



CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE

Defending the Sea
Since 1984

AUGUST 2026

Clean Ocean Action Sues to Stop “Messy NESE!” and Protect the Bay!

Contact: [Madison Wurst, Advocate@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:MadisonWurst@CleanOceanAction.org); [Ericka Nimbley, Campaign@CleanOceanAction.org](mailto:ErickaNimbley@CleanOceanAction.org)

On July 20, 2026, Clean Ocean Action (COA) filed a lawsuit challenging the approval of a NJ Tidelands Utility License for Williams/Transco's Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) dirty methane gas pipeline project. The proposed pipeline would bring fracked methane gas from PA through NJ, and beneath six miles of Raritan Bay to NY. The project will stir up more than one million tons of contaminated sediment, damage over **93,000 square feet** of state-owned critical tidelands habitat, and threatens **marine wildlife, fisheries, recreation, and the regional economy**. In return? NJ receives just **\$14,084 annually** from Transco, a multi-billion dollar fossil fuel company — about \$38/day.

“This appeal involves the Tidelands Resource Council’s abdication of its duties to New Jersey residents and a violation of its authority,” said **Andrew Provence, Esq.**, an attorney at Litwin & Provence representing COA. “There can be no compromise that excuses this conduct and allows State-owned tidelands to be used and damaged without any public benefit contrary to the statutes designed to prevent this outcome.”

The appeal argues that the NJ Tidelands Resource Council (TRC) failed to uphold its legal responsibility under the NJ Tidelands Act by approving use of publicly owned underwater lands for a project that provides no public benefit to the state. The TRC voted to approve the application on May 6, despite 43/45 public testimonies against the project. The appeal argues:

1. The TRC failed to prove NESE is in the public interest.
2. All harm, no benefit: the proposed project would serve only New York customers.
3. The TRC failed to determine if the State may have a future use for the tidelands.
4. The STOP Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling Act prohibits the TRC from issuing a utility license in the Raritan Bay.

“For 40+ years, NJ residents and visitors have successfully blocked offshore fossil fuel development with support from both sides of the isle, because we love the Jersey Shore,” said **Cindy Zipf, COA Executive Director**. “In 2018, the **STOP Act passed with 99% bipartisan support** by the state legislature, banning fossil fuel infrastructure development in state waters. **NESE is not just awful, it’s unlawful.**”

“We’re not messing around — the decision to approve a Tidelands license for NESE is **all harm and no gain** for New Jersey”



Cindy Zipf
Executive Director
Clean Ocean Action

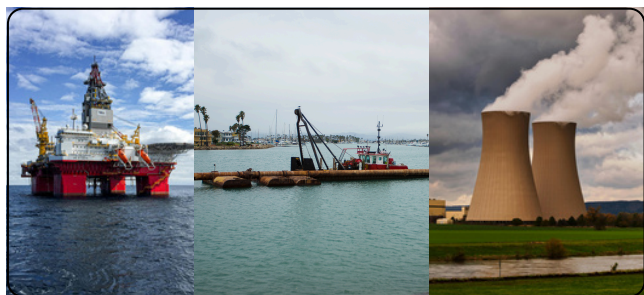


The appeal follows nearly a decade of opposition from NJ/NY organizations, communities, elected officials, and residents. COA has opposed the project since 2017 and successfully campaigned to stop it — Transco withdrew its application in 2024. But a reported deal between President Trump and NY Governor Hochul brought NESE back to life in exchange for the offshore wind project, Empire Wind. COA’s lawsuit seeks to overturn the license and stop this project, once and for all.

Signing of the STOP Act (L-R): Chris Smith (R-04), R. Bruce Land (D-01), Frank Pallone (D-04), Troy Singleton (D-07), former NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy, NJDEP Commissioner Catherine McCabe, and Cindy Zipf watch as former NJ Gov. Phil Murphy (center) signs the bill on April 20, 2018

Federal Administration Poses Major Threats: July Edition

Contact: Madison Wurst, Advocate@CleanOceanAction.org; Ericka Nimbley, Campaign@CleanOceanAction.org



Scan the QR code to read COA's comments on possible offshore strip mining ("critical mineral mining") off Virginia

Did President Trump just put the fox back in the hen house? After the horrific 2010 BP/Horizon oil spill disaster, the Mineral Management Service (MMS) was found full of corruption and scandal, due in large part to its incompatible mandates: to **aggressively promote offshore drilling** and simultaneously **ensure safe operation for people and marine life**. As a result, this agency was separated into two: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE). Though not perfect, it was an improvement. However, **the Trump Administration has put the two agencies back together** with a new (yet similar) name, **Marine Minerals Administration (MMA)**.



On July 8, BOEM published a "Request for Information" for the proposed use of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) for offshore space launch and re-entry activities. BOEM is considering whether existing offshore oil and gas infrastructure could be repurposed for this use, or new offshore platforms could be built to support commercial space launches, space re-entry, and related activities on the OCS.



On July 22, MMA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) signed a "memorandum of understanding" for offshore nuclear energy projects. The agreement clarifies which federal agencies have authority over nuclear energy projects proposed on the OCS. Its goal is to streamline the permitting and review process, reduce duplication among agencies, and improve coordination for future offshore nuclear energy projects.



On July 24, BOEM extended the comment period for the Request For Information for possible offshore strip mining ("critical mineral mining") off Virginia. COA used the extension of time to rally support for our comments. Over 80 citizens and three organizations joined COA's comments which were on August 22nd. **Scan the QR code above to read our comments.**

Welcome, Ericka!

Contact: Ericka Nimbley, Campaign@CleanOceanAction.org



COA is delighted to welcome **Ericka Nimbley** as **Ocean Campaign Coordinator**! Ericka joins COA with a strong environmental advocacy and nonprofit background. She graduated from Lafayette College with a degree in Environmental Studies and Government & Law, and she brings a lifelong passion for protecting waterways.

Growing up on Lake Hopatcong, Ericka developed a deep appreciation for clean water while working as a kayak tour guide, where she learned the importance of conservation and stewardship. At Lafayette, Ericka discovered the thrill of grassroots civic engagement, and unites this passion with respect for truth and dialogue. She also serves as Director of Development for the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education (ANJEE).

As Ocean Campaign Coordinator, Ericka will help organize campaign strategies, strengthen coalition partnerships, and advance COA's mission to protect the ocean, coast, and waterways. Please join us in welcoming Ericka to the COA team!

"I am excited to join a group that takes its drive and turns it into action," Ericka said. "I hope to take our action to local communities and work with individuals who want to be the change for a protected ocean."

Sweeping through Summer: Corporate Teams Make a Splash

Contact: Meg Sulzberg, BeachSweeps@CleanOceanAction.org

Corporate leadership and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand. By stepping out of the office and onto the sand, corporate teams make a lasting impact to keep our ocean and beaches healthy through COA's Corporate Beach Sweeps program.

Since June, 232 volunteers from 11 participating corporations have collected almost 20,000 pieces of debris from Gateway National Recreation Area - Sandy Hook Unit beaches, protecting local wildlife, cleaning-up beaches, and keeping harmful plastics out of our ocean. Every piece of trash tallied and removed contributes to our comprehensive data collection efforts, helping us track pollution trends and advocate for source-reduction policies. After participating, corporations also bring back waste reduction lessons and actions to their offices and warehouses. Thank you to all the dedicated corporate citizens who rolled up their sleeves to turn the tide on marine debris!

The 2026 Corporate Sweeps season extends until **September 11**. Email Meg Sulzberg to reserve a session!



Book your Corporate Sweeps session now – spots are limited!

Pervasive Plastics: Nanoplastics Found in Antarctica

Contacts: Catie Tobin, Coastal@CleanOceanAction.org; Meg Sulzberg, BeachSweeps@CleanOceanAction.org

Antarctica may be romanticized as Earth's final true wilderness, but a groundbreaking new study details how an international research team discovered the first-ever evidence of nanoplastics (microscopic plastic pieces smaller than one micrometer) contaminating inland Antarctic soils. Analyzing samples from the remote McMurdo Dry Valleys, microscopic plastic particles and tire-wear debris were found in over half of the surface soil sites tested. Scan the QR code (right) to read the study.



This discovery highlights that the marine plastic crisis is actively altering the global atmosphere. Millions of tons of plastic waste entering

or oceans are broken down by waves and sunlight into nanoparticles. Scientists hypothesize that these particles are swept from marine waters into the atmosphere, traveling thousands of miles on wind currents before raining down onto fragile polar ecosystems.

Beach Sweeps volunteers collect thousands of pieces of marine debris each year, preventing plastics from breaking down further in the ocean into microplastics. Stay informed about microplastic pollution; email COA's Catie Tobin to join COA's microplastics research email list.



STAY* TUNED!

Read our September newsletter for more info on a newly renovated, environmentally-friendly park and green space. Now open in Monmouth County!

Attention, High School Students!

Contact: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org



Pictured: 2026 SEAL students toured the NJ State House in Trenton. Scan the QR code to apply for the SEAL program today!

Join the 2026–2027 Student Environmental Advocates and Leaders (SEAL) Program! This free leadership program provides Monmouth County high school students with the opportunity to build leadership skills, learn about environmental advocacy, and take action in their communities.

From October to May, participants meet twice per month to explore environmental issues, connect with professionals in the field, and develop community-based environmental projects.

Apply by October 1 to join a network of passionate student leaders working to protect New Jersey's coast and ocean. To complete the Student Interest Form, scan the QR code or contact Kristen Grazioso.

Free South Jersey Field Trip for 5th–8th Graders!

Contact: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org

There's still time to apply for the Fall Student Summits! Give students the opportunity to experience hands-on marine environmental education while exploring New Jersey's coast. Designed to reinforce STEM concepts and support classroom learning, this free field trip combines outdoor exploration, peer-to-peer learning, and environmental stewardship. Students investigate coastal ecosystems through engaging, interactive activities while discovering how they can help protect NJ's beaches and waterways.

The 2026 Fall Student Summits will take place on October 8 at the Nature Center of Cape May, and October 15 at Island Beach State Park. Applications are due by October 1. Teachers may apply to bring up to 30 students closest to their school's location. To apply, contact Kristen Grazioso or scan the QR code.



Student Summits are FREE, hands-on learning! Scan the QR code to apply today!



SURF OPEN

SAVE THE DATE

When: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 - DAWN TO DARK
Alternate Date: Sunday, September 27 - depending upon the waves

Where: SEVEN PRESIDENTS OCEANFRONT PARK
LONG BRANCH, NJ

Who: OPEN TO ALL AGES!

CHECK CLEANOCEANACTION.ORG/SURF FOR REGISTRATION AND SPONSORSHIP!





Surf Open 2026 Announced!

Contact: Kari Martin, Business@CleanOceanAction.org

COA's 2026 Surf Open is scheduled for **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, from dawn to dusk at **Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park in Long Branch, NJ** (depending on wave conditions). Last year, the waves did not roll in for the event to take place, but here's hoping the waves appear this year! Participant registration and sponsorship opportunities are "live" at CleanOceanAction.org/surf. Paid registrations for 2025 will be honored and rolled over to this year; additional spots are still available, too!

Questions? Call the office at 732-872-0111 or email events@cleanoceanaction.org.

Harvest Hope for the Ocean - October 1!

Plans are well under way for a festive fall evening at our annual Fall Gala, "Harvest Hope for the Ocean," to be held at the beautiful Riverhouse at Rumson Country Club on Thursday, October 1, from 5:30-9:30PM. The unforgettable evening will feature live music by The Haven, the famous Lusty Lobster Raw Bar, a sumptuous dinner buffet, a three-hour open bar, a silent auction with unique gifts, and more!

The Honorary Event Co-chairs, Monmouth County Commissioner **Tom Arnone** and **Valerie Montecalvo** of Bayshore Recycling and Family of Companies, and the Committee, led by Co-Chairs **George Destafney** and **Matt LaMura**, are hard at work gathering support for the event and taking care of the details that will help make a success for the sea.

The autumn event will honor **Christopher D. Maher** of OceanFirst Bank and OceanFirst Foundation, **Joey Garofalo** of Beacon Events, and the **Marine Academy of Science & Technology (MAST)** for their remarkable commitment to our ocean and the quality of life along the New Jersey shore.

We are thrilled to have the following event sponsor support to date:



Join us as we celebrate the gifts of the ocean and the people who work tirelessly to protect them! Your support helps sustain our vital programs to improve and protect our ocean and keep our shore beachy clean.

Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities as well as reservations are available now at CleanOceanAction.org/gala. Questions? Call 732-872-0111 or email events@cleanoceanaction.org



Members of the 2026 Gala Committee launched plans for "Harvest Hope for the Ocean"



Interns (L-R): Adriana Whelan, Lauren Multari, Alana Woods, Jack Chaneski, and Emily Widmer

Thank You, Summer 2026 Interns!

COA thanks the Summer 2026 interns for their hard work, dedication, and curiosity, and we wish them the best in their next endeavors! We asked them to share about their experiences:

Adriana Whelan, Marine Debris Intern: "I've learned an incredible amount about community engagement, the threat that marine debris poses to local ecosystems, and plastic-reduction legislative work across New Jersey. I look forward to carrying this knowledge with me throughout the rest of my college and professional career!"

Lauren Multari, Ocean Policy Intern: "I've been so grateful to contribute to policy that ensures the ocean is a safe space for all. By developing my scientific writing and policy analysis skills, I've been privileged to work with the wonderful COA staff to advocate for environmental protection and government accountability."

Alana Woods, Education Intern: "This experience has helped me grow both professionally and personally, and I've learned so much from such an incredible team. Having the opportunity to develop my own lesson plans and educate others about environmental advocacy has been especially rewarding!"

Jack Chaneski, Water Quality Intern: "I learned so much through my sampling, lab work, and data analysis, as it gave me some great experience and understanding of the results of our work. [This experience] allowed me to meet so many great people, spread awareness about the importance of our waterways, and assist in the improvement of our local environments!"

Emily Widmer, Communications & Marketing Intern: "COA gave me such valuable hands-on experience, from learning more about communications and marketing than I ever imagined, to working right beside the ocean I love. I'm leaving with skills and knowledge I'll carry far beyond this internship and a deeper appreciation for how powerful environmental storytelling can be."



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LABEL



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Our Ocean Tributes

Is there someone or something special to celebrate — a special occasion or success? Is there someone to honor or remember? Consider donating to Clean Ocean Action as a tribute, which funds our internship program. Make a tribute donation at CleanOceanAction.org/donate, or by scanning the QR code.



In Memory of:

Janet Baker
Peter Cauterucci
Michele Ferro Jasionowski
Carol Anne Ross
Drew Thompson
Kathleen Wigginton

In Honor of:

Quinn and Linnea Dixon
Frank Montecalvo



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