



Winter Report

Congress launches major attack on environment

Progress on clean water, clean air in jeopardy

Over the past year, with much of the public's attention focused on the economy, anti-environmental extremists in Congress have launched an all-out attack on the laws that protect our waterways, from the Puget Sound to the Great Lakes to the Chesapeake Bay—as well as the air we breathe and the places we love. It's the most radical, reckless attack on our environment in our lifetimes.

Air, water and EPA itself in the crosshairs

Polluters and their allies in Congress have doubled down on their efforts to weaken or eliminate environmental protections. Lobbyists for fossil fuel industries, mining companies, developers and corporate agribusiness have lined the halls of Congress to lobby for rollbacks, and it seems that every piece of must-pass legislation is a vehicle for anti-environmental riders.

According to U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, in the House alone, lawmakers have cast an incredible 191 roll call votes on measures that would block the EPA from keeping our waters clean, making our air safer to breathe, or enforcing other environmental protections.

Back in February 2011, the U.S. House rammed through a budget bill that took aim at our rivers and streams, our air quality and funding for some of America's most beloved places, from Maine's Acadia National Park to Washington's Mount Rainier. In August, the House passed a bill containing 39 separate environmental attacks. In December, they passed



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SpeakerBoehner/Flickr

▲ In 2011 the House held nearly 200 votes on anti-environment measures, including ones that would allow more pollution of America's air and water.

a funding bill that would have made it virtually impossible for federal agencies like the EPA to protect public health and the environment.

71,000 stand strong for environment

Fortunately, by harnessing public support, so far we've successfully blocked each of these attacks. Our canvassers have gone door to door in communities across the country, educating more than 500,000

people over the last year on the importance of clean water protections. Our activists sent in 71,000 comments in support of the EPA's plan to protect America's waterways.

Thanks to the support of our members, and the president's commitment to veto the worst proposals, we've helped ensure the Senate rejected several of the worst proposals this fall.

Sen. Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)
1st term Democrat from Maryland.

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 Visit Sen. Benjamin Cardin's candidate bio page.

Residence: Baltimore
Marital Status: Married (Myra)
Prev. Occupation: Attorney
Prev. Political Exp.: MD House, 1967-67; US House, 1967-2007
Education: BA University of Pittsburgh, 1964; LLB University of Maryland, 1967
Birthdate: 10/05/1943
Birthplace: Baltimore, MD
Religion: Jewish

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Find out how your representatives in Congress are voting on the environment.

Visit our online scorecard at www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/scorecard

To our members

I've got good news, bad news and better news. First the good news. As we closed the book on 2011 and began 2012 we had the chance to celebrate three real victories: ground-breaking standards to get cleaner cars on the road, rules to cut mercury pollution, and a decision by the Obama administration to protect the Grand Canyon from uranium mining. The bad news? Polluters are using our hard-won victories as an excuse to roll back progress. In the fall, there were nearly 200 votes in the U.S. House to roll back the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act and much more.

Fortunately, there's better news. State legislatures are back in session and we expect to see progress—more solar, more wind, more efficient buildings, and efforts from Maine to Washington state to protect state parks and other places that make this nation great. And the best news of all? We know that Americans care deeply about our air and water, our families' health and the places we love. No matter how powerful the special interests may be, when people come together to defend our environmental values, we almost always find a way to win. Thanks for joining us.



Margie Alt, Executive Director

Recent action

White House's clean cars proposal moves forward

This summer, the Obama administration announced a plan to require cars and trucks to meet a 54.5 miles per gallon standard by 2025. In November, the administration opened a public comment period on the proposed standards—the first step toward making them a reality.

The standards mark the biggest step America has ever taken to fight global warming, and many additional benefits would result as well. By 2025, American families will use 23 billion fewer gallons of oil and save \$45 billion at the pump annually. Our report "Gobbling Less Gas for Thanksgiving" spelled out how much American families would have saved during the holidays if the standards were in effect today.

With the National Auto Dealers Association lobbying to weaken the new standards, and their allies in Congress vowing to block them, this victory is not yet a done deal. Our staff, members and allies are backing up the Obama administration's effort to seize this important opportunity to get America off oil and curb global warming.

Solar jobs provide bright spot in dim economy

In addition to all the benefits solar energy provides to the environment, it is also one of the bright spots in the U.S. economy, with solar jobs growing by 6.8 percent last year—almost ten times faster than the rest of the economy.

The good news came from the National Solar Jobs Census 2011, which Environment America released in partnership with the Solar Foundation. Our staff released the report across the country, joined by local solar supporters. "This report shows that solar jobs are putting people to work across the country to repower our economy while protecting our environment and our health," said Environment America's Courtney Abrams. Ranking in the top 10 for solar jobs were California, Colorado, Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, New York and Massachusetts, all places where our state affiliates have mounted successful campaigns to require that a greater percentage of the state's electricity comes from solar energy.



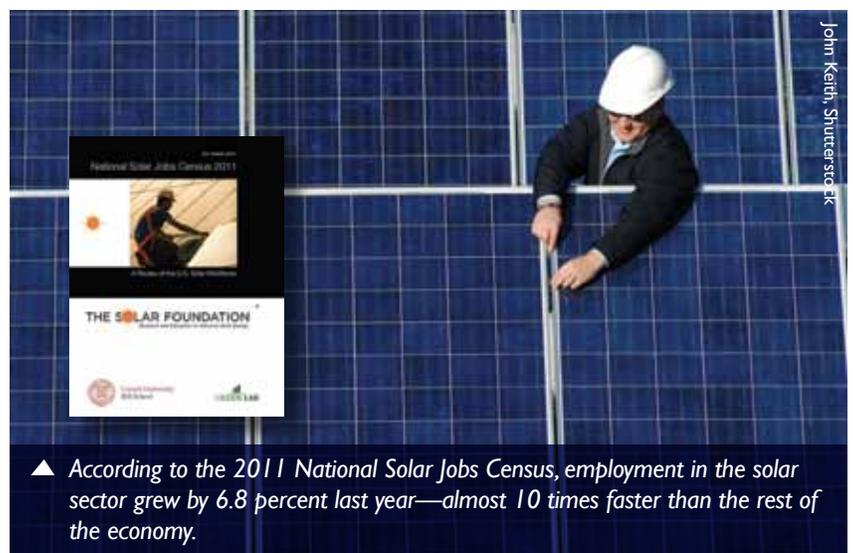
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THE SOLAR FOUNDATION

▲ According to the 2011 National Solar Jobs Census, employment in the solar sector grew by 6.8 percent last year—almost 10 times faster than the rest of the economy.

John Keith, Shutterstock



Report: State action promises way forward on global warming

Droughts and wildfires in Texas, heat waves in the Gulf States and in Washington, D.C., massive floods in the Midwest and Northeast...Over the past year, extreme weather has provided nearly daily reminders of what scientists warn could be “the new normal” as fossil fuel pollution warms our world.

To avoid the worst consequences of global warming, we must dramatically reduce the carbon pollution that we pump into the atmosphere—and soon. Clearly Washington is not doing enough, and is stalled by the influence of Big Oil and the coal industry, and the hyper-partisan politics in Congress.

State action could reduce emissions 20%

Fortunately, even without action in Congress in the short term, victories in cities and states across the country are beginning to make a real difference. According to a report we released this fall, we can dramatically reduce global warming emissions through continued state and local action. The report, “The Way Forward on Global Warming,” shows how policies implemented at the local, state and federal levels can cut the nation’s carbon pollution by 20 percent from 2008 levels by 2020 and 34 percent by 2030.

Furthermore, our study documents that many of the policies our state staff have championed in state capitols have already yielded a reduction of more than 539 million tons of carbon pollution—equivalent to 7 percent of U.S. global warming pollution in 2007. Thanks in part to policies like renewable energy standards, energy efficiency programs, clean car standards, and state and regional greenhouse gas caps, America’s global warming emissions in 2009 were the lowest they have been since 1995.

According to former Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter, “When we adopt clean energy policies, people see the environmental and economic benefits, and they value them. That is how we will build the clean energy economy and reduce emissions.”

Gov. Ritter currently serves as Director of the Center for a New Energy Economy at Colorado State University and joined us for the release of our report.

States shift to clean energy

Across the nation, we are waging campaigns that tap into broad public support for clean energy. We’re promoting increases in solar energy in Arizona, Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota, California, Florida, New Mexico and North Carolina. Our staff are championing energy efficiency in Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania, and working to get Massachusetts and California to make all new buildings zero net energy by 2030. Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor has helped launch a campaign to put a measure on the ballot next year to double the state’s renewable energy standard.

“The good news is that local and state government-led actions have already cut carbon emissions by relying more on clean energy—America now produces five times as much wind power and eight times as much solar power as we did seven years ago,” said Sargent. “By tapping into public support for clean energy and demonstrating that these solutions work, we can overcome the entrenched opposition of the fossil fuel industry and their allies in Congress.”



Staff in action

Environment America’s Rob Sargent released “The Way Forward on Global Warming” this fall. Visit our new website to read the report: www.EnvironmentAmerica.org



Questions for EPA

Administrator Lisa Jackson

EPA has recently worked on several clean air standards including the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. Can you explain what these standards mean for the average American family?

These new Clean Air Act standards mean cleaner, healthier air for American families.

The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule are part of a series of common sense steps under the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions of mercury, acid gas, particulate matter, arsenic and other harmful chemicals from some of the biggest polluters in the nation.

These reasonable steps will provide dramatic protections to our children and loved ones—they will save tens of thousands of lives and prevent hundreds of thousands of asthma and heart attacks.

What’s the best way for our members and supporters to express their opinions on these issues?

Unfortunately, we are at a point where we have to remind some leaders in Washington to put the health of their constituents above the wish lists of special interests. Speaking directly to those who want to undermine common sense environmental protections is one of the best ways to stand up for your right to clean air and clean water.

For the full interview, visit www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/page/ame/Lisa-Jackson-interview

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Alan English/CPA/Photo

Environment America

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open space. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment America. We focus exclusively on protecting America's air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Protections secured for Grand Canyon, national forests

In the past several months, Environment America celebrated two long-awaited victories for some of America's best-loved places.

In October, a federal appeals court reaffirmed protection for nearly 50 million acres of roadless areas in our national forests, from the Rockies to the Appalachians. The "Roadless Rule," which was initially finalized in 2000 after our hard-fought campaign, had been tied up in the courts for the past decade.

On Jan. 9, the Obama administration banned new mining on 1 million acres around the Grand Canyon for the next 20 years—a huge victory for Environment America, our allies, and the hundreds of thousands of activists who joined our call for protections. With nearly 1,100 uranium mining claims already staked as close as two miles to the Grand Canyon, this will stop the mining industry from turning our national treasure into a toxic waste dump, and protect wildlife and the Colorado river.



◀ *Executive Director Margie Alt snowshoeing in Colorado's White River National Forest, one of many that will be better protected thanks to the Roadless Rule.*