On June 6, 2017, a federal agency (National Marine Fisheries Service/NMFS) announced its review of five corporations’ requests to conduct seismic testing (aka Ocean Blasting) in the Atlantic. This action, a direct result of the Trump Administration’s America-First Offshore Energy Strategy, is the first step toward offshore drilling for oil and gas.

The notice included five separate Intentional Harassment Authorizations (IHA), which would allow five corporations hired by the oil and gas industry to intentionally blast over 138,000 marine mammals. The applications do not consider the impact of overlapping, concurrent blasting on marine life, nor do they mention the many fish and invertebrate species that will be shocked, stunned and possibly killed by the blasts.

Organizations up and down the coast have responded immediately by drafting comments and empowering citizens to show strong, united opposition to these authorizations and to the fast-tracking of offshore drilling in general. Currently, 125 east coast municipalities, over 1,200 elected officials and an alliance of over 41,000 businesses and 500,000 fishing families, have publicly opposed seismic airgun blasting and/or offshore drilling.

The opposition is great, yet the fight is not over. To submit your comment and voices in opposition, go to COA’s website today. The public comment period ends July 6!

On June 9, 2017, the NJ delegation reacted quickly and unanimously for the first time as they signed-on to a letter voicing their strong bi-partisan concern for the proposed seismic testing. The delegation, led by Congressman Frank Pallone (D, Congressional District 6) wrote, “We are deeply concerned about the prospect of seismic testing being conducted within the Atlantic, and the damage such testing could cause to our coastal communities, both environmentally and economically.”

The delegation highlighted the government agencies’ lack of transparency by asking that the the applications are rejected and requesting longer comment periods, as well as public hearings for each of the proposed authorizations.

In addition to the above threats from ocean blasting and drilling, the Trump Administration continues to bombard the oceans with new attacks on America’s marine sanctuaries and monuments. This “lost opportunity” analysis paired with the current America-First Offshore Energy places even more ocean areas at grave risk for destruction.

This specific notice opens the comment period, which ends on July 27, 2017, for 11 Marine Sanctuaries and Monuments, including the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monument, which are located immediately off the NY/NJ coast. The other areas included are the Channel Islands, Cordell Bank, Greater Farallones, Marianas Trench, Monterey Bay, American Samoa, Pacific Remote Islets, Papahānaumokuākea, Rose Atoll Marine, and Thunder Bay. The damage does not stop there, this one notice is part of greater efforts that could lead to the reduction of more than two dozen monuments and sanctuaries designated and expanded within the past 10 years.

Organizations and citizens have from June 6 to July 27 to voice their opposition by mail or electronic submission. To view the official notice and submit your comment visit the Federal Register and search “Review of National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments Designated or Expanded since April 28, 2007; Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment.” For more information or guidance on how to access the notice and comment feel free to contact advocate@cleanoceanaction.org.
**New Pipeline Project Expansion**

On July 13, 2017, the NJ/NY Baykeeper will be holding a public meeting to discuss actions that communities and individuals can take to help stop the Transco Pipeline. Williams, a provider of energy infrastructure, has proposed a 23.4-mile pipeline project to expand its existing Transco transmission system to transport natural gas. The 50-year-old pipelines would transport natural gas from fracking wells in the Marcellus shale regions in Pennsylvania and the Gulf Coast to Mercer, Somerset and Middlesex Counties in NJ and under the Raritan Bay in NY. The potential impacts are grave due to corrosion stations and pipeline leaks of methane and exhaust which contain carcinogens and other toxic chemicals. This dangerous pollution will impact fishing, boating and recreational activities in our communities. The meeting will be held Thursday, July 13, at Keyport High School at 351 Broad Street, Keyport, NJ 07735.

For updates contact COA's Policy Intern Melanie Daly by email at advocate@cleanoceanaction.org.

**Do You Know What You're Swimming In?**

The NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) assesses water quality at approximately 180 beaches acrossNJ to protect the health of the people who use our waters for enjoyment and relaxation. Swimming advisories are issued based on the amount of bacteria per 100ml of sample if the concentration of bacteria in a sample exceeds the state standard (greater than 104 colonies), a swimming advisory is issued. The NJDOH notes that regional health or enforcement agencies can close beaches at any time they feel necessary to ensure public and health safety. The NJDOH reports that the regional enforcement agencies have closed beaches for swimming due to water quality concerns. The beach closings are due to high bacteria levels, which can be caused by stormwater runoff, sewage spills, or animal waste. The beach closings are necessary to protect the health of swimmers and prevent the spread of diseases such as gastrointestinal illnesses.

**Navesink River Citizen Water Quality Monitoring**

On June 14, 2017, COA and the NJDEP launched the Navesink Ambient Citizen Water Quality Monitoring and Source Tracking Program. This is a weekly sampling program that will be conducted for 52 weeks in 18 sites until June 2018 by citizen scientists in the watershed. This collaboration between the NJDEP and COA, along with cooperation from local municipalities, is the first time that citizen scientist volunteers will participate in helping to find and fix the sources of bacterial pollution in the Navesink River. COA is field coordinating for this sampling program and will be conducting the survey at 18 sites in the Navesink River basin. Each site will be sampled on a regular schedule, and the data will be used to identify the sources of pollution and to develop strategies to reduce pollution in the Navesink River.

**Spotlight on Seals, Seismic and MMSC**

In the year the Marine Mammal Stranding Center (MMSC) has released 19 seals into the wild after successful rehabilitations. MMSC is a nonprofit organization that responds to impaired marine mammals and sea turtles in NJ waters. In June, COA live Facebook video of a release scored approximately 75,000 views on Facebook – our first video ever to go viral!

Also in June, “Phil” the seal was released by the National Aquarium, a non-profit public aquarium based in Baltimore, MD. Phil was rescued in DE as he crawled his way through the mud from one pond to another and rehabilitated at the aquarium.

The viral activity of COA's videos proves that people care about protecting these beautiful ocean mammals. The seals are just one kind of marine life that will be shocked, stressed and possibly killed by seismic blasting. In fact, through COA's social media these images were linked to a Citizens’ Call to Action against seismic blasting. Numerous citizens wrote to NOAA and NMFS and voiced their vehement opposition to seismic blasting in the Atlantic.

Spring into Summer Vacation

The 2016-2017 school year ended with exciting outdoor adventures! Here are a few highlights:

- Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) Interns, Sienna Byrne and Zoe Susan, received the Exemplary In Marine Research award. This award for their microbiology research with COA was presented by Liza Baskin, capstone teacher for the Biological Oceanography program.
- Congratulations, graduates!
- COA was recognized at Long Branch's George L. Carew for their work in improving curriculum for sustainable schools.
- Congratulations, GLE!
- After COA presentations, Amerigo A. Anastasia School students wrote letters to persuade their local officials in Long Branch to curb beach litter by having concessions serve "straws only upon request." Great job, AAA!
- In May and June, COA provided advocacy education to over 2,700 students from pre-school students (Learning Path Preschool) to college level (Monmouth University). Many thanks to all the teachers!

For more information about our educational programming, please contact Amanda Wheeler at AWheeler@cleanoceanaction.org.

**It's a Jersey Shore Thing to Support Clean Ocean Action!**

For example, enjoy:
- Patagonia's ‘Fish People’ free showings at Glide Surf Co in Asbury on Friday, June 30th.
- Community night at Russell & Bettie's in Rumsen, NJ, on Thursday, July 20.
- 2nd Jetty's (Sea Bright, NJ) Happy Lobster Bash; all summer a portion of the proceeds is donated to COA.
- Angel's Envy Distillery (NYC) events throughout the summer a portion of the proceeds served without straws is donated to COA.

Check out our website and Facebook page to get a full list of Jersey Shore Thing events and participants. Do you own a business and want to get involved with COA? Become a Jersey Shore Thing! Contact Tory at TWoods@CleanOceanAction.org to join the mission and help protect our waters.

**Clean Ocean Action Shore Tips (COAST)**

July is kick-off month for COAST! Let’s get ready to hit the beach and make this year’s campaign the most successful one yet! COAST is an outreach program educating beachgoers about ocean and watershed issues. This year the goal is to expand beyond the shore and into inland areas. John Chiarella, the 2017 C.O.A.S.T. Intern is including new community events, and bringing in local farmers markets and businesses through COA’s Jersey Shore Tips (see above article). These opportunities will provide an entirely new audience, and translate into the minds of our entire community of volunteers, more ocean defenders will be ready to jump into action! At a time when ocean blastings threaten to devastate these ecosystems, our resources will be more valuable. To learn more, visit our blog at cleanoceanaction.blogspot.com or email John at coast@cleanoceanaction.org.
COA Welcomes Six Impressive Summer Interns!

Nicole Brennan is COA’s Science Intern. She is a 2017 graduate of URI with a BS in Geology/Geological Oceanography with field experience as a “Research Intern in Ocean Sciences Fellowship” with Rutgers University in Chile, as well as experience in the Sea Level Research Lab at URI. At COA, Nicole is launching and staffing the implementation of the citizen water quality monitoring program, Rally for the Navesink, as well as other water quality initiatives.

John Chiarella, C.O.A.S.T. Intern (Clean Ocean Action Shore Tips), attends Fordham University as a History major with a Theatre/Communications minor. John has previous non-profit experience interning for Move for Hunger in Asbury Park and as a crew member of the Student Conservation Association at Sandy Hook. He is focusing on providing information to businesses and citizens about how they can make a difference in the quality of NJ’s coastal waters.

Melanie Daly, Policy Intern, is heading into her second year as a law student at New York Law School. She is ranked 7th in her class, and has just been appointed to the Law Review. She is a graduate of UVM and was involved with COA’s Beach Sweeps and other initiatives during high school. This summer, Mel is working on stopping seismic testing and expansion of offshore oil and gas development, as well as watchdogging and researching proposals for potential threats to water quality.

Josh Keller is the Nonprofit Management Intern. He is a junior at Eckerd College, St Petersburg, FL as a Marine Science major and Computer Science minor. Josh is an avid boater and is passionate about protection of marine ecosystems. He is very familiar with COA, as he worked on many programs while attending MAST High School and his parents have been involved since the 1980’s. This summer Josh assists with development, communications, and general office management.

Maureen Sullivan, Marine Debris Intern, is a graduate of Bucknell University and will be attaining her Masters of Science from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmosphere Science in December. Maureen’s focus at Rosenstiel is on Coastal Zone Management and she is writing her thesis on Marine Debris. At COA, Maureen assists with the Corporate Beach Sweeps and statewide Beach Sweeps programs, as well as corporate sustainability.

Valerie Taranto joins the team part-time as the Nonprofit Intern assisting the Development Director with correspondence, data entry, and general office work. Val was also an intern during the school year while attending MAST and in the Fall will attend the University of Southern California in LA with a major in Sustainable Architecture.

All six interns bring many talents and skills, and they are individually already making a difference at COA. Please attend COA events and activities this summer to meet them and dive into the summer with these energetic and enthusiastic students! Welcome to the COA Crew!
A beautiful, foggy, late spring morning on the Shrewsbury River provided the perfect conditions for paddlers at COA's Shore Paddle event on May 17! The new location at the Shrewsbury Sailing & Yacht Club (SSYC) was an excellent venue for spectators, family, and friends. Over 125 standup paddleboard, prone, kayak, outrigger, and surfski paddlers signed-up to help raise awareness and funds for COA's year-round water quality programs.

Paddlers took to the water and participated in either the 2 Mile Fun Paddle or the 5 Mile Race. The new race course, which consisted of three laps, allowed participants to test their speed and turns while spectators viewed from the upper deck. The racers competed in a variety of categories including age and board size. Up-cycled trophies from Beacon Awards were given to the top three finishers, as well as Thule backpacks and gear for the first place winners. In memory of Ben Hamilton, avid paddle boarder, surfer, and COA friend, the first annual “Ben Hamilton Volunteer Award” was presented to John Quinn, past Commodore of SSYC. John is an outstanding volunteer and without his help the Shore Paddle would not be possible.

Throughout the morning, the Shore Paddle offered many activities, such as complimentary sailing sessions, SUP Yoga with Flow Paddle Yoga, SUP demos by Aqua Vida, education by David P Civile Foundation, many SUP vendors, face painting, and more!

The event continued with an After Party at the clubhouse, where guests enjoyed waterfront views and dancing to live music by the Sam Sims Band, whose music provided the perfect ocean friendly vibe. To uphold COA’s environmental missions, participants were given re-useable pint glasses and enjoyed a complimentary Bloody Mary bar, donated by Tito’s Vodka, along with craft beers by SweetWater Brewing. The amazing team of volunteers grilled up barbeque style food with additional donations provided by Surf BBQ, Wenning’s Foods, and Sickles.

Many thanks to the Shrewsbury Sailing & Yacht Club for hosting the Shore Paddle! Special thanks to the dedicated volunteers, safety boat captains, Oceanport First Aid Squad, donors, and participants.

The Shore Paddle was a great success and continues to grow! We hope you will join us next year at this fun, family friendly event on the beautiful Shrewsbury River. Follow the Shore Paddle throughout the year on Facebook and follow the new Instagram account @COA_ShorePaddle for more photos and event updates!