

SLINGSHOT



AUGUST 2022 – JULY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



HELLO COMMUNITY LEADERS, SUPPORTERS, & PARTNERS ACROSS THE NORTHEAST!

This summer, our region faced climate extremes. Most of the U.S. endured the hottest months ever recorded. Vermont and Massachusetts experienced a 100-year flood that left thousands displaced. Smoke from Canadian wildfires choked the air for days at a time.

And yet, despite this climate chaos and a lifetime of living in the shadow of environmental pollution, people are still fighting to build a more resilient world. We get hope from folks like Wendy, leaving no stone unturned to protect her community from a polluting waste facility. Like Ian, who joined with neighbors to defeat a new fossil fuel power plant and now drives hours across the region to be a community voice in our electric grid. Like Ayesha, relentlessly pushing to get forever chemicals out of firefighting gear and our drinking water.

We launched Slingshot a year ago as a hub for residents who are organizing for the brighter future we deserve. We work alongside communities taking aim at polluters and building power to win the solutions we so desperately need.

In our first ever annual report, we are excited to share stories of this work in action.

None of this would have been possible without your support and willingness to put your trust in a new organization.

For that, you have our deepest gratitude.

In solidarity,



**MIREILLE
BEJJANI**
Co-Executive
Director
she/they



**DANA
COLIHAN**
Co-Executive
Director
she/her



BUILDING A COMMUNITY-CENTERED ORGANIZATION

At Slingshot, we're building
power for people, not polluters.

In all of our work, we seek to **build strong partnerships with impacted communities**—giving leaders the tools, training, and organizing support they need to run successful campaigns for clean air, clean water, and vibrant communities.

Our goal isn't just to win on local environmental problems. Our goal is to build a base of long-term leaders who will light the fire for change across the region. We know that meaningful

solutions are driven by the people most impacted by environmental health threats. That's why we are committed to building an organization that centers the leadership of frontline communities.

Region-wide, we're convening a **core group of longtime leaders** to guide our organizational development, collaborate on visionary campaigns, and continue on the path towards a cleaner, healthier, and more just future.



OUR FIRST YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

14

victories!

52

communities
supported

50

community organizing
workshops

140

leadership
coaching sessions

46

actions
with groups

20

calls to our
support hotline

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS

Community organizing is the heart of our work.

We support communities on the frontlines of environmental health threats, whether that is stopping a dirty energy project, protecting clean water, or fighting against a polluting facility. We build deep relationships with grassroots leaders on the ground, supporting the development of local groups that will join the environmental and social justice movement long after their initial fight is won. Here are a few highlights from our work **supporting more than 50 community groups over the last year.**



ENERGY



WASTE



WATER



TOXICS



MONTPELIER, VT

The Vermont Environmental Justice Network is building deep community connections while holding the state government accountable to its policy promises. At their inaugural summit in August, local leaders laid out their vision for Vermont, established the network's mission, and enjoyed community wellness workshops.



CLAREMONT, NH

Leaders from A Better Claremont are working to stop a proposed waste transfer station that would increase polluting truck traffic and potentially leak toxic substances right next to an affordable housing complex and an elementary school. Neighbors are calling on the NH Department of Environmental Services to reject the polluter's permit applications, making space for sustainable local businesses.



PEABODY, MA

Leaders from Breathe Clean North Shore catalyzed a statewide movement to retire fossil fuel power plants after initially forming their group to stop construction of a new fracked gas power plant in their neighborhood. Screenings of #StopThePeabodyPeaker, a documentary detailing their years-long fight, helped lay the foundation for the new MA Clean Peak Coalition, aiming to retire all fossil fuel peaker plants in Massachusetts.



SPRINGFIELD & LONGMEADOW, MA

Residents with Springfield Climate Justice Coalition and Longmeadow Pipeline Awareness Group are taking on an unnecessary and unwanted Eversource fracked gas pipeline from both ends. Their organizing has had a huge impact: referencing community concerns, the state ruled in July that Eversource failed to address environmental justice impacts in a permitting report. The company must now conduct additional analysis and meaningful community outreach.



Photo Credit:
Marilyn
Humphries
Photography



AUGUSTA, ME



Last year, Don't Waste ME celebrated the passage of their monumental bill that stopped the importation of over 200,000 tons of out-of-state waste to Juniper Ridge Landfill. However, Casella, the billion dollar waste company, hired high-paid lobbyists in an attempt to roll back these tough-won protections for our health and environment. Don't Waste ME fought tooth and nail, and ultimately fended off the attempt to completely re-open the floodgates to out-of-state waste.

UNION, WARREN, & HOPE, ME



After Canadian mineral exploration company Exiro shared plans to survey near a critical watershed, residents formed Citizens Against Residential Mining Activity (CARMA). CARMA organized their neighbors to successfully pass moratoriums on mining in all three towns! Now, the group is leading efforts to ensure that state law continues to guarantee towns' ability to control and regulate mining.

LAKE AUBURN, ME



Lake Auburn provides drinking water to 40,000 residents in Lewiston, Auburn, and Poland. However the quality and affordability of this drinking water has been under threat by aggressive development. In response, residents formed We Protect Lake Auburn, organized their neighbors, and introduced and won a bill to safeguard the lake from additional development. Now, leaders are continuing their campaign for safe and affordable drinking water and a healthy lake through local organizing.

DALTON, NH



Forest Lake Association and North Country Alliance for Balanced Change forced Casella to withdraw permits for their landfill proposal right on Forest Lake. They continue to watchdog the regulatory process while working statewide to protect the state's waters from landfill pollution.

SAUGUS, MA



The Alliance for Health and Environment won reassurance that the city's WIN Waste-operated landfill cannot be expanded under current law. Now, residents are working to educate the public about air quality and win retirement of the landfill along with the neighboring WIN Waste incinerator (the oldest in the country).



NEW BEDFORD, MA



South Coast Neighbors United is plowing forward on their campaign to stop a proposed waste facility. Residents won a major victory when the polluter, Parallel Products, agreed to abandon plans to process toxic sludge at the facility. However, the project as proposed would still cause serious harm to surrounding residents and habitats, and the fight continues to halt the facility entirely.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR SOLUTIONS

When residents across the region and country come together, they can unleash truly **transformational change**. We wanted to **highlight two such efforts** that made big gains over the last year.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, CLEAN ENERGY-BASED ELECTRIC GRID

ISO-New England, the organization that manages the region's electric grid, continues to rely on fossil fuel energy to power our lives while ignoring calls for more accountability or transparency to everyday ratepayers.

But we are changing these power dynamics. The **Fix the Grid** campaign, facilitated by Slingshot, is **centering community leaders' voices** in the push for a cleaner, more democratic electric system and calling on state leaders to use their influence to shift the grid's priorities.

We helped elect Ian McDonald from Killingly, CT and Regine Spector from Amherst, MA to ISO-NE's Consumer Liaison Group, inserting the public voice into a process that previously catered primarily to fossil fuel interests. We built momentum through a campaign launch event, a webinar on rising electricity rates, and a Boston "Fee Party" rally that collectively drew hundreds of people.

Our work is paying off: thanks to strong relationships we've built, state leaders in Massachusetts are reaching out to our campaign for input, connections to communities, and collaboration on mutual priorities. Right now, we're working together to secure the creation of a new environmental justice position at ISO-NE—the first of its kind in the country. The campaign is building on this momentum as we focus on budding relationships with state agencies in Connecticut, recruit new allies, and bring leaders together.



Photo Credit: Marilyn Humphries Photography

EPA PROPOSES FIRST-EVER NATIONAL DRINKING WATER STANDARDS FOR PFAS FOREVER CHEMICALS



The EPA estimated that **70-94 million people** are drinking water contaminated with unsafe levels of the cancer-causing forever chemicals, PFAS. That's why the National PFAS Contamination Coalition is organizing for a PFAS-free future. Led by over 30 communities directly impacted by PFAS, the coalition envisions a world where people are not exposed to any PFAS, where there is justice for the victims of PFAS exposure, and where laws and regulations prevent contamination disasters like this from happening again. We have the honor of co-facilitating this coalition alongside this powerful group of community leaders.

After almost a decade of organizing and pressure, the coalition celebrated this spring when the U.S. EPA announced proposed national, enforceable drinking water standards for six PFAS chemicals. Nine members of the coalition were quoted in the White House's press statement.

We know that the fight isn't over. We are continuing to push to ensure that these proposed standards are swiftly enacted, that we regulate PFAS as a class, turn off the tap of contamination, and make polluters pay.

GreenRoots community leader Noemy Rodriguez speaks at the Boston Fee Party.



This is an amazing and much awaited day. We have pushed for so long for this and the EPA has delivered a just and defensible action where PFAS levels in drinking water will no longer depend on your zip code. Our voices have truly been heard.

— LAURENE ALLEN
Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water
Merrimack, NH

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

We are sincerely grateful to the following organizations for their financial support during our 2023 fiscal year:

- Anonymous
- Barr Foundation
- Center for Whole Communities
- Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
- Energy Foundation
- Family 140 Fund
- The Fracking Fund of the New World Foundation
- The Harris & Frances Block Foundation
- Island Foundation, Inc.
- The John Merck Fund
- The JPB Foundation
- Lawson Valentine Foundation
- New England Biolabs Foundation
- New England Grassroots Environment Fund
- Rights & Democracy Education Fund
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

FOUNDING CIRCLE DONORS

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$5,000 OR MORE:

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MASSACHUSETTS

CONNECTICUT

RHODE ISLAND

VERMONT

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