

**For Immediate Release**

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**Waterkeepers Chesapeake's Annual Awards Event to Honor Regional Clean Water Champions, Feature Environmental Justice Discussion**

***Awardees to be recognized for advancing civil rights and public health***

(Takoma Park, MD) Waterkeepers Chesapeake will host its 4th annual [\*In Defense of Water\*](#) awards event on **Thursday, Sept. 24 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.** To keep everyone safe and healthy during this global pandemic, the event will be a ***Virtual Celebration of Clean Water Advocacy***. This annual event celebrates clean water successes and raises awareness of the work of local Waterkeepers who are protecting rivers, streams and bays for everyone.

**Sen. Ben Cardin** and **Sen. Tim Kaine** will be special guests as we honor **Patuxent Riverkeeper Fred Tutman** with our **Waterkeeper Outstanding Win (WOW) Award** and the Lower Eastern Shore community group **Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOs** (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) with our **Water Warrior Award**. Michael Buckley, WRNR FM 103.1 radio host, will be the awards presenter. Marc Steiner, host of the Marc Steiner Show, will also lead four Waterkeepers in a discussion on how they are responding to our nation's reckoning with systemic racism.

"Fred Tutman is truly deserving of this award for his dedication to bringing clean water and environmental justice to the communities living along the Patuxent River," said Betsy Nicholas, Executive Director, Waterkeepers Chesapeake. "In 2016, he filed a Title VI civil rights complaint when an expansion of a gas-power plant was proposed in a predominantly Black area of the state that already had five power plants. The complaint led to proposed regulations from the Public Service Commission to require companies conduct an environmental justice screen and report the results."

Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOs grew out of Somerset County, Maryland residents' concern that the sudden growth of huge industrial scale poultry facilities (CAFOs) would forever change their rural landscape and present numerous public health concerns. Over the past five years this group has engaged a diverse community of citizens and groups to push back against environmental injustice on the Lower Shore. They advocated for and won important zoning ordinance changes to protect rural communities; won their case to stop a 14-house poultry CAFO; introduced the Community Healthy Air Act; held numerous town hall events to educate, inform and engage communities on the Lower Shore; and spawned a new

grassroots organization in Worcester County that is also committed to engaging citizens in public health, clean water and clean air advocacy.

The *Virtual Celebration of Clean Water Advocacy* event is sponsored by **MOMs Organic Market** and will feature live music, specialty cocktails and a raffle with great items from Patagonia. The event is free. Those who wish to attend should [RSVP](#) to receive a link to the event. For more information, go to <https://waterkeeperschesapeake.org/indefenseofwater2020/>.

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***Waterkeepers Chesapeake*** is a coalition of 17 Waterkeeper programs working to make the local waters of the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays swimmable, fishable and drinkable. *Waterkeepers Chesapeake* amplifies the voices of each Waterkeeper and mobilizes these organizations to fight pollution and champion clean water. <https://waterkeeperschesapeake.org>