



## STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH

### All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, July 24, 2022

## Clean, Safe Water is a Basic and Universal Human Right

Celebrating 50 years, the **Clean Water Act** and **Clean Water Action** recognize that access to clean, safe water is a critical human right.

“Making sure that Clean Water Act programs **protect critical water bodies** remains a priority campaign for Clean Water Action. For over twenty years, powerful polluters have been working to limit the definition of ‘Waters of the U.S.’ for the Clean Water Act’s pollution programs. At issue are many water bodies, including many streams and wetlands, that influence the water quality in downstream rivers, lakes, and bays - including many of our drinking water sources. The Supreme Court will soon hear a case on this issue, and Clean Water Action is joining allies [to weigh in on this critical decision.](#)”

“Facilities that store hazardous substances near water bodies, including drinking water sources, need to plan ahead to prevent spills that can occur during extreme weather events like hurricanes. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finally **proposed requirements for chemical spill prevention plans** and is taking public comments through July 26th. [Tell the EPA](#) to finalize the ‘Worst Case Discharge Rule’ possible to protect fence-line communities and their water resources.”

“Clean Water Action is also making a difference in tackling **forever PFAS chemicals**. PFAS chemicals, which build up in our bodies and in the environment and which are very difficult to destroy, are linked to numerous health effects and are being discovered nationwide, including in drinking water sources. Two key strategies are getting PFAS chemicals out of products and keeping them from getting into water in the first place.” Seven states have passed bans in food packaging as have some national chains such as McDonald’s and Chipotle. The next step is a national ban. Tell [members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senators](#) to ban toxic food packaging.

“**Pennsylvania has been working to establish a state drinking water standard for toxic PFAS chemicals**, which have been found throughout the state and have led to numerous public and private water supplies being shut down due to contamination. This would be the first time Pennsylvania has set its own drinking water standard separate from the federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards.” (All above quotes are from *Clean Water Currents*, Summer 2022)

**Also hopeful for Pennsylvania** - A sum of \$220 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a \$1.9 trillion federal economic stimulus bill signed by President Joe Biden last year as part of COVID-19 relief, will be used to establish a **new Clean Streams Fund**.

“Pennsylvania has 85,000 miles of waterways - the highest stream density in the continental U.S. One-third of those waterways are considered polluted enough to harm wildlife, recreation, or drinking water. The Clean Streams Fund is designed to fund projects that clean rivers and streams damaged by agricultural runoff, abandoned mine drainage, and storm water.” (Frank Kummer, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7/15/22)