SUMMER 2018

Connecticut Fund for the Environment

Save the Sound®

GreenSheet

Litchfield, Connecticut

The Future is Bright: Shared Solar Comes to Connecticut

The 2018 legislative session marked a sea change in Connecticut's relationship with solar energy. After years of fighting to make solar power more accessible to residents and ramp up renewable energy use, we were thrilled to see comprehensive shared solar legislation passed as part of this year's big state energy bill, thanks in large part to your ongoing support.

"We see shared solar as one of the best tools to achieve the in-state greenhouse gas emissions reductions we need," said Claire Coleman, climate and energy attorney for CFE/Save the Sound. "Shared solar is the tool we focused on to ramp up renewables in Connecticut this session. Shared solar increases both access and equity by expanding who can participate in the clean energy economy."

Currently, four out of five Connecticut residents can't put solar on their own roof, due to restrictions such as shade, renting, or living in a multi-family home. Being able to afford the upfront costs of solar installation is another major barrier to access.

"Now, if you can't put solar on your own roof—whether for locational or economic reasons—you'll be able to buy or lease from a larger solar array," Claire said.

New Haven resident Jett Jonelis works as an Environmental Stewardship AmeriCorps VISTA with Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven, and testified this spring in support of the energy bill.

"I thought that it was important for me to testify as a low income resident first and foremost because often people in situations like myself are unable to attend these hearings," Jett said, adding that low-income residents spend about 15 percent of their income on utilities compared to less than three percent for moderate- to high-income residents.

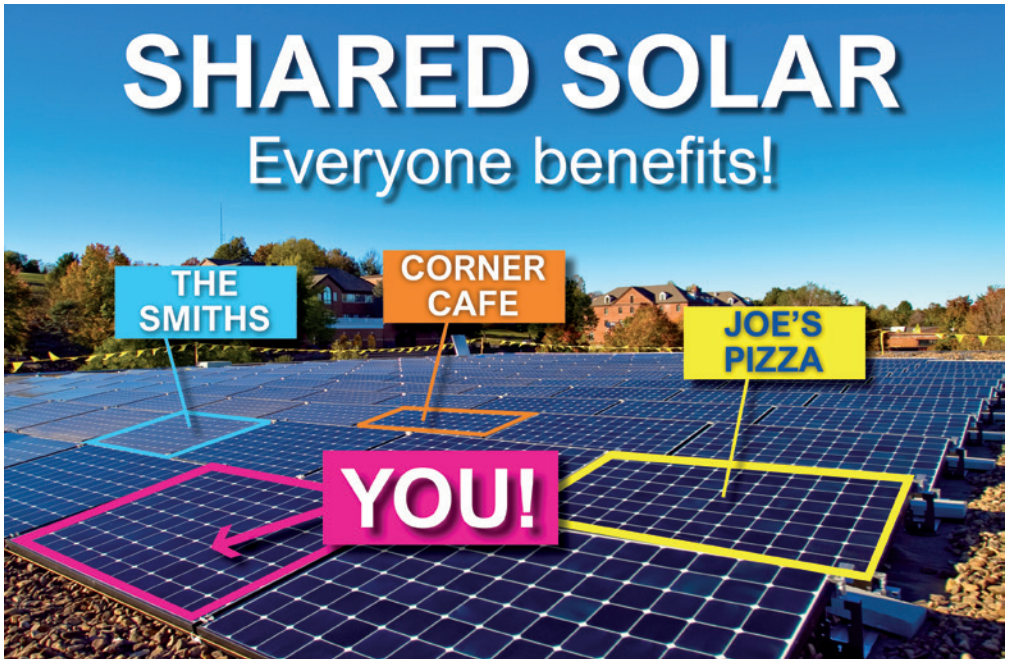
The new law takes steps to address this inequality, requiring that 10 percent of each shared solar project serves low-income customers and an additional 10 percent serves low- and moderate-income customers. These customers will be able to lower their electricity bill just by opting in to purchase clean energy from a shared solar array.

> *"Shared solar increases both access and equity by expanding who can participate in the clean energy economy."*

By making renewable energy more accessible, and increasing the number of solar consumers in our state, Connecticut will become a more viable market for renewable energy businesses—creating an influx of new green energy jobs while decreasing climate-warming emissions.

"People need work and the solar industry provides an opportunity for low-income people to break into a new growing workforce," Jett added. "Community shared solar allows them to actually be able to afford the products they are working on."

Connecticut customers could have access to shared solar power as early as 2019.



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Events Spotlight

BASS-A-PALOOZA XI

For more than 10 years, Clay Persinger has been hosting his Bass-A-Palooza charity fishing tournament. In 2016, Clay decided to team up with Save the Sound for the event, a decision that's made a big impact on the health of the Long Island Sound community.

We're thrilled to report that this year's Bass-A-Palooza was the most successful yet, with a record $34,000 raised to support a clean and healthy Long Island Sound. The silent auction fueled excitement among after-party attendees, with packages including rare whiskey and wines, far-flung vacations, and a farm-to-table dinner.

"We had a record year with 107 anglers entering and we had a 95 percent catch and release rate," says Persinger. "The anglers and crowd from the event are eager to help raise awareness and funds for an organization that helps their home-waters… My fishery depends on you guys."

Thanks for your support, Clay! We're already looking forward to next year.

Bass-A-Palooza 2018 award winners and friends.

OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

A planned gift from your estate can help protect the endangered places you care about far into the future, while monthly giving of $5, $10, $20, or more could be a small addition to your household budget and a big contribution to the environment. Contact *mlemere@ctenvironment.org* for more information.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
A Five-year-old's Environmental Birthday Wish

When Ethan Ferrante Gouzie started showing concern for litter and pollution, his mother, Catherine Ferrante, seized the opportunity to teach her young son about the importance of philanthropy.

"Nurturing a philanthropic spirit in a child can pay dividends as they grow into adult stewards of the environment," Catherine says.

While planning Ethan's marine-themed fifth birthday party, Catherine spoke with him about donating his birthday to help support the environment. Rather than asking for material presents, Ethan's guests were asked to make their gifts in the form of donations to Save the Sound—though Catherine emphasized she did promise Ethan a new toy of his choosing, noting that it can be a lot to expect a child to completely sacrifice their birthday presents.

"In the end he gets to enjoy a party with his friends, gets a couple of presents he really wants, and employs teamwork with his friends to raise money for a great cause," Catherine says. "It's a win-win, and I encourage anyone who can to try something similar."

Happy Birthday from Save the Sound, Ethan! Thank you for dreaming big!

To make a birthday donation to Save the Sound, contact Michelle LeMere at ***mlemere@savethesound.org.***

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT:
Fueling Up Your Long Island Soundkeeper

In April 2018, a small group of highly motivated donors and advocates gathered to focus their energies on securing the future of Save the Sound's new Soundkeeper program. To kick off the summer, Soundkeeper launch committee members Dan and Julia Anderson hosted a unique fundraising event with special guest Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., president of Waterkeeper Alliance. Kennedy spoke to a passionate crowd of advocates about the importance of on-the-water watchdogging—both on Long Island Sound and world-wide.

During the event, a number of committee members were recognized for their generous financial contributions to stabilize the program. We are grateful to the Soundkeeper Admirals listed here, who are leading our program to success through contributions of $1,000 or more!

"Connecticut's economy depends on the quality of the local waters, and initiatives like the Soundkeeper program benefit every community," says Pat O'Meara, a Soundkeeper Admiral and President of the Security Traders Association of Connecticut, which also supports Save the Sound. "We are thrilled to support Bill Lucey and we know he will be a great advocate and a terrific educator."

Your 2018 Soundkeeper Admirals:

Jack Alexander, Robert and Libby Alexander, Daniel and Julia Anderson, Paul Barringer and Tonia Falconer-Barringer, Steven and Heidi Benjamin, Jonathan and Susan Beyman, John and Margaret Brewer, Bunting Family Foundation, Crow Hill Foundation, Peter DeBell, M.D., William "Doug" Douglass, Charles and Emily Dreas, Raphael Elkind, Drew Freides, Mary S. Halsey, Evan and Lesley Heller, Dawn Henry, Ruth and Seymour Klein Foundation, Mary Ellen Kranzlin, Charles and Leslie Lee, Steven Loeb, Patrick Lynch, Steven Minninger, M.L.E. Foundation, Thomas and Sophie Murphy, Eric Naison-Phillips, Irwin and Dorothy Nessel Foundation, Newman's Own Foundation, Patrick and Andrea O'Meara, Clay and Elisa Persinger, The Polk Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley, Jerry Rosenblum, Sandpiper Fund, John Schlachtenhaufen, Security Traders Association of Connecticut, William Simmons and Wendy Popp-Simmons, Smithfield Foods, Inc., Stephen Tomlinson, UBS Business Solutions US, LLC, George and Anne Walker, Waterwheel Foundation, Stephen Wiggins, WindCheck Magazine, and Women's Seaman's Friend Society of Connecticut.

Thank you, Admirals, for protecting and restoring Long Island Sound through your incredible support!

Your membership in action: exciting legal and on-the-ground updates

RESTORING YOUR RATEPAYER ENERGY FUNDS

Nearly every Connecticut electric customer pays a charge on their monthly bill that supports energy efficiency and clean energy programs—programs intended to save money for families, clean the air we breathe, and spur economic growth. But last fall, the state government unconstitutionally diverted $145 million of those ratepayer funds to plug an unrelated budget gap.

Among other devastating impacts, the loss of these funds could cost Connecticut 6,885 jobs over the next two years, cut $2.9 million per year in education and training benefits for clean energy workforce development, and prevent 12,900 homes in 2018 alone from receiving energy assessments, weatherization upgrades, or reduced pricing on insulation.

That's why, on May 15, we filed a federal lawsuit against the State of Connecticut demanding the funds' return, alongside a number of energy advocate co-plaintiffs. Your membership supports the fight to restore these stolen funds.

CFE/Save the Sound President Curt Johnson spoke alongside energy efficiency businesses impacted by the raid at a press conference in Hartford.

"Connecticut residents and our health should not be politicized," said Steve Osuch, a co-plaintiff and owner of Energy ESC, an energy efficiency and sustainability consulting firm, at a press conference this past May. Steve mentioned that the cuts have forced him to lay off 50 percent of his lead technicians. "Our electric bill is not a tax," he added.

Join our email list at www.ctenvironment.org and keep an eye on your inbox for updates on this and other pressing CFE/Save the Sound cases.

RESIDENTS MAKE A PLAN FOR CLEANING UP THE MILL RIVER

The Mill River is receiving some much deserved attention these days. For years, a large portion of the river, which starts in Cheshire and flows into New Haven Harbor, has been unsafe for kayaking and swimming due to pollution from a range of sources. But with the help of invested local residents and Save the Sound's Mill River Watershed Coordinator Nicole Davis, the Mill River will have a comprehensive watershed management plan by September, the first step on a long journey towards restoration.

"The goal of the plan is to eliminate impairments in the Mill River watershed," Nicole said, explaining that impairments mean anything that harms wildlife, or bacterial contamination that makes the river unsafe for human enjoyment. She emphasized that the Mill River is the last of the three major rivers emptying into New Haven Harbor to receive an official watershed management plan, which will make it easier to obtain grants to restore the harbor and Long Island Sound at large.

With 50 members weighing in through the steering committee, the completed plan will reflect suggestions and concerns from local stakeholders who live and work in the area.

Save the Sound staffers and local stakeholders gathered in March for the first public meeting about the Mill River Watershed Management Plan.

"It is important for stakeholders to understand how their communities benefit from and potentially impact this watercourse that is so vital to both humans and wildlife," said Anthony Zemba, senior ecologist with Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., and a member of the Mill River Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee. "I hope to see the plan used to identify projects or focal areas where needed changes in land use, or retrofits in the community infrastructure, can be implemented, which will help to address chronic causes of water quality impairment."

CURT'S CORNER: A QUARTERLY NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Focused Impact of the Few

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
– Margaret Mead

CFE/Save the Sound's growing leadership task forces are demonstrating the truth behind Margaret Mead's famous observation. They are volunteering their time to change the world of Long Island Sound protection and make Connecticut a regional leader in the fight against climate change.

Our biggest historical successes have resulted from small clusters of people leading transformative campaigns around targeted issues, like defeating the Broadwater natural gas plant in the middle of Long Island Sound, and protecting 15,000 acres of Kelda land in central and western Connecticut.

Since taking on the role of President, I've made it my priority to present small, dedicated groups with opportunities for big impact. Our Soundkeeper launch committee began meeting in February to ensure the Soundkeeper program will have the support and guidance it needs over the next three years to maximize efforts to clean up and restore the Sound with the backing of our Save the Sound team. I am thankful to the 12 dedicated members of the Soundkeeper launch committee, each of whom brings unique insight and value. Some have hosted or organized events, many have brought in new members, and one is even investigating options for the development of a pollution-focused smartphone app. Together, the committee has already raised over $100,000 to help keep Soundkeeper fueled up.

Given federal inaction, states will lead our country in implementing the climate action agenda we so desperately need. That's why we gathered our seven founding climate committee members for their first meeting in late June. The climate committee's charge: make Connecticut a regional climate leader again. Their first gathering included an exciting combination of co-learning, brainstorming, and dreaming big.

Your membership and support is the foundation on which these efforts rest, and these transformative groups are just gathering momentum. Please reach out to Alicia Sullivan at asullivan@ctenvironment.org to learn how your involvement in these committees could help amplify their impact.

Curt Johnson
President, CFE/Save the Sound

Soundkeeper Admirals Dan and Julia Anderson with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., president of Waterkeeper Alliance; CFE/Save the Sound Board Chair Leslie Lee; Senator Ted Kennedy, and CFE/Save the Sound President Curt Johnson at "An Evening with the Long Island Soundkeeper."

Staff Spotlight

ALICIA SULLIVAN

Alicia Sullivan joined CFE/Save the Sound as Chief Development Officer in January. Previously the Connecticut State Director at the Trust for Public Land, she brings nearly 20 years of experience in conservation and fundraising as well as a lifelong passion for the environment to the team.

"Having focused on land protection for many years, I'm excited to have a chance to broaden my focus to help protect the waters of Long Island Sound, fight for clean air, and advocate for meaningful climate action," Alicia says.

With philanthropy campaign experience as well as a J.D. and a certificate in environmental law, Alicia looks forward to utilizing her expertise to bolster the CFE/Save the Sound team, and we're thrilled with the diverse skillset she brings.

"My job is about creating opportunities for people to fulfill their desires to positively impact the environment. This, in turn, makes our programs thrive and furthers our mission," Alicia added. "I'm excited to work with our current supporters and build our network by engaging new members to move initiatives forward around the Sound and throughout Connecticut."

When she's not busy fighting to protect land, air, and water at work, Alicia is busy enjoying Mother Nature—she loves skiing, hiking, and kayaking with her two sons and dog.

Alicia kayaking near Peach Island, one of her land protection projects at TPL. The island is now part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge.

SUMMER 2018

Save the Sound®

SoundBites

Cold Spring Harbor, New York

Sound Lovers Wield the Power of the Paddle

Paddleboard and kayaking enthusiasts from around the Sound are standing up to protect the waters where they work and play. Meet a few Sound-loving members who proudly wield the power of the paddle for the betterment of Long Island Sound!

Nancy Vincent, stand up paddleboarding (SUP) instructor and owner of SUP Westchester, used to talk with her clients about how fun and challenging it would be to paddle across Long Island Sound and back. In 2016, she reached out to Save the Sound with her dream of a paddleboarding fundraiser and Paddle Across the Sound was born. This year's event raised nearly $8,000 with the help of over 70 participating paddlers.

"There are so many people in this area who boat, swim, and play in these waters," Nancy says. "I'm hoping this event becomes a big fundraiser for Save the Sound and generates more awareness about the waterways in our community."

Credit: Josh Garskof

Over 70 participants hit the water for Paddle Across the Sound in July 2018 to advocate for a cleaner Long Island Sound

Jean Kostelich is the coordinator of the Kayakers Alliance of Larchmont and Mamaroneck (KALM), a group of friends who paddle together and advocate for recreational Sound access for all. This past spring, Jean coordinated an event at the Horseshoe Harbor Yacht Club, where Soundkeeper Bill Lucey and Water Quality Program Manager Peter Linderoth spoke with members about how they can help identify and report pollution.

"The more people you put on the water, the more people who are interested in that water," Jean says, adding that she regularly collects trash she finds while kayaking in Sound waters.

On the other side of the Sound, **Steve Berner** has seized the opportunity to lead his kayaking group, Long Island Paddlers, on an excursion along the coast of Orient Beach State Park to raise awareness of the campaign to preserve Plum Island.

"There are still many people, including some in my club, who don't realize we could lose Plum Island to the highest bidder," Steve says, explaining his inspiration for leading the first Paddle for Plum Island this August. "There are so few undeveloped places here on Long Island… If Plum Island were open to the public, it would most definitely be a paddling destination."

Citizen Scientists Watch Your Water

With the collaborative efforts of 20 groups around the Sound, this year's Unified Water Study will take samples from 36 bays and harbors throughout the summer, illuminating water quality issues and laying groundwork for strategic action.

SoundWaters, a Stamford-based organization dedicated to Long Island Sound education, joined the study this year, collecting samples from Holly Pond and Stamford Harbor.

"The health of Long Island Sound is affected by the health of the inlets along its perimeter," says Jessica Castoro, a SoundWaters educator. "Thanks to the UWS standard procedures, organizations

Credit: Jessica Castoro

across the Sound are able to collect water quality data in a way that allows for comparison."

This data standardization will allow scientists and decision makers to better understand the Sound's health. Thanks for your participation, SoundWaters!

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Read new stories about the impact of your membership and members like you

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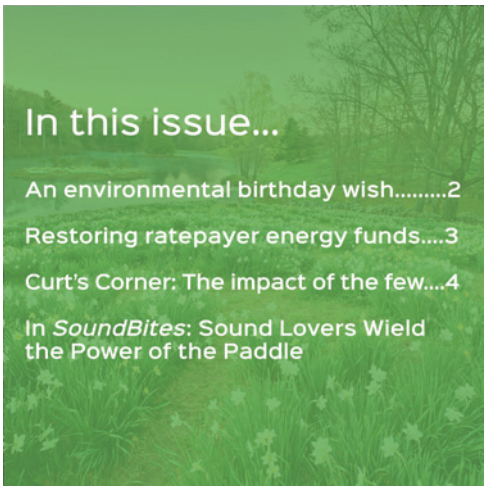

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Coastal Cleanup Day

September 15
Coastlines across Connecticut

Save the Sound is the Connecticut coordinator for Ocean Conservancy's annual International Coastal Cleanup, a global effort to remove trash from beaches to help eradicate marine debris. This year, cleanup events will be held throughout September and early October, with the ICC Big Day on September 15. Sign up to clean your beach at *bit.ly/icc2018ct*

40th Anniversary Member Hike of the Oswegatchie Hills

September 29
Oswegatchie Hills Preserve, East Lyme, CT

Join CFE/Save the Sound for a hike to celebrate our 40th anniversary! Chris Cryder will lead a free guided hike for all members in the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve, offering insight on the battle to preserve the last acres of this rare coastal forest from development. Email Ariel at ashearer@ctenvironment.org for more information.

CFE/Save the Sound Annual Meeting

October 14 from 4–7 p.m.
Kroon Hall at Yale, New Haven, CT

All members are invited to join CFE/Save the Sound at Kroon Hall for the 2018 Annual Meeting! This year's speaker will be Dr. Anthony Leiserowitz, senior research scientist at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. Dr. Leiserowitz will present his talk "Climate Change in the American Mind," during which he will explain recent trends in Americans' climate change knowledge, attitudes, policy support, and behavior, and discuss strategies to build public and political will for climate action. Meet and mingle with other members, enjoy food and drinks, and cast your vote in the annual board election.

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