



## Summer Report

# On the verge of a clean water victory

## New protections for America's waterways at risk

America is on the verge of winning major new protections for millions of miles of streams that feed the nation's treasured waterways. But just as President Obama was about to sign off on the biggest victory for clean water in our country in decades, some polluter-friendly members of Congress began doing everything they could to block him.

## Biggest victory in a decade

From the Great Lakes in the Midwest to Puget Sound in Washington to the Guadalupe River in Texas and all the smaller waterways in between, Americans care deeply about our nation's waterways. But despite their popularity, for many years our waterways have not been nearly as protected or as safe as they once were.

Thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions in the last decade, nearly 60 percent of our streams—including many that feed into cherished waterways like the Chesapeake; more than 20 million acres of wetlands, which provide habitat for many animal and plant species and are critical to filtering and cleaning our waterways; and the drinking water for 117 million Americans' may not have been protected by the Clean Water Act.

Thankfully, last April, the Obama administration proposed new guidelines to restore protections to many of America's waterways, including those smaller waterways that feed and filter waters like the Chesapeake Bay.

Environment America played a critical



David Fulmer, Flickr



Nate Pica, Shutterstock

▲ From the Colorado River (left) to the Chesapeake Bay (right), all of America's waters deserve protection.

role in getting the administration to act—from talking to more than half a million people about the issue last year to gathering 88,000 public comments in support of the proposed guidelines to mobilizing more than 500 local elected officials, farmers and recreational businesses early this year.

In February, the administration announced that it was in the last stage

before officially finalizing these protections. Once they are final, this will be the biggest victory for our waterways in the last decade. But our work is not done. As we build support for the president to finalize the guidelines, many in Congress are working to stop it. Environment America is committed to defending these new protections, so Americans nationwide can enjoy clean water.



Staff

## more online



◀ [Environment America Clean Water Advocate Shelley Vinyard](#)

*Visit our website and tell the president that you want to see all of America's rivers, lakes and streams protected.*

[www.EnvironmentAmerica.org](http://www.EnvironmentAmerica.org)



## To our members

For us at Environment America, summer means lots of great things—more time in state and national parks, more chances to appreciate our lakes, streams and beaches, and of course our citizen outreach canvass.

This summer, we'll have nearly 1,000 outreach staff going door to door and working at busy intersections and events in communities across the country, talking to people face to face about the threats to the places we love, and giving folks easy opportunities to sign up and make their voices heard. After all, it's your voice and the voices of concerned citizens like you that make all of our work possible.

We all know that in state capitols and in Washington, D.C., polluters' dollars talk loudly. But when hundreds of thousands of us demand protections for a favorite lake, river or stream, or speak out to support limits on the carbon pollution that threatens our health and fuels global warming, we can, and we do, make ourselves heard. So if you bump into our staff this summer on your doorstep or at your farmers market, take advantage of the opportunity. And say hi for me!

Margie Alt, Executive Director



joelplutchak/Creative Commons

## How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment America or the Environment America Research & Policy Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentAmerica.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentAmerica.org).

## Recent action

### How to build a better, greener America

American families could cut the global warming pollution from buildings by 30 percent and save about \$450 every year on their heating bills by 2030 if we invest in energy efficiency today. These findings were included in "Building a Better America," a report released on March 8 by Environment America Research & Policy Center staff, along with the U.S. Green Building Council, local and state leaders, architects, builders and public health advocates.

In December, the Obama administration announced the Better Buildings Challenge, which includes 60 chief executives, mayors, university presidents and labor leaders. The leaders have committed to invest nearly \$2 billion of private capital into energy-efficiency projects to upgrade the performance of office, industrial, municipal, hospital, university, community college and school buildings. The administration also announced a \$2 billion commitment to energy upgrades of federal buildings using the long-term energy savings to pay for up-front costs, at no cost to taxpayers.

### California nears a million solar roofs

California is zeroing in on a million solar roofs with San Diego leading the way, thanks in large part to a program we spearheaded in 2006 and our ongoing work to achieve this massive goal. The state's leading solar cities were catalogued in an Environment California Research & Policy Center report released on January 25 at news events featuring the mayors of San Diego, Fresno and Sacramento, along with other local leaders. The report showed that California's top solar cities reflect a maturing solar market with cities like Fresno and Bakersfield competing with San Francisco. Some cities, like Sacramento and Los Angeles, saw a tripling of solar power in the past two years alone.

Looking ahead, Environment California is pushing to increase the state's rooftop solar market 12-fold by 2020, a goal embraced by Gov. Jerry Brown and more than 90 other elected officials.



Staff



Photon Energy, Flickr

▲ Environment California's Bernadette Del Chiaro at "California's Solar Cities 2012" report release. Already, California generates 1 gigawatt of rooftop solar power, and Environment California is working to increase this 12-fold by 2020.

# EPA moves to cut carbon pollution from power plants

In March, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed limits on carbon pollution from new power plants. When implemented, they will be the first nationwide limits on the largest single source of the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

As scientists, doctors and other experts have warned for years, cutting carbon pollution now is critical to avoiding the worst impacts of global warming—including everything from dirtier air and more deadly heat waves, to more devastating floods and extreme weather.

## In the path of the storm

In the weeks before the EPA's historic announcement, Environment America released a report documenting one of the reasons that action to cut carbon pollution and tackle global warming is needed. The report, "In the Path of the Storm," found that four out of five Americans live in areas that have been hit by at least one recent weather-related disaster, illustrating scientists' warning that global warming could lead to more frequent extreme weather events.

We created an interactive online map, available at [www.EnvironmentAmerica.org](http://www.EnvironmentAmerica.org), where citizens and decision-makers can see state-by-state and county-by-county incidents of weather-related disasters, showing where they hit and when. The report and map received extensive press attention, including stories in *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

The real battle began after the EPA's announcement, as utilities, coal companies and other corporate polluters began spending millions to convince the Obama administration to weaken or abandon the standards altogether.

## Scare tactics

Through paid ads and armies of lobbyists, polluters are trying to scare the American public and the Obama administration

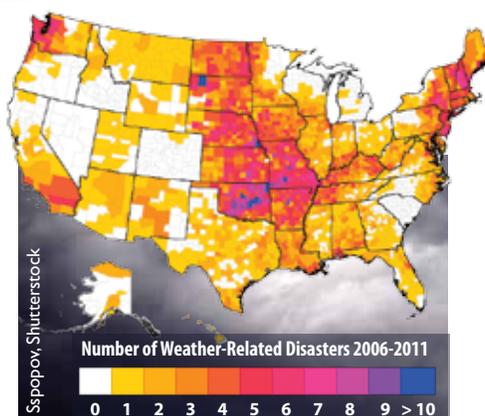
into thinking that we can't afford to adopt these commonsense standards.

But we are certain that the opposite is true. We can't afford to not adopt carbon pollution standards for power plants, the largest source of the pollution fueling global warming.

Environment America affiliates in Pa. and Ohio—two states we knew would be critical in this election year—launched an unprecedented push to educate and mobilize citizens in support of the standards.

Our on-the-ground organizers are gathering tens of thousands of public comments in support of the standards, holding press events to help raise the profile of the issue, and reaching out to public health groups and local environmental groups to demonstrate broad support.

If all goes well, the EPA is expected to finalize these carbon pollution standards by the end of 2012 and will begin developing standards to cut carbon pollution from existing coal-fired power plants in the near future as well.



## Extreme weather's local impact

*Our map shows the impacts of extreme weather across the country.*

Visit [www.EnvironmentAmerica.org](http://www.EnvironmentAmerica.org) to see how your county has been affected.



▲ Environment New Jersey's Dan DeRosa leads a clean energy rally.

## A program that works

As the first program in the nation to limit global warming emissions from power plants, the Northeast Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has helped show the nation that a program that sells pollution permits and uses the money to invest in clean energy options can work.

Despite its success—or perhaps because of it—fossil-fuel interests, such as the Koch brothers-sponsored Americans for Prosperity, have mounted a well-financed campaign to roll back this landmark program. In New Jersey, New Hampshire and Maine, Environment America's state affiliates are fighting to prevent backsliding on this precedent-setting policy.

In New Hampshire and Maine, we have already beaten back efforts to kill RGGI by highlighting the clean energy benefits of the program and mobilizing citizens along with allies in environmental, public health and national security groups. In New Jersey, our work to get the Legislature to block Gov. Chris Christie from pulling out of RGGI is having an impact.

So far, we have held the line on the rollbacks in those states, while laying the groundwork for strengthening the program in the coming year.

At the same time, we are campaigning to strengthen the program to reduce current carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020, 40 percent by 2030, and at least 80 percent by 2050. In December, we worked with allies to enlist 250 environmental groups, clean energy businesses, and public health officials on to a set of principles to strengthen the program.

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## Summer Report

VOLUME 5 | NO. 2 | 2012



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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.

## Crossing the Delaware: Groups win fracking reprieve

Home to bald eagles and major recreation spots, the Delaware River basin provides drinking water for 15 million people. Yet this is where the oil and gas industry wants to start fracking—a gas drilling technique involving toxic chemicals, contaminated wastewater and ruined landscapes.

Last year, the Delaware River Basin Commission proposed opening the watershed to fracking. In response, Environment America, our state affiliates and allies in the community mobilized more than 35,000 residents to oppose the plan. We also wrote to President Obama, reminding him of the Department of Energy committee's advice that "sensitive and/or unique areas" be kept "off-limits to gas drilling."

Lacking enough pro-drilling votes, the DRBC tabled its proposal in November. At least for now, the Delaware remains fracking-free. Our fight will continue as long as dangerous drilling threatens our environment.



◀ PennEnvironment's Erika Staaf, right, and Environment New Jersey's Doug O'Malley, left, delivered more than 40,000 public comments opposing drilling near the Delaware River.