Thousands of Granite Staters speak out for clean water

As polluting industries push to weaken legal safeguards and Republican leaders in Congress move to block the Environmental Protection Agency from doing its job, Environment New Hampshire is delivering a firm response: Don’t mess with New Hampshire’s lakes.

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 our lakes.

The consequences are clear: In New Hampshire, more than half of our streams lack protection, putting the lakes they feed at risk of increased pollution.

For the past several years, Environment New Hampshire and our partners have been working to close these loopholes and restore the Clean Water Act’s ability to protect our lakes. This year, the EPA responded. In April, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced a plan to close the loopholes that are allowing polluters to dump into our streams and pave over the wetlands that feed our lakes.

“Legal warfare”

Not surprisingly, oil companies, developers and corporate agribusiness immediately sprang into action to stop the EPA from closing the dirty water loophole—ExxonMobil lobbyists even met with the president to convince him to drop the issue, threatening “legal warfare” if the EPA moved forward. Over the summer, polluters’ allies in both parties launched an unprecedented attack on the Clean Water Act in Congress. By mid-July, the U.S. 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. Our field organizers have talked face to face with tens of thousands of Granite Staters about the attacks on clean water. And, we worked with our allies to mobilize 170,000 people nationwide to send comments to Washington, D.C., urging support for clean water.

As we work to protect America’s great waterways, we’ll be sure to remind officials in Washington that here in New Hampshire, we want to see our lakes protected.
To our members

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

Not by a long shot. Because right here in New Hampshire, our staff and members are making a real difference.

In July, Gov. John Lynch vetoed a bill to repeal New Hampshire’s groundbreaking clean energy law. And thanks in part to the advocacy of our staff and members, enough senators stood up for clean energy to prevent anti-environmental legislators from being able to override the governor’s veto.

Of course much remains to be done—we’re stepping up our work to win strong protections for our lakes and cut toxic air pollution. But I am proud of what we’ve already accomplished together. I hope you are too.

Sincerely,

Jessica O’Hare
Program Advocate

Recent action

Local food, healthy farms
From the first pint of strawberries in June, to the juicy tomatoes and crunchy cucumbers of summer, down to the last crisp red apple of fall, the abundance of a farmers market is unparalleled. But fresh food grown close to home shouldn’t only be found on a special trip to the market.

While we now have 75 farmers markets across the state—from Derry to Concord to Wolfeboro—much remains to be done to expand our access to fresh, local food.

We should be doing everything we can to encourage responsible farming. Unfortunately, the U.S. House recently voted to eliminate a program that supports small, sustainable farms. That’s why this summer, Environment New Hampshire joined a nationwide coalition working to make sure local farms can provide their own communities with safe, fresh, delicious food. We’re urging the U.S. Senate to restore those programs and get small farmers the help they need.

New rules will cut air pollution, saves live
This year the Environmental Protection Agency took major steps to cut toxic air pollution from power plants, despite intense opposition from industrial polluters and their allies in Congress.

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

Polluters and their allies in the U.S. Senate fought back with proposals to block the EPA. Our staff and activists helped defeat the measures, and in July we delivered more than 600,000 public comments to the EPA supporting the mercury rule—a strong show of support as Congress keeps trying to block EPA action.

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 New Hampshire.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNewHampshire.org.
In 2011, Environment New Hampshire helped defend our state’s cornerstone clean energy law against the threat of legislative repeal.

The law, known as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), invests critical funding in clean energy and energy efficiency projects.

A clean energy program that works

RGGI has already made a huge difference for the Granite State since it passed in 2008, helping us save money on our utility bills, create local jobs and protect our environment against the threat of air pollution and climate change.

Every year, New Hampshire sends $2.6 billion to other states and countries to pay for the energy that lights and heats our homes. In fact, between our drafty old homes, businesses and other buildings, and our heavy use of heating oil each winter, New Hampshire tops the nation’s list for per capita oil consumption.

That’s where RGGI comes in. The law invests in energy efficiency programs, helping to lower our utility bills, shrink our carbon footprint and keep energy dollars in our state.

Already, New Hampshire’s landmark clean energy law is helping families, businesses and communities across the state kickstart local clean energy and efficiency projects. Since 2008, RGGI has led to more than $27.7 million in clean energy investments, leading to more than $94.6 million in energy savings and contributing $163.2 million in growth in economic activity in New Hampshire.

Governor vetoes attack on clean energy

Yet despite RGGI’s clear benefits for our environment and economy, the Statehouse in Concord voted in March to repeal the law.

Our staff and members immediately got to work to keep RGGI intact. Our members called and emailed their senators and urged them to stand up for clean energy. They also called the governor to thank him for his commitment to veto any legislation that would repeal or weaken RGGI.

In June, MacKenzie Clark of Environment New Hampshire released a report, “A Program That Works,” that shone a spotlight on the positive impacts RGGI has had. We also engaged veterans and the business community in talks with key Senate leaders to secure their support for the program.

Our effort paid off. Although the Senate ultimately passed the repeal bill, our support empowered Gov. John Lynch to veto the rollback in July.

We applauded the governor’s move—and thanks in part to our advocacy, enough senators stood up for clean energy to prevent anti-environmental legislators from overriding the governor’s veto.

State clean energy law defended against rollback

Efficiency is the cheapest and cleanest way to cut our fossil fuel use and pollution. It seems intuitive enough: Use less energy, save fuel and save money. It can be tough to figure out where to start when retrofitting your home or business. There are numerous federal, state and local organizations—offering rebates, discounts, financing and other incentives to help.

Here are five low to no-cost things you can do right now to cut your energy use.

1. Replace old fashioned light bulbs with CFLs to cut your lighting costs by up to 75 percent.

2. Wash your laundry using cold water only.

3. Plug appliances into power strips, and turn them off when not in use.

4. Put aluminum foil behind radiators to reflect heat back into the room.

5. Scrape—rather than rinse—dishes, and only run the dishwasher when you have a full load.

For the full list, visit www.EnvironmentNewHampshire.org/center/plug-into-clean-energy.
President announces big step to get U.S. off oil

As President Obama negotiated with auto companies to improve fuel efficiency this summer, Environment New Hampshire and our partners across the country advocated for 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 New Hampshire applauded the proposed rules, which represent the biggest single step our country has ever taken toward getting off oil. By 2030, these rules 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 Wilcox, had the honor of thanking the president in person for the new, tougher fuel efficiency standards.

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