



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN
NUCLEAR DANGERS & A SAFE,
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Winter 2022 Newsletter

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A CHALLENGING YEAR

Dear Friends,

We always try to be candid in our end-of-year newsletter about our work. Most years, we have significant victories to report. This year there have been difficult losses, made more heartbreaking because they represent the reversal of hard-fought victories.

Since our disclosure many years ago of the long-secret partial nuclear meltdown at the Santa Susana Field Lab, we have worked diligently to try to get the site cleaned up and the risk to the neighboring hundreds of thousands of people removed. As you will read inside, after repeatedly promising that the longstanding cleanup agreements would be enforced and there would be no negotiations to weaken the cleanup obligations, the Newsom Administration did precisely the opposite and has allowed Boeing to walk away from cleaning up the great majority of its contaminated soil.

Similarly, we played a significant role over many years in the effort to close the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactors, which helped lead to a 2016 agreement that Diablo would phase out by 2024 and 2025, making California nuclear-free. However, Governor Newsom rammed a bill through the Legislature in the last hour of session to overturn that agreement and keep Diablo running for many more years. If an earthquake, accident, or terrorist attack were to occur during that extended time, much of California could be radiologically impacted.

It is one thing to struggle hard and fail. It is another to struggle hard and long and eventually prevail, get legally binding agreements that will protect many people and the environment, and then have powerful polluting interests use their influence to breach those agreements. It really hurts when you lose a big one, but we lost two, both of which had been won years ago, and now are left in tatters.

We have had some wins this year, about which we will tell you, and the fights over Santa Susana and Diablo continue. We have embarked on new work as well. We are trying hard to discern the most effective and ethically appropriate paths forward in the difficult and extraordinary times the world is facing.

Peace, and other responsibilities,

Daniel Hirsch

BETRAYAL: BREACH OF SANTA SUSANA CLEANUP COMMITMENTS

“Those are legally binding agreements. We will hold them to those agreements. And as I said, but I will say it again: our job is to regulate, not to negotiate.” So promised Jared Blumenfeld,

THE SECRETARY OF THE California Environmental Protection Agency, in a speech at a large February 2020 public meeting of the community and elected officials and their staffs. And indeed, he did say it again, repeating the promise at least four times that night.

However, less than a year later, his toxics department initiated secret negotiations with Boeing to breach the 2007 legally binding agreement for cleanup of the portions of SSFL for which Boeing is responsible. The backroom deal signed earlier this year “supersedes” much of the 2007 Order that Blumenfeld had pledged to uphold and would allow Boeing to leave 90-95% of its contaminated soil not cleaned up.

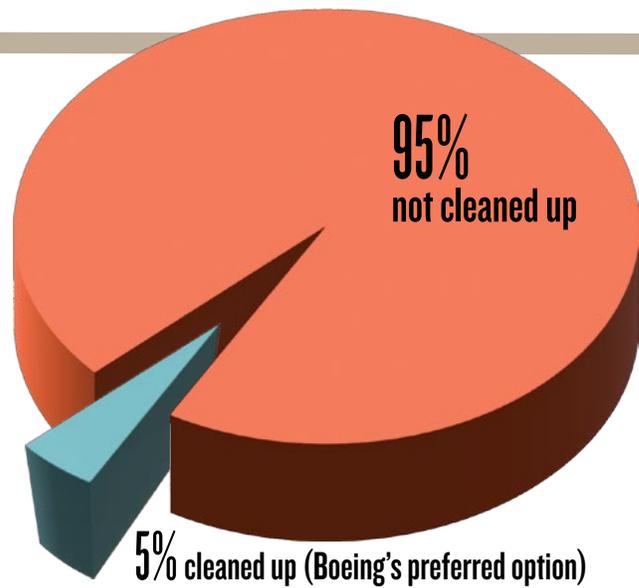
In 1979, much missed Michael Rose uncovered documents about a partial nuclear meltdown at SSFL that had been kept secret for the previous twenty years. CBG released the story through the news media and has been involved ever since in pushing for cleanup of the nuclear and rocket test site, which was contaminated by that nuclear accident and numerous other radioactive and toxic chemical releases.

After years of work, in 2007 and 2010, cleanup orders were executed,

requiring full cleanup by 2017. But the parties responsible for the contamination—the Boeing Company, the US Department of Energy, and NASA—have refused to comply. And after repeatedly promising it would enforce the agreements and not negotiate to weaken them, the Newsom Administration did precisely the opposite. Parallel breaches of the cleanup obligations for DOE and NASA are expected shortly.

CBG and the impacted community had been played. The deal between the Newsom Administration and Boeing allows hundreds or thousands of times higher levels of contamination for many of the toxic chemicals to remain at the site unremediated. Most of Boeing’s chemically contaminated soil would never get cleaned up. If this sweetheart deal between the regulator and polluter is not reversed, the people living nearby will be forever at risk.

The polluters’ capture of the agencies that are supposed to ensure public protection is powerful. For 43 years we have tried to protect the innocent children and adults living near this environmental injustice. The fight isn’t over, but the betrayal stings.



LARRY YEE: STANDING UP AGAINST A GRAVE INJUSTICE



An extraordinary moment of hope and transformation occurred in the midst of the Santa Susana tragedy. When the then-Secretary of CalEPA broke his promise to enforce the longstanding cleanup agreement and not negotiate with Boeing about weakening it, and the resulting deal between Boeing and the toxics department was to be signed without opportunity for public input, the then-Chair of the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board, Larry Yee, courageously stood up. He insisted that the associated Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and Boeing be subject to a public hearing and vote of the Board. Not long thereafter, the CalEPA Secretary asked for Yee’s resignation. Yee subsequently took the extraordinary step of asking to speak before his former Board at the SSFL hearing, and in very dramatic testimony, disclosed what had happened, and called for his former colleagues to vote “No.”

Larry calls what happened “a grave injustice — the civil liberties of an entire community were trampled by an arbitrary government action that made a mockery of due process.” As he put it, “The net result is Boeing, the polluter, is protected, enjoying a much less stringent level of cleanup....The environment and people are not adequately protected and continue to suffer from the toxic contamination at SSFL.”

RADIATION VICTORY AT THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

AND A REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION

THE LIVES OF COUNTLESS people often depend upon a few words quietly inserted—or prevented from being inserted—into long technical reports of governmental and quasi-governmental organizations. This has been particularly true of studies on the health effects of ionizing radiation issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).

The NASEM studies are influential in setting radiation exposure standards by US EPA, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Department of Energy (DOE). The nuclear industry and governmental entities such as DOE that expose the public to radiation thus have a great incentive to try to influence NASEM reports so that standards are kept weak or weakened further, saving them money. There is pressure on NASEM to pack its panels with people with ties to DOE and industry and whose views tilt heavily toward relaxing radiation protection requirements.

DOE funded a recent NASEM panel to propose a research agenda for “low dose” radiation. CBG played a significant role in exposing that conflict of interest, raising objections to the tilt of its membership, and helping in the end prevent what could otherwise have been

a heavily biased report that would adversely affect communities impacted by nuclear weapons and power facilities, abandoned uranium mines, and the fallout from nuclear testing.

CBG’s Dan Hirsch was invited to make a formal presentation on the history of DOE suppressing its own studies showing health harm to workers and the public from DOE radiation. The revelations in that presentation apparently triggered further concern in the panel, given DOE’s sponsorship of the study.

Then, in a dramatic statement at the end of the last public session, Hirsch revealed the panel chair’s decades of working for DOE, which he had not revealed in his NASEM bio, and his history of questioning whether radiation at doses less than thousands of Xrays was dangerous at all or might even be good for you. In a stunning response, the panel chair affirmed that Hirsch had accurately described his views and his ties to DOE. This apparently contributed to efforts by some on the committee to make sure that no statements downplaying radiation risk were snuck into the report.

The final report did not give DOE and the nuclear industry what they wanted, and in fact concluded that



Screenshot of Dan Hirsch speaking at The National Academies meeting: "Developing A Long-Term Strategy for Low-Dose Radiation Research in the United States"

there was evidence that radiation is more dangerous than previously thought because in addition to causing cancer it is also associated with cardiovascular disease, neurological disorders, and immune dysfunction. In a remarkable preface by the chair, he acknowledged the long history of harm to impacted communities by DOE and industry activities, and the

concern about potential conflicts of interest, including his own, and stated his hope that those communities would view the report as one which had set aside such biases. The experience appears to have been a transformative Gandhian moment. We seem to have touched the heart of a previous adversary—a big part of what Bridge the Gap is all about.

REUTERS INVESTIGATION REVEALS POLLUTERS’ MISUSE OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS TO AVOID CLEANUP OBLIGATIONS

Boeing & SSFL Prime Example

IN JULY, REUTERS NEWS Service released an extraordinary year-long investigation led by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Jaimi Dowdell, exposing audacious efforts by corporate polluters to declare their contaminated sites to be “nature reserves” in order to get out of requirements to remediate their chemical and radioactive toxins. The article discloses how “Boeing and dozens

of other companies have granted ‘conservation easements’ on some of the most contaminated land in the U.S. Companies can save millions on cleanups with these deals....”

The Reuters investigation noted that in 2007 Boeing had entered into an agreement with the state for a full cleanup, “but most of that cleanup never happened. Now, Boeing is

Reuters’ continued on page 5

THE DEVIL'S CANYON

THIS HAS BEEN A GOOD year for the Newsom Administration breaking legally binding agreements about dangerous nuclear sites and a bad year for those concerned about nuclear risks. Newsom rammed through, in literally the last hour of the legislative session, a bill to override a 2016 agreement he had boasted of having helped broker to phase out the Diablo Canyon reactors by 2024 and 2025. Unless somehow reversed, that aging and exquisitely dangerous atomic plant will be a massive risk for years or decades longer.

Forty years ago, we fought against the opening of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant and we fought thereafter for its closure. CBG's "Truth to Power" campaign, led in part by S. David Freeman, played a significant role in exposing safety problems at Diablo and creating the conditions

for the phase-out agreement to be reached. Now the boulder has rolled back down the hill again.

At the time it proposed constructing the reactors, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) claimed there were no active earthquake faults within 30 kilometers and therefore the plant didn't need to be designed to withstand any significant earthquake. When the plant was largely complete, PG&E conceded there was a powerful fault, the Hosgri, just offshore. Then three others were discovered nearby, one coming within 600 meters of the reactors. The faults were capable of larger quakes than the plant was designed to withstand.

Each Diablo reactor contains, while operating, one thousand times the long-lived radioactivity of the Hiroshima bomb. If the cooling is disrupted—by earthquake, accident, or

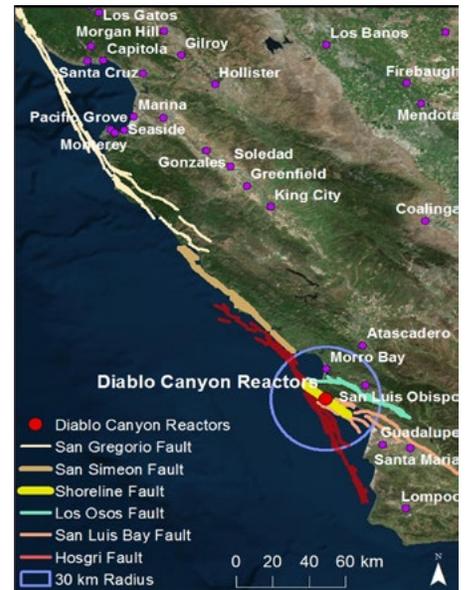
terrorist attack—that radioactivity can be released, contaminating wide swaths of California. Continued operation increases the risk of such a catastrophe, and in any case will produce large amounts of more high level radioactive waste, dangerous for ten thousand generations, for which we still have no safe method of disposal. Each year the reactors run, they produce enough plutonium to create the equivalent of a hundred nuclear weapons.

Newsom's midnight (actually 1 a.m.) Diablo deal gives PG&E a "forgivable" loan of \$1.4 billion to keep Diablo running beyond its current license period.

Thus, continued opera-

tion of Diablo steals funds that are critically needed for far more cost-effective renewables to address climate change. The deal is a lose-lose for the environment.

Look for "On the Brink of Disaster" on the Discovery Science Channel featuring CBG's Dan Hirsch on the seismic risks at Diablo Canyon.



*Earthquake Faults Near Diablo Canyon
Slide by Evan Morgan*

NEW PROJECT: EXPOSING & COUNTERING NUCLEAR GREENWASHING

DURING THIS YEAR'S FIGHT OVER THE EXTENSION of Diablo Canyon, we noticed a curious trend in the media coverage: in story after story, environmentalists were being portrayed as divided over nuclear power. Upon investigation, many of these supposed pro-nuclear environmentalists turned out to have dubious backgrounds or outright industry ties. Dan Richard, for instance, was widely quoted as a "green" advocating for the Diablo Canyon extension – without disclosing that he is a former Vice President and head of lobbying for PG&E, the owner of the Diablo Nuclear Plant. The group he was said to be affiliated with, Carbon Free California, is funded in turn "through" an organization which states that among its primary purposes is to be a financial pass-through.

If key voices loudly proclaiming for a nuclear renaissance are not really environmentalists but rather a closely coordinated and well-funded campaign, the public deserves to know. And the misleading assertions they make need to be countered. At a time when much of Europe is at risk of radioactive exposure because of attacks on Ukrainian reactors, while nearly half of France's much-touted fleet of nuclear plants are shut down because of worrisome cracks and corrosion in key cooling piping, and the first new nuclear plant in the U.S. in three decades is coming in twice over budget and years behind schedule, nuclear propagandists are continuing a full-court press of PR claiming nukes are safe and cheap, and the problem of radioactive waste dangerous for tens of generations can be ignored. We have launched a new project uncovering the interlocking network of funders and advocates behind the current wave of pro-nuclear misinformation and to fight back with facts.

Stay tuned in the coming year as we use this work to bring clarity and integrity to the debate over the future of nuclear power.

HUNTERS POINT: THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE CONVERGE

On July 16, 1945, the USS Indianapolis departed Hunters Point Shipyard in San Francisco carrying components of a bomb code-named “Little Boy” to Tinian Island. On August 6, the plane Enola Gay left Tinian and dropped the A-bomb on Hiroshima. A little less than a year later, the first post-war nuclear tests were conducted at the Bikini Atoll, contaminating scores of ships, which were brought back to Hunters Point, then as now a low-income community of color, for “decontamination.” This produced widespread radioactive contamination, and the site is now a Superfund site.

CBG has been working to help the impacted community in the face of a botched cleanup and captured agencies. We helped disclose findings by EPA--which it had not made public--of evidence of widespread fabrication or falsification of radiation measurements at Hunters Point. We subsequently showed that retesting efforts were also flawed. Recently, we have helped disclose the significance of Navy measurements of strontium-90, a particularly dangerous radionuclide, above cleanup levels in areas that were supposed to have already been cleaned up. And we helped reveal through the news media that the US EPA was now saying it would not comply with a Proposition overwhelmingly passed by San Francisco voters requiring cleanup to the most protective EPA standards.

The human impacts occasioned by polluting entities and captured regulators were poignantly made clear recently by a request we received from the leader of a marvelous community garden one quarter of a mile from the Hunters Point Superfund site, concerned about potential contami-

nation of the soil in which the produce grows. Her garden serves a housing co-op community of 300 families with many children, having provided in the last 10 years over 4 tons of organic fruits and vegetables to the families. She wrote, “I would be devastated to think that we are further adding to the toxic burden of our families.” She is providing fresh produce in a “food desert” to an environmental justice community and should not have to worry about such matters. Nor should she have to turn to us for help because those responsible for the nearby toxic chemical and radioactive contamination keep cutting corners on safety. We’ll keep trying to help this impacted community deal with the legacy of the nuclear arms race.

Check out our website for a link to the NBC Bay Area piece on Hunters Point and the Navy’s rejection of its own findings of Strontium-90 hot spots at the Superfund site.



*Aerial view of Shot Baker, Operation Crossroads, July 25, 1946, ships in foreground
Photo:US Army Photographic Signal Corps*

REUTERS - CONTINUED

pursuing an unorthodox strategy that could enable it to bypass cleaning up much of the land. The company is using a legal agreement meant to preserve nature to argue that it should be allowed to leave much of the pollution untouched.” The Reuters analysis of the cleanup standards in Boeing’s new deal with

the state shows “Boeing’s cleanup could allow some chemicals to remain at levels tens, hundreds, and even thousands of times higher than previously promised.”

Reuters disclosed that dozens of other polluters were attempting the same way of escaping cleanup responsibilities, in the guise of protecting nature. But as environmental toxicologist

Frank von Hippel noted, “If the property is not safe for people, then it certainly is not safe for much of the wildlife.”

Bridge the Gap’s work has long been two-fold: attempting to win concrete protections for the environment and the public while trying to pull back the veil hiding the way powerful interests exercise control

over agencies that are supposed to protect the public from polluters but instead protect the polluters. The Reuters investigation was a major contribution in lifting that shroud of secrecy.

To find a link to read the full Reuters article visit our website at committeeto-bridgethegap.org

SNATCHING HOPE

by Catherine Lincoln, Executive Director



THIS NEWSLETTER IS the 17th that I have edited for CBG. It seems like a long time, until I reflect the forty plus years that CBG has worked to ensure the cleanup of the heavily polluted Santa Susana Field Lab. Martin Luther King, Jr is often quoted as saying the “arc of the moral universe is long,

but it bends toward justice.” But it does seem that the arc is bending VERY slowly and at times seems to snap backwards.

Years ago, during the fight to stop the proposed Ward Valley nuclear waste dump, I attended a public hearing held by the Department of Energy to defend the intended sale of irradiated metals from various nuclear facilities. These metals would be recycled and melted down to be used in any number of products from strollers to zippers. A reporter asked the panel why they would go to the trouble of selling these metals as they could not possibly make much money. In a remarkably candid answer, the DOE

representative said they were not concerned with making money, they were doing this for “cost avoidance.” The proper, safe disposal of radioactive waste was expensive.

While I knew that government agencies could not always be trusted, I was shocked to hear that the people’s health and welfare took a back seat to the bottom line. Economic pressures are often the driving force behind crucial environmental decisions. The thwarted cleanup at SSFL is a good example. Boeing has spent millions on lobbying and PR campaigns to avoid 95% of the cleanup – because proper cleanup of their mess is expensive.

It is easy to become cynical and discouraged. Especially when years of struggle and accomplishments are overturned by the stroke a

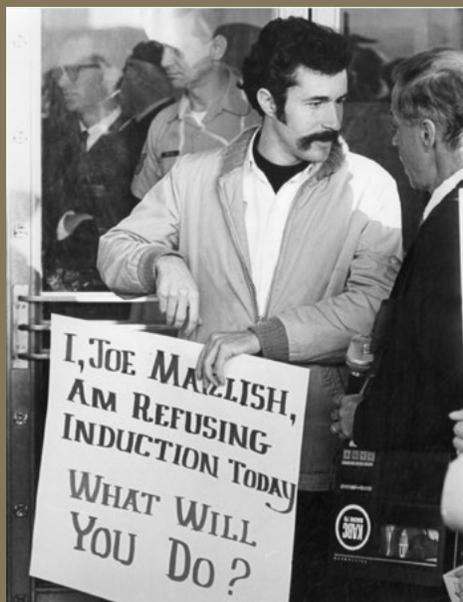
pen or the insertion of a new table in the back of a report. Yet as I work with the vibrant young staff at CBG, I find hope for the future knowing that their time with CBG is preparing them to keep the work going for decades to come. Working with CBG has inspired them to take on new roles in healing the world. Some, like Maria (Sedi) Caine and Nicolas Snyder are now pursuing environmental law degrees, while our current staff has taken on more of the responsibility of speaking truth to power.

So, join me in snatching hope from the jaws of despair and please make a contribution to CBG’s important work! You can donate online at www.committetobridgethegap.org or use the donation envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

In Memoriam: Joe Maizlish

Joe Maizlish—war resister, gentle soul, and dear friend of Bridge the Gap—died March 16, 2022. While a graduate student in history at UCLA in 1968, to protest the Vietnam War, Joe gave up his draft deferment and publicly refused induction. He served 2 ½ years in various federal prisons, a substantial amount of the time in solitary confinement. In the decades since, Joe was always a peacemaker, bridging gaps.

He helped found the Southern California Nonviolence Community. He advocated for a peaceful and just resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. When the militant Jewish Defense League and supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization were demonstrating about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and about to come to blows, Joe and others from Bridge



the Gap demonstrated as well, for a resolution that respected the genuine rights of both peoples. The police asked us if we would be willing to place ourselves between the JDL and PLO supporters as a buffer to try to defuse the situation and prevent violence, which we did, at a bit of risk, and the result was no violence.

Joe was for his whole life a force of peace, trying to find a way to resolve conflicts without violence. In his person, he also embodied the values of gentleness, humility, and caring that he worked for in the world at large. The picture, at left, exemplifies who he was at heart: someone who did the right thing, at great personal cost, and who gently asked us all, what are we going to do to help transform a world filled with war?

MEET THE STAFF

CBG'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR, HAAKON WILLIAMS & ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, AUDREY FORD

Haakon and Audrey have worked with CBG since 2018 as volunteers, research associates, and now directors. CBG takes seriously its cultivation of the next generation of activists. After four years of work – researching, writing, speaking truth to power, and helping run the ship – they've shared some reflections on the journey so far.

"The two of us have known each other since long before our work at CBG. In our days together in college, we frequently lamented the state of the world and struggled to imagine ways of life that honor the incredible challenge and potential of our time. With CBG, we are overjoyed to find ourselves on just such a path. And like any good hike, we are changed people now from those who began it: we have seen the stunning vistas possible on this path, yet also have gotten some scrapes from the tough lessons this terrain teaches. How to be bold without sacrificing accuracy and strategy? How to focus and prioritize ruthlessly without losing the softness to be caring? Nurturing



our networks is essential, yet so is maintaining boundaries. We bring our full selves to this work, and strive to not only complete the tasks that need doing but to approach them as practice in applying the lessons of our lives. We are deeply grateful for the tutelage of the legendary Dan Hirsch, and feel privileged to wake up every morning knowing that we are, as best we can, helping the world heal."

CBG'S RESEARCH ASSOCIATES



Alex Dodd: Over the past year, I have learned so much from my work at CBG. The struggles at both the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and the Santa Susana Field Laboratory have taught me that change takes not only hard work, but time. Battles may be lost, but the fight continues – and there are a multitude of forms that fight can take. Exploring those different avenues of change has made my engagement with HPNS and

SSFL all the more interesting, and I look forward to continuing to do so in the upcoming year.



Chris Clarici: I joined CBG as an intern in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and returned every quarter until I was offered employment in late 2021. Since then, I have graduated from UCSC with a BA in Anthropology and minor in Sustainability Studies, and moved to Boston with my fiancé. My favorite thing about our organization is the pride I feel when I tell people about our work saving people and our planet from greedy

polluters' toxic messes. I look forward to continuing to help change the world and hopefully using my East Coast location as an asset!

Lauren Rice: I stumbled across CBG's website when looking for a summer research opportunity. While initially drawn to CBG because of the work done at Hunters Point and Santa Susana, I've continued to be motivated and inspired by the hard work, character, and passion of each and every CBG team member. I am currently working for a rigorous cleanup of Hunters Point, to ensure the polluting entities are not able to continue to harm the health of the surrounding community. I am a college junior at Duke University, studying Environmental Science and Policy and International Comparative Studies, and I hope to go into a career in environmental justice and law. I am honored to be part of such a tenacious and dedicated organization."



CBG NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Your generous donations make this vital work possible.

Please send a donation or give online at www.committeetobridgethegap.org



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NUCLEAR DANGERS & A SAFE,
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HELP COMMITTEE TO BRIDGE THE GAP MEET THE CHALLENGES AHEAD!

Dear Friends,

CBG has a deep commitment to protecting the world and future generations from nuclear and other threats – and as the challenges of the past year have demonstrated, that work is far from over.

Supporting CBG's important work requires money. CBG is training a new generation of environmental activists and working to prevent the deadly growth of nuclear risks, which means that your donation will be turned directly into action. Your contribution is crucial, especially now. Please take a moment to show your support—there are lots of ways! CBG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization—donations are tax-deductible.

1. Send a check using the enclosed donation envelope
2. Give online at committeetobridgethegap.org. We take Paypal and credit cards!
3. Transfer stock or securities
4. Leave something in your will
5. Make CBG a beneficiary of your IRA or (if over 70 ½) make a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) from your IRA.
6. Sign up for Action Alerts by sending your email address to committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com or introduce someone else to CBG.

Thank You!

Catherine Lincoln, *Executive Director*

Questions? Call (831) 336-8003

or email committeetobridgethegap@gmail.com for more information

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