



Your Winter Report

Thanks to you, we delivered over 1 million public comments for our forests

Old growth forests, many of them older than America itself, are not just crucial allies in our race against climate change—they are also home to many species and areas of wonder. However, roadbuilding, logging and development threaten our forests on federal land.

Thankfully, our supporters and members like you are aware of the importance of these forests, and we were able to help deliver more than 1 million public comments over four comment periods urging protection of old growth forests from logging and development.

How we made your voice heard

Mature and old growth trees and forests are critical to addressing the biodiversity and climate crisis, serving as unique ecosystems that support thousands of wildlife species and store significant amounts of carbon.

Following President Joe Biden's 2022 executive order directing the U.S. Forest Service to develop policies protecting mature and old growth forests in the National Forest system, the agency proposed a plan to change the way it manages old growth forests. The Biden administration then invited public input on the plan.

During the comment period, canvassers with Environment America's state offices knocked on doors across the country including in Oregon, Wisconsin and North Carolina where old growth forests are on the chopping block.



Our national canvass team, ready and excited to kick off their summer outreach campaign.

Canvassers educated the public about the threats to old growth trees and forests and built support for old growth protections by collecting public comments from supporters, including from members like you. Along with those supporters, environmental organizations, indigenous-led organizations, federal and state elected officials, faith groups and faith leaders, businesses, scientists and people across the nation submitted hundreds of thousands of comments in support of strong protections for the nation's oldest trees and forests.

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Thanks
for making it
all possible

New grant program will accelerate solar adoption in Maryland

Going solar has gotten easier and faster in Maryland. The Maryland Energy Administration launched the FY25 SolarAPP+ Implementation Grant Program on Oct. 25. With Streamline Solar for Maryland, a coalition of leading environmental and community advocacy groups, Environment Maryland celebrated the opening of grant

health as these approximately 9 million toxic pipes are the single largest source of lead in drinking water.

Unfortunately, this new rule does not require water utilities to halt the widespread contamination of schools' drinking water, as urged by Environment America Research & Policy Center joined by parents and educators.

Lead in schools' water is especially dangerous because children's developing brains and bodies absorb lead more easily. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even low levels of lead exposure have been linked to a drop in IQ, attention disorders and impaired academic performance. That's why schools should install filters certified to remove lead at all taps used for drinking or cooking.

"The EPA's new deadline on lead pipes is a huge step forward for safe drinking water. Now we need state and local officials to take similarly bold action to help ensure that our kids have safe drinking water wherever they go to learn and play each day," said Environment America Research & Policy Center's Clean Water Director John Rumpfer.

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Expedited permitting will make it easier and faster for residents to go solar in Maryland.

applications and the future of instant permitting across the state.

The program will provide financial support to Maryland counties, cities, towns and other local jurisdictions to expedite the solar plan review and permitting process through the adoption of the U.S. Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory SolarAPP+ software platform.

"The adoption of SolarAPP+ promises to be game-changing to grow solar energy in Maryland," said Johanna Neumann, senior director of the Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy at Environment America Research & Policy Center. "By simplifying and expediting the permitting process, SolarAPP+ will support more residents in going solar, reducing pollution and protecting public health."

Major step taken to 'get the lead out'

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently took a major step to get the lead out of drinking water: In October, the EPA set a 10-year deadline for most water utilities to replace lead service lines nationwide.

This deadline is a significant step for public

Where does microplastic pollution come from? Often where plastic is made

Microplastic is showing up in our waterways and on our beaches. Facilities that make plastic pellets are one source of this pollution, so we set out to find where microplastics are coming from.

On July 31, Environment Maryland and our partners at PIRG released an interactive map of these facilities based on data from the Environmental Protection Agency, so citizens can identify potential polluters near local water sources and homes.

An estimated 1 trillion plastic pellets enter the ocean each year and can take 100 to 1,000 years to break down. Because these pellets are small and lightweight, they are often spilled and end up in waterways where they can also be mistaken as food by wildlife.

"Turtles, birds and fish need waterways free from microplastic pollution, but if they live near one of these plastic-producing plants, they could be at risk," said Environment America's Executive Director Lisa Frank. You can find the tool on our website.

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

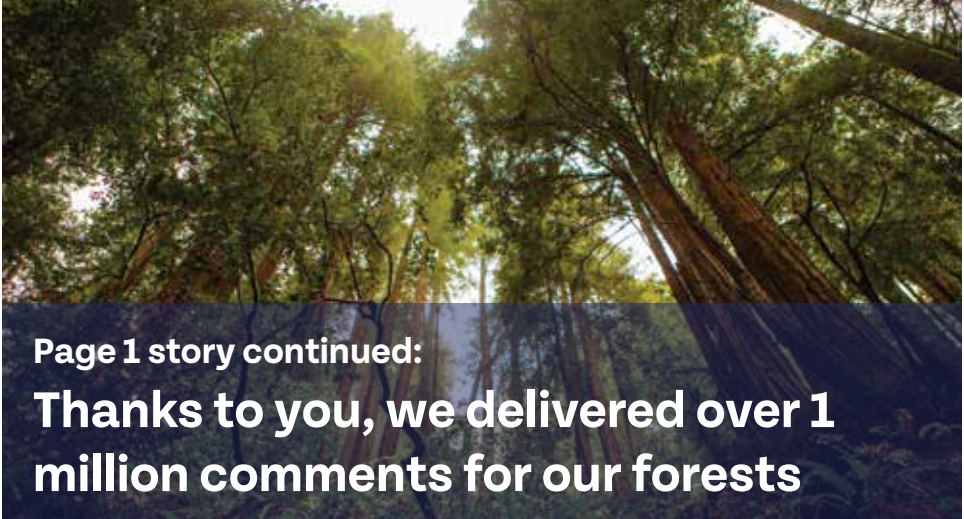
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Why our forests are still at risk

Despite overwhelming public support, our forests remain at risk. The “Fix Our Forests Act,” passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in September 2024, poses urgent threats to our forests by prioritizing logging over true forest restoration. The Act could fast-track logging approvals in federal forests by bypassing critical environmental reviews.

The impact would be devastating: older trees chopped down, eroded soils and habitat destruction. We urged the Senate to reject this legislation.

Strong support for our forests

“The response from the public to our on-the-ground efforts to build support for a strong old growth policy has shown that people want to see older trees protected,” said Environment America Public Lands Campaign Director Ellen Montgomery. “These trees and forests are home to wildlife that we love from birds to bears.”

We will keep working to make sure that decision-makers recognize the truth that the public knows: old growth trees are worth more standing.



Above right: Many trees in old growth forests are older than Philadelphia’s Independence Hall (1753). Below: Rep. John Sarbanes stops by the Environment Maryland campaign office to brief the canvass team.



Staff

Our mission

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

Learn more about us by scanning the QR code below:



Featured staff



Yazan Aboushi

Lisa Frank
Executive Director
Environment America

Lisa leads Environment America’s work for a greener, healthier world. She also directs The Public Interest Network’s Washington, D.C., office and operations. A pragmatic idealist, Lisa has helped win billions of dollars in investments in clean energy and transportation and developed strategic campaigns to protect America’s oceans, forests and public lands. Lisa is an Oregonian transplant to the Capital region, where she loves hiking, running, biking and cooking for friends and family.

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Environment Maryland



Your 2025 Winter Report

Renewables on the Rise

The Renewables on the Rise dashboard allows you to track the growth of clean energy in your state and around the country. Explore your state's clean energy progress by scanning the QR code below:



Surprising facts about renewable energy growth in Maryland

Renewable energy continues to rise in Maryland. According to the Renewables on the Rise 2024 dashboard released on Oct. 22 by Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center, Maryland now generates 575% more solar power and 48% more wind power than it did in 2014. This increase means that we can power an additional 201,927 households each year with renewable energy.

Here are three interesting facts about clean energy's growth in Maryland:

1. Maryland generated more solar energy in 2023 alone than all solar generation before 2017 combined.
2. Maryland is ranked 13th in the country in terms of EV growth in the past 10 years.
3. Maryland added 1,058 EV charging ports in 2023, ranking us eighth in the country in EV charging ports installed.

"When we replace fossil fuels with wind turbines and solar panels, and curb wasteful uses of energy, we build a world where the planet and people can thrive," said Johanna Neumann, senior director of Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center's Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy.

In just 10 years, solar energy generation across the country grew eight-fold, enough to power 22 million homes in 2023.



Tim O'Connor