



Summer Report

Hard-won pollution limits for Chesapeake at risk

Congress moves to block the EPA from doing its job

Last December, at the climax of a two-year campaign by Environment America and our allies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established clear pollution limits for the Chesapeake Bay. The EPA also announced its plan to issue rules to restore Clean Water Act protections to lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands across the country.

If the Bay cleanup plan moves forward, polluters—including massive chicken producers like Tyson and Perdue—will be required to curb their pollution until the Bay's dead zone is no more. However, these same polluters are suing to prevent the new rules from taking effect, and have used litigation to strip Clean Water Act protections from thousands of streams and millions of acres of wetlands across the country. The EPA's planned restoration of Clean Water Act protections would help safeguard drinking water for 117 million Americans.

In addition, earlier this year the House passed amendments that would block the EPA from taking on the Bay's polluters or restoring Clean Water Act protections.

Polluters push Congress to roll back clean water protections

Exploiting the battle over the budget and the deficit, lobbyists for factory farms, developers, and other polluters enlisted their allies on the Hill to include a number of provisions that strip environmental protections. In addition to blocking the Bay cleanup plan and clean water protections, the House also voted to halt new clean



▲ A dead zone spans up to one-third of the Bay, where oxygen levels are too low to support life.

water standards crucial to restoring the Everglades, block curbs on pollution from mountaintop mining, and slash funding for preventing sewage from overflowing directly into our waterways.

To stop this onslaught, Environment America and our state affiliates worked to bolster the EPA's resolve, to expose the polluter influence behind the rollbacks, and to show broad public support for clean water. On Feb. 14, we presented EPA

Administrator Lisa Jackson with thousands of Valentines for clean water. Two weeks later, we issued a report showing the growing influence of corporate agribusiness and its systematic efforts to roll back clean water laws. On March 9, the Senate rejected the budget package containing these anti-clean water amendments by a margin of 44-56, but as the budget stalemate continues there is little doubt that polluters and their allies in Congress will keep trying to block progress.



more online

◀ EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson receiving our Valentines for clean water.

Visit our website to read more and find out how you can take action for clean water: www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/our-rivers-lakes-streams



Brian W. staff

To our members

For millions of Americans, summer means spending time on the water — whether it's going to the beach at the Jersey Shore or the California coast, kayaking in the Chesapeake Bay, rafting down the Colorado River or fishing in one of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes.

All of these waterways are cleaner today than they once were, thanks in large part to the Clean Water Act and other standards set by state and federal environmental officials. Unfortunately, despite the progress, too many of our precious waterways are still not clean enough—runoff from factory farms creates a dead zone in the Chesapeake Bay each summer, and hundreds of our beaches end up closed because pollution makes them unsafe for swimming.

But as we work to strengthen our laws and make all of America's waterways safe for swimming and fishing, polluters are encouraging some in Congress to block the EPA from doing its job. I hope you'll join us this summer in showing your support for clean water.

Thanks for standing with us!

Margie Alt
Executive Director

Recent action

President responds to ideas for the great outdoors

Last year, President Obama asked for input on what the federal government should do to help Americans reconnect with the great outdoors. Environment America and our state affiliates responded with plenty of good ideas.

Environment Maine pushed for the park service to purchase the last pieces of unpreserved land within the borders of Acadia National Park. Environment Montana called for an end to drilling on the outskirts of Glacier National Park. And Environment Washington made the case for expanding Mt. Rainier National Park to protect the adjacent Carbon River Valley rainforest.

Across the nation, we helped thousands of citizens make their voices heard on behalf of deserving projects. As a result of this work, the president invited Executive Director Margie Alt to join him at the White House as he announced that he'd seek the renewal of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, a critical tool for funding many of these initiatives. Our staff is currently building support for the approval of the conservation funding in Congress.

2010 was a breakthrough year for solar

In an otherwise lackluster year for the economy, the solar industry shined brighter than ever with a 67 percent increase in the amount of solar energy projects installed across America in 2010 compared to 2009.

That means more homes and businesses across the country will be powered by pollution-free solar energy, an increase made possible by strong solar policies implemented at the urging of Environment America and our state affiliates. In December, Clean Energy Advocate Sean Garren led our charge in Congress to extend critical incentives for solar power.

Environment America staff continue to strategize with entrepreneurs within the solar industry, champions in Congress and officials in the Obama administration to hit a far more ambitious benchmark: getting 10 percent of our nation's energy from solar by 2030.

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B. Mark Schimmerling

▲ PennEnvironment's Charley Dorsaneo joined coalition partners at a solar home in Pottstown, Pa.

Defending 40 years of progress on clean air

There's no doubt that the Clean Air Act, which turned 41 this year, has improved the health and well-being of millions of Americans. It is credited with saving the lives of 160,000 Americans in 2010 alone.

Of course, air pollution remains a pressing health threat in this country, a stark reminder of the work still left to do. An estimated 13,200 Americans lost their lives as a result of heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks and other fatal conditions brought on or exacerbated by air pollution from power plants. It's estimated that one in six women of childbearing age has enough mercury in her bloodstream (a byproduct of coal power production) to put her child at risk should she become pregnant.

Thankfully, the Obama administration has announced it will seek to strengthen and update portions of the Clean Air Act in the coming months, including proposing the Mercury and Air Toxics rule to reduce mercury pollution from power plants by 91 percent on March 16th.

Clean Air, Healthy Families

With some vocal opponents of the Clean Air Act throwing their weight around in Congress, Environment America, the American Lung Association and other public health and environmental organizations are building support to make sure the administration's proposals become the law of the land.

In January, Environment America's Shelley Vinyard released a hard-hitting examination of one of the most dangerous air pollutants: mercury. That report, "Dirty Energy's Assault on our Health," documented waterways across the country where advisories warn against fish consumption due to mercury pollution. According to the report, power plants released 134,000 pounds of mercury into our environment in 2009 alone.

The findings were covered by some 100 news outlets nationwide, including USA

Today, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Business Week. This is the first in a series of reports Vinyard plans to publish in her examination of the health threats posed by the burning of coal.

Showdown in Congress

The Obama administration's updates to the Clean Air Act face great uncertainty, with polluting industries and their allies in Congress launching an all-out assault on the Clean Air Act. In February, the House of Representatives passed a measure that would have blocked the EPA from cutting mercury pollution, cleaning up soot pollution, and reducing carbon dioxide from coal-fired plants.

After this setback, Vinyard and others worked to convince dozens of newspapers across the country to editorialize in support of the Clean Air Act. Environment America held rallies outside of the offices of representatives who voted for the bill.

Less than a month later, the Senate rejected the House measure, with many senators citing the environmental and public health attacks within the bill as one of the reasons for their opposition.



Clean Air,
Healthy Families

Join our Clean Air, Healthy Families campaign on Facebook and tell us why clean air is important to you.



How could nuclear ever be worth the risk?

Our hearts go out to the families in Japan that were stricken by a massive natural disaster in March.

After an earthquake and tsunami ravaged Japan, the country remains in the midst of a nuclear crisis. The fallout from this disaster has touched millions of lives in Japan and is being felt worldwide. The health threats are numbing: Drinking water samples in Tokyo are contaminated with radioactive iodine at a level dangerous to infants; a dozen agricultural products from the Fukushima region are radioactive at dangerous levels; hundreds of thousands of people have been evacuated from the area around the reactors; and many other effects are just being assessed—including high radiation levels in the nearby ocean waters.

The events in Japan must be a wake-up call for Americans about the dangers of nuclear power. We must ask ourselves: Is it worth the risk? Our current use of nuclear power gambles with our children's health and our environment. In Japan, Mother Nature yet again proved stronger than anything we can design. Isn't that possible here as well?

We must act now to ensure the relative safety of existing plants, put a moratorium on any new plants, and begin to phase out our use of nuclear power. We can and must move away from energy technologies that put our environment and health at massive risk and repower our country with clean, renewable energy, like wind and solar power.

▲ Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, in Ottawa County, Ohio, uses the same type of reactor as Japan's stricken Fukushima Daiichi plant.

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Summer Report

VOLUME 4 | NO. 2 | 2011

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Environment America

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. 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 spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Mining threatens Yosemite and Grand Canyon

Mining can be a dirty business. The New York Times reported that hard-rock mining generates more toxic waste than any other industry in America. Yet, within 10 miles of Yosemite National Park's borders, there are more than 285 mining claims. Worse, mining companies have laid over 1,100 claims to mine for uranium within five miles of Grand Canyon National Park. These mining processes can use cyanide and sulfuric acid, and pose grave risks to these treasured places.

In order to protect Yosemite, our state affiliate Environment California is calling on Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to declare a ban on all mining that could in any way affect the health of Yosemite National Park. Meanwhile, Environment Arizona is calling for a 20-year ban on mining around the Grand Canyon, building off the two-year moratorium that we won in 2009 but expires this summer.



◀ Mining companies are pushing to drill mere miles from Yosemite and Grand Canyon national parks.



Visit our website to read more about protecting our national parks and find out how you can get involved:
www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/parks-open-spaces-wild-places