



ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH
STRATEGY CENTER

Victories for Health, Jobs, and Justice

Thanks to you, we get it done.

2017 Report to the Community

COVER CAKE: It was yummy! That's the cake we served this summer to thank and congratulate our ambitious team of interns.

Common Sense

It's easy to be outraged, in these times, by hateful rhetoric, anti-science agendas, and more. But waving the facts and believing we're on the right side of history is not enough.

We need proactive strategies that motivate people of different ages, opinions, and experiences. We need to harness grassroots power and promote authentic leadership. We need to teach, and learn from, the next generation.

What's the proof that works? The Strategy Center accomplishments you've made possible this year.

You'll see we're making common sense change happen and getting unprecedented work done, even in the face of divisive political conditions.

We aim for solutions that provide good health, good jobs, and a fair deal. Whether it's safe drinking water for rural families, couches without toxic flame retardants, or new climate-friendly jobs making stuff that's safer for people and the planet—we're fighting for what's right and what works.

It helps—a whole lot—that people like you support our work.

As we wrap up our fifteenth year, we remain dedicated to the children and families of our home state of Maine while also expanding our reach nationwide. We're moving people and partners to work for what's good for everyone: health, jobs, and justice.

It's work in progress.



Michael E. Belliveau
President and Executive Director

Thank you for helping us overcome the rising challenges of these times. We need you! Stay in touch.

The ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY CENTER works for a world where all people are healthy and thriving in a fair and healthy economy. We protect public health by fighting for safe food and drinking water, toxic-free products, and good green manufacturing jobs.

We bring the best science and authentic voices to the table to achieve collective impact. Working with our advocacy partner, **Prevent Harm**, we persuade government and industry to embrace common sense solutions. We make a difference in Maine and the nation.

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Staff smiles at the Maine State House after lawmakers acted for safe drinking water.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY CENTER

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Visit our web pages to read more about our board and staff.

Thank you. We are grateful to the hundreds of individuals, businesses, and foundations whose support helped fund our work this year, including these grantmakers:

- The Betterment Fund
- The Bingham Program at Tufts Medical Center
- The Broad Reach Fund of the Maine Community Foundation
- Maine Cancer Foundation
- Marisla Foundation
- The John Merck Fund
- The New York Community Trust
- Passport Foundation
- Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration





Good Jobs = Good Health

It's not enough to campaign against the "bads." We're advancing the "goods," too.

GREEN JOBS: We're working for investment in biobased manufacturing.

Consumers and companies worldwide are driving the growing demand for safer products made from renewable materials rather than climate-killing oil or gas. Manufacturing climate-friendly, biobased products also creates good-paying jobs —the greatest social determinant of good health and key to a sustainable economy.

That's what we're working for in Maine, where our rural forest-based economy has been rocked by paper mill closures and job loss. From the raw materials of Maine's vast, sustainably harvested forest resources, new technology can manufacture biobased chemicals and bioplastics as well as advanced biobased materials. In addition, using forest resources rather than industrial corn is better for the environment.

Working with our partner Biobased Maine this year, we:

- Advised leading companies exploring biobased manufacturing investment opportunities in Maine, and consulted in partnership with two major companies, ReEnergy and Sappi North America, to expand biobased technology in their existing operations in Maine.
- Marketed Maine's forest resources, companies, labor force, and other assets at high-profile biobased business conferences in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.
- Helped write the next chapter of Maine's forest industry as an executive committee member of the Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative.

Next? We're publishing a groundbreaking "roadmap" of new data and information that will help more companies see Maine as the place to invest in biobased manufacturing, make climate-friendly products, and create good jobs that can help revitalize rural communities.



GROWING MEMBERSHIPS

Our Sustainable Economy Program Director Charlotte Mace serves as the executive director of the Biobased Maine trade association, a role for which she's won recognition as a leader for Maine's economy.

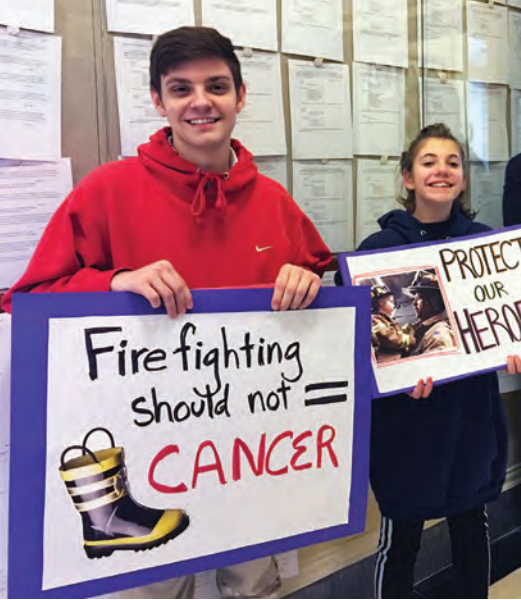
Biobased Maine is earning attention and respect from leaders of business, research, and government for its work to attract investment in biobased manufacturing in Maine.

Biobased Maine includes leading member companies with facilities in Maine making biobased products, such as Sappi North America (Westbrook), Tom's of Maine/a subsidiary of Colgate-Palmolive (Sanford), True Textiles (Guilford), ReEnergy (Fort Fairfield), Grow-Tech LLC (South Portland), Cerealus (Waterville), and Maine Standard Biofuels (South Portland).

See *Biobased Maine's full list of businesses, organizations, and educational institutions at biobasedmaine.org.*



(Left) Biobased Maine's conference exhibit promotes Maine's renewable forest resources and other assets. (Right) There's world-class research and development capacity at the Forest Bioproducts Research Institute at the University of Maine, one of our important partners in this work.



Firefighters and their families, scientists, and grassroots leaders joined with dedicated lawmakers to overcome the chemical industry's behind-the-scenes tactics and misleading information and win a powerful prohibition on the sale of furniture in Maine containing toxic chemical flame retardants.

FOR THE HEALTH OF OUR HEROES

Therese Flaherty of Yarmouth, Maine drove north to the State House more than once during the winter of 2017, visiting with legislators to ask them to pass the flame retardants phase-out law that would protect firefighters' health.

Until his death six years ago, her husband of 42 years, Tim Flaherty, was a firefighter. He wasn't fighting a fire when he died, but his death at age 63 was caused by what's considered the number one cause of line-of-duty deaths among professional firefighters today: cancer.

"He fought until the end," Therese said. "Tim was the best husband I could have asked for. He was my hero."

It's the law.

In action with our partner organization **Prevent Harm**, we won major legislative victories with national impacts for public health, despite facing anti-public health ideology and deceptive chemical industry lobbying.

SAFE PRODUCTS: We banned toxic chemical flame retardants in furniture.

For the health and safety of families and first responders, we worked closely with the Professional Fire Fighters of Maine union to win a battle with the chemical industry: Maine legislators passed a first-in-the-nation law to end the unnecessary use of so-called "flame retardant" toxic chemicals in upholstered furniture.

Firefighters across the country, regularly exposed to dangerous gasses when toxic chemicals burn, die from cancer in obscenely high numbers. Some of these chemicals have been linked to cancer and other may harm brain development in kids, leading to learning disabilities.

Maine Governor Paul LePage vetoed the legislation, bowing to the chemical industry. But the bipartisan support we built over many months resulted in overwhelming overrides of the governor's veto in both the Maine House and Senate.

The new Maine law prohibits the sale after January 1, 2019 of residential upholstered furniture that contains any flame retardant toxic chemical.

It has already helped open the door to further action: in the fall of this year, Rhode Island's legislature banned a group of flame retardants, San Francisco's city council was ready to approve an extensive ban, and the U.S. Consumer Products and Safety Commission issued a nationwide warning against a group of toxic flame retardants.



We called for a group cheer at the Maine State House on a day of advocacy for common sense policies that help keep children, families, first responders, and all of us healthy.



FOR THE HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN

In Maine, parents and teachers of kids who unwittingly drink arsenic in well water called for safe drinking water for all, regardless of where people live or how much money they make.

Wendy Brennan testified in a public hearing that she still feels guilty that she didn't know she should test her well until a study in her children's schools found lower IQs among children exposed to arsenic in well water. Testing revealed her family's well water was contaminated by arsenic at ten times the EPA safety limit.

Now Wendy is a passionate grassroots leader for safe drinking water, calling for more wells to be tested and more help making safe drinking water affordable. Her message is simple: "Rural families need help to protect our children."

SAFE DRINKING WATER: We advanced justice for rural families.

Because legislators came together, again, to decisively override the governor's vetoes, we passed two laws in Maine to ensure access to safe and affordable drinking water, an issue of environmental justice.

One new law funds educational outreach to boost water testing to identify arsenic-contaminated wells. The second invests \$500,000 to help lower-income well owners pay for water treatment to slash arsenic exposure.

Shockingly, the health of some 100,000 Mainers and more than three million Americans is at risk from arsenic contaminated residential wells. Public water supplies in towns and cities are regulated, but rural residents' wells remain exempt from Safe Drinking Water Act protections. Arsenic exposure triggers bladder, liver, and skin cancer, and harms brain development, setting up children for lifelong challenges.

When well water is contaminated, lower-income families are hit especially hard: costly water treatment systems will slash exposure to arsenic, but are unaffordable for many.

Passing these two laws is a strong start to our long-term campaign to guarantee the basic human right of affordable access to safe drinking water.



We trained talented interns like Korbin Houston (Bates College) and Sydney Avitia-Jacques (Bowdoin College) to become impressive issue experts and organizers.



Grassroots leaders like moms Heather McIntosh, Wendy Brennan, and Joanie Hill made sure lawmakers heard firsthand about the impacts of unsafe drinking water on children and families.

STANDING STRONG

Who's with us in demanding EPA protect public health and safety?

Scientists, consumers, workers, people from low-income communities of color, parents and teachers of children with learning disabilities—and great lawyers.

Public law firm Earthjustice brings attorneys with know-how earned over decades fighting for public health, safety, and justice. In seeking justice from the EPA, we are joined by organizations both small and mighty, including the Learning Disabilities Association of America, United Steelworkers, Union of Concerned Scientists, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Environmental Working Group, Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, Sierra Club, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice.



TRUMP EPA: We sued to uphold the law.

We retained a leading public interest law firm to sue the Trump EPA for violating landmark chemical safety law that took over ten years to win.

Finally strengthening the broken federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) in 2016, Congress required the evaluation of thousands of industrial chemicals found in products, building materials, and workplaces as well as in drinking water and food.

Evaluation must show the chemicals are safe for pregnant women, children, and workers—or they must be removed from commerce in favor of safer alternatives.

But when Donald Trump became president, his new EPA administrators arrived directly from longtime careers defending the oil, gas, and chemical industries, bringing what one of our attorneys called “head spinning conflicts of interest” and the apparent intent to weaken how the agency will regulate toxic chemicals.

Now the Trump EPA is trying to turn back the clock: its final chemical safety rules are dramatically weaker than the rules proposed under the Obama Administration, because they deliberately bypass the law’s clear requirement to base safety assessments on ALL uses of a chemical.

This lawsuit is about holding the Trump EPA to the letter of the law and ensuring it fulfills its mandate to protect the public.



Awardee Andy Igrejas and friends including Hannah Pingree, Prevent Harm board chair and former speaker of the Maine House of Representatives.

Celebration for Our Healthy Future

At our annual Celebration in December, people of all ages hear about good work and meet the inspiring winners of our leadership awards.

Frank Hatch Environmental Health Leadership Award: Andy Igrejas, executive director of the national Safer Chemicals Healthy Families coalition, a key leader in the years-long effort that won reforms to the federal Toxic Substances Control Act.

Bettie Kettell Award for Health Professional Leadership: Dr. Steven Feder, a Maine primary care pediatrician who advocates to reduce young peoples’ exposure to toxic chemicals.

Grassroots Leadership Award: Regina Creeley, a retired teacher who is an unflinching advocate for action to ensure children have access to safe and affordable drinking water.

Sustainable Business Leadership Award: James Chittum, director of Business Development at Grow-Tech LLC, a business leader who sees tremendous opportunity for companies that make advanced products from renewable, plant-based resources.

Congrats to our 2016 award winners! Read about our 2017 awardees at ourhealthyfuture.org.

Changing the marketplace

We launched a national campaign for safer food. Our aim? Ridding the industrial food system of all toxic chemicals in material that has contact with food.

SAFER FOOD: We blew the whistle on toxic chemicals in mac and cheese.

Millions of people learned about our safer food campaign when a *New York Times* exclusive story in July spurred a viral media storm, that brought an estimated \$6 million dollars worth of coverage. It reported that our laboratory testing found phthalates in 29 of 30 cheese products tested, with highest levels in the cheese powders of major brands of a beloved comfort food: macaroni and cheese.

Phthalates (THAL-eights) are a class of hormone-disrupting toxic chemicals that are particularly threatening to pregnant women, babies, and toddlers. A developing fetus or young child with the highest exposure to phthalates may grow up struggling to succeed in school, at work, and in life. Boys may suffer an increased risk of birth defects associated with testicular cancer, prostate cancer, or difficulty in fathering a child.

Food is the number one source of human exposure to phthalates, which are not added to food products as an ingredient, but enter through processing and packaging. Fortunately, safer alternatives are widely available. They just need to be used.



Phthalates...
No Phthanks!

Have you signed
our petition at
KleanUpKraft.org?

We're calling on market leader Kraft Heinz to identify and eliminate any and all sources of phthalates in its food processing equipment and packaging materials.

Kraft is the biggest producer of cheese in the country, and if it changes, others will follow.



Speaking Out

A mom willing to share the story of her infant son's surgery has helped inspire nearly 100,000 people to sign our petition to food industry leader Kraft Heinz.

After a completely normal pregnancy, Laura's son was born with hypospadias with chordee, a birth defect that has become one of the most common among babies in

the United States. At just eight months old, he needed an hours-long surgery to dismantle and reconstruct his penis.

"I remember singing to him as an anesthesia mask was placed on his face, trying to help him be less afraid. It was a wrenching experience for us all."

SHOPPING: We graded major retailers – and they're responding.

With the national Safer Chemicals Healthy Families coalition, we're using the Retailer Report Card to challenge major retailers and suppliers to end their use of highly toxic chemicals—or face the wrath of consumers increasingly concerned about product safety.

Since issuing the 2016 report card, we've seen some leading retailers make significant progress in creating plans and timeframes to reduce, phase out, and improve management of toxic chemicals. Timed for holiday shopping release, the 2017 report card evaluates 30 retailers and assigns them A-F grades.

What grade did your favorite retailer receive?
Find out at retailerreportcard.org.
New grades come out in mid November.



A Year By Numbers

\$6 million worth of media coverage.

That's the estimated value of the media coverage that launched our safer food campaign and got people talking about toxic chemicals in macaroni and cheese.

100,000 petition signatures.

That's our goal, and we're getting close! We're calling on Kraft Heinz, the biggest cheese producer in the country, to take action that will demonstrate great leadership in an industry that needs to get toxic chemicals out of food.

2,277 rural miles.

That's how many miles our amazing team of interns covered, working for safe drinking water. From Maine, they could have driven to Colorado, Texas, or Saskatchewan, Canada!



863 grassroots leaders.

That's who contacted their Maine legislators, advocating for common-sense policies that became three new state laws, for the most impressive environmental public health gains in recent memory in Maine.

3 countries on 2 continents.

That's where we worked for good jobs in Maine by marketing Maine's assets—labor force, renewable resources, transportation infrastructure, and more—at high-profile conferences of biobased manufacturing investors in North America (U.S. and Canada) and Europe (The Netherlands).



1 new deputy director!

Thank you, Patrick MacRoy, for bringing your impressive, national environmental health experience to our work—and letting us share this made-in-Maine photo with the world!

Looks like fun, doesn't it? We're grateful to the next generation of leaders and to people of all ages who volunteer to make phone calls, help at events, and speak out on issues they care about. Join us! More info at: (207) 699-5789 and info@ourhealthyfuture.org.



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You can make children safer.



Your support for our work gets consumers, lawmakers, and retailers to take action for the health of our most vulnerable populations and communities.

Please make the most generous gift you can this year, to help those who need us most.

Online: ourhealthyfuture.org

By phone, with credit card: (207) 699-5789

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You're Invited

Celebrating achievement and diverse and inspiring leaders is always a good reason to get together. Buy tickets, sponsor, or become a host—and receive free tickets!

In 2017, join us on **Friday, December 1** at *O'Maine Studios*, 54 Danforth Street in Portland, Maine.

More info: ourhealthyfuture.org.

And that's where you'll find out about the 2018 event, too.