



## Clean Ocean Action

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## The Ocean Needs You – Become the Force for Change

*Winter 2025-26*

Good Tidings, Friends of the Ocean!

The ocean is a force—a breathtaking, life-giving presence that sustains countless species and connects us all.

However, even the strongest forces need champions. Pollution, reckless industrialization, plastic pollution, and climate change are pushing the ocean's resilience to its limits. To meet these growing challenges, **we must rise as an even greater force for the sea.**



Indeed, it's your true-blue support at the heart of this movement whose dedication empowers and sustains Clean Ocean Action's (COA) intense and complex work to ensure a healthy, vibrant ocean for today and tomorrow!

Together with you, we've stood strong through a tumultuous year for ocean resources and achieved incredible success. Please see our enclosed brochure for details about these actions. Here is just a quick overview:

- **Challenged a NEW Ocean Mud Dump site** off the Jersey Shore and urged sensible solutions.
- **Sued Against Offshore Empire Wind Project** to stop the ongoing illegal construction off the Jersey Shore as a lead plaintiff.
- **Rallying Against NESE—AGAIN!** Last year, NESE was dead in the water. Now, the 23-mile Raritan Bay-ocean fossil fuel pipeline is back.
- **Leading the Fight Against Plastic Pollution** to reduce the growing threat to public health and ecosystems from plastic.
- **Celebrated 40th Anniversary of Beach Sweeps!** Since 1985, volunteers removed and tallied over 8.7 million pieces of litter.

*(over)*

- **Advanced Cleaner Waterways:** COA is NJ's only non-profit organization hosting an in-house water quality lab for saltwater “poo-llution” track down.
- **Inspired Future Ocean Advocates** by expanding and enhancing youth-based programs, and connecting with low-income community-based non-profits to collaborate on successful and accessible education programs.
- **Enhanced Organizational Capacity** by filling key organization positions for advocacy and community engagement.

While these accomplishments are remarkable, the challenges ahead require bolder, more united action. This is where YOU come in. Your support fuels these vital programs that defend the ocean all year long!

**Mission 2026 – with your support:**

**Clean Ocean Zone: Now is the Time!**

The ocean – one of the most powerful forces on Earth has the weakest laws against pollution and industrialization. This requires a law worthy of the ocean and all it provides. COA has drafted such a law for federal and state action to



**lock out harmful activities and lock in protection.** Long in the works, the time is now to drive a campaign forward!

At the same time, Clean Ocean Action will continue to drive our award-winning core work to reduce plastics pollution, track down pollution sources, inspire local community engagement and educate youth to ensure a steady flow of new and dedicated leaders for our waterways and ocean.

In short, threats to the ocean – industrialization, offshore drilling, pollution, weakening of laws and new dumpsites – are daunting. **We cannot hope the ocean will be protected; we must unite and take actions.**

We need you! **Will you dive in?** Your continued commitment is the lifeline for this critical work. It ensures that the ocean—a source of life, joy, and economic vitality—remains vibrant and resilient. **Please consider a year-end gift so we can create waves of change, together.**



Ever onward,

Cindy Zipf

Executive Director

*"After all, we would not be, were it not for the sea."*



# THE OCEAN IS A FORCE

TO DEFEND  
IT, WE MUST  
BE TOO



2025

# 2025 Impact

*Thanks to your unwavering support, we made huge waves in 2025!*

## WE UNITED



**TOOK ACTION FOR A PLASTIC-FREE SEA**  
Celebrating COA's 40th Annual Beach Sweeps, we launched a mascot, "Bucket Man," to unite thousands of volunteers of all ages, who removed and tallied tens of thousands of littered items from 80 NJ beaches. We also held a special tribute for Beach Sweeps Captains.

Since 1985, over 8.7 million pieces of litter have been removed and tallied. Corporate Beach Sweeps welcomed 24 companies whose 469 employees removed nearly 30,000 items. COA highlighted threats plastics pose to people and the environment, and led advocacy campaigns against plastic and micro-plastic pollution. COA testified in Trenton and local municipalities in support of key legislation and ordinances, and chaired the NJ Plastics Advisory Council for a 4th year, a position appointed by the Governor.



## RALLIED FOR SAFER WATERWAYS

COA hosts the only nonprofit in-house lab to track down pathogens (poo-llution) in waterways to protect families and fish. COA's mighty 37 volunteer community scientists collected over 1,250 samples, and analyzed 800 samples for pathogens. Recently, COA began sampling upstream to protect drinking water.

## WE RESEARCHED



COA strengthened partnerships with towns and municipalities to drive local pollution solutions. COA also conducted pollution source tracking in Barnegat Bay, Toms River, and Deal Lake.



## WE EDUCATED

## INSPIRED THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS



Over 5,500 students participated in COA's education programs statewide. The 7th Rally for the Two Rivers Eco-Fest brought communities together for hands-on eco-activities. Students also connected with the coast through 3 free Student Summits (Cape May, Island Beach State Park, Staten Island) and the SEA program at Sandy Hook. The SEAL Program marked its 5th year with a record 42 high school students from 15 towns leading community projects.

## BATTLED OFFSHORE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSSIL FUELS – AGAIN!

## WE PROTECTED THE OCEAN



COA is again fighting the NESE project. The 23-mile pipeline project in Raritan Bay and the ocean will contaminate waterways and cause 50+ years of environmental harm to NJ. COA helped to secure 24 town resolutions opposing NESE. In addition, with renewed interest in offshore drilling, COA continues the 40+ year bipartisan opposition.



## COMBATED RECKLESS OFFSHORE WIND

While nearly all US offshore wind construction has stopped, Empire Wind – off Long Branch, NJ – continues. COA joined as a lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against Empire Wind to stop the illegal project. COA also documented whale deaths and strandings in the NY/NJ Bight, while demanding science and due process.

## FOUGHT OCEAN DUMPING – AGAIN!

After years of progress, a federal proposal sought to open a new offshore Mud Dump Site. COA has fought for over two decades to protect the ocean from harmful dumping and launched a campaign in opposition, advocating sensible alternatives. Pictured right is the 2000 march for “Dump No More, March for the Shore.”



# IN 2026, COA WILL...

- Stop harmful industrial projects and expand marine life protections using science, law, and advocacy focused on the comprehensive Clean Ocean Zone Campaign.
- Lead efforts to eliminate plastic pollution sources and hold polluters accountable.
- Inspire the next generation of students by expanding education programs.
- Keep our waterways safe by strengthening our water monitoring program and collaborating with communities to eliminate pollution and safeguard healthy waters.



# YOUR SUPPORT WILL:

- Protect marine life by challenging harmful coastal projects
- Fight plastic pollution at its source to safeguard public health and the environment
- Power COA's watchdog lab to test and track polluted waters before they harm communities
- Mobilize thousands of volunteers to keep beaches clean and the ocean thriving
- Inspire future leaders through hands-on education and youth programs

Cover photo: Ryan Struck

# BE PART OF THE WAVE

Your donation ensures we can expand our initiatives to protect marine life, stop health-threatening pollution, keep the ocean healthy, and inspire students and local communities. Rise like the tide and donate for a clean ocean by scanning the QR code or visiting the link.

## DONATE:



[CleanOceanAction.org/AnnualAppeal](https://CleanOceanAction.org/AnnualAppeal)



*COA is proud to earn a 99% and multi-year 4-star Charity Navigator rating, as well as the Platinum Seal of Transparency rating from Candid.*

