



## 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

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

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, creating the third-largest federally protected marine area in the United States.

This new sanctuary, spanning 116 miles along California's Central Coast, represents a monumental step in preserving the nation's marine biodiversity and protecting one of the Pacific's most ecologically significant regions.

The sanctuary safeguards crucial habitats where key ocean currents meet, providing vital feeding and migration grounds for marine life, including whales, sea otters and numerous fish species. This designation opens the door to increased federal funding for scientific research, which will deepen understanding of ocean ecosystems and inform conservation efforts under changing climate conditions.

Made possible by over 100,000 comments, including from members like you, and a letter of endorsement signed by 181 scientists, this achievement promises to safeguard irreplaceable waters for future generations.

## 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 Washington 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.

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

CBS



John Rumpler speaks about lead in drinking water on CBS in March 2019.

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 Rumpler.

## Celebrating a new ocean sanctuary

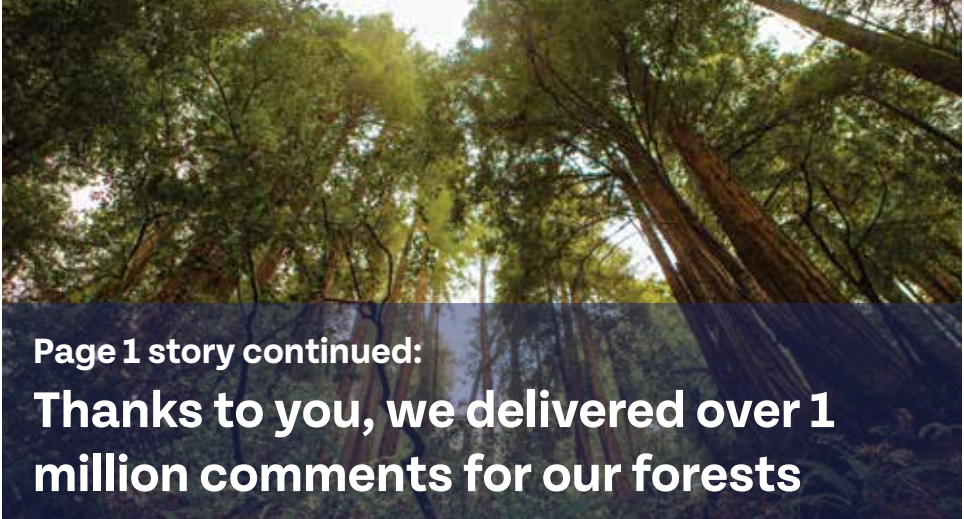
Good news for our oceans: On Oct. 11, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) granted permanent protection from oil and gas drilling to the

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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: Public Lands Campaign Director Ellen Montgomery and staff help deliver more than 500,000 public comments to the U.S. Forest Service to protect old growth forests.



Glen Fortner

## Our mission

Environment Washington 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.

505 Broadway Ave. E #129  
Seattle, WA 98102  
(206) 568-2850

# Environment Washington

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## 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:



### Washingtonians come together to save our Southern Resident orcas

In a powerful show of support last summer, Environment Washington met with Sen. Patty Murray's office to deliver over 4,000 petition signatures to save our orcas.

Southern Resident orcas are starving. Fewer than 80 remain today and the primary cause of their die-off is a lack of food—Chinook salmon.

In some places in the Pacific Northwest, salmon runs have drastically declined because dams block their ability to make it

to their spawning grounds at higher altitude. So if we're to save our orcas, we first need to save the salmon.

In June and July, we spoke to around 10,000 Washingtonians and gathered more than 4,000 petition signatures from concerned citizens, including from members like you, who want to save our orcas. We also attended a youth rally in Seattle calling on state leaders to publicly support actions to benefit struggling orca and salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest.

Orcas in the Pacific Northwest have existed since time immemorial, and they deserve a chance at survival. Join us in our effort to breach these dams, save our salmon and ultimately save our orcas.

*Canvassers hit the streets to rally support for saving Southern Resident orcas. Together, they gathered over 4,000 signatures to help protect and ensure a future for these iconic creatures.*



Staff