



Our annual report

on the actions you made possible

Fiscal Year 2024

Pine Creek Gorge

For a greener Pennsylvania



986
AD OUT!
Getting Lead Out of School Drinking Water

A letter to our supporters

PennEnvironment has a long, successful track record reining in illegal polluters who break our cornerstone environmental laws in Pennsylvania. When three U.S. Steel facilities in the Pittsburgh region violated the Clean Air Act more than 12,000 times, we delivered a victory of historic proportions that will reduce their pollution and get them to follow the law. And when a company illegally released plastic pellets into the Ohio River day in and day out, we began taking legal action to curb this pollution.

Standing up to these powerful polluters is just one example of the actions we take with your support to put Pennsylvania on a greener, healthier path.

We also worked to expand and celebrate the accelerating rise of rooftop solar power, to tackle some of Pennsylvania's worst sources of global warming pollution, and much more.

Your action and support make all this work possible. Our planet can't thank you directly, but we certainly do.



David Masur
Executive Director

(Left) PennEnvironment's David Masur joins state decision-makers to advocate for getting lead out of school drinking water. Photo credits: (Front cover) CEW via Shutterstock; (left) Pennsylvania Senate.

PennEnvironment is a policy and action group with one mission: to protect and restore the natural world.

But we can't do it without you. Our staff researches the issues, educates the public and advocates tangible results for a greener world. Our members give us the resources to carry out our mission and put grassroots support behind all of our campaigns and programs.

To keep up to date with our work and learn more about our campaigns and progress, you can follow us at the addresses below. We'd also love to hear from you—feel free to email us at info@PennEnvironment.org

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Decades of plastic pollution



WILDLIFE OVER WASTE

Action for plastic free waters in Pennsylvania

As our members know, birds, fish and other wildlife are often harmed and sometimes killed by plastic that has entered our waterways. Some of the most dangerous plastics are also the smallest.

Plastic “nurdles,” which are tiny plastic pellets used in making plastic products, have been spilled or dumped into rivers, streams and other waterways, where they can be eaten by wildlife.

In December 2023, PennEnvironment partnered with Three Rivers Waterkeeper and the National Environmental Law Center to file a Clean Water Act lawsuit against Styropek, a plastic manufacturer found illegally discharging plastic nurdles into the Ohio River and Raccoon Creek just north of Pittsburgh. We are working to ensure that these two beloved waterways in western Pennsylvania don't become a dumping ground for plastic waste.



**WILDLIFE
OVER WASTE**

(Left) PennEnvironment's David Masur hunts for nurdles in Raccoon Creek. (Above, clockwise from left) David Masur announces a lawsuit against a plastic company dumping nurdles into the Ohio River; Great blue heron; a handful of nurdles. Photo credits: (Left) Garrick Schmitt; (above, clockwise from left) Garrick Schmitt; Bob Garvine via Shutterstock; Brendan Gibbons, Oil & Gas Watch News.

\$25 million



RENEWABLE ENERGY

We're supporting schools going solar

Rooftop solar, which produces energy right where it is needed, is growing rapidly. Yet our fall 2023 study showed that Pennsylvania lagged behind most states when it came to tapping into clean, renewable energy from rooftop solar.

Solar's tremendous potential lies in its accessibility: there is no shortage of suitable rooftops on homes, schools, churches and other buildings. Despite this, rooftop solar currently provides only 1.5% of America's electricity, but has the potential to generate 45%.

In June, we held our annual citizen lobby day calling for increased funding to develop solar on schools across the state. This proposal was signed into law by Gov. Josh Shapiro a month later, providing \$25 million to school districts to go solar. And to get the word out about the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act, PennEnvironment hosted a series of church solar rooftop tours for members of Pennsylvania's congressional delegation.



You can find our Clean Energy Home Toolkit at:
PennEnvironment.org/cleanenergyhome.

(Left) PennEnvironment's Flora Cardoni (right, back) accompanies U.S. Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (second from right), state Sen. Amanda Cappelletti (center), Pastor Tim Johansen and solar energy advocates to tour the solar roof at Temple Lutheran Church in Havertown, Penn. (Above, top to bottom) PennEnvironment's Belle Sherwood (left) and Ellie Kerns (right) join state Rep. Anthony Bellmon at a school's solar ribbon cutting event; Flora (left) and U.S. Rep. Brian K. Fitzpatrick (center) join advocates to tour a church with solar panels; more than 250 Pennsylvanians joined us during PennEnvironment's annual virtual Citizen Climate Action Lobby Day; Flora with solar panels on the roof of a church. Photo credits: All photos by staff.

\$42 million settlement



CLEAN AIR

Our historic lawsuit against illegal air pollution

Everybody should be able to breathe air that's clean and safe. Yet after a fire took place in 2018 at U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works, the company's massive coal refining facility and their Edgar Thomson and Irvin steel mills in Pittsburgh belched illegal air pollution day in and day out for over three straight months.

PennEnvironment filed a federal Clean Air Act lawsuit against the company to rein in these illegal discharges and hold U.S. Steel accountable for their ongoing violations.

And our results were historic: Our settlement against the company included the largest penalty of its kind against an illegal air polluter in Pennsylvania history, requiring U.S. Steel to permanently shut down some of the dirtiest parts of the plant and pay tens of millions in pollution upgrades to the facility. A true victory for cleaner air.



(Left) U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works; (Above) PennEnvironment's David Masur joins residents who live near Clairton Coke Works to announce the results of our citizen suit. Photo credits: (Left) Mark Dixon via Flickr, CC BY 2.0, <https://flic.kr/p/2kYEFW3>, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>; (above) All photos by Abby Wilcox.

WILDLIFE OVER WASTE



Staff

PennEnvironment has been the statewide leader in implementing local bans on single-use plastic bags. This year we helped pass a dozen new local bag bans in cities and towns across Pennsylvania that are expected to mean nearly 90 million less plastic bags distributed in the state each year.



SAVE AMERICA'S WILDLIFE



Harry Collins Photography via Shutterstock

After a PennEnvironment-backed effort to preserve critical habitat for native species was passed in 2023, state officials unveiled new recommendations for protecting wildlife in July. The study details the policies and steps needed to preserve and reconnect wildlife habitats in Pennsylvania to create a more interconnected natural landscape.



THE CLEANEST ENERGY CONSERVATION & EFFICIENCY



Yazan Aboushi

Our recent study showed that the newly updated appliance energy efficiency standards by the Biden administration will dramatically reduce air and climate pollution. The standards are projected to cut 371 tons of sulfur dioxide and 392 tons of nitrous oxide pollution in Pennsylvania annually, over the next two decades.



Staff

In July, PennEnvironment released a new interactive map to help Pennsylvanians find state and national parks where they can charge their electric vehicles while “unplugging” from civilization in nature. The new map showed that Pennsylvania’s state park system is a national leader, with EV charging stations in over three dozen state parks.



Jon Bilous via Shutterstock

In December 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed new safeguards to reduce pollution in the Delaware River. This was critical to help protect the endangered Atlantic sturgeon, since only 250 remain in the lower Delaware. PennEnvironment recruited more than 1,000 residents to support the EPA’s proposal.



Yazan Aboushi

After PennEnvironment delivered signatures from more than 10,000 Pennsylvanians, the Biden administration finalized new safeguards in February 2024 that are expected to reduce harmful soot pollution by nearly 25%. These protections are expected to save an estimated 4,500 lives and avoid 800,000 asthma attacks every year in the U.S.

OUR LEGACY: A GREENER AMERICA

Together, we have a long legacy of victories for clean air, clean water, clean energy and more—including state and local wins that have provided blueprints for action nationwide.



2006: New rule to reduce mercury pollution

PennEnvironment helps secure a new rule to reduce toxic mercury pollution from the commonwealth's coal-fired power plants. The plan requires thirty-six power plants to reduce their mercury pollution by 90% by 2015, leaving Pennsylvania's lakes and ponds cleaner and healthier.

2007: We expand program to clean up hazardous waste

PennEnvironment helps reauthorize and increase funding for the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, the state's cornerstone program for cleaning up hazardous waste sites.

2008: PennEnvironment helps secure stronger statewide clean car standards

Pennsylvania establishes stronger emission standards for automobiles, providing significantly higher levels of pollution reduction than the then-existing federal standards.

2009: We win historic plan to curb global warming pollution

Pennsylvania finalizes a historic plan to curb the commonwealth's global warming pollution through a variety of clean energy solutions. PennEnvironment had played a critical role in developing the plan and mobilizing record public support for it.



2010: New e-waste recycling program

PennEnvironment successfully advocates for a law that establishes a statewide recycling program for electronics such as computers and televisions, while also banning this harmful waste from Pennsylvania's landfills.

2011: Record-breaking penalty against a water polluter

PennEnvironment wins a record-breaking \$3.75 million penalty against GenOn Energy and an order to stop its illegal pollution of aluminum, manganese, iron and other toxic pollutants into the Conemaugh River. The suit alleges that GenOn was

(Left to right) Nathan Willcox with PennEnvironment speaks with Fox43; David Masur (right) announces the GenOn settlement as NELC's Josh Kratka (left) and Foundation for Pennsylvania Watershed's John Dawes look on; E-waste. Photo credits: Fox43; Staff; Curtis Palmer via Flickr, CC BY 2.0 DEED, creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/



illegally dumping more than 3 million gallons of contaminated wastewater into the Conemaugh River each day, putting the company in continuous violation of its Clean Water Act permit.

2018: PennEnvironment delivers historic clean air settlement with Monessen coke plant

PennEnvironment wins a lawsuit against ArcelorMittal's Monessen Coke Plant in Pittsburgh for its air pollution, including a \$1.5 million penalty and pollution reduction measures. This is the largest Clean Air Act citizen suit penalty of its kind in Pennsylvania history.

2018: New law increases incentives for local solar

PennEnvironment helps win a new law to increase solar production in Pennsylvania. It blocks solar projects built in other states from taking advantage of Pennsylvania incentives for solar energy.

2021: PennEnvironment helps win waste cleanup lawsuit

PennEnvironment wins a lawsuit against PPG Industries, forcing the company to clean up soil and water contamination at its waste site in Ford City, Pennsylvania. The suit was first filed in 2012 over ongoing Clean Water Act violations that polluted the neighboring Allegheny River.



2022: Philadelphia gets the lead out of school drinking water

By a unanimous vote, the Philadelphia City Council passes legislation requiring the School District of Philadelphia to replace all of its old drinking fountains with lead-filtering hydration stations by 2025. The bill is introduced following our report, which shows that 98% of public schools in Philadelphia tested since 2018 have some level of lead in the water, and over 60% of all water outlets have tested positive for lead.

(Left to right) PennEnvironment's Elwyn Corby at the Crane Arts Building solar installation; ArcelorMittal's Monessen plant; Stephanie Wein, PennEnvironment's clean water advocate, releases our "Get the Lead Out" report, giving Pennsylvania an "F" for the inadequacy of the state's policies aimed at stopping pervasive lead contamination of schools' drinking water. Photo credits: Staff; Khaetlyn Grindell; Staff



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