



ORGANIZING for  
HEALTH and JUSTICE

52 Linwood Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14209  
(716) 852-3813  
cacwny.org

# Clean Air Connection

NOVEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Help us raise  
\$50k to Root Our  
Resilience 2

Welcoming Eve  
Berry 2

Campaign up-  
dates 3

For more detailed updates, visit  
our blog: [www.cacwny.org/  
press/blog-2/](http://www.cacwny.org/press/blog-2/)

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## Taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for Tonawanda Coke cleanup

Tonawanda Coke has a new owner in developer Jon Williams, owner of OSC and the recently formed Riverview Innovation and Technology Campus Inc.

While Williams says his team “knows the challenges of cleaning up and addressing environmental challenges” (Buffalo News), his track record tells another story.

The Public Accountability Initiative reported that

“Williams is not the environmental champion that his public image portrays. Several of Williams’ properties are the sites of significant industrial pollution that he has used public subsidies to remediate. Williams has also donated \$35,000 to President Donald Trump’s re-election campaign, making him the largest Trump donor in WNY.”

Clean Air members living in Buffalo’s Delavan Grider neighborhood are also familiar with Williams, who owns the former American Axle site. The site has leaked toxic gunk into the City of Buffalo’s sewer system for years, until community pressure resulted in a remedial measure executed by the state earlier this year.

Williams is determined to clean up the Tonawanda Coke site using taxpayer dollars through New York State’s Brownfield Remediation Program. If Williams is granted this designation, Honeywell avoids enforcement action and cost recovery, there is no mandate for workers to make prevailing wage, and the burden of cleanup is shifted to the taxpayer.

We want the site to be referred to the Federal Superfund Program, which requires that the responsible party pays for the cleanup costs. If you agree, tell New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos at 518-402-8545.

Read the news coverage here: <http://bit.ly/JonWilliams> & [http://bit.ly/  
NewberryBuffNews](http://bit.ly/NewberryBuffNews)



# Help Clean Air raise \$50k to Root Our Resilience in 2020



Our work saves lives and changes our communities for the better. But we know that it is far from done. In 2020, we will root ourselves, our values and our community to make the biggest impact we can. Clean Air’s year-end fundraising campaign to raise \$50K to Root Our Resilience will get us there. Will you join us by investing today? When you give right now your gift will go twice as far. The first \$10,000 we receive will be generously matched dollar-for-dollar.

Visit [cacwny.org/donate](http://cacwny.org/donate) to join the movement, or send a check to 52 Linwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209. And be sure to join us on Giving Tuesday for a phone bank at Clean Air’s office (52 Linwood Ave)! We need your help! Contact Julia at [julia@cacwny.org](mailto:julia@cacwny.org) or 852-3813 for more information. We’ll be making calls Tuesday, Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2-4 p.m. and 5-7 p.m.

## We welcomed Eve Berry for a Facilitation 101 training

Clean Air hosted our staff, board and local organizational partners for a Facilitation Training run by Eve Berry, an internationally recognized trainer in facilitation and organizational development. The Facilitation Training offered an introductory lesson on how to effectively bring a group together and build trusting and productive teams.

At Clean Air, we know that good facilitators are crucial to create campaign team strategy and execution — and can be the difference between those groups that are fun and accomplished and those that are not. As we model internally the world that we want to create externally, we are committed to training our people in both the necessary tools as well as the self-awareness and self-reflection to be effective organizers.

Stay tuned for a Facilitation 102 Training in 2020!



Eve Berry at Clean Air’s Facilitation 101 Training.

*Thank you to our  
community partners!*



*Mercy United  
CWA Local 1133*

*Communications Workers of America Local 1133 • AFL-CIO  
821 Elk Street • Suite A • Buffalo, New York 14210  
(716) 828-1133 • Fax (716) 828-1158*



## Campaign Updates

(Want to get involved? Call 852-3813 or email [info@cacwny.org](mailto:info@cacwny.org))

### **After Huntley's closure, community asks, "How far has Tonawanda come?"**

On Oct. 15, Clean Air's Just Transition Team hosted a Tonawanda Tomorrow Progress Update featuring regional leadership committed to the long term economic and energy transition after the NRG Huntley Coal Plant retirement.

NRG Huntley, which retired in 2016, was the largest polluter in Erie County and, at the time, the largest tax provider to the Town. The plant retired due to low natural gas prices, the uncompetitive price of coal and lack of demand.

Seeing the national energy trends early, Clean Air, the Western New York Area Labor Federation, and the Kenmore Teachers Association launched a Just Transition campaign two years before the company's announced retirement.



This work resulted in the creation of the New York State Fossil Fuel Closure Fund, the first energy transition fund in the country, which provides funds to municipalities to preserve jobs and services during energy plant re-

tirements.

With four years of state transition funding left, representatives from the Town of Tonawanda Town Board, Tonawanda Implementation Team, the NFTA and the Western New York Area Labor Fed-

eration, presented on the status of their projects to grow the town's economy, improve community well being, and waterfront access.

The event provided transparency, accountability, and insight into the plan's progress, and offered clarity on the next steps that stakeholders need to take to continue to move the plan forward.

The event was the first of its kind in the country, providing a model for coal communities across the world to hold their local leaders accountable during a coal transition.

Clean Air has published a Tonawanda Tomorrow status report on our website for those who missed this groundbreaking event.

Visit [www.cacwny.org](http://www.cacwny.org) to check it out.

### **Stop victimizing us for being poor and living where we live**

A NYS Department of Health (DOH) Cancer Study found high levels of cancer in East Buffalo and Cheektowaga communities. On Oct. 22, the state held a public meeting in Buffalo. Clean Air's members joined with fellow Delavan Grider residents who showed up in numbers to speak on their experiences living in one of Buffalo's most polluted environmental justice neighborhoods. After learning that the state is allocating \$650,000 toward cancer prevention and health studies rather than examining the toxic legacy waste within the community, residents spoke up.

For residents organizing for more than a decade to have PCBs (a group of chemicals banned in 1979 due to the connections to cancer, liver damage and nerve problems) cleaned up, blaming sickness and cancer on lifestyle choices was shocking and angering. Local residents weren't buying it, saying the state was essentially blaming them for getting cancer. Many of them, including Delavan Grider resident Virginia Golden, said the state is ignoring a much larger issue to absolve themselves of blame.

### **Seneca Babcock residents are tired of corporations poisoning their neighborhood**

The worst polluters are located in communities that have been historically left out of decision-making and systems of power and wealth. For residents living in Seneca Babcock, they are now leading the charge for ecological and sustainable solutions for a more just future.

In the Seneca Babcock community, residents and Clean Air fought back against Battaglia Demolition, a waste transfer site that was illegally operating a concrete crusher, causing horrible nuisance, noise and air pollution ... and they won.

Now, they're exploring what they want to build next. Residents and Clean Air held a neighborhood meeting on Sept. 25 to explore how we can both address Buffalo's industrial legacy while also preparing our communities for climate change. Stay tuned for more to come!





## Become a sustaining member of Clean Air today!

Clean Air works to build the power of everyday people to make our communities healthier, safer, and more equitable places to live. **Becoming a monthly sustainer helps us continue to hold corporations and agencies accountable to putting our health and environment first.** Choose to give \$5, 10, or \$20 per month! For more information, call Julia at (716) 852-3813, or *send your support directly to:*  
Clean Air, 52 Linwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209.

**¿No eres miembro? ¡Inscríbese hoy mismo!** Clean Air trabaja para desarrollar el poder de la gente para que nuestras comunidades sean más sanas, y lugares más seguros para vivir. Envíe su apoyo de \$ 10, \$ 20 o \$ 50 a:

Clean Air, 52 Linwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209