

San Diego



Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report
Thanks for making it all possible

From the Director

To be an environmentalist, you've got to wrestle with a conundrum: We need bold action on a short timeline ... with broad public support.

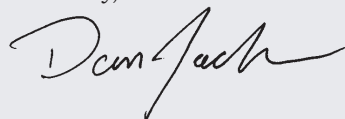
We need to do a lot, quickly, to preserve a livable planet. But progress has to earn and sustain the support of the people in order to last—so progress doesn't often come in one big swooping action. It usually comes one small-ish victory at a time.

At Environment California, 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,



Dan Jacobson
State Director, Environment California

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. California 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 California and our national network are working in California 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."



John Rumpler, senior director of our national network's Clean Water campaign, spoke to CBS This Morning about states' failure to protect school drinking water from lead contamination.



*Above: California became the first state in the nation to require builders to install solar panels on all new homes.
Below: Environment California State Director Dan Jacobson accepted his “Clean Power Champion” award for his success in leading the 2018 campaign to pass SB 100.*



Clean, Green & Renewable Energy

With support from Environment California'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 100% Renewable Energy and Go Solar campaigns.

Dan Jacobson recognized as a 'Clean Power Champion'

AUG. 21, 2019: Virtue, they say, is its own reward, especially when it comes to standing up for California's environment. But a little recognition along the way sure can't hurt.

That's why we're happy to announce that, on Aug. 20, the Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies (CEERT) named Environment California's Dan Jacobson a Clean Power Champion. CEERT selected Dan for the award based on his success in leading the 2018 campaign to pass SB 100, the law that put California on the path to 100 percent clean electricity by 2045; and for his leadership in the passage of dozens of bills, including California's Climate Solutions Act.

"I'm honored to be selected as a Clean Power Champion by CEERT," said Dan. "The passage of SB 100 was a historic victory for clean energy in California and it's encouraging to see other states follow our lead, but there's still a lot of work to be done."

It's official: California to install solar panels on all new homes

DEC. 10, 2018: California's energy future just keeps getting brighter.

The California Building Standards Commission finalized a rule on Dec. 5 that requires builders to install solar panels on all new homes starting in 2020. According to Environment California Research & Policy Center's Dec. 3 report, "Solar Homes," the additional solar panels could increase California's existing solar capacity by 22 percent by 2045. The policy, paired with energy efficiency improvements, could save homeowners thousands in energy and maintenance costs.

"Every home and structure built without solar is a missed opportunity," said Environment California Research & Policy Center State Director Dan Jacobson. "Generating renewable energy from our rooftops helps homeowners and their communities reduce pollution and live healthier lives."

This decision has been in the works since May 2018, when the California Energy Commission adopted new building standards that proposed building all new homes with solar panels, the first such proposal in the nation.

The passage of SB 100 was a historic victory for clean energy in California and it's encouraging to see other states follow our lead, but there's still a lot of work to be done.

*Dan Jacobson
State Director*



This year, Environment California prioritized building statewide support for legislation that would have dramatically reduced the state's plastic waste.



Wildlife Over Waste

Plastic pollution from single-use plastic bags and foam too often works its way into California's rivers and lakes, and the Pacific Ocean, where it can harm wildlife and our environment. Below, find more on Environment California's work to choose wildlife over waste.

Californians rally to break free from plastic

AUG. 24, 2019: California could take the lead against plastic pollution.

On Aug. 21, standing in front of a giant plastic bag and straw at the Capitol, Environment California staff and supporters joined our network partner CALPIRG, business owners, and local and state officials to call for the passage of bills to dramatically reduce our plastic waste. If the bills pass, businesses will have until 2030 to phase out 75 percent of their single-use packaging and the state's most littered single-use plastic items in favor of reusable, compostable or recyclable alternatives.

"Nothing we use for minutes should harm our environment and wildlife for centuries," said Environment California's Valerie Nguyen. "If we don't act now, our environment will be even more damaged and diminished by plastic waste. California can lead the way in reducing plastic pollution by passing SB 54 and AB 1080."

By August, both bills had passed out of their respective houses.

Environment California sets its sights on January session to pass punted plastics bill

SEPT. 17, 2019: On the last day of their 2019 session, California lawmakers failed to vote on the nation's most ambitious plastic pollution reduction bill.

Companion bills filed in the Senate and Assembly would have put California on a path to reducing single-use plastic packaging and foodware by 75 percent by 2030. By 2030, all packaging and single-use foodware would have needed to be recyclable or compostable.

"From turtles with plastic straws stuck in their noses to whales with bellies full of plastic bags washing up on our beaches, you don't need to look very hard to see an enormous plastic pollution problem," said Environment California Associate Emily Fieberling. "We'll keep calling for legislation that prioritizes the wellbeing of wildlife over the convenience and waste of single-use plastics."

Legislators can vote on the bills in January. Environment California will be ready to make the case and rally our members to take action.



Below: Staff from our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with their allies, delivered 350,000 public comments in support of federal Clean Car standards to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (top right). Andrea McGimsey and Environment America Research & Policy Center staff hosted a tour of an electric bus facility (bottom right).



Global Warming Solutions

Environment California 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 California did to move California commuters from depending on diesel to cleaner transportation.

Dan Jacobson goes on the hunt for electric vehicle charging stations

APRIL 8, 2019: If your car runs low on gas, there's likely a gas station nearby. If your electric vehicle's charge runs low, you might be out of luck and, with millions of electric cars about to hit California's roads, that's a big problem.

Environment California State Director Dan Jacobson joined the San Diego Union-Tribune on a mission to show what the state needs to do to get ready for more electric vehicles. As documented in Environment California Research & Policy Center's "Ready to Charge" report, chargers for electric vehicles can be hard to find, and when you can find them, there is no uniform way to use them.

"We're still at a point where it can be a pretty big adventure to charge your car when you're not at home," said Dan.

In 2018, then-Gov. Jerry Brown signed an executive order calling for 5 million electric vehicles in California by 2030. Since the article was published, San Diego announced plans to expand infrastructure.

Victory: California public buses will be zero-emission by 2040

DEC. 18, 2018: California's done it again, with another groundbreaking action on climate and public health.

This time, the state became the nation's first to commit to a 100 percent zero-emission bus fleet. The decision came on Dec. 14, when the California Air Resources Board unanimously approved increasingly strong purchasing standards, ultimately requiring all public transit buses to emit zero carbon and zero lung-damaging pollutants by 2040.

"It makes no sense to continue to use buses that impact our climate and hurt our kids, especially when we can use clean electric buses," said Environment California State Director Dan Jacobson to the Desert Sun. "We want 100 percent clean buses and zero percent child asthma."

The board predicts that, when fully implemented, the plan will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 19 million metric tons by 2050. That's the equivalent to taking 4 million cars off the road.

“It makes no sense to continue to use buses that impact our climate and hurt our kids, especially when we can use clean electric buses.”

*Dan Jacobson
State Director*



Above: This summer, our national network campaigned to ban the worst uses of harmful bee-killing pesticides, and 123,000 Americans sent messages to governors and state legislators calling for action. Below: The Land and Water Conservation Fund, our nation's best conservation program, came under threat this year. Our network is working to save it.



Conservation

Our network's staff and members sought to save the bees from toxic pesticides, and to spare Arctic wildlife from oil and gas exploration and drilling.

All the way: Our best conservation program would be fully funded under bipartisan bill

JUNE 13, 2019: The idea that Americans should enjoy more and better-maintained parks, wildlife refuges, hiking trails and ball fields is earning bipartisan support.

On June 11, Reps. Jeff Van Drew (D-N.J.), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Penn.) and Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) introduced a bill to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Republican Reps. John Katko and Lee Zeldin of New York, as well as several dozen Democrats, signed on as cosponsors. The Senate is considering a similar bill, introduced by Sens. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) and Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.).

"LWCF is slated to receive \$900 million per year, but, for decades, that money has been diverted to other programs," said Erik Dumont, public lands advocate for our national network. "Congress needs to pass these bills to finally, fully fund LWCF."

Our national network helped lead the effort to reauthorize LWCF after the last Congress let it expire. Overwhelming, bipartisan majorities in both houses voted to restore it.

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," said Steve Blackledge, director of our national network's Conservation program.

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.

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 Blackledge
Director, Conservation program*

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