

Spring/Summer 2026

# NEWSLETTER



**BEYOND  
TOXICS**

*Leadership for a thriving and just Oregon*

# LETTER FROM TONY ARNELL, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

**You are the reason Beyond Toxics can show up for Oregon communities every day.** Your support strengthens our ability to respond when families have questions about chemicals near their homes, when neighborhoods face new environmental threats, and when frontline communities need a partner who will stand with them.

Since joining the organization nine months ago, I have had the privilege of speaking with a wide range of supporters, from long-time donors who have stood with this mission for many years to those who joined our work more recently. What I hear in the voice of everyone I have spoken to is Beyond Toxics' greatest strength and resource: **trust**.

Trust that your contributions fuel research and facts that shape policy. Trust that your giving keeps our staff rooted in the communities we serve. Trust that someone calling with a concern about a chemical or toxin near their home or workplace will receive clear, empathetic guidance to turn their concern into action.

In this summer newsletter, you will find updates on our involvement with the **Eugene Clean Energy Fund** as it moves toward the fall ballot, the latest progress on the **West Eugene Clean Energy Project**, and the ongoing fight against the proposed **Coffin Butte Landfill expansion**. You will also read about the growth of our youth leadership program **Rise as Leaders**. Additionally, we are preparing for the next phase of our **Resilience Markets** work, building on the success of past summer markets that brought neighbors together to share resources, strengthen community ties, and support local solutions.

I am also proud to share that Beyond Toxics staff have unionized and we have our first collective bargaining agreement! Your generosity and support helps us move into this new chapter with stability and care for our team which will allow us to continue to show up for our communities who need us most.

**Thank you for your time, your advocacy, and your contributions that sustain and grow our mission.**

In partnership,



**Tony Arnell**





# POSTCARD



## ROOTS & RISING

Join us for a jazz concert benefiting Beyond Toxics and environmental justice.

**5-8:00 p.m. on Thurs., Sept. 17, 2026**

Hinman Vineyards (formerly Silvan Ridge Winery)  
27012 Briggs Hill Rd., Eugene, OR 97405



Visit [beyondtoxics.org/events](https://beyondtoxics.org/events) for tickets!

### Interested in sponsoring events?

Sponsorship packages are available for businesses & patrons. Contact Tony at 541-264-5255 or [tarnell@beyondtoxics.org](mailto:tarnell@beyondtoxics.org) for more information.

# POSTCARD



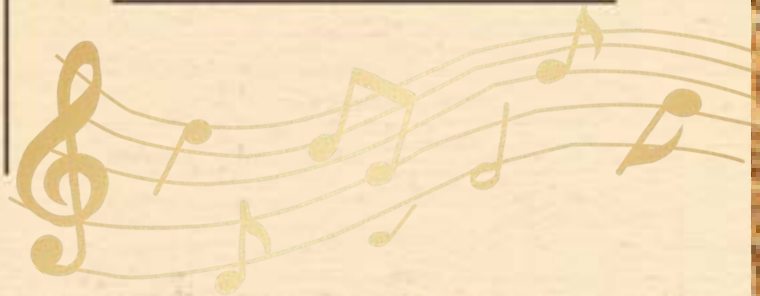
RING IN THE HOLIDAYS  
WITH CHEER AND JUSTICE!

## CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH CONCERT ROCK VIOLINIST AARON MEYER

**Friday, December 11, 2026**

WOW Hall, 291 W 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.,  
Eugene, OR 97401

FROM: YOUR FRIENDS AT BT



# WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



**Karen Kossow**

Human Resources  
Manager

Karen became a member of our team in March 2026, following several years of professional experience at the University of Oregon. She brings 15 years of human resources expertise across various industries, including retail, healthcare, and social services. In her current role, she supports recruitment, benefits administration, compliance, and various other HR functions.

Outside of work, Karen enjoys spending quality time with her rescue dog, reading, and exploring the Oregon Coast whenever possible. We are excited to welcome Karen to the team!

## We're celebrating National Intern Day, July 30!



**Lucy Burks**

Youth Education Intern

Lucy is a second-year student at the University of Oregon studying Planning, Public Policy and Management with a minor in Environmental Studies. She joined us this May as our summer Youth Education Intern for our Rise as Leaders program. Lucy is excited to work with Beyond Toxics to get involved in local environmental action while gaining valuable job experience. "Not only do I get to help younger students learn more about what environmental justice is and the forms it exists in, but I can also learn from students about the issues they are most concerned about, both locally and beyond."

Lucy wants young environmentalists to know that they're not alone, and that there is a community of activists and organizations who share their passions and concerns. **"I feel especially supported by Beyond Toxics, as my time so far has already taught me so much about the kinds of jobs that are possible for people who want to get involved with environmental justice work."**

# BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER



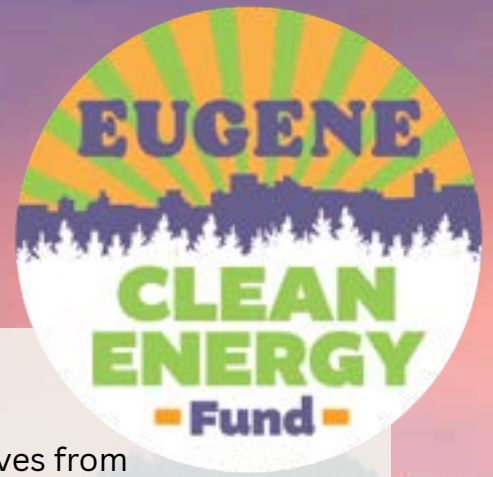
*The Beyond Toxics staff, ready to combat environmental injustice, at our 2026 staff retreat.*

This past April, the Beyond Toxics team participated in a two-day staff retreat focused on strategic planning goals for 2027 through 2030. Over the course of the retreat, we explored our organizational goals and values and performed an internal analysis of our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT).

We also partnered with a University of Oregon Planning, Public Policy and Management class to help with this strategic planning process. The students interviewed a number of people with a connection to Beyond Toxics, including current and former board members, donors, and community partners, and presented their insights and draft plan in June. The staff and board will continue to move through our larger strategic planning process over the next several months and aim to finalize this plan by the end of the year.

**“This is an exciting time to engage our community, staff and board to help evaluate our current efforts and community needs, and to examine opportunities to be more strategic in the future,”** said Executive Director Jen Davis. “We look forward to building upon the 25-year legacy of Beyond Toxics and ensure that our foundation is solid as we look toward the future.”

# ENVISIONING A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE



As we see the weather become more extreme and federal environmental regulations rolled back, we are often left wondering what more we can do locally to protect ourselves from climate change. Beyond Toxics has joined forces with Breach Collective, Oregon Just Transition Alliance, and the Oregon Sierra Club to bring the **Eugene Clean Energy Fund** to voters this November.

The Eugene Clean Energy Fund (ECEF) is a ballot initiative that would require billion-dollar retailers operating in Eugene to pay a 2% fee on their gross profits into a fund for local climate resilience projects. This fee only applies to businesses making \$500,000 locally and \$1 billion or more nationally. ECEF was modeled after the Portland Clean Energy Fund, which passed in 2018 earning 65% of the vote. PCEF has been incredibly successful: in 2025, it awarded \$64.4 million in grant to 60 different community-led projects. It has already allocated \$1.7 billion for climate justice efforts through 2029.

If passed, ECEF is projected to bring in **\$15 million per year**, which would be reinvested directly into our community. This would fund renewable energy projects, clean energy jobs training, carbon sequestration programs, and future innovation while supporting Eugene in achieving its climate goals.

Funding from ECEF would allow organizations like Beyond Toxics to expand on climate work already underway. For example, our West Eugene Clean Energy Program could directly support more households each year. We would be able to host more weatherization workshops where renters and homeowners can learn how to make their homes more energy efficient at low costs. And who knows what else – we could dream up many possibilities.



*Emily collects signatures  
downtown Eugene*

Our goal is to collect 15,000 signatures ahead of the July 27 deadline. Dozens of volunteers and staff have been diligently campaigning to bring this initiative to Eugene voters, and have already collected more than 9,000 signatures at the time of publication. ECEF needs 8,726 valid signatures to qualify for the November ballot.

**Learn more at [eugenecleanenergyfund.org](https://eugenecleanenergyfund.org) and follow @eugenecleanenergyfund on social media for updates!**

# CLIMATE RESILIENCE EFFORTS ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY

## West Eugene Clean Energy Project

In May, Beyond Toxics distributed more than 50 air conditioners and air purifiers to families living in West Eugene. This project, funded by the Oregon Health Authority, is a continuation of we've done in the past. The original Bethel Clean Energy Project, which began in 2023, was an effort to inform and inspire people to make home energy upgrades by utilizing rebates and incentives. The same year, we distributed more than 200 air conditioners and air purifiers to those most at risk of heat-related illnesses, with a goal to support the community directly impacted by industrial pollution.

This year, we were able to continue the program to provide energy efficient portable air conditioners and air purifiers to eligible households, ensuring vulnerable populations stay cool, healthy, and safe in the summer heat and wildfire smoke. **“Since I have plugged in the air purifier, I have not woken up once with coughing fits or the inability to breathe a regular breath,”** said Karmen Sauers, a West Eugene resident who received both units. **“I know with this program, Beyond Toxics can help our community to be able to breathe easier and stay cooler in the summer months!”**



*Alex loads an AC unit for a WECEP participant*

## Beat the Heat and Wildfire Smoke

Each year, Beyond Toxics and partner organizations host Weatherization Workshops as part of our Just Transition efforts. These workshops provide information and free resources to community members to “Beat the Heat” during extreme heat and smoke events. Participants learn about the health risks of heat and poor air quality, and learn to create their own DIY air purifier. As the climate continues to change and weather becomes more unpredictable, clean energy home upgrades and low-cost weatherization projects will help home owners and renters alike. Partner organizations include Fossil Free Eugene, UO Climate Justice League, Springfield Eugene Tenant Association, Cascadia Wildlands, 350 Eugene, and Toolbox Project.

# UPDATES FROM THE FIELD



## **ROOTs Union Contract Ratified**

We are proud to announce the unanimous ratification by board members and staff of Beyond Toxics' first Collective Bargaining Agreement with Resilient Organizers Opposing Toxics (ROOTs) and Communications Workers of America Local 7901. This is a milestone that reflects the shared commitment of our staff and leadership to building a workplace rooted in equity, dignity, and mutual respect.

This agreement wasn't negotiated, it was co-created through honest dialogue, good-faith bargaining, and a genuine belief that the democratic values we fight for everyday must first be lived within our own organization. From fair wages and equitable compensation to meaningful benefits for our staff, this CBA reflects who we are and who we aspire to be. By investing in our employees, we are investing in the work they do, the communities they serve, and the environmental justice movement overall.

"It just isn't possible to have environmental justice without economic and procedural justice. Living by the values our mission seeks to enact is a necessary step in being the change we want to see in the world around us," said Mason Leavitt, a union member on the bargaining team.

"I couldn't be prouder to celebrate the ratification of Beyond Toxics' first union contract in my first year as Executive Director," Jennifer Davis said. "Supporting our union isn't just the right thing to do, it's what makes us stronger as a team, an organization, and in our environmental justice work."

## **Resilience Markets are Back for the 2026 Season**

After a successful season in 2025, Resilience Markets are back! Beyond Toxics hosts markets every second and fourth Saturday through October thanks to support from Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District and SquareOne Villages. The markets offer free, locally-sourced organic produce and opportunities for community members to connect with local organizations and resources.

The Resilience Markets are part of our ongoing commitment to building healthy and resilient communities. The 2026 Resilience Market series kicked off in June and we are looking forward to another summer of building resilience.

## Corvallis Action

### **The Coffin Butte Battle Rages On**

In March, Benton County commissioners voted unanimously to deny Coffin Butte Landfill's proposed expansion, and the case now heads to the Land Use Board of Appeals. This change from November, when commissioners initially approved the expansion, was due to the \$3 million fine for air quality violations levied by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The fine was "hard proof" of the noxious odor problems residents experienced, though Beyond Toxics is proud to note we had noticed these violations back in 2024 and brought them to the attention of Oregon's congressional delegation which asked the EPA to launch a formal enforcement investigation.

This spring, DEQ also held a comment period for rulemaking on Senate Bill 726, passed in 2025, which requires Coffin Butte to implement better methane emissions monitoring practices. Beyond Toxics served on the rules committee and pushed for DEQ to enact stronger environmental protections. Additionally, the landfill's Title V air quality permit came back for review this spring reflecting many of the changes we advocated for in the previous draft with our partners at the Environmental Integrity Project. Thanks to our ongoing collective efforts with the Valley Neighbors for Environmental Quality and Safety, Coffin Butte will continue to be held accountable for years of environmental damage.

## Statewide Action

### **Defending the Climate Protection Program (again)**

Earlier in 2026, a coalition of oil and gas industry companies and allies sued to block Oregon's Climate Protection Program (CPP). The CPP is a policy that requires the state's biggest climate polluters to cut emissions to reach our climate goals and invest in the frontline communities hit hardest by climate impacts. When companies pollute without limits, Oregonians pay the price through higher rates of asthma, heart disease, and other preventable illnesses, with our frontline communities bearing the brunt of these impacts.

Beyond Toxics isn't fighting this alone. We've joined forces with Climate Solutions, Oregon Businesses for Climate, Oregon Environmental Council, Rogue Climate, and Verde to formally intervene in the case, standing alongside the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Together, we're working to uphold the CPP so that big polluters invest in fixing the problem they created, instead of leaving frontline communities to deal with the consequences.

# RISE AS LEADERS SPRING COHORT STEPS INTO ACTION

**By Alejandro Garcia Iboa,  
Youth Education Coordinator**

May marked the beginning of a new Rise as Leaders cohort. During the 10-week program, participants build leadership skills and learn how to engage with environmental justice work. Previous cohorts saw a mix of college and high school students, but this time around, it's all high schoolers from West Eugene. The majority either live in or go to a school in West Eugene,



the community that Beyond Toxics has served for more than 25 years. The students engage with our current projects for a hands-on experience.

Recently, the youth supported the West Eugene Clean Energy Project (WECEP). During a distribution event, staff and the nine RAL participants distributed over 50 air conditioners and air purifiers to the most vulnerable members of the West Eugene community: people with preexisting health conditions worsened by climate change, expecting mothers, and individuals over age 65. It is clear to the youth that these programs should be the first step of many in improving the quality of life of our frontline communities.

These students come from all walks of life and have varying levels of experience when it comes to the environmental justice movement. For some, this is their first time interacting with and learning about EJ concerns in their community while for others, this is another step in a long journey to help lead the movement forward. One thing is abundantly clear: youth leaders are here to take charge and take a seat at the table when it comes to decisions about their future.

WECEP was only the beginning; future sessions will have students learning from professionals in the political organizing sphere on how to build and maintain strong grassroots campaigns. All work that they can immediately put into practice as they take part in signature gathering for the Eugene Clean Energy Fund ballot measure and more!

# WHERE WE'VE BEEN



*Community Organizer Eric Richardson (left) at the Black Resilience Breakfast this spring*



*Work party to remove invasive plants at Eugene's Westmoreland Park*



*Signing the ECEF petition at our April Launch Party*



*Tour of fuel storage infrastructure in West Eugene earlier this year*



*Rise as Leaders Youth Leadership cohort at Golden Gardens*



*BT staff at our annual staff retreat to kick off the summer*



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Interested in becoming a board member?  
Contact [kenny@beyondtoxics.org](mailto:kenny@beyondtoxics.org)

## BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR TODAY!

Whether you're a longtime supporter or someone new to our work who believes in healthier communities across Oregon, the best thing you can do to support Beyond Toxics this year is by becoming a monthly donor and attending our upcoming fundraising events!

Your choice to give monthly creates a powerful ripple effect for Beyond Toxics. A recurring gift of any amount strengthens our financial footing so we can stay nimble and advance environmental justice as new challenges arise.

**Plus, become a new monthly donor before August 31** and you will be entered to win one of two pairs of Keen shoes! Two winners will receive a voucher to be redeemed online valued at \$165 each! Visit [beyondtoxics.org/donate](http://beyondtoxics.org/donate) to become a monthly donor today.

### OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT BEYOND TOXICS:

- Give a meaningful summer donation
- Give appreciated stock
- Make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA (*for those 70 ½ & older*)
- Consider a planned gift

### WIN A FREE PAIR OF KEENS!



Cover photo: Beyond Toxics staff tour Short Mountain Landfill in Lane County this June.

Beyond Toxics is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

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