Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report

Thanks for making it all possible
To be an environmentalist, you’ve got to wrestle with a conundrum: We need bold action on a short timeline ... with broad public support.

We need to do a lot, quickly, to preserve a livable planet. But progress has to earn and sustain the support of the people in order to last—so progress doesn’t often come in one big swooping action. It usually comes one small-ish victory at a time.

At Environment New Jersey, we acknowledge the conundrum—and we embrace it. We believe in bold action on a large scale. But we work every day at the local, state and national levels to build, step by step, the support this action demands. Each college, or city or state that deploys more renewable energy helps win more people over to the possibility of a world that runs on the sun and the wind. Each company or state that phases out a single-use plastic product shows more people a way to end harm to ocean wildlife from plastic pollution.

These victories are smaller than the challenges demand. But as their pace picks up, their summary effect grows. A year ago, California became the second state to commit to 100 percent zero-carbon electricity. Now, there are six states with such commitments, plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. Back in 2016, California banned single-use plastic bags. In 2019, five more states banned plastic bags, and Maine, Maryland and Vermont banned plastic foam take-out containers. Like all social changes, environmental solutions have tipping points.

Our natural world faces serious problems, and we’ve got to solve them. Our strategy is to make sure that each victory opens a door to the next. Thanks for being with us on the journey.

Sincerely,

Doug O’Malley
State Director, Environment New Jersey
Clean Water & Air

Through our Clean Water & Air program, our staff and members tackled problems ranging from the Trump administration’s attempts to roll back clean water standards, to industrial discharges that violate the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. Below, you’ll find reports on our Get the Lead Out campaign and our efforts to bolster investment in our nation’s water infrastructure.

The grades are in: Report finds states are failing to ensure safe drinking water for our children

MARCH 21, 2019: Lead contaminates the water coming out of drinking fountains and taps at schools across the country, and at least 22 states aren’t doing enough about it.

“Get the Lead Out,” a study published March 21 by our research partners Environment America Research & Policy Center and U.S. PIRG Education Fund, examined the policies of 31 states and Washington, D.C., and assigned grades based on how well they protect children from lead in drinking water at school. Twenty-two states earned an F grade with only Illinois and D.C. grading above the C range. New Jersey received a C.

“Waiting for more tests to confirm that our children are drinking water laced with lead is unconscionable,” said John Rumpler, senior director of our national network’s clean water campaign. “It’s time to get the lead out.”

Environment New Jersey and our national network are working in New Jersey and more than a dozen other states to protect drinking water for millions of children by advancing policies to proactively get the lead out.

Congress passes long overdue measures to protect our drinking water from lead, sewage

OCT. 23, 2018: Victories for clean water are rare in Washington, D.C., these days, so this is one to savor.

In October, Congress passed—and the president signed—America’s Water Infrastructure Act (S. 3021), which would double federal investment in safe drinking water, establish a small grant program for schools to address lead contamination, and expand monitoring of contaminants such as per- or polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Our national network’s advocates—and environmental champions such as Sen. Ben Cardin (Md.) and Rep. Paul Tonko (N.Y.)—shaped the legislation and ensured it contained the solutions we need.

“In 21st-century America, we should be able to keep lead and other toxins out of our drinking water, and sewage out of our rivers, lakes and bays,” said John. “These provisions are long overdue.”

Photo credits: (cover) Creative Family via Shutterstock; (headshot left) Kimball Nelson; (spread) Mark Baldwin via Shutterstock; (above) CBS
Above: Rob Sargent toured the nation’s first offshore wind farm on Block Island, R.I. (upper left). Below: Our national network campaigned for 100% renewable energy across the country, from New Mexico (left) to Florida (right).
Clean, Green & Renewable Energy

With support from Environment New Jersey’s members, our national network promoted energy efficiency in our homes, educated city leaders about solar, and fostered the development of wind power. Here are updates on our network’s 100% Renewable Energy campaign and New Jersey’s offshore wind.

Six states are now committed to 100% clean energy

JULY 1, 2019: In 2018, only one state had committed to 100 percent clean energy. Six months ago, there were two. Now there are six.

In June, Maine and New York became the latest states to pass laws committing to 100 percent zero-carbon electricity, joining Hawaii (2015), California (2018), New Mexico (March) and Washington state (May). Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., have made similar commitments.

“Within less than a year, four states have said, ‘If California can do it, so can we,’” said Rob Sargent, director of our national network’s 100% Renewable Energy campaign. “We’re urging decision-makers across the country to join the 100 percent renewable movement and put the United States back on the world map as a climate leader.”

Our network helped win the laws in California, New Mexico, Washington and Maine. We’re also advocating for 100 percent renewable energy laws in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida, Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota.

New Jersey makes history, approves nation’s largest offshore wind farm

JUNE 24, 2019: New Jersey’s first offshore wind farm is going to be a big one.

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities voted on June 21 to select Ørsted A/S to develop the country’s largest single offshore wind farm. The 1,100 megawatt project should power between 350,000 and 600,000 homes per year. But it might not be the largest for long. Per Gov. Phil Murphy’s instruction, the state will consider two larger solicitations for offshore wind in 2020 and 2022.

“These turbines will provide the clean energy engine we need to tap the goldmine of wind potential off the Jersey Shore,” said Environment New Jersey State Director Doug O’Malley. “Offshore wind is one of our best tools to fight climate change, and New Jersey just cemented its place as a national leader.”

Offshore wind is slated to play a large role in New Jersey reaching its pledge to reach 100 percent clean energy by 2050.
Leaders of our national network’s canvass team met in Baltimore before spreading across the country to build public support for putting wildlife over waste by banning single-use plastics (top).
Our network’s staff and members sought to revive the country’s best conservation and recreation program, and to spare Arctic wildlife from oil and gas exploration and drilling. Below, find more on our national network’s efforts to protect wildlife from plastic pollution and save the bees from toxic pesticides.

### Six states in six months choose Wildlife Over Waste
**JULY 2, 2019:** In the first half of 2019 alone, six states took strong action to rein in plastic pollution.

New York, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and Oregon all banned single-use plastic bags, joining California, which banned them in 2016. Maine also became the first state to ban single-use polystyrene foam containers, and Maryland became the second a month later. Bags and polystyrene are seldom recycled. Instead, they often end up in our rivers and oceans, where they never fully degrade and pose a threat to wildlife for years to come.

“Our Wildlife Over Waste campaign is based on the principle that nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute our environment for centuries,” said Steve Blackledge, senior director of our national network’s Conservation program. “When we started this year, it was only California. Now it’s a movement.”

Our network’s staff were instrumental in winning the California ban, and campaigned for the laws in Maine, Connecticut, Oregon and Maryland.

### More than 123,000 join the call to save the bees
**JULY 26, 2019:** Wherever you go, you’re likely to find people who have heard about the decline in bee populations and are willing to do something about it.

That was our experience this summer, as our national network sent canvassers across the country to knock on doors, write letters and meet with lawmakers in support of restrictions on the class of pesticides called neonicotinoids (or neonics), which are known to kill bees. Their message resonated. As of this writing, more than 123,000 people have sent messages to governors and state legislators calling for action.

“If we want to save the bees, one of the first things we need to do is stop using the pesticides that are killing them,” Steve said.

Decision-makers took notice, from Idaho, where the governor’s office requested a meeting with Steve, to Texas, where the state Parks and Wildlife Department agreed to stop using neonics in state parks.
Above: Environment New Jersey State Director Doug O’Malley called for greater investment in electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. Below: Andrea McGimsey and Environment America Research & Policy Center staff hosted a tour of an electric bus facility (bottom right).
Global Warming Solutions

Environment New Jersey worked with other state groups in our network to reduce carbon emissions from power plants, transportation and other sources. Here’s more on what Environment New Jersey did to promote state-level action across the country and defend strong pollution standards.

It’s the best carbon reduction program you’ve never heard of, and N.J. is back in

DEC. 19, 2018: New Jersey will once again be part of the regional carbon pollution-reducing initiative that we helped create.

On Dec. 17, the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection announced it will propose regulations for the state to rejoin the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in 2020. The 10-state program caps carbon emissions from power plants, makes the plants pay for their pollution, and invests the money in clean energy.

The program, said Environment New Jersey Director Doug O’Malley, is “a strong first step to reduce pollution from our fossil fuel plants and move us to a clean, renewable energy economy.”

Under the state’s plan, New Jersey’s emissions would drop from 18 million metric tons per year to 11.5 million metric tons in 2030. During his campaign, Gov. Phil Murphy pledged to rejoin RGGI, overturning former Gov. Chris Christie’s decision to withdraw. Virginia is in the process of joining the program and Pennsylvania and Illinois could be next in line.

Gov. Murphy green-lights initiatives to electrify transportation

JUNE 4, 2019: New Jersey just tapped the accelerator toward an electric transportation future.

On June 3, Gov. Phil Murphy announced the New Jersey Partnership to Plug-In, a set of new initiatives to increase electric vehicles in the state through a rebate program and direct millions of dollars to install charging stations. On the same day, the state Department of Environmental Protection announced a second round of projects supported by the Volkswagen settlement funds, awarding $16 million to the deployment of electric heavy-duty garbage trucks and school buses.

“Gov. Murphy’s initiative will help overcome the roadblocks facing electric vehicles, which include the lack of charging stations and the affordability gap consumers face when it comes to buying cleaner cars,” said Morgan Folger, director of our national network’s Clean Car Communities campaign. “The Volkswagen settlement also provides New Jersey with the perfect opportunity to fund projects that will cut carbon pollution by electrifying our cars, trucks and buses.”
Our staff (partial list)

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