



CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE

SEPTEMBER 2026

Defending the Sea
Since 1984

Messy NESE Found Illegal After a Day in Court!

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



A major victory for the bay and ocean!
Scan the QR code below to donate to EELC

Great news for the bay and ocean: on September 8, 2026, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit found the Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) water quality certification unlawful, and sent it back to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). In other words, the key permit no longer exists. Without a lawful permit, **NESE cannot move forward** with construction in Raritan Bay.

This victory is thanks to the **Eastern Environmental Law Center (EELC)**, **Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)**, and the **petitioners** who fought to protect Raritan Bay. The voices of the Bay and ocean were finally heard! COA commends this phenomenally strong opinion from the Third Circuit court judges, which could have ripple effects for years to come. COA's lawsuit against the Tidelands Resource Council now faces additional challenges. The TRC's issuance of a license to Transco was based on the premise that they had a legal permit from NJDEP. COA's legal team is on the case, and we will keep you posted.

To move forward, Transco would need to start over by re-applying to NJDEP. Next, NJDEP would then need to review the application, while complying with due process and addressing the concerns of the Court, which stated that "NJDEP acted arbitrarily and capriciously in issuing the Water Quality Certification."

Scan the QR code (right) to donate to EELC and support their legal costs, and follow COA's social media for updates on our separate lawsuit.



COA Pushes Back Against Trump's Plan for Harmful Aquaculture

Contact: Madison Wurst, Advocate@CleanOceanAction.org

The ocean off the NJ/NY coast is being eyed for harmful offshore aquaculture in response to Executive Orders by both Trump Administrations. These Orders seek placement of confined fish holding cells in open ocean areas, exposing the wild ecosystem to high concentrations of chemicals, feed-stock, pharmaceuticals, fecal bacteria, hybrid and non-native species. Based on studies from other regions that allow these practices, it would cause gross contamination of this region's sensitive ecosystem, and threaten NJ fresh seafood.

In response, on September 13, 2026, COA submitted comments to the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA)'s Request for Information (RFI) on aquaculture opportunity areas (AOAs) in the Mid-Atlantic. COA strongly urged NOAA to only consider coastally located passive aquaculture operations, and to prohibit offshore industrial finfish and high input aquaculture in the Mid-Atlantic.

COA supports some passive or "Low to No" input aquaculture such as inshore bi-valve aquaculture, like shellfish facilities and re-seeding operations, which can be environmentally friendly, with positive effects on water quality. But finfish, genetically modified organisms, and higher trophic-level fish aquaculture initiatives generally result in pollution, biodiversity loss, and contamination. COA is diligently monitoring federal and industry movements to establish aquaculture areas in the region. **Scan the QR code to read COA's comments!**



Pictured: offshore finfish farms
Scan the QR code above to read
COA's comments!

Calling All Beach Buddies: Register for Beach Sweeps!

Contact: Meg Sulzberg, BeachSweeps@CleanOceanAction.org



Registration for Beach Sweeps is now LIVE!

Join the fun today by scanning the QR code (left) or visiting CleanOceanAction.org/register!

Statewide Sponsors



Countywide Sponsors



Hackensack
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Additional support provided by Enterprise Mobility Foundation

“Skip the Stuff” Already Showing Results: A Long Branch Case Study

Meg Sulzberg, BeachSweeps@CleanOceanAction.org

Plastic pollution threatens marine life, public health, and coastal communities. To reduce unnecessary waste, New Jersey's statewide Skip the Stuff law took effect on August 1, 2026, requiring food-service businesses to provide single-use utensils and condiments only upon request. Full-service restaurants with seating for 10 or more must also use reusable utensils for dine-in service.

The law builds on years of local action. At the 2025 Beach Sweeps, volunteers collected 1,858 plastic utensils, and by the end of that year, more than 60 New Jersey municipalities had adopted Skip the Stuff ordinances or resolutions.

To better understand the impact of these efforts, COA Summer 2026 Marine Debris Intern **Adriana Whelan** surveyed Long Branch businesses about the city's Skip the Stuff ordinance. Among the 20 businesses that participated, an estimated 119,485 single-use utensils were eliminated in just over a year, resulting in approximately \$5,271 in savings!

While representing only a portion of local businesses, the findings show the potential benefits of Skip the Stuff, including less waste, lower costs, and cleaner communities and waterways.



Scan the QR code to see the results of the study!

NJ Clearwater Festival Makes Waves For NJ Environmental Advocacy!

On September 5, the 51st Annual NJ Friends of Clearwater Festival brought music, community, and environmental advocacy to Asbury Park! Held at Sunset Park, the free festival celebrated the legacy of folk musician and environmental activist Pete Seeger while highlighting the importance of protecting NJ's coast, waterways, and the environment.

Presented by the NJ Friends of Clearwater (NJFC) and co-sponsored by COA, the festival featured live music throughout the day, along with remarks from U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone Jr., Asbury Park Deputy Mayor Amy Quinn, and Councilmembers Angela Ahbez-Anderson and Eileen Chapman, along with COA's own Cindy Zipf and other environmental leaders. Clearwater also presented Waterspirit with an Environmental Achievement Award!

Attendees enjoyed food, craft and merchandise vendors, environmental exhibits, a Circle of Song folk singing gathering, a beverage garden, and a children's area.

Waves of thanks to NJFC and Municipal Event Services for hosting the event!



COA Executive Director Cindy Zipf, and volunteer Christian Seuffert at the Clearwater Festival!

Local Groups “SEA” Sandy Hook

Contact: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org

COA’s Seaside Environmental Academy (SEA) made waves this spring and summer with 20 schools, 1,014 students, and 128 chaperones participating. The program was capped off with two very special programs at Sandy Hook.

For the second consecutive summer, Boys & Girls Club of Monmouth County - Asbury Park Unit campers in grades 4–8 joined COA educators in seining for local marine life, exploring seashells and beachcombing, and uncovering the incredible ecosystems of Sandy Hook, and learning how to improve our watery world.

COA also welcomed Shore House, an organization dedicated to fostering hope, independence, and self-worth through social, educational, and employment opportunities for adults. Participants visited the historic lighthouse, got their feet wet seining, and enjoyed a picnic at Guardian Park by No Limits Cafe.

While SEA is typically a fee-based environmental education program, both programs were offered for free thanks to a grant COA received from the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF) to help make meaningful coastal experiences and environmental education more accessible to local communities.

Clean Ocean Action extends waves of thanks to IICF, Boys & Girls Club of Monmouth County, and Shore House for making another summer of learning, exploration, and connection along the coast possible.



Shore House participants explored the natural and historic treasures of Sandy Hook!



COA’s SEA Program Director, Kevin Connelly (right), leads a hands-on seining field trip for the Boys & Girls Club of Monmouth County!

COAstal Connections with Fulfill!

Contact: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org



Waves of thanks to the Fulfill team for joining this special SEA session!

Pictured: Susan Kyrillos, Triada Stampas, and Cindy Zipf (L to R)

COA was honored to host Fulfill’s Board of Trustees for a morning of coastal exploration at Sandy Hook for the kickoff of the organization’s annual Board retreat. **Susan Kyrillos**, Chair of Fulfill’s Board of Trustees and Principal of SK Partners, planted the seeds for this blossoming connection.

Longtime supporters of COA, Susan and her husband, former New Jersey State Senator Joe Kyrillos, were among the honorees at COA’s 2025 Sunset Soirée.

Waves of thanks to Susan for bridging this new relationship, as well as to **Fulfill President & CEO Triada Stampas** and **Executive Assistant Valerie Ryan** for helping plan such a wonderful morning connecting Fulfill’s Board of Trustees with COA and the coast!



APPLY NOW

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES & LEADERS PROGRAM

Apply now! Join our *free opportunity* for high school students looking to grow, network, earn volunteer hours, and lead projects that make a real difference!

Education@CleanOceanAction.org
732 872 0111

Free High School Leadership Program – Apply now for October Kickoff!

Contact: Kristen Grazioso, Education@CleanOceanAction.org

Back-to-school season is here, and so is the opportunity to apply for the Student Environmental Advocates and Leaders (SEAL) Program!

This free leadership program provides high school students in Monmouth County with the opportunity to build leadership skills, learn about environmental advocacy, and take action in their communities. Students come back year after year to build on their leadership skills through this meaningful and inspiring program!

Apply by October 10! Visit CleanOceanAction.org/seal or scan the QR code to learn more, view example projects, and apply to join a network of passionate student leaders working to protect the environment.



Introducing a New Waterfront Space for Red Bank!

Contact: Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan, Science@CleanOceanAction.org

Joe Ahart, Programs@CleanOceanAction.org

Want to enjoy some outdoor green space along the Navesink River in Monmouth County with the whole family? The new and improved Marine Park in Red Bank is now open after renovations! After Hurricane Sandy damaged the park's previous infrastructure, plans to rework and improve the space have finally come to life. Marine Park now includes 28,000 square feet of green space, featuring an inclusive playground, a hammock lounge, easy access to the waterfront, and more. Along with updates to the recreational areas, the Borough's efforts included improvements to aging water infrastructure in the area with upgraded stormwater check valves and better drainage systems to prevent tidal backflow and lower the risk of flooding. These upgrades provide recreational benefits as well as aim to improve the water quality of the Navesink River which is frequented by many for numerous water-based recreational activities. While some are disappointed about the reduction of parking area along the waterfront, this was a source of pollution from car-drippings and litter directly into the river.

Marine Park is also one of the long-standing sites for COA's Rally for Two Rivers, our community science bacteria monitoring program in collaboration with the NJDEP to identify and eliminate the sources of chronic fecal pollution impacting the River. COA has been engaged with the Red Bank Environmental Commission, and the Red Bank Navesink Subcommittee to assess hot spot pollution areas and in prioritizing stormwater management efforts to reduce these impacts

COA extends our thanks to the **Red Bank Department of Public Utilities** for assisting with our sampling work. And, waves of thanks to **Kate Triggiano**, chair of the Marine Park Committee and Deputy Mayor of Red Bank, Borough Manager **James Gant**, Councilmembers **Ben Forest** and **Kristina Bonatakis**, Project Engineers **Laura Neumann** and **Michael Reiser**, **Nancy Blackwood** and **Paolo Rodriguez Heyman** from the Red Bank Environmental Commission, and playground designer **John Marshall** for bringing this community project to life.



Red Bank Deputy Mayor Kate Triggiano and Councilmember Ben Forest were key to bringing the beautiful new green space to life!

Welcome, Chariclia Karavanas!

COA is thrilled to welcome **Chariclia Karavanas** as our South Jersey Program Coordinator!

Chariclia has lived in Cape May County along the Delaware Bay for her whole life, inspiring her love for marine and estuary ecosystems. She graduated from Barnard College with a degree in Environmental Science and a minor in Science and Public Policy. She completed her thesis on vessel interactions with bottlenose dolphin mothers and young. She has also worked with environmental organizations and businesses in Cape May, including the Cape May Point Arts and Science Center, Good Deeds Market, and the Cape May Whale Watch and Research Center in research and education roles.

As South Jersey Program Coordinator, Chariclia will collaborate across COA initiatives to increase organization presence, events, and networks within New Jersey's southern counties. Chariclia looks forward to bringing the concerns of South Jersey residents to the forefront of COA's advocacy efforts and expanding the reach of COA's programs! Are you a South Jersey resident interested in working with COA? **Contact Chariclia at Outreach@CleanOceanAction.org!**



Join us in welcoming Chariclia to the COA Crew!

The Countdown is On! COA's Fall Gala - Thursday, Oct. 1

Contact: Kari Martin, Business@CleanOceanAction.org

Celebrate fall with a splash! Buy tickets or become a sponsor or underwriter to support Harvest Hope for the Ocean. Your participation and support helps the future of our ocean and the Jersey Shore.

As COA's only major fundraiser of the year, this evening helps power year-round education, community science, and environmental advocacy work.

Date: Thursday, October 1, 2026

Location: The Riverhouse at Rumson Country Club
(163 Rumson Rd, Rumson, NJ 07760)

Time: 5:30 - 9:30 PM



Scan the QR code or visit CleanOceanAction.org/gala



today to reserve tickets or support the event.

Reservations are LIMITED – purchase now to support a clean ocean tomorrow!

Clean Coast Crusader: MONTICALVO & BAYSHORE www.bayshorecycling.com Family of Companies	
Beachy Clean Defenders:	
 KEEFE, BRUYETTE & WOODS Specialists in Financial Services	 The Komar Family
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 Morgan Lewis	American Braiding & Mfg. Corp. RMC ATM Solutions, Inc.
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Gina and Ted Loud	Anthony Hanlon & Family
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"General Swartztube" and his signature surf move at the 2023 COA Surf Open. Scan the QR code to join the surf fun!

Photo / Jack Flaherty

Surf's Up! COA's Surf Open - Sept. 26 or 27

Contact: Kari Martin, Business@CleanOceanAction.org

The Surf Open will take place on **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, from dawn to dusk at the beautiful Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, Long Branch, NJ (alternate date: 9/27 or weekend day through 11/22 based on wave conditions). The event is open to all ages and skill levels. Enjoy a fun fall day at the beach! Register to surf (there may still be open spots), watch from the shore, and learn more about COA and our efforts to save the sea!

To register to surf or for more information and updates, go to CleanOceanAction.org/surf-open or scan the QR code.



Clean Ocean Action
49 Avenel Blvd.
Long Branch, NJ 07740
www.CleanOceanAction.org
732-872-0111
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Save the Dates!

September 26 - COA's Surf Open

*Participate or spectate! Learn more:
CleanOceanAction.org/surf-open*

October 1 - "Harvest Hope for the Ocean"

*Buy your tickets to COA's Fall Gala at
CleanOceanAction.org/gala*

October 10 - SEAL Application Deadline

*Apply to COA's free high school leadership
program! Visit CleanOceanAction.org/seal!*

October 24 - Beach Sweeps (80+ beaches)

*Join thousands: register today at
CleanOceanAction.org/register*

LABEL



Follow us!

SEPTEMBER 2026: Dive in for the latest updates!

Our Ocean Tributes

Is there someone or something special to celebrate — an occasion or success? 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:

Peter Cauterucci
Karen J. Cook
Michele Ferro Jasionowski
Leslie Lafferty
Mama Lau
Carol Anne Ross
Bill and Mary "FiFi LaRue" Sofield
Drew Thompson
Brian A. Unger
Rob Watson

In Honor of:

Leo Garofalo
Keaton Littlepage
Meg and Rod's Engagement
Louise Stillufsen



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