

## **PRESS RELEASE**



### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Grassroots Campaign Focuses on Tackling Sea Level Rise Awareness**

*Including Study on Perceptions and Opinions*

**Point Pleasant Beach, NJ-** Today, environmental advocates gathered at Jenkinson's Boardwalk in Point Pleasant Beach to wrap up this year's C.O.A.S.T. (Clean Ocean Action Shore Tips) Campaign, highlighting the launch of a sea-level rise survey, tip-card for citizens, and a new national initiative called US Strong.

C.O.A.S.T. is an annual summer outreach campaign that raises awareness among beachgoers and coastal citizens about current ocean pollution and industrialization issues. The C.O.A.S.T. campaign organizes volunteers to set up and staff information and action tables at beach locations in Monmouth and Ocean Counties on weekend in July and August. This summer, additional tables were set up at festivals as several beaches could not accommodate the campaign due to complications from Superstorm Sandy. Despite the setbacks from the storm, the volunteers were able to reach hundreds of citizens at dozens of locations. Volunteers also sold campaign merchandise to raise funds for Clean Ocean Action's efforts to stop ocean pollution.

It has been nearly ten months since Superstorm Sandy devastated the Jersey Shore. What Sandy destroyed in 36 hours will take years to restore. This summer's C.O.A.S.T. campaign focused on educating the public about the imminent threat of sea level rise in an effort to prevent the same kind of destruction from occurring again. At each table a new card from Clean Ocean Action's "10 Tips" series were given out that outlines what steps the public can take to protect themselves from such devastation in the future.

"Until recently, many New Jerseyans were unaware of what climate change meant to them; it was a vague term that had no face," said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action**. "Superstorm Sandy gave us a harsh devastating glimpse of the threats and realities of sea level rise, but we now have a window of opportunity to help inform citizens about what is at stake and how they can prepare and respond to keep them safe from future storms," Zipf added.

Yesterday, Governor Christie and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan called for creating more resilient communities through long term planning. This year's C.O.A.S.T. campaign got to the grassroots of that endeavor. The campaign provided coastal citizens with the tools to become more aware of the pressing issues related to sea level rise.

"Clean Ocean Action's work to educate the public about the threat and reality of sea level rise is vital," said **Lauren Townsend, New Jersey Director of US Strong**. "Between sea level rise and extreme weather events like Superstorm Sandy, we need real protections and disaster relief to protect our communities. Establishing a federal extreme weather relief and protection fund will help vulnerable communities respond to sea level rise and extreme weather events that are becoming common place across the nation. Acting now will save money and, more importantly, save lives."

The C.O.A.S.T. campaign also launched Clean Ocean Action's new citizen's survey on sea level rise. The survey will gauge public perception on what should be done to prevent sea level-related devastation, and whose responsibility it is.

"The Jersey Shore bounced back from the storm with the kind of resilience and determination that you would expect from New Jerseyans," said **Macailagh McCue, Clean Ocean Action's C.O.A.S.T. Intern**, "however there is a great deal of rebuilding and planning that still needs to be done. The citizen's survey will help Clean Ocean Action to determine what the best actions are moving forward, and who should be responsible for protecting our homes and communities from this kind of catastrophe in the future."

To participate in the survey, and voice your opinion on this important issue, visit [www.cleanoceanaction.org](http://www.cleanoceanaction.org) or call Clean Ocean Action at (732) 872-0111 for more information.

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