



Annual Report

A look back at our work together in fiscal year 2017



Our members make the difference

None of our work would be possible without the passion, energy and support of people like you, who are standing up in Virginia and all across the country to protect the places and people we love.

It's been quite a year. Climate scientists agree it's more critical than ever that we act immediately to reverse the effects of climate change and transition to a carbon-free world—and yet we have an administration in the White House that seems bent on taking us in the opposite direction. Sometimes it feels like we're under attack on all fronts.

But I've never been prouder of the work we've done together, nor more optimistic about what we can continue to accomplish. You stood up for our water, our air, our beloved special places and our future. Thanks to you and the hard work of our staff and partner groups, we're doing big things at all levels and showing the world that the American people are committed to a cleaner, greener future—even if our president and Congress refuse to lead.

You came through for the places we love, flooding the Department of the Interior with comments in support of our national monuments. You helped us convince governors, mayors, and business and community leaders to uphold our commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement. You helped us make the case for a 100 percent renewable future.

In this report, you'll learn more about the things we were able to accomplish last year with your help. Our power to make real progress toward a cleaner, greener future comes from the passion and dedication of millions of concerned citizens like you.

As we begin another year, I'm excited for all we can accomplish together. Thank you for what you make possible. You are, quite literally, saving the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Sargent". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rob Sargent
Energy Program Director

Defend Our Environment

For the past 50 years, America has enjoyed cleaner air, cleaner water and better protected public lands thanks to environmental laws and other protections. In 2017, as the Trump administration and new Congress sought to dismantle this legacy, we stood in defense of our environment.

Defend the EPA

When President Trump proposed a budget that would slash EPA funding by nearly one-third, Environment America launched a campaign to defend the agency from crippling budget cuts. We gathered thousands of public comments to show the White House that most Americans want more protections for our health and environment, not fewer. Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center published “Rough Waters Ahead” a series of reports examining the impact of EPA budget cuts on our waters.

Defend the environment in court

When the government has failed to enforce protections for air and water, Environment Virginia, our national network, and our partners at the National Environmental Law Center have stepped in to hold polluters accountable and take them to court when they break the law.

In Texas, our sister group Environment Texas won a \$19.95 million settlement last April against ExxonMobil for thousands of violations of the Clean Air Act, and a case against Pasadena Refining for similar violations is in progress. Environment Florida filed suit against Pilgrim's Pride, the world's second largest chicken producer, for polluting the Suwannee River. In Pennsylvania, PennEnvironment is taking on the world's largest steel company, ArcelorMittal, for showering Pittsburgh-area neighborhoods with emissions of soot, acidic gases and noxious odors. Our national network's lawsuits have resulted in more than \$250 million in court-ordered penalties and pollution reduction actions.



Top: In March, National Environmental Law Center's Heather Govern (middle) and Environment Florida's Jennifer Rubiello (right) announced a lawsuit against Pilgrim's Pride.



Bottom: Environment New Mexico's Sanders Moore (middle) spoke at an event recognizing New Mexico Senator Martin Heinrich (right).



Clean, Green & Renewable

Fossil fuels have changed our climate faster than scientists feared, but renewable energy has grown faster than experts predicted. We know we can and must power our lives without polluting our environment, which is why Environment Virginia has been working to put our cities, states, communities and corporations on a path to 100 percent renewable energy. From city halls across the country to Washington, D.C., we're leading the way to a cleaner, greener future.



▲ Our sister group Environment Massachusetts worked with state legislators to introduce a bill that would put the state on a path to getting 100 percent of its energy from renewable sources.



▲ All across the country, Environment Virginia and our national network have been making the case for 100 percent renewable energy.

Renewable energy on the rise

Burning oil, gas and coal has polluted our air, water and land for decades, and it's changing our climate even faster than scientists feared. The good news is that renewable energy is growing faster than experts predicted. We can have healthier communities today and leave our children a cleaner, more livable tomorrow, but only if we turn our backs on the dirty technologies of the past and commit to a 100 percent renewable future.

A decade of progress on renewable energy

According to a report titled “Renewables on the Rise,” released in July by Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center, the future is bright for renewable energy. Wind turbines and solar panels were novelties 10 years ago, but today they are everyday parts of America’s energy landscape. Energy-saving LED lightbulbs cost \$40 apiece as recently as 2010; today, they cost a few dollars at the local hardware store. Electric cars and batteries that store excess energy on the grid seemed like far-off solutions just a few years ago; now, they are poised to break through into the mass market.

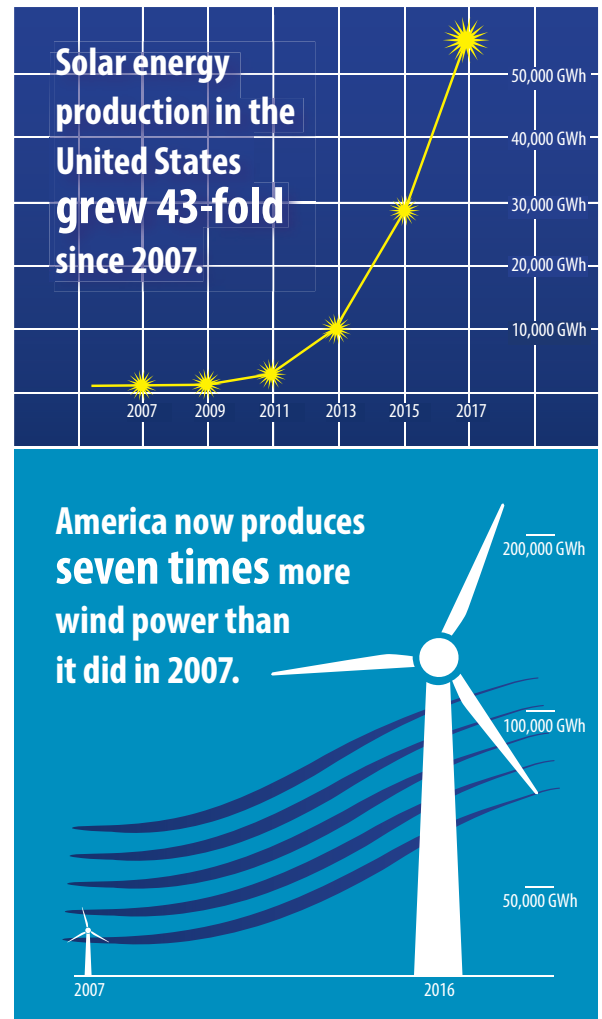
The report found that America produces nearly eight times as much renewable electricity from the sun and the wind as in 2007. Last March, for the first time ever, wind and solar produced 10 percent of America’s electricity. At the same time, the average American uses 10 percent less energy than a decade ago, due in great part to improvements in energy efficiency.

You helped us make the case for 100 percent

Last year, Environment Virginia and our national network launched our Voices for 100% Renewable Energy campaign. In it, we highlight a wide range of voices—from everyday citizens to community, business and political leaders—who share our goal of shifting to 100 percent renewable energy. By adding your voice to the call, you’re helping bring 100 percent renewable energy further into the mainstream.

And there’s good news coming out of Washington, D.C. Last year, Sens. Jeff Merkley (Ore.), Ed Markey (Mass.), Bernie Sanders (Vt.), and Cory Booker (N.J.) introduced the “100 by ‘50 Act” into the U.S. Senate, with a House companion bill following a few months later. The bill would put in place a comprehensive plan to ramp up renewable energy and energy efficiency while halting the development of fossil fuel infrastructure, putting the United States on a path to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

Meanwhile, states and cities are taking the lead, as California and Massachusetts both introduced bills to commit their states to 100 percent renewable energy. Cities from San Diego to Georgetown, Texas, have already committed to achieving 100 percent renewable energy, and were joined in the past year by Portland, Ore., Philadelphia and more. And college campuses have been valuable allies, by transitioning to clean energy themselves and by bringing their communities along with them.



A wide-angle photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is a bright orange orb on the horizon, with its light reflecting as a shimmering path on the water's surface. The sky is filled with dark, textured clouds, some of which are illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a dramatic orange and blue glow. The water is calm, with gentle ripples.

Clean Water

Water is life. Environment Virginia is committed to keeping the waters we love and rely on clean, safe and beautiful. When the Trump administration moved to roll back the Clean Water Rule, we stood up to protect it. Through our Get the Lead Out campaign, we worked to keep drinking water safe, especially for our children. And our Clean Water Network provided organizers and advocates with the resources they needed to protect our most beautiful bodies of water.



▲ In February, Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center released “Get the Lead Out,” drawing attention to the threat of lead in our schools and preschools.



▲ In March, Environment Virginia Clean Water Program Director John Rumpler (middle) and local water advocates from other states met with the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C., to raise concerns about proposals to weaken clean water protections.

In defense of clean water

When President Trump moved to roll back protections for 2 million miles of streams that help provide drinking water for 117 million Americans, Environment Virginia was ready to stand up for our waters. We mobilized immediately to push back against the repeal, rallying support across the country to defend the Clean Water Rule and other key environmental protections.

Our clean water team enlisted hundreds of business and political leaders to voice their support for the Clean Water Rule. Our state leaders submitted op-eds and letters to the editor to dozens of local papers, as well as national media outlets like The New York Times and CNBC.

“Clean water is vital to our ecology, our health and our quality of life,” said Environment Virginia Clean Water Program Director John Rumpler. “Repealing the Clean Water Rule turns the mission of the EPA on its head.”

“Get the Lead Out”

Four years ago, the tragedy in Flint, Mich., stunned the nation. We watched the drinking water of an entire city become contaminated with lead. And now we know this toxic threat extends well beyond Flint to communities across the country—including in our schools and preschools.

Last February, Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center released “Get the Lead Out,” a report showing the alarming prevalence of lead contamination in school drinking water. The information publicly available is still very limited, but what’s available paints a grim picture: The report found evidence of lead contamination in schools all across the country, from New York to Texas.

We worked to protect the waters we love

From the Chesapeake Bay to Puget Sound and the many rivers, lakes and streams in between, our waterways are critical to our health and quality of life. Yet every day, we hear new stories of the threats our beloved waters are facing. That’s why we and our affiliates around the country formed the Clean Water Network. A project of Environment America Research & Policy Center, the Clean Water Network is a nationwide coalition of local clean water groups working to protect the waterways we love.

Last year, our member groups celebrated victories protecting the Shenandoah River from waste treatment plant pollution, doubling the size of the Hach-Otis Sanctuary State Nature Preserve in Ohio, and more.

Where do we need to get the lead out?



FLORIDA

At least **24** schools

GEORGIA

At least **25** Atlanta schools

ILLINOIS

At least **113** Chicago schools

MARYLAND

All Baltimore schools

MASSACHUSETTS

At least **20,000** school water outlets

NEW JERSEY

Schools in at least **three** counties

NEW YORK

14 percent of school water outlets

PENNSYLVANIA

Schools in **Philadelphia** and **Butler** Counties

TEXAS

At least **62** Dallas-Ft. Worth area schools

WISCONSIN

183 school water fountains

WASHINGTON, D.C.

At least **64** schools

*The EPA recommends taking action when lead contamination exceeds 15 ppb



No Bees, No Food

Bees are dying off at an unsustainable rate, with alarming consequences for our environment and our food supply. Scientists point to several causes of bee colony collapse, including climate change, parasites and pesticide use. We're working to save bees and other pollinators by banning the use of neonicotinoids—a class of pesticides linked to bee die-offs. After all, when bees pollinate everything from apples to strawberries to the alfalfa used to feed dairy cows, we know it's bees, not pesticides, that make our farms and food possible.

Give bees a chance

Neonicotinoids (neonics) are the most widely used class of pesticide in the country, yet big agrichemical companies are using them more and more. That's why Environment Virginia worked hard last year to educate the public on the need to ban these bee-killing pesticides. Over the summer, we held events like bee-friendly BBQs and picnics to drive home how much we count on bees for the foods we eat every day.

This summer, Environment Virginia and our allies gathered and delivered more than 164,000 public comments from people like you who called on the Environmental Protection Agency to carefully review and declare a moratorium on four bee-killing neonics.

The Bee Friendly Food Alliance

In 2017, we launched the Bee Friendly Food Alliance to unite chefs, restaurant owners and other leaders in the food industry to save the bees. The alliance keeps our allies updated on the problems facing bees and provides opportunities to make their voices heard by the public and decision-makers.

More than 30 restaurants joined us for National Pollinator Week in June to educate customers, highlight the contributions of bees through food and drink specials, and spread the word through social media.



Top: Our national network held events all over the country to raise awareness about the importance of bees and the problems they face.

Bottom: Our staff delivered public comments from citizens to the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C., calling for a ban on bee-killing pesticides.

Conservation

From the Grand Canyon to the Everglades, our parks, forests and public lands are a beloved part of our natural heritage. They're the places we visit with friends and family to hike, bike, fish and open our eyes to the wonders of the great outdoors. Last year, our public lands faced threats like never before, as the Trump administration and some members of Congress pushed shortsighted plans to open these sensitive landscapes to dirty and dangerous development.

You stood up for our national monuments

America's outdoors are part of what make this country special. So when President Trump ordered a review of 27 of our national monuments, from Katahdin Woods and Waters in Maine to Giant Sequoia in California, you spoke out.

Environment Virginia and our coalition partners helped deliver more than 2.7 million of your public comments to the Department of the Interior, calling on the president and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to preserve our monuments.

While Secretary Zinke ultimately did not revoke any of our monuments' protected status, he recommended weakening protections for Bears Ears National Monument and nine others, potentially opening those lands up for mining and drilling. In the new year, we'll continue to defend these special places and keep our public lands in public hands.

You said no to offshore drilling

From Exxon-Valdez to Deepwater Horizon, we've seen time and again that when you drill, you spill. That's why Environment Virginia and our national affiliates have stood strong against efforts by the Trump administration to open the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans to expanded offshore drilling. We engaged coastal communities and Americans from Alaska to Florida to send a clear message to Washington, D.C.: Our oceans should be preserved, not sold off to the highest bidder.



Top: Environment Virginia and our allies delivered more than 2.7 million public comments to the Department of the Interior, calling on them to save our monuments.

Bottom: In April, President Trump signed an executive order to allow expanded offshore drilling in the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans.

Environment Virginia supporters

Citizen support is the cornerstone of Environment Virginia. Thousands of Virginians supported Environment Virginia, a project of Environment America, Inc., Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center, Inc., a project of Environment America Research & Policy Center, Inc., and/or Environment Virginia's connected political action committee, Environment America Voter Action, by making contributions in fiscal year 2017. The members listed below were particularly generous in backing the organizations' research and advocacy. Names that appear in *italics* denote Monthly Supporters.

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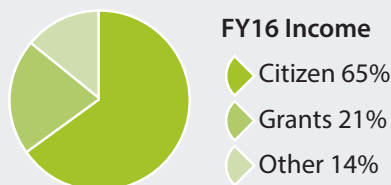
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Financial information

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Toward a greener future

Environment Virginia and Environment Virginia Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 ext. 310 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentVirginia.org.

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