



Fall Report

Wind power: An American success story?

The next chapter is up to Congress

How's this for an environmental and economic success story? Wind power is now generating enough energy to power 10 million American homes, while bringing down energy costs by 90 percent. In Minnesota, wind now provides 10 percent of the state's electricity. In Iowa, it's 15 percent.

So what do some in Congress want to do? Pull the rug out from the industry by letting key clean energy tax credits expire. If these forces in Washington, D.C., get their way, 37,000 Americans will likely lose their jobs, and American manufacturing of wind turbines will come to a screeching halt.

Pollution-free power

"Letting these tax credits expire is a bad idea any way you look at it," said Environment America's Courtney Abrams. "Wind energy is providing Americans with pollution-free power and putting people to work across the country. Why end something that's working so well?"

The good news is that we have the president on our side. He listed the wind incentives among his "Top 5 To-Dos" for Congress this summer. Even Republican political consultant Karl Rove has said Congress should extend the credit.

Big Oil is opposed

But Big Oil and other polluting industries have already begun to weigh in against the incentive, and with only a few short months until it expires, we're running out of time.



Randy Geise

▲ *Wind farm near Ruthton, Minn.: Wind energy in America has surged in recent years benefiting the environment and creating jobs; That success is now at risk.*

So Environment America is ramping up our efforts, lobbying key members of Congress, reaching out to editorial boards, and organizing public support to get this key wind policy across the finish line before the end of the year.

We're also working to get the first wind turbines spinning off America's coast within the next five years.

In addition to campaigning for wind power, we're working to help Minnesota, Arizona, Oregon and other states get at least 10 percent of their energy from solar power by 2030. Our advocates and members in Massachusetts celebrated a major victory for solar in August, when Gov. Deval Patrick signed a bill that will dramatically expand access to solar energy for families, businesses and local governments.



Dennis Schroeder / NREL

more online

Visit our website to voice your support for American wind power and the clean energy tax credits at:
www.EnvironmentAmerica.org

◀ Aerial view of wind turbines, National Wind Technology Center near Boulder, Colo.



To our members

After one of the hottest summers on record (thousands of heat records were broken in July alone) and irrefutable evidence that we're experiencing more extreme weather (our report documents 30 percent more extreme precipitation events since 1948), it is patently obvious that we're facing some of the implications of global warming.

While we continue to do our best to make the nation more energy efficient, it's clear that it matters which elected officials represent us.

Thus, Environment America has endorsed President Barack Obama for re-election and is working to support pro-environment candidates for office in the states at all levels of government. Here's hoping we end the year with more leaders who are champions for a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

Don't forget to vote!

Yours,

Margie Alt
Executive Director

Recent action

3 million support limits on carbon pollution

While thousands of heat records were being broken across the country, Environment America staff and activists worked with colleagues in the environmental and public health communities to demonstrate record levels of support for limiting the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

After the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the first-ever carbon pollution standards for new power plants in March, we helped to generate more than 3 million public comments in favor of the proposed limits. That's more than twice the record for any previous environmental rule. A significant showing of support came from citizens in coal-burning states like Ohio and Pennsylvania. We are urging the Obama administration to finalize this standard and to act to reduce pollution from existing plants as well.

Los Angeles among latest to ban plastic bags

Dozens of communities along the West Coast have passed bans on single-use plastic bags, helping curb one of the biggest sources of the plastic pollution that is wreaking havoc on sea birds, turtles and other marine life.

After a successful campaign by Environment California, Los Angeles joined the more-than-50 communities in California to ban plastic bags. To persuade the Los Angeles City Council to adopt the ban, we organized thousands of residents to make calls and send emails, and recruited Julia Roberts, Edward Norton, Jeff Goldblum, Bonnie Raitt and other local celebrities to endorse the ban.

Other state affiliates also helped win plastic bag bans in Portland, Ore., and Seattle. We are looking to secure statewide bans in all three West Coast states by 2013.



▲ At LA's City Hall the day of the bag ban vote: (l-r) Legislative Director Dan Jacobson rallied the crowd; Marshall Wright checked in with City Councilman Paul Krekorian; Environment California supporters and staff turned out en masse to back the bill.

Communities fight the rush to drill for gas

As gas drilling booms across the country, Environment America is working to stop hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) and protect our health and environment from its impacts.

Pumping millions of gallons of toxic fluid at thousands of drilling wells, this dangerous and weakly-regulated drilling practice is contaminating drinking water sources, turning forests and rural landscapes into industrial zones, making families sick with air pollution and emitting global warming pollution.

Environment America is raising public awareness of fracking and helping to coordinate a nationwide effort to regulate, restrict and ultimately end the dangerous practice.

Because the oil and gas industry has secured exemptions for fracking from many of our national environmental laws, the biggest battles are playing out in the states. And our state affiliates are in the thick of it.

Calling on Cuomo

Environment New York has been engaged in a two-and-a-half year campaign to keep the Empire State free from fracking. Recently, we intensified our public education efforts, talking with more than 100,000 New Yorkers face-to-face, mobilizing nearly 40,000 supporters to email and petition Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and highlighting the risks of fracking in the media. In response to opposition, the governor scaled back his administration’s plans to open the door to drilling. We’re urging him to keep New York totally free from fracking.

Meanwhile, across the Hudson River, Environment New Jersey focused efforts on banning the import of toxic fracking waste. Environment New Jersey helped coordinate a Lobby Day, during which more than 150 activists showed their support for the ban in Trenton. Our supporters also delivered more than 1,500

emails and phone calls to legislators. On June 25, the Legislature overwhelmingly approved a ban on the processing of fracking waste in the state.

We’re also working to address threats from fracking in more than a dozen other states, including Colorado, New Mexico, Virginia, North Carolina, Illinois and Ohio.

New national standards approved

This summer, fracking was addressed twice at the federal level, beginning with the Obama administration’s recent approval of new national standards for reducing air pollution from gas extraction operations.

Taking a further step in the right direction, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed guidelines for fracking where toxic diesel is used. While praising this step in the right direction, we are urging the agency to ban the use of diesel in fracking altogether. As the EPA’s comment period came to a close in mid-August, we released “Diesel and Drinking Water Don’t Mix,” to fortify the case for a diesel ban.



In the news

Environment New York Field Organizer Eric Whelan helped mobilize the 40,000 supporters who petitioned Gov. Cuomo to oppose fracking.



Summer of support

Thousands of Americans speak out in support of clean water

This summer, millions of Americans traveled to their favorite lakes and rivers to swim, kayak, fish and enjoy the most beautiful waters our nation has to offer. Unfortunately, many of these beloved waters are at risk.

In April 2011, President Obama proposed much-needed guidelines to protect the rivers, lakes and streams across the country that are vulnerable to pollution and development thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions.

However, the long-overdue protections have yet to be finalized. Recently, they have fallen victim to partisan politics and face heavy blowback from polluters like ExxonMobil and the American Farm Bureau, which in July launched a major campaign to stop the proposed guidelines.

To counter their efforts and push these protections over the finish line, this summer Environment America staff pounded the pavement across the country, talking to more than 200,000 Americans about the issue and getting many of them involved. We also harnessed the support of 187 family farmers and more than 400 local elected officials who care about clean water.

Despite three separate attempts to block the Obama administration’s efforts in Congress, our persistence is beginning to pay off. We helped demonstrate enough public support this summer to convince the leadership in the U.S. Senate to ensure that dirty water bills did not pass.

In the coming months, we will continue to stand up to big polluters and keep up the fight for all our beloved lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, ensuring our waters are protected for generations to come.

RNN TV

Art Moore/Creative Commons

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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.

Environment America endorses President Obama

Looking back on the accomplishments of President Barack Obama's first term, we see real progress for our environment.

There will be cleaner cars on the road—cars that save oil and reduce carbon pollution. We now have new standards in place that will significantly reduce mercury, soot and smog pollution from power plants. And the nation has made historic levels of investment in clean energy.

In an election overrun with the influence of Big Oil and their allies, we need to make sure that the next president will continue to stand up for our families' health and the environmental values we share. We are also supporting pro-environment candidates for Congress.

Now is the time to keep making progress. We need to keep America moving forward toward cleaner air and water, protections for our special places and a clean energy future.



◀ PennEnvironment Director David Masur and his family with President Obama. The president has been a champion for the environment in his first term.

Visit us online for a list of our congressional endorsements:
www.EnvironmentAmerica.org

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