

green watch

- *Inspiration on the Trail: Protecting Doris Duke Woods*
- *The Energy Jobs & Justice Act, explained*
- *Our Fight for Fair Maps at the Ohio Supreme Court*
- *Eliminating Ohio's Lead Service Lines, and more!*

SPRING 2022



Ohio Environmental Council

A LETTER FROM FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEATHER TAYLOR-MIESLE

Dear friends,

After six tremendous years, I draft my last letter to all of you as the Executive Director of the Ohio Environmental Council. Together, we have had countless wins—and a few pretty painful losses. But through it all, we have been a team working towards protecting the Ohio we all love.

I have no worthy words to express my deep gratitude for your support. Your partnership has allowed us to hire a talented, passionate staff and engage people all over the state. It has helped us build diverse coalitions, work with long-time opponents towards solutions, start new programs—and even organizations, like the OEC Action Fund—to sharpen our advocacy. Your support has also helped us to begin to reconcile long standing systemic racism in our movement, center on those with the lived experience of injustice, and better understand how we welcome and lift up new voices into the fight in a more equitable, inclusive way.

There are lots of victories that we can list for sure, but for today, I reflect on the personal:

I remember walking Guy Denny's prairie with OEC alumni hearing stories that laid our firm foundation...

I can still smell the crisp air on Lake Erie as we talked about toxic algae on the boat of Charter Captain Dave Spangler, who is no longer with us but whose spirit lives and inspires a generation of activists to keep going...

I remember the birth—in a barn—of the huge coalition that founded Power a Clean Future Ohio and continues to help communities tackle the climate crisis in a way that honors their neighborhoods' needs...

I can still feel the tingles I got when powerhouse community warrior Alicia Smith told the story of the Toledo water crisis at a community forum...

And I remember:

The beautiful fall leaves of an old growth forest near Camp Oty'Okwa on a walk with long-time leaders, Paul and Cathy Knoop...

The focused resolve when we stood calling out the corruption of House Bill 6 with Representatives Casey Weinstein, Kristin Boggs, David Leland, and Laura Lanese in the Statehouse...

The intrigue and hope of working with farmers, state leaders, and academics to create the Ohio Agriculture Conservation Initiative so we could make a transition to farming practices that are better for our water...

The righteous determination of working with the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, Ohio Organizing Collaborative, CAIR-Ohio, All in for Ohio, the Brennan Center—and so many others to defend our democracy and change the constitution for redistricting—and then winning several times at the Ohio Supreme Court (which you can read about in the pages to follow).

Each day contains a memory I could list here. But mostly, I remember the OEC team who never gives up and is forever creative and enduring no matter the circumstance. Our staff and board know that our jobs, while hard, are also luxuries because we get to work "in mission" each day. It has been an honor to serve with these warriors, whom I admire, and a wonderful gift to know them. I will continue to be a partner and donor and I hope you will join me.

These memories I carry forward to my next adventure. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your history and for making me a better person and leader. I am forever, and ever, grateful.

Very truly yours,



Heather Taylor-Miesle





Staff and Board Members gathered to honor former Executive Director Heather Taylor-Miesle ahead of her departure in early March. Pictured from left to right: former OEC Board Chair John Marshall, former OEC Executive Director Heather Taylor-Miesle, OEC Board Chair Rich Shank, and OEC Interim Executive Director Trish Demeter.

A NOTE FROM INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRISH DEMETER

We are deeply grateful for all Heather did to protect our environment and build a stronger environmental movement during her tenure with our organization. We thank Heather for her commitment and can't wait to see the great work she will do in her new role at American Rivers.

I am honored that our Board of Directors has appointed me to serve as OEC's Interim Executive Director as it launches a search for a permanent Executive Director.

I am proud to continue working alongside our excellent staff members to advance good environmental policy across the Buckeye State. Though I have more than a decade of experience leading OEC's policy advocacy efforts, this new role has deepened my appreciation for our staff, our partners, and supporters like you.

Together, we continue to work in city halls, at the Statehouse, and on Capitol Hill to secure important victories for Ohioans' air, land, water, and democracy. We look forward to continuing to share our growing impact with you!

With gratitude,



Trish Demeter



INSPIRATION ON THE TRAIL: PROTECTING DORIS DUKE WOODS



NATHAN JOHNSON
Director of Public Lands

I ALWAYS FIND A BIT OF INSPIRATION ON THE TRAIL.

Last spring, my colleagues and I hiked the rolling hills of Malabar Farm State Park. On that crisp spring day, a bounty of native wildflowers welcomed us along the trail: bursting Spring Beauties, unfurling Mayapples, and an incredible hillside of Dutchman's Breeches. While the wildflowers were a sight for sore eyes after a long winter, the large beech trees towering over the landscape were even more impressive.

This landscape's beauty moved us deeply that April afternoon. But there was a power beyond beauty here, too. The stories of this place—its recent past and its troubled present—inspired us all the more.

This land was part of the homestead and farm of native Ohioan Louis Bromfield, one of the world's most famous authors from 1920-1940. When he died of cancer in 1956, his close friend, the environmentalist and philanthropist Doris Duke, purchased and saved the woods at Malabar from auction to private parties.

But Doris Duke was not the only one who worked to protect the woods.

On the hike, we were joined by local advocates Dan Hardwick (former Richland County commissioner and spokesperson for the North Central Ohio Land Conservancy) and Eric Miller (an attorney and Conservancy trustee). Both worked for decades to protect this old-growth forest. The public forest immediately adjacent to these woods had recently been commercially timbered. The time to ramp up protection efforts was now.

Ohio was once nearly covered in old-growth forests, but today such a landscape is hard to find.

Forests are not mere collections of trees. They are interconnected ecological communities that grow stronger over time. If this mature forest at Malabar Farm State Park were to be logged or clearcut, the entire landscape—including native wildflowers and wildlife habitat—would be scarred not only by machinery, but also by invasive species.

As we hiked, we strategized ways the OEC could support Dan, Eric, and their fellow advocates in protecting this special place. These advocates, alongside North Central Ohio Land Conservancy, had worked with State Senator Mark Romanchuk on legislation to designate the land a state nature preserve.

But we knew we needed more protections to prevent logging of the old-growth forest. As my colleagues and I closely watched the state budgeting process, we saw an opportunity to secure such protections.

Through the leadership of local advocates, Sen. Romanchuck, and the OEC, the Ohio General Assembly passed the budget bill in June 2021 with two specific provisions: officially designating 120 acres in Malabar Farm State Park as "Doris Duke Woods" and protecting this old-growth forest from logging. This natural treasure will remain in its strength and its beauty to inspire many more people today and for many generations to come.



"This natural treasure will remain in its strength and its beauty to inspire many more people today and for many generations to come."



OHIO'S ENERGY JOBS AND JUSTICE ACT



NOLAN RUTSCHILLING

Interim Managing Director for Energy Policy



The Midwest creates 25% of our country's greenhouse gas emissions, according to a World Resources Institute analysis. As the climate crisis unfolds locally, Ohio has the chance to lead the Heartland into an equitable clean energy future with the **Energy Jobs and Justice Act**.

Ohioans have experienced decades of energy policy largely favoring utilities and fossil fuel industries that contribute heavily to our region's emissions—and **Ohioans deserve better**. The Energy Jobs and Justice Act (EJJA) addresses the root of these issues with intentionally designed, comprehensive clean energy policy rooted in equity, economic development, and accountability.

EQUITY & JUSTICE

COMMUNITY COMES FIRST

After decades of discrimination, it's time Ohio's underserved regions that've been on the frontlines of extractive and polluting industries are at the center of our state's needed clean energy transition—and that's exactly what EJJA's equity component is poised to do.

Many of Ohio's Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities are **disproportionately impacted by high energy bills and air pollution** as the result of racially discriminatory policies like redlining. And many low-income Appalachian communities are facing the polluting legacies of extractive industries that found it easier and cheaper to operate in southern and eastern Ohio as the result of federal economic policy, but have since left these communities behind.

EJJA would **protect Ohioans** from massive rate increases from utilities that would drive their energy bills up. It would also direct resources and support to these communities to reduce the effects of historical racial and economic discrimination, increasing access to safe, **affordable clean energy and the jobs that come with it**.

Ohio's current regressive energy policies have also been at the expense of workers. As part of its equity provision, EJJA will **establish an Office of Energy Justice** to ensure Ohio's workers can access the critical training necessary to build, scale, operate, and sustain our transition away from polluting fossil fuels to clean energy. The Office of Energy Justice will create at least 15 Ohio Clean Energy Workforce Incubators statewide. These incubators will facilitate **Ohio Clean Energy Workforce Programs** and **Clean Jobs & Environmental Justice Business Accelerator Programs**, both of which are centered on advancing BIPOC and low-income communities in the clean energy transition.

With Ohioans trained and ready to deliver clean energy, our state could set an example for what a just, equitable, and transparent clean energy transition could look like throughout the Midwest.

CARBON REDUCTION

100% CARBON-FREE ELECTRICITY BY 2050

In order to fight climate change and create a healthier environment for all, Ohio must eliminate carbon emissions, reduce energy waste, and level the playing field for renewables.

Ohio's EJJA outlines a plan to reduce carbon emissions economy-wide incrementally. The legislation aims to cut carbon emissions 26% by 2025, 50% by 2030, and a full 100% by 2050.

To achieve this, EJJA would remove Ohio's excessive red tape on new wind farms, enable community solar no matter where you live, and put money into schools and county governments by sharing revenue from renewable projects.

A **justice-centered clean energy transition** must also reduce energy waste across the board. EJJA will drive creation of energy waste reduction standards, saving Ohioans money that should already be in our pockets after years of paying for corrupt energy policies.

ACCOUNTABILITY

UTILITY ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

In 2019, Ohio passed what many consider to be the worst energy law of the 21st century—House Bill 6. A year later, we learned how House Bill 6 was passed as part of the largest corruption scandal in Ohio history. The scandal extended to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO).

If passed, EJJA would **write utility accountability and transparency into law**, strengthening Ohio's investigation of utilities suspected of wrongdoing.

The Office of Energy Justice, created by this legislation, would act as a watchdog over the PUCO so it isn't unduly influenced by utilities. It would root the PUCO's decisions in environmental and racial justice.

Ohio needs innovative, equitable solutions that are good for our communities and our economy. **Together, we can advance bold climate action like the Energy Jobs and Justice Act to secure a healthier future for all Ohioans.**

OUR FIGHT FOR FAIR MAPS



CHRIS TAVENOR
Staff Attorney

Here at the OEC, we know we can't secure a healthy environment without a healthy democracy.

For years, Ohioans have asked our leaders to step up and protect our environment. But for too long, politicians have rigged Ohio's electoral maps to preserve political power and silence the voices of our communities. Because of these gerrymandered maps, we've seen our elected officials ignore critical environmental challenges facing Ohio—especially when it comes to fighting climate change and environmental injustice.

In 2015 and 2018, Ohio voters decisively rejected partisan gerrymandering by voting for two redistricting reform measures. Over the past year, those reforms were put to the test.

We proudly joined the Equal Districts Coalition and supported the efforts of the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission (OCRC) to engage Ohioans in redistricting efforts across the Buckeye State. With your support and the support of our partners, the OEC educated hundreds of Ohioans about our new redistricting processes and supported dozens of community mapmaking workshops. We helped hundreds of concerned citizens prepare and deliver testimony at Commission and General Assembly committee hearings. On top of that, OEC staff delivered expert testimony at hearings in Cleveland, in Dayton, and several times at the Ohio Statehouse. Unfortunately, the Ohio Redistricting Commission and General Assembly attempted to stifle Ohioans' participation in this process time and time again. They failed to release maps on time, blatantly ignored Constitutional deadlines, and scheduled last-minute hearings hoping Ohioans wouldn't show up.



I was proud to join members of the Equal Districts Coalition and speak out for fair maps at a rally and press conference in March 2022.

In September, the Republican members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission passed a gerrymandered state legislative map along party lines. And in November, the Ohio General Assembly also passed a gerrymandered congressional map.

When we dug into the data, we saw how severely gerrymandered state legislative districts **diluted the voting power of Ohioans most directly experiencing environmental risks**, especially communities of color. We refused to let that discrimination stand. We worked with our partners to hold the Ohio Redistricting Commission accountable in court.

FIGHTING FOR FAIR STATE LEGISLATIVE MAPS

The OEC joined the Ohio Organizing Collaborative, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Ohio), as well as individual voters and community leaders in a lawsuit appealing the unfair state legislative map **in September**. Represented by the nationally-acclaimed Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law and the law firm Reed Smith, we argued



that the maps violated the prohibition against partisan gerrymandering and voters' equal protection under the Ohio constitution.

In January, we received tremendous news: we WON!

The Ohio Supreme Court invalidated the gerrymandered state legislative redistricting plans. **On January 12**, a bipartisan majority of justices declared the Ohio Redistricting Commission's partisan gerrymandering was absolutely unconstitutional and voted to send the maps back to the drawing board.

Over the next ten days, Republican members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission met behind closed doors to redraw Ohio's state legislative maps. Despite ongoing objections by the Democratic members of the Commission, the Republican majority approved another gerrymandered legislative map—just hours before the court deadline with no input from the public—on the evening of **January 22**. The OEC and our partners filed objections with the Supreme Court, explaining how the new maps, like their predecessors, violated the Ohio Constitution's prohibitions against partisan gerrymandering.

On February 7, we received another round of good news: We WON again!

For a second time, the Ohio Supreme Court rejected state legislative maps passed by the Republican majority of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The court found that this second set of maps also violated the Constitution's prohibitions against partisan gerrymandering and fell short of its proportionality standards. The bipartisan majority of justices demanded Republican members of the Commission work with their Democratic counterparts to draw fair and constitutional maps.

On February 24, a majority of the Republican members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission approved a third set of state legislative maps—a **full week after a court-ordered deadline with no input from the public**. Once again, the OEC and our partners filed objections with the Supreme Court in opposition of these unconstitutional maps.

And on March 16, the Ohio Supreme Court struck down gerrymandered statehouse maps for a third time—we **WON again!** Every step of the way, the Ohio Supreme Court has upheld the Ohio Constitution's prohibition against partisan gerrymandering.

During mid-March, the Ohio Redistricting Commission followed Court guidance to utilize independent mapmakers to create a new map. The map produced by the independent mapmakers had potential to be a fair map. However, **on March 28**, the Commission unfortunately made the choice to push through a version of their February 24 map with only minor changes. As of the writing of this piece, we're in the process of objecting to the map for a fourth time. **We will not stop until Ohioans have fair maps.**

FIGHTING FOR FAIR CONGRESSIONAL MAPS

In addition to our advocacy for fair state legislative maps, the OEC filed an amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs in the case appealing the unfair congressional map in December. Our brief illustrated the environmental injustices perpetuated through gerrymandered maps.

In January, we received tremendous news: we also WON on congressional redistricting!

The Ohio Supreme Court invalidated the gerrymandered congressional redistricting plans. A bipartisan majority of justices declared the partisan gerrymandering performed was absolutely unconstitutional and voted to send the plan back to the drawing board.

Unfortunately, on March 2, the Ohio Redistricting Commission passed another gerrymandered congressional map. In response, two sets of plaintiffs appealed the map at the Ohio Supreme Court, arguing that it violates the Ohio Constitution's anti-gerrymandering provisions yet again. Those lawsuits are still ongoing. While we aren't a party in those lawsuits, we will keep supporting the efforts of all advocates fighting for fair maps, whether statehouse or congressional.

NEXT STEPS

By passing extreme and unconstitutional gerrymandered maps, our elected leaders are refusing Ohioans the representation they deserve. They are denying a voice to Ohioans facing environmental injustice and the growing impacts of climate change, and we refuse to let this unconstitutional power grab go unchallenged.



We published this GreenWatch article in early April 2022. Read more about the current state of redistricting by checking out our blog:

theoec.org/blog/stateofredistricting0322

" We will not stop declaring the truth: A healthy environment requires a healthy democracy. All Ohioans deserve a fair shot at representation and pathways to participate in the political process. To achieve environmental justice, we must have fair districts.

INTERSECTIONALITY, COLLABORATION, & ENERGY JUSTICE:

A Q&A with Energy Justice Fellow Dion Mensah

Dion Mensah joined the OEC in January as our first-ever Energy Justice Fellow. We interviewed Dion to learn more about their role and reflect on their first few months on the team.

How did you learn about the OEC in the first place?

I first learned about the OEC in college out of an interest in the environment and climate work being done in Ohio because I constantly felt like the conversation was dominated by other states.

As the organization's first Energy Justice Fellow, what has your role looked like so far?

Right now I'm focused on the Energy Jobs and Justice Act (EJJA) and an upcoming report on the costs of climate change. The EJJA is statewide legislation with three main components of equity, carbon reductions, and transparency and accountability—that last bit being super relevant to Ohio given the scandal associated with House Bill 6. The report will be a really cool tool to understand the costs of climate change and how those costs will impact local governments.



In terms of your individuality, what do you feel you bring to this work and why are those things important to you?

My lived experiences as a Black queer and trans person I feel is unique, especially in the environmental realm where I just don't see people like me. A lot of energy justice is about undoing the historical wrongs done to people from marginalized communities. And I have more of that perspective than not. My perspective comes from a place where all of these things, including my collaborative organizing experience, are combined. That intersectionality is so important because that's what energy justice needs to be.

How does your fellowship impact the work others do?

What I learn in my role impacts the message we share about energy justice throughout the organization. Our Northwest Ohio Regional Director Nick Mandros helped craft an ordinance in Toledo to create a "1% for the Environment" fund and I was tapped in to help build the language. For the future, I'm trying to set really clear boundaries of what this fellowship will be because it's brand new. It's my goal that what energy justice is, is very clearly defined at the OEC.

What have you learned so far in this role?

I've been learning about all the different existing groups and initiatives in Ohio and how much coalition building is happening. Another thing is honestly a lot about energy justice—different community-driven solutions, ways we can move towards renewable options, the ways energy injustice has been happening for so long. I've also learned a lot of technical stuff, which is exciting.

What has been a challenge in this role?

Making sure I don't over commit myself to things. I'm really enthusiastic about the work that the OEC does and the more that I learn about all the different teams and all the different moving pieces here, the more I want to get involved. So it's hard to make myself wait in these early stages.

What brings you joy in all this work?

Number one is the really cool people who are also really excited about making a difference in the environmental world. What also brings me joy in a lot of this is thinking about how the work I do here could tangibly impact the future of Ohio's local communities.

I remember in my last year of school thinking all the environmental justice careers are in Michigan or Illinois, and nothing's here. So to find a role that so explicitly welcomes and centers justice as well as energy is really exciting to me. I thought I'd have to wait a lot longer to see a position like this in Ohio.

To find a role that so explicitly *welcomes and centers justice* as well as energy is really exciting to me. I thought I'd have to wait a lot longer to see a position like this in Ohio.

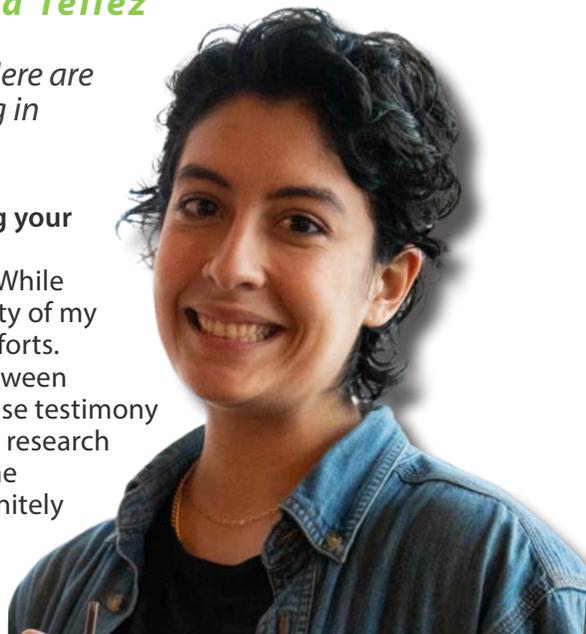
CENTERING COMMUNITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY:

A Q&A with Environmental Policy Fellow Callia Téllez

Callia Téllez just finished their Environmental Policy Fellowship. Here are some final reflections and takeaways on their experience working in advocacy at the Ohio Environmental Council.

As the environmental policy fellow, what did your role look like during your time here?

The fellowship's main goal was to introduce me to all sides of advocacy. While my role was rooted in our democracy and public lands work, the flexibility of my position allowed me to find ways to learn and contribute across OEC's efforts. Highlights of my role were creating maps illustrating the connection between gerrymandering and environmental injustice that were used in Statehouse testimony and Ohio Supreme Court lawsuits. Getting to lead on public lands policy research and outreach for our National Recreation Area campaign and learning the "watchdog" role from [OEC's Public Lands Director] Nathan Johnson definitely inspired my next steps. Engaging with regional and development staff allowed me to explore topics such as the ethics of community engagement and more just funding processes for nonprofits.



How did your work impact the work of others?

I was fortunate to chase my passions around the OEC. My role allowed me to put myself in any room and any conversation. The ability to bring my interest and expertise into many projects with a lot of flexibility was unique and I feel so grateful for this role.

What did you feel you brought to this work and why were those things important to you?

I recently gave a talk at OSU on how I used asset-based community development in our work to center advocacy on people's lived experiences. With redistricting, [OEC's Staff Attorney] Chris Tavenor and I led map-making workshops where Ohioans drew their community and crafted testimony on how gerrymandering affects them and the issues they care about, which often are environmental and public health related. My background and interest in community development was important to how we engaged with people on the ground. With our National Recreation Area campaign, it's about making sure that not just advocates from Columbus are visiting southeast Ohio saying, "We think you should preserve 30,000 acres of forest!" but ensuring the campaign is co-led by entrepreneurs and advocates living in southeast Ohio who can bridge conservation goals with shared goals for a recreation economy fueled by decades of hard work by southeastern Ohioans. I also felt privileged to share my skills and passion for public speaking and become an OEC spokesperson. That's allowed me to speak on many panels and be featured in events to elevate critical topics of environmental justice into all sorts of subjects and contexts.

What did you learn this past year?

I came into this fellowship not understanding my next steps. Do I pursue a law degree or tackle advocacy from the grassroots organization, litigation, or research sides? It's a testament to the mentoring I've received that I feel ready to take my next steps and pursue a research-based MS/PhD in environmental sociology. In my undergrad research at OSU, I saw disconnects between the research that institutions produce and how those practices are observed on the ground. Having spent a year in nonprofit advocacy, I see opportunities to not only bridge research but deepen the focus of environmental advocacy on frontline community priorities. I've always wanted to return to research, but now I'm thinking, "How can I conduct it in a way that's rooted in community?" I came into this feeling lost, but this fellowship helped me realize these issues are very connected and there are paths I can take using multiple areas and skills.

What was a challenge for you?

Facing the failures of the environmental movement historically and the failures prevalent to this day. The environmental movement has been very exclusionary of Black, Indigenous, and people of color voices. Those are the very communities that face disproportionate environmental harms and growing impacts of climate change. While we see growth in inclusion in this movement, change is sometimes slow and incremental.

What brought you joy in all of this work?

This is the classic OEC answer, but it's the classic OEC answer because it's so true, and that is the other staff at the OEC. I feel so fortunate to have been mentored and supported by so many incredible advocates. These are folks that I will keep in my circle for the rest of my career and I can't thank them enough for everything they've taught me.

ELIMINATING OHIO'S LEAD SERVICE LINES



MELANIE HOUSTON
Interim Water Director

Every Ohioan—no matter if they're from Youngstown or Dayton, Cleveland or Cincinnati, Toledo or Athens—deserves clean, safe, and affordable drinking water. That's why we're thrilled to see direct investments in Ohio's public water infrastructure from the state and federal administrations for lead service line removal.

In Ohio, we've been dealing with lead pipes contaminating our tap water for decades. Even though the use of lead pipes was banned by Congress in 1986, Ohio currently ranks second in the nation for the most lead pipes serving families, with 650,000 still in use.

Getting your water delivered to your home through a lead service line is like drinking your water through a lead straw. It provides an opportunity for lead to leach from the pipes and into the water, which can cause serious health problems. For kids, and especially kids under age six, elevated levels of lead in their blood can cause impaired brain development, among other symptoms. Adults are more likely to experience increased risks of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and kidney and nervous system problems when exposed to lead.

Because of historical disparities in water infrastructure investment and ongoing structural racism and classism, Ohio's lead water lines are disproportionately found in Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities, as well as low-income communities. The good news is that



Watch our video "**Getting the Lead Out**" to learn more about the problems lead service lines cause and how with your help, advocates across the state are calling on our leaders and lawmakers to get the lead out of our homes and our drinking water systems: theoec.org/leadserVICelinereplacement

"Getting your water delivered to your home through a lead service line is like drinking your water through a lead straw."



investments to fully replace these lead service lines are on the way.

In November 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (bipartisan infrastructure law) providing \$15 billion for lead service line replacement across the nation over the next five years. Of that, \$2.9 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure law will be dispersed to states, tribes, and territories this year, with Ohio to receive \$71 million dedicated to lead service line replacement in 2022. Given this news, cities like Toledo and Cincinnati have announced plans to speed up their lead service line replacement programs.

For future funding allocations, we're advocating alongside our partners at the Alliance for the Great Lakes for lead service line replacement dollars to be proportional to the number of lead service lines a state has.

In early March, Governor Mike DeWine announced that the state would make an additional investment in lead service line removal through the H2Ohio initiative. Gov. DeWine committed \$4 million to locate, remove, and replace lead-contaminated lines, with half the funding targeting six communities with pipes already mapped and ready for replacement. About 500 households and businesses will get fresh lines delivering safe and clean drinking water.

Now is the time for Ohio to take bold action to set our state on a path to removing all remaining lead service lines and protecting families from the health impacts of this outdated infrastructure. Supporters like you are critical in the fight for clean and safe drinking water. Thank you for calling on our lawmakers to make these critical investments to permanently safeguard our drinking water from lead contamination.



ON THE ROAD AGAIN



DENA SICO
Vice President of Advancement

Our Ohio Environmental Council staff have sorely missed the relationship-building that happens when people are together in advocacy. As towns across Ohio begin to reopen and people return to their offices, our passionate team has already started to reconnect with partners and communities in person again, striking up conversations and comraderie across the state around our shared vision for a safe, clean, and healthy Ohio.

Thanks to generous supporters like you, our team has been able to weather this pandemic safely while continuing to advocate for vibrant public lands, a healthy democracy, and clean air and water for all who call Ohio home. **Check out these photos to get a sneak peak at some of the advocacy and education work our team has been diving into lately!**



The OEC celebrated World Water Day in March with partners at the Environmental Professionals Network at OSU. Pete Bucher, Interim Advocacy Center Manager, spoke on our priority to build a comprehensive statewide strategy to address Ohio's drinking water and sewer affordability needs.



In February, OEC Environmental Policy Fellow Callia Téllez spoke to Ohio State's School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR) Community Development in Practice course. A 2020 graduate of SENR, Callia shared how key takeaways and values learned from the course supported their decision to work at OEC.



In March, OEC Vice President of Public Affairs Emily Bacha had the privilege of introducing Sonia Aggarwal, Senior Advisor for Climate Policy and Innovation from the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy, at the City Club of Cleveland.



In November 2021, OEC staff members gathered to honor and memorialize our late colleague, MJ Eckhouse, with a tree planting in Columbus as seen here and on the front cover.

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JOIN OUR GREEN GIVING CLUB

Our **Green Giving Club Members** support the OEC's mission through automatic monthly or quarterly donations. These donations provide **ongoing, reliable support** for the OEC team, ensuring we're ready to fight for Ohio's air, land, water, and democracy **now and in the future.**

Plus, we're happy to provide you easy monthly processing, an end-of-year donation summary to assist you in tax preparation, and dedicated OEC staff members to answer your questions.

Make your first monthly gift today at: theoec.org/give-monthly

The OEC restricts contributions from individual businesses to less than 5% of our total operating budget and limits total business donations to less than 15%. The OEC requires all business donors to acknowledge that acceptance of a gift does not hinder or place limits on the OEC's ability to comment on, litigate, or participate in processes related to any permit, legislation, policy, or related decision.



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