



## Your Fall Report

# Hundreds turn out for PennEnvironment's annual virtual citizen climate lobby day

Joining from Erie to the Poconos and from Pittsburgh to Philly, over 250 Pennsylvanians participated in this year's PennEnvironment citizen climate lobby day. Held in early June, attendees participated in 60 meetings with Pennsylvania state senators, state representatives and their staff—nearly one-quarter of the entire state legislature—over the course of the busy day.

Excitingly, one of the priority policy recommendations being advocated for during our citizen lobby day made it to Gov. Josh Shapiro's desk and was signed into law: legislation introduced by Philadelphia state Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler to direct \$25 million towards installing solar panels on school buildings across Pennsylvania to create more clean, renewable energy in the state.

## Citizens win support for climate and renewable energy policy

PennEnvironment's annual citizen climate lobby day was held virtually again this year to make it easier for residents concerned about global warming to participate.

And the overwhelming show of citizen advocacy paid off: over 40 state senators and representatives pledged to add their names to legislation pending in the General Assembly that would help rein in global warming pollution and implement clean, renewable energy alternatives, and to personally lobby other legislators in the General Assembly asking them to join them and do the same.

"Poll after poll shows that Pennsylvanians from all walks of life—Democrats, Republicans and Independents—support



*In June, PennEnvironment hosted our Annual Citizen Climate Action Lobby Day virtually. More than 250 Pennsylvanians joined us for 60 legislative meetings to push for clean energy and energy efficiency policies in the state.*

increasing renewable energy production and tackling climate change," said PennEnvironment's Deputy Director Flora Cardoni. "That's why so many concerned Pennsylvanians joined PennEnvironment's annual citizen climate lobby day to demand that our elected officials implement policies to expand clean energy, improve energy efficiency, reduce climate and air pollution, and protect our children and future generations."

Specifically, Pennsylvanians who met with their legislators were advocating for them to pass two bills comprising Gov.

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all possible

## Study puts forth recommendation for protecting Pennsylvania wildlife

If Pennsylvania acts on the recommendations of a new state report released this summer, the Keystone State's majestic native animal species will find it easier to survive and thrive.

The report details how to preserve and reconnect wildlife habitats in Pennsylvania by better utilizing forested and other

wide range of products including cleaning products, carpeting, cookware, cosmetics, dental floss, food packaging, infant and children's products, artificial turf, menstrual products and other products.

Excitingly, HB2238 overcame a critical hurdle in the state legislature, passing the Pennsylvania State House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee by a vote of 14-11 with PennEnvironment's support. PennEnvironment was recently quoted in stories about the threats posed by PFAS in major news outlets, including national media coverage in Newsweek, and a detailed investigative report on PFAS in artificial turf by the Philadelphia Inquirer.

"Whether Pennsylvanians are frying an egg, microwaving popcorn, buying baby supplies or heading to the park to kick a ball around on a soccer field, we shouldn't need to worry about being exposed to toxic 'forever chemicals' threatening our family's health," said PennEnvironment's Stephanie Wein.

## New interactive map spotlights EV charging in state and national parks

Millions of Pennsylvanians are expected to hit the highways this year for road trips, often to state or national parks. For many drivers, 2024 marks their first year behind the wheel of an electric vehicle.

A new interactive map from PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center helps those early adopters of EVs find state and national parks where they can plug in their electric vehicles while enjoying nature.

"Park systems across the country and Pennsylvania are making it easier for EV owners to 'recharge where you recharge,'" said PennEnvironment's Deputy Director, Flora Cardoni. "That means we can all leave air pollution behind when we go to enjoy the wonders of the great outdoors."

The interactive map highlights more than 260 large state and national parks across the country with EV chargers either in them or nearby. In Pennsylvania, state officials have installed electric vehicle chargers at more than three dozen state parks and forests.

You can check out our EV charging station map "America's best places to recharge" at [pennenvironmentcenter.org/resources](https://pennenvironmentcenter.org/resources).

Get more updates on our work online at <https://pennenvironment.org>.

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Pennsylvania is home to the largest elk herd in the eastern U.S. Protecting and expanding their habitat is key to the herd's growth and health.

undeveloped corridors as well as road-crossing structures. This change could help animals safely move between areas fragmented by roads, buildings and other infrastructure development and to create a more interconnected natural landscape.

The creation of the report was required under the passage of PennEnvironment-backed HR87 in 2023. It calls for next steps to include the creation of a commission to identify Pennsylvania high-priority habitats for protection and policies to increase funding for land conservation, among other recommendations.

"This report lays out clear next steps our leaders in Harrisburg can take to protect our wildlife for generations to come. Now, they need to act on this commonsense plan," said Stephanie Wein, clean water and conservation advocate at PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center.

## PennEnvironment-backed policy would ban PFAS in many common consumer products

PennEnvironment staff have helped draft—and now are aggressively advocating for—new legislation that would ban PFAS or "forever chemicals." Introduced by state Rep. Greg Scott, HB2238 would ban PFAS in a

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Shapiro’s Energy Plan—the PA Climate Emissions Reduction Program (PACER) and the PA Reliable Sustainable Energy Standard (PRESS).

Together, these bills would cap climate pollution from Pennsylvania’s largest global warming polluters, and significantly increase the existing requirements for renewable energy produced by utility companies providing electricity in the state to be at least 35% wind and solar by 2035. This would be a four-fold increase over current renewable energy requirements existing in Pennsylvania today.

Participants also lobbied their local legislators to pass Community Solar legislation, the Lake Erie Wind Development Act, and to implement new energy efficiency standards for a set of commonly used appliances sold in Pennsylvania.

PennEnvironment also held a mid-day virtual rally for attendees of the citizen lobby day, where they could hear from keynote

speakers including the Democratic Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, state Sen. Carolyn Comitta; state Rep. Aerion Abney, the sponsor of legislation to make climate polluters pay for their pollution; and state Rep. Jenn O’Mara, the lead sponsor of legislation to set appliance energy efficiency standards in Pennsylvania.

Our 2024 citizen climate lobby day also garnered media attention across the state, including stories in the Scranton Times Tribune, Yahoo News and MyChesco.com. To help get the word out, PennEnvironment’s staff disseminated a news release to dozens of media outlets throughout Pennsylvania.

“Today’s participants showed that concerned citizens want to make Pennsylvania a climate champ instead of a climate chump,” Cardoni said. “There are now so many good policies queued up and ready to be passed—there’s no time like the present for legislators to follow their constituents’ lead and do the right thing for people and the planet.”

*PennEnvironment Executive Director David Masur and Deputy Director Flora Cardoni meet with members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus to discuss energy efficiency.*



Staff

## 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 PennEnvironment. We focus on protecting 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.

## Featured staff



Garen Mesnerian

David Masur  
Executive Director

As executive director, David spearheads the issue advocacy, civic engagement campaigns and long-term organizational building for PennEnvironment. David has served on the environmental transition teams for Govs. Josh Shapiro and Tom Wolf and Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, and he was recently recognized by City & State in Pennsylvania’s “Government Relations Power 100.” Under David’s leadership, PennEnvironment has won the two largest citizen suit penalties in Pennsylvania history against illegal polluters under the federal Clean Water Act.



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# PennEnvironment

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## Your 2024 Fall Report

### Take action

Together we can advance policies that put our country and our world on a better path. To find out about the latest ways you can get involved, visit our online action center at: [PennEnvironment.org/take-action](https://PennEnvironment.org/take-action).



## Momentum grows for passing plastic bag bans across Pennsylvania

With new scientific data showing the environmental harms of plastic waste coming out on almost a daily basis, PennEnvironment has doubled down on its campaign to convince elected officials in cities, townships and boroughs across Pennsylvania to implement the most successful policy for addressing this threat—local bans on the distribution of plastic bags and other single-use plastics.

This spring and summer, PennEnvironment's Zero Waste Advocate Faran Savitz helped four more municipalities implement local plastic bag bans: Doylestown Township, Phoenixville, and both Newtown Township and Borough in Bucks County.

And with our ongoing advocacy, more than ten local ordinances banning single-use plastic bags have passed in the last year. These recent policies could lead to the elimination of nearly 63 million plastic bags each year in Pennsylvania, and avoid over 500,000 pounds of additional plastic waste in the commonwealth annually.

PennEnvironment is currently working with officials from over a dozen Pennsylvania cities and towns to draft similar policies, with the hopes of getting up to five more policies passed before 2024 ends.

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*Recent local plastic bag bans in Pennsylvania could eliminate nearly 63 million plastic bags each year.*



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