobs it supports

A new alliance, the Boston Recycling Coalition, has formed to move Boston from its abysmal 13 percent recycling rate to a 75 percent rate over the next 20 years—with an emphasis on good, green jobs along the way. Toxics Action Center has teamed up with MASSCOSH, Clean Water Action, Boston Workers Alliance, and others for this effort.

70 Framingham, Mass.: Residents work to shut down and clean up hazardous waste facility

Members of the Framingham Action Coalition for Environmental Safety (FACES) are working to clean up and shut down General Chemical, a hazardous waste facility with an abysmal track record. FACES elevated their campaign against General Chemical to one of the most-covered toxics issues in the state. Seeing the writing on the wall, General Chemical announced that they will close.

72 Holyoke, Mass.: Local activists organize to retire Mt. Tom Coal Plant

Action for a Healthy Holyoke, a coalition led by local activists and Holyoke organizations, is working to retire the Mt. Tom coal plant, one of the biggest polluters in the region. Toxics Action Center is at the center of this effort to get the site cleaned up and redeveloped with green jobs for a sustainable economy.

79 Plymouth, Mass.: South Shore residents unite for a safer, cleaner energy future

Residents of the South Shore are working for a safe energy future. After the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, concerned neighbors are continuing to ask questions about the safety of the Pilgrim nuclear reactor and recently launched a new effort called Pilgrim Coalition.

85 Springfield, Mass.: Effort to stop biomass incineration served as a statewide model

Over the last two years, we’ve worked with Stop Toxic Incineration in Springfield to stop a construction waste and now a biomass incinerator proposed in the midst of more than 50 schools and daycare centers. As a result of wide-spread public concerns, the state adopted a moratorium on the use of construction and demolition waste as incinerator fuel, and city officials revoked the special permit they’d granted three years ago. The citizen effort in Springfield is part of a larger statewide movement that has resulted in regulatory changes discouraging biomass burning.

88 Westfield, Mass.: Residents work to prevent a massive new fossil fuel power plant

Westfield Concerned Citizens formed in 2011 to convince energy developers to abandon their plans to build a large oil and natural gas plant issues in the state.

89 Coventry, R.I.: Asphalt plant neighbors organized to demand clean up

Neighbors who live next to two large asphalt plants are fed up with the pollution that coats their homes and they’ve formed the group CRUST (Coventry Residents Upset with Sticky Tar). They want the industrial plants to reduce their air pollution and clean up the heavily populated neighborhood.

90 East Providence, R.I.: Neighborhood coalition halted waste facility’s repeated expansion attempt

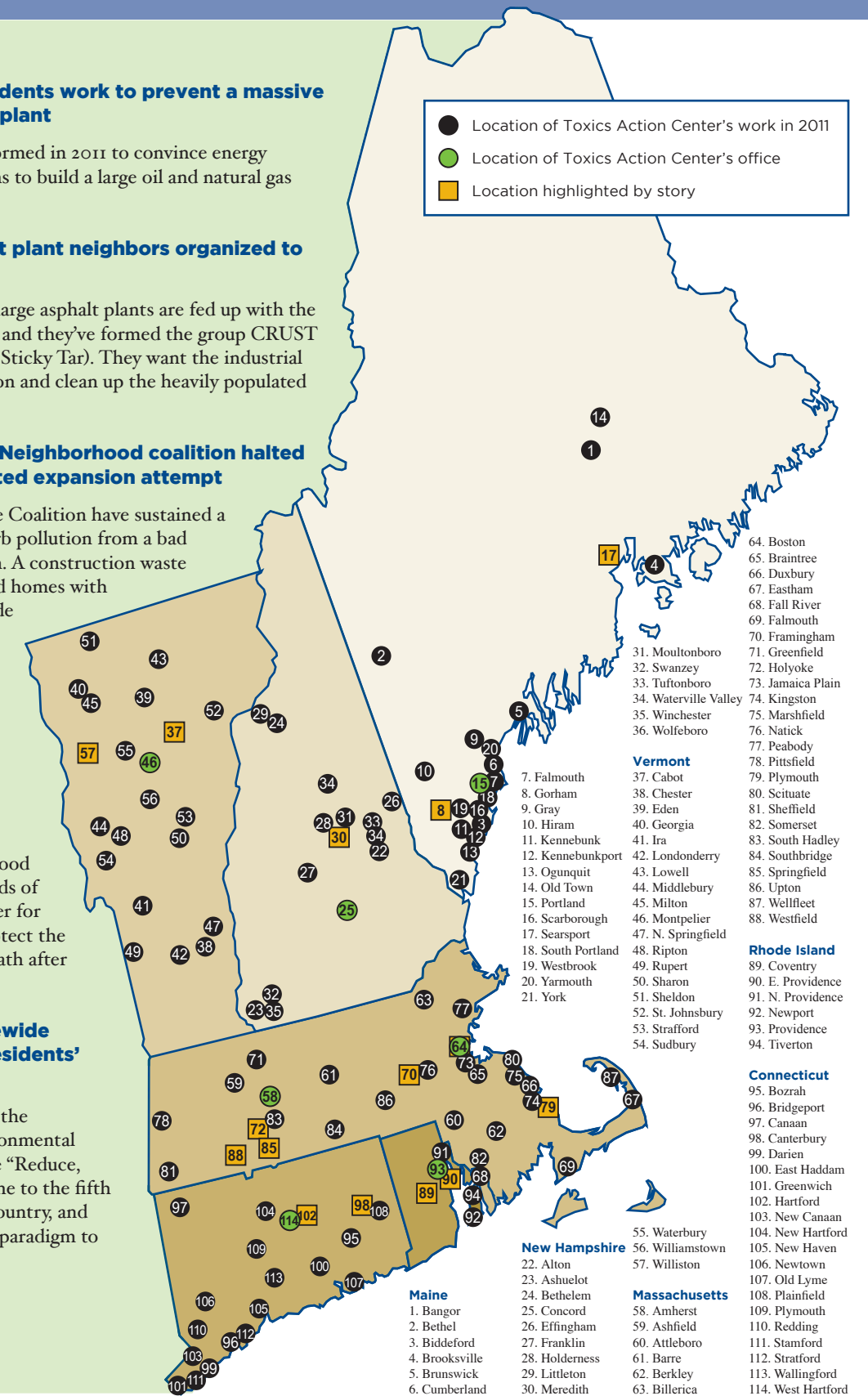
Residents in the East Providence Coalition have sustained a year-long, full-swing effort to curb pollution from a bad corporate neighbor in their town. A construction waste facility that polluted their air and homes with dust and toxins for the last decade tried to expand for a third time this past year, but neighbors put a stop to it.

98 Canterbury, Conn.: Concerned residents campaigned to protect the Quinebaug River

Friends of the Quinebaug are concerned about a dirty waste-wood incinerator that will use thousands of gallons from the Quinebaug River for cooling. They are working to protect the river and keep it on a recovery path after a toxic legacy.

102 Hartford, Conn.: Statewide initiative to change residents’ waste habits launched

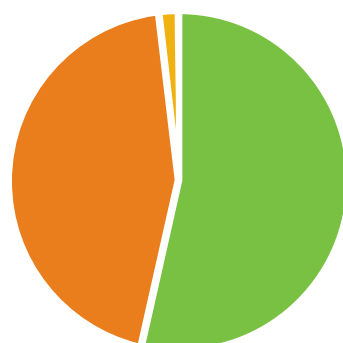
Toxics Action Center supported the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, in their work to promote “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” Hartford is home to the fifth largest trash incinerator in the country, and they hope to create a new waste paradigm to protect air quality in the state.



2011 Financial Information & Supporters

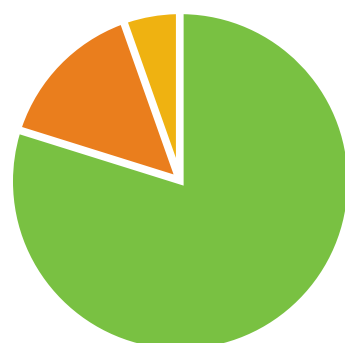
At Toxics Action Center, we pride ourselves on our ability to get an incredible amount done with limited resources. We are able to maximize our impact by focusing on building the capacity of neighborhood groups for the long run. We are so thankful for your contribution. Together, we are moving towards a New England where everyone can drink clean water, breathe clean air and live in a healthy community.

2011 Income



- Donations 54%
- Grants 45%
- Other 1%

2011 Expenditures



- Program 81%
- Fundraising 13%
- Administration 6%

We are sincerely grateful to the following organizations for their financial support during 2011.

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Thank you!

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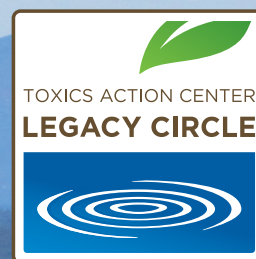
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Toxics Action Center gratefully accepts bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work. Through your gift, you can make sure that New England residents get the help they need to clean up and prevent pollution in their communities. For information, call 1-800-841-7299 or email plannedgiving@toxicsaction.org.



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“For twenty-five years Toxics Action Center has been doing rocking work. They have changed communities and helped people on their journey for justice.”

- Lois Gibbs
Center for Health Environment and Justice

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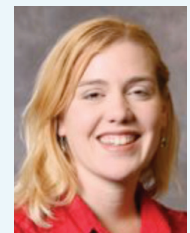
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