



## Fall Report

# Interior Secretary: No mining near Grand Canyon

## Fight continues as House votes to block move

In June, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced his support for a ban on toxic uranium mining around the Grand Canyon—a victory our staff, activists, and coalition partners worked for months to win. But no sooner had the secretary made his announcement than Congress moved to block him.

### 1,100 mining claims next to the canyon

From its jagged cliffs to the winding Colorado River that runs through it, the Grand Canyon is one of the world's natural wonders. But our national treasure is at risk: Mining companies have staked roughly 1,100 uranium mining claims within just five miles of Grand Canyon National Park, posing a serious threat of contamination to the park itself and the 25 million people who drink water from the Colorado River.

### More than 300,000 urge ban on mining near the park

When we alerted our online activist network to the threat to the Grand Canyon, people sprang into action. In June, Environment America and our allies delivered more than 300,000 public comments to the Department of Interior urging Secretary Salazar to protect the Grand Canyon from new mining claims.

On June 20, after an intense lobbying effort by Executive Director Margie Alt and others, Secretary Salazar announced that he would focus his agency on moving to withdraw 1 million acres around the grand canyon from new mining claims for up to 20 years with a final decision



▲ Secretary Salazar announces his plan to protect 1 million acres around the Grand Canyon from mining.

expected in December. The secretary's announcement is a huge victory, but it is far from secure. In July, the House Appropriations Committee passed a bill that would undermine the secretary's decision and allow more mining near the Grand Canyon. Environment America rallied our members to oppose this brazen assault on the place we love. As of this writing, the bill had yet to pass the Senate—and we're working to keep it that way.

Environment America is continuing to fight toxic mining wherever it threatens special places. In July, we released "Grand Canyon at Risk," a report highlighting the harm caused by uranium mining in the Southwest. Our organizers released the report in Albuquerque, San Diego, Boulder, Tempe, Denver and Washington, D.C. Now we are setting our sights on protecting Yosemite National Park, which is endangered by mining near the park's borders.



## more online



Visit our website to read the full report, "Grand Canyon at Risk: Uranium Mining Doesn't Belong Near Our National Treasures."

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





## To our members

Washington, D.C., is paralyzed by partisan warfare and dominated by powerful economic interests. But does that mean environmental progress is impossible?

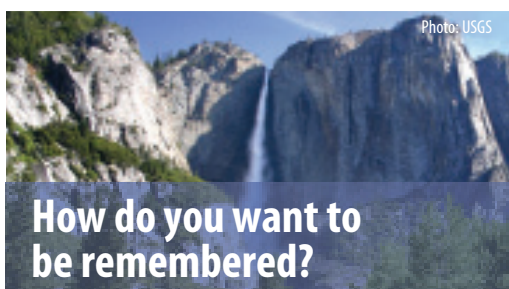
Not quite. You just have to look beyond D.C. to the cities and state capitols where our staff and members are making a real difference.

Thanks in large part to our work, more than one-third of California's and Colorado's energy will come from renewable sources. In Maine, we passed a bill requiring the state to reduce its oil dependence.

From Los Angeles to Portland, West Coast communities are banning the plastic bags that pollute the Pacific. PennEnvironment won the largest settlement against an illegal water polluter in state history.

While much remains to be done, I am proud of what we've accomplished together. I hope you are too.

Margie Alt  
Executive Director



## 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.

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

## Recent action

### States lead the way on global warming

When it comes to global warming, it's easy to succumb to despair, especially given the anti-environmental rhetoric and lack of action in Washington. Yet there is a way forward—and it starts in the states.

State and local governments have adopted clean energy policies that are projected to cut more than 500 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution per year by 2020—nearly 10 percent of our nation's current emissions. And our research shows we have the potential to go even further. In September, Energy Program Director Rob Sargent unveiled a study showing that states can cut carbon pollution by 20 percent by 2020 by adopting clean energy and transportation policies like renewable energy standards, building energy codes and expanded public transportation.

### New standards will cut mercury, save 34,000 lives

This year the Environmental Protection Agency took major steps to cut toxic air pollution from power plants.

In March, the EPA proposed the first-ever nationwide limits on mercury pollution from power plants. The new rule would cut mercury emissions by 91 percent—a huge victory, given mercury's effects on how kids think, learn and behave. In July, the EPA finalized a rule to protect communities from dangerous soot and smog pollution from power plants, which could prevent as many as 34,000 premature deaths annually by 2014.

Polluters and their allies in Congress fought back with proposals to block the EPA. Our staff and activists helped defeat the measures, and in July we delivered more than 800,000 public comments to the EPA supporting the mercury rule. Unfortunately, the White House also announced in September that it was abandoning efforts to update air quality standards for smog pollution—standards which would have saved thousands more lives nationwide.



▲ Environment Massachusetts Advocate Ben Wright (right) delivered public comments to New England's EPA Administrator Curt Spalding (center) in favor of stronger mercury protection.

# Thousands to Congress: Don't mess with our waters

As polluting industries push to weaken legal safeguards and House leaders move to block the EPA from doing its job, Environment America is delivering a firm response: Don't mess with America's waters.

## EPA moves to close loopholes

The Clean Water Act has been extremely successful in limiting pollution across the country. But legal loopholes are allowing polluters to pave over wetlands and dump toxic waste into streams that feed the waterways we love and rely on for drinking water. Meanwhile, sewage runoff from farms, cities and construction sites too often flows into our waters. And now, Congress is attempting to revoke the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to step in when states aren't protecting their own waters.

The consequences are clear: Across the country, 59 percent of streams and 20 million acres of wetlands lack protection, putting the drinking water of 117 million Americans at risk. Last summer alone, runoff pollution and sewage overflows caused 10,592 days of beach closings or advisories against swimming around the country.

For the past few years, Environment America and our state affiliates have been working to close these loopholes and restore Clean Water Act protections. This year, the EPA responded. In April, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced a plan to close the loopholes that are allowing polluters to pave and dump into the small waters that feed our lakes. And following state laws spearheaded by Environment Maryland and Environment Rhode Island, the agency is also gearing up to cut sewage pollution by setting national standards.

## "Legal warfare"

Polluting industries immediately sprang into action. Mining companies, developers and corporate agribusiness have all urged their friends in Congress to stop the EPA from closing the clean water loophole—

ExxonMobil lobbyists even met with the president in an attempt to convince him to drop the issue, threatening "legal warfare" if the EPA moved forward.

Over the summer, polluters' allies from both parties launched an unprecedented attack on the Clean Water Act in Congress. By July, the House of Representatives had passed three separate measures attacking the EPA's authority to protect our water.

We saw this coming, and had already begun building a campaign to defend the EPA's clean water initiatives. All over the country, from the streets of Chicago and Boston to the suburbs of Denver and Austin, our field staff talked face to face with tens of thousands of Americans about the attacks on clean water. Citizens wrote to their local papers, and 170,000 people sent comments to Washington urging the EPA to stand strong for clean water.

Our beaches, rivers and lakes provide some of our best summer memories as we head into fall and winter. As we work to restore the Clean Water Act, we'll be sure to remind officials in Washington that Americans care about our waters and want to see them protected.



### Staff in action

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson (left) with Wisconsin Environment's Megan Severson, after Jackson announced the EPA's plan to set strong clean water rules.



## From N.Y. to Texas to Colo., slowing the rush to drill

Oil and gas companies are rushing to drill for gas across the country, with potentially devastating consequences for the water we drink, the air we breathe and the places we love. Environment America and our state affiliates are confronting the threat head on.

The problem stems from a new and dangerous form of drilling known as hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." The process uses an untold number of toxic chemicals, creates millions of gallons of contaminated wastewater, and releases harmful air pollution. And between the clearcuts, new roads and pipeline required at each well site, gas drilling threatens some of America's most treasured places.

Our staff are working to pass rules on drilling in Pennsylvania and Texas, where the drilling boom has already caused drinking water contamination, air pollution, explosions and other problems.

But in states where drilling has yet to take off, we are working to stop it before it starts. In June, Environment New Jersey helped persuade the Legislature to enact a drilling ban.

A few days later, New York officials recommended keeping New York City's watershed off-limits to drilling—a move Environment New York has been advocating for more than a year. We are now calling for similar protection for all of the state's drinking water sources.

▲ PennEnvironment's Erika Staaf speaks out against drilling at a rally in Harrisburg, Pa.



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## Fall Report

VOLUME 4 | NO. 3 | 2011

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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.

## At 54.5 mpg, a big move to get America off oil

As President Obama negotiated with auto companies about fuel efficiency this summer, Environment America and our partners across the country advocated a strong standard to make our cars go farther on a tank of gas. More than 10,000 people signed our petition in support of cleaner cars.

On July 22, the president announced a new standard of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025—roughly twice as strong as the current standard.

Environment America applauded the proposed rules, which represent the biggest single step our country has ever taken toward getting off oil. By 2030, they will cut our annual gasoline use by 23 billion gallons, save Americans more than \$80 billion at the pump annually, and reduce our annual global warming pollution by 280 million metric tons—the equivalent of shutting down 72 coal-fired power plants.



◀ Our Federal Global Warming Director, Nathan Willcox, had the honor of personally thanking the president for the tough new fuel efficiency standards.



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