



# Your Fall Report

## The Grand Canyon needs your help now

### Uranium mining poses a serious threat

Whether they live in Arizona or here in Virginia like you, Americans know that the Grand Canyon is one of the most amazing places in the world—from the iconic landscape and winding Colorado River to the unique cultural and natural heritage.

Woodrow Wilson designated the Grand Canyon as a national park nearly 100 years ago. Unfortunately, the land surrounding the canyon was left out of the park and is unprotected. Now, mining companies are pushing to start digging for uranium only six miles from the park's border.

President Obama can protect the Grand Canyon with a stroke of his pen, by declaring a new national monument.

That's why we need you by our side as we band together with other groups across the country to call on the president to take action before he leaves office.

### Take a stand for the best of America

With support from concerned citizens from all corners of America, and a strong and diverse coalition, Environment Virginia is calling on the president to designate the proposed Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument.

This monument would protect 1.7 million acres around the Grand Canyon, which provide habitat for many unique species of wildlife and include the drinking water sources for millions of people downstream. They also include land that is sacred to several Tribal Nations.

It would also effectively ban all new uranium mining claims, making the 20-year ban



Credit: Lucas Mullikin

▲ Environment America Executive Director Margie Alt (second from right) and Environment Arizona Advocate Bret Fanshaw (right) joined Grand Canyon Trust's Roger Clark and Sarana Riggs to learn about the Grand Canyon.

we helped win in 2012 a permanent one.

### Another 100 years preserving parks

In July, to mark the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, our coalition delivered more than 550,000 petitions urging the president to designate the monument. If we continue building public support across the country, including right

here in Virginia, we know the president will have to act.

With your support and action, we can protect the Grand Canyon for generations to come and set a precedent for protecting other special places across the country from reckless threats.

Credit: Grand Canyon National Park via Flickr, CC BY 2.0



### take action

We need your help to protect the Grand Canyon. Take action online to urge President Obama to act: [www.EnvironmentVirginia.org](http://www.EnvironmentVirginia.org)

◀ Environment Virginia is building public support to permanently protect the Grand Canyon and more than 1 million acres of watershed and native heritage areas surrounding it.



Credit: Staff

## You make the difference

In this election year, with the climate movement growing stronger and more positive environmental progress happening every day, I feel like we're in a time of great change. And I'm glad that you're pushing for a cleaner, greener, healthier America.

Since our last update, we swarmed the Environmental Protection Agency with petitions from members like you to stop the use of bee-killing pesticides, added to half a million petitions across the nation calling on President Obama to declare the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument, and so much more.

All of this work happens because of you. You provide the financial backing that allows us to speak with millions of Americans. You make up the grassroots power that makes positive change possible, and your passion stirs leaders to enact that change on the issues that matter most to all of us.

Thanks for everything you do,

Sarah Bucci  
Campaign Director

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## Recent action

### All in for 100 percent renewable

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the United States has the potential to meet its current electricity needs more than 10 times over with wind energy, and more than 100 times over with solar energy. We can have healthier communities and a livable future for kids growing up today, but to get there, we need to transform the way we produce and consume energy.

With more than 19 cities, counties and states already committed to 100 percent renewable energy, and dozens of major companies like Google, Facebook, IKEA and Johnson & Johnson making commitments as well, it's clear that now is the time to go 100 percent renewable.

To show that we have both the tools and the imperative to transition entirely off dirty fuels, Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center and our sister groups in other states distributed literature to more than 1.3 million households like yours this summer. The good news we're spreading is that 100 percent renewable is 100 percent possible.

### Has your community gone solar?

Perhaps it was on the rooftop of a superstore in Virginia, on a low-income housing development, or a solar carport project in California, believed to be the largest of its kind. But sometime in February, the United States installed its 1 millionth solar power installation, a milestone that says as much about where the solar industry is going as it does about how far the industry has come.

"It took us 40 years to get to 1 million installations, and it will take us only two years to get to 2 million," said Dan Whitten, vice president of communications at the Solar Energy Industries Association.

But according to a report Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center released in July, "Lighting the Way 4," solar is under attack in the places where it has flourished the most, proving we have more work to do. You can call on your elected officials to bring more solar power to our homes, our places of worship, our schools and our communities.



Credit: Adam Perri

▲ Our national network is rallying public support for strong solar policies alongside members like you in states across the country.



# Introducing America's next top polluter

In June, Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center revealed the massive water pollution caused by industrial agribusiness in our report, “Corporate Agribusiness and the Fouling of America’s Waterways,” which makes it clear that America’s next top polluters are big agribusinesses and the factory farms they operate.

The report details the “water pollution footprint” of five major agribusiness companies: Tyson Foods, Smithfield, Cargill, JBS USA and Perdue Farms. These companies threaten our waterways with three sources of pollution:

1. Manure from factory farms;
2. Runoff from vast acres of grain grown to feed livestock; and
3. Direct dumping of pollutants into rivers from processing facilities.

Using data available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Agriculture, we documented the volume of manure and direct dumping of toxic pollutants by each of these corporations. For both measurements, Tyson comes out on top of the polluter pile—with more than 55 million tons of manure in its supply chain and direct dumping of 104 million pounds of toxic pollutants into waterways from 2010 to 2014.

## Polluting our drinking water

Pollution from agribusiness is responsible for some of America’s most intractable water quality problems, and the pollution of countless streams and lakes. In fact, this pollution is so severe that it is beginning to threaten our drinking water.

For example, in Toledo, Ohio, runoff from agribusiness operations contributed to a toxic algae bloom in Lake Erie that contaminated the drinking water for 500,000 people in 2014.

In Iowa, nitrate pollution from agribusiness operations has so badly polluted the Raccoon River that Des Moines Water Works is now suing three counties for failing to stop contamination of its main

drinking water source. And factory farms have contaminated drinking water wells from Washington to Wisconsin.

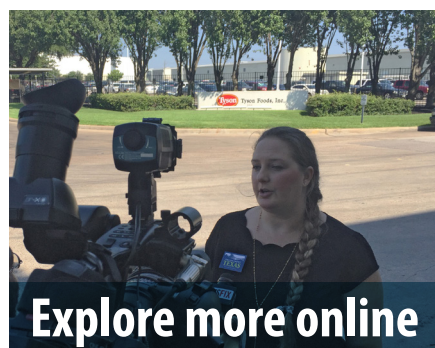
## You can help clean up factory farms

In addition to our release of the report, the media also heard from second-generation farmer Terry Spence, who raises his cattle on a rotational pasture to nurture the soil and keep manure from flowing into nearby streams.

“As a farmer it is my duty to preserve our land and water resources for future generations,” said Spence. “It’s high time these companies look beyond their profit margins and do the same.”

The report concludes that to restore our rivers, lakes and streams, the industry must shift away from industrial-scale livestock facilities and overproduction of commodity crops that depend on heavy doses of fertilizers and pesticides.

You can also urge your state and federal governments to take immediate steps to protect America’s waterways, including temporary bans on factory farms, holding companies accountable for pollution in their supply chains, and shifting subsidies from industrial grain and meat production to sustainable farming practices.



Credit: Staff

## Explore more online

▲ Organizer *Hayden Hamilton* released our report outside a Tyson Foods facility in Houston, Texas.

To read our research on how factory farms are polluting our waterways, visit: [www.EnvironmentVirginiaCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentVirginiaCenter.org).



Credit: U.S. Department of Agriculture via Flickr, CC BY 2.0

## The solutions are within reach

The solutions to curb agribusiness pollution are feasible and well known to the industry.

Halting excess application of manure and other fertilizer is the most effective means to preventing agribusiness pollution.

Perennial cover crops, buffer zones and other techniques can reduce runoff as well. Moreover, raising livestock in pasture at a smaller scale minimizes manure as a pollution threat. And for existing factory farms, when compelled by legal action, agribusiness companies have even found ways to haul massive volumes of waste out of endangered watersheds.

Supermarkets, food service companies and restaurant chains also bear some responsibility, and can exert enormous influence on how agribusiness operates.

For example, under pressure from consumers and investors, major restaurant chains—and some of their agribusiness suppliers—have recently committed to end routine use of antibiotics on livestock.

Yet as two top retailers—Costco and Walmart—enter into agribusiness production, it remains to be seen whether they will follow the industry’s polluting practices or chart a more sustainable path.

▲ *Water flows off a farm in Tennessee following a storm.*

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# Environment Virginia

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## Your Fall Report

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### Environment Virginia

#### 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 Virginia, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus exclusively on protecting Virginia'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.

## Together, we're going big for the bees

Thanks to you, bees were all the buzz this summer. Environment Virginia and our national federation talked with more than 740,000 people across the country, gathering more than 280,000 signatures to call on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ban bee-killing pesticides.

At the end of June, Environment Virginia, along with coalition partners and beekeepers, delivered more than 4 million signatures to the EPA, culminating a coast-to-coast tour to raise awareness about recent massive declines in pollinators. Bees pollinate most of the world's most common crops, including summer favorites like peaches and watermelon. But around 30-40 percent of U.S. honeybee hives die each year, costing the farming and beekeeping industry more than \$2 billion annually.

"Given the support from millions of concerned citizens from across the country, officials should move boldly and swiftly to stop any and all uses of these dangerous chemicals," said Anna Aurilio, director of Environment America's Washington, D.C., office.



Credit: Suzannah Hoover

### Support our efforts

Support our efforts to save the bees and our food supply. Donate online at: [www.EnvironmentVirginia.org](http://www.EnvironmentVirginia.org)

Environment Virginia joined partner groups and beekeepers in June to deliver more than 4.5 million signatures to the Environmental Protection Agency, urging them to stop the use of bee-killing pesticides.