



THE ISSUE

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Affordability? Equity? Jobs? When it comes to our energy policy in Ohio, what do you think is most important?

“ EARTH DAY 2023: OHIO PLAYED KEY ROLE IN CREATION OF FIRST EARTH DAY AND EPA

by Gregory T. Moore

As the nation observes the 53rd Earth Day, it's important to note the key role that Cleveland and the now infamous Cuyahoga River fire in 1969 played in the creation of the first Earth Day in 1970 and the passage of the landmark Clean Water Act in 1972. In the 60s, many lakes and rivers throughout the Midwest were literally allowed to become "industrial and municipal sewers," according to a [2019 article](#) released by the Property and Environmental Research Center.

It was a common practice as water tributaries in the late 1960s were loosely regulated, allowing industries and local municipalities to use the Cuyahoga River as a discharger, allowing them to pollute the waterway based on the state's previous designation of the Cuyahoga River as an "industrial stream."



EARTH DAY



The report concluded that municipal authorities left the Cuyahoga River alone—allowing firms along its banks to discharge into it at will.



The widespread pollution of the Cuyahoga River was a wake-up call to the nation that our waterways could no longer be dumping grounds and vast wastelands for manufacturing industries and corporations. It brought new attention to the conditions of many rivers and lakes throughout the US that were increasingly polluted over the years by the rapid growth of industries throughout the 20th century. This changing sentiment for taking action on the problem of water and air pollution eventually grew into an environmental movement that established what is now known as Earth Day, first observed on April 22, 1970.



By 1972 Congress passed a law, signed by then President Richard Nixon creating the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Clean Water Act, which passed shortly thereafter. Federal and state environmental standards have since grown and strengthened over these last 53 years. Today the Cuyahoga River has been restored following over five decades of clean up and restoration policies undertaken by state and local governments working with conservationists and private industries. In 2019, the U.S. EPA even deemed the Cuyahoga River safe for fishing following many years of testing to ensure its fish were safe for consumption. It was a multi-year/multi-decade effort to repair and rebuild not just the River, but the surrounding land areas along its shores. Continued success still requires close monitoring and adherence to all Clean Water Act Guidelines including litter control.



EARTH DAY

The Cuyahoga River's renaissance is a prime historic example of how public, private, business, community leaders, and advocates can work together to revive a river that had been left for dead decades ago.



Martin Luther King, Jr. once said; "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." This, in essence, was the message of the first Earth Day back in 1970. It is a reminder that environmental and climate issues require long-term commitments and a collective approach to resolving the issue.



EARTH DAY 2023: EAST PALESTINE DERAILMENT, ANOTHER WAKE UP CALL FOR OHIO AND THE NATION

by Gregory T. Moore
Courtesy of [*The Cleveland Observer*](#)



Courtesy, The New York Times

The unfortunate Norfolk Southern train derailment disaster that befell East Palestine, Ohio on February 3, 2023, presents another opportunity for Ohio to be a catalyst for exposing the environmental dangers that awaits every urban, suburban, and rural community where hazardous materials are still being shipped through. The federal, state, and county governments in Ohio and Pennsylvania have formed what they have termed a "Unified Command" pledging to continue to work together to ensure Norfolk Southern keeps its commitments to clean up the site and take full responsibility for the damage caused.

EARTH DAY

According to Marc Durno, EPA's on-site coordinator in East Palestine, "We're under what we call a unified command. And the unified command means agencies who have responsibility, who have a stake in what's happening, are making decisions, and taking action on the ground." The Unified Command has continued to undertake testing and monitoring of the water, air, and soil samples at agricultural, commercial, recreational, residential, and commercial properties in both Ohio and Pennsylvania.



On April 14, 2023, the Unified Command announced that it had:

- Collected and shipped out **24,346** tons of contaminated soil
- Removed **11,885,221** gallons of liquid waste
- Conducted **630** indoor air screenings
- Collected **421** private well samples for further and ongoing evaluation



Despite the release of these results, pledges have been met with some skepticism by the people of East Palestine, who have waged a gallant fight to sound the alarm about the threats to our water, soil, and air in the aftermath of the disaster. While there is cause for skepticism, the people of East Palestine should look north to the nearly forgotten efforts of civic, environmental, political, and business leaders who developed long-term plans to clean up the Cuyahoga River. We need this same level of short- and long-term commitment to being focused on preparedness for any potential hazardous disasters here in Cleveland and throughout Northeast Ohio.

The city of Cleveland is filled with freight rail lines that run throughout dense neighborhoods and in many cases Black, Brown, and low-income communities. City of Cleveland officials acknowledged in a February 17th statement that local communities are vulnerable to potential accidents along these multiple freight lines.



On June 3, 2020, Cleveland City Council passed an emergency resolution #465-2020, condemning Norfolk Southern Corporation for “rerouting daily trains carrying highly toxic flammable crude oil and ethanol through the city of Cleveland without public notice.” The resolution went on to urge Norfolk Southern to reroute trains to less populated routes. The Federal Railroad Administration, state and federal EPA officials, and Congress are continuing to gather data, monitor rail safety guidelines, and consider stronger regulations in light of this and other derailments that have occurred since the East Palestine disaster.



In 2023 we need to recapture that same spirit and take decisive steps to avoid potential environmental disasters among the residents of Cuyahoga County. Given the high stakes and long-term implications such a disaster would have, climate advocates acknowledge that long-term solutions will require Northeast Ohioans to work together across racial, economic, political, and geographic lines of cooperation.



Earth Day 2022: Listen Lead and Share Community Listening Session



JOIN US ON ZOOM

Climate Justice Listen Lead and Share Community Listening Session

DATE: **Earth Day** Friday, April 22

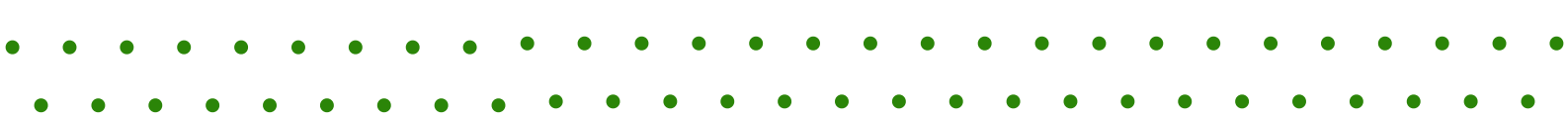
TIME: **1:30-3:00 PM**

Opening remarks by **Mustafa Santiago Ali**

SPONSORED BY: Ohio Climate Justice Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Promise of Democracy Foundation

For Earth Day 2022, the Ohio Voter Fund, along with the Promise of Democracy Foundation and partners Ohio Climate Justice Fund and National Wildlife Federation, had the opportunity to participate in a timely discussion on climate justice and how to become better stewards of our planet.

[Click here to access the replay.](#) **Page 5**





ENERGY JOB AND JUSTICE ACT: MAKING CLEAN ENERGY WORK FOR ALL OHIOANS

Reprinted from OEC Action Fund



PURPOSE

The Energy Jobs & Justice Act, currently stalled in the Ohio General Assembly, is a bold, comprehensive energy policy for all Ohioans. It implements equitable clean energy solutions and carbon reductions while ensuring much-needed accountability, transparency, and Ohio PUC reform.

STATE ENERGY POLICY FOR PEOPLE, NOT UTILITIES

The last two years have unveiled deep corruption within our utility regulatory structure and statehouse at a level previously unseen in the state of Ohio. It exposed alarming structural flaws in Ohio law that put the interests of utilities and energy companies above the interests of people and communities. Ohioans deserve policy solutions that benefit our economic future, our communities, and our health.



Ohio's energy policy isn't working for the people. That is why we need your help in drafting #EJJA 2.0! Affordability? Equity? Jobs? When it comes to our energy policy in Ohio, what do you think is most important? Take two minutes to fill out this [survey](#)!

You can also urge your legislators to support HB 429. Fill out this [form](#) to contact your lawmakers and make your voice heard!

EARTH



DAY

SAVE OUR PLANET

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[Antoinette M. Wiley](#), Copyediting | Layout | Design



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