

## 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.

Continued on page 3 ►

**Thanks  
for making it  
all possible**

## **Public schools in Milwaukee ensure safe drinking water for schools**

After years of advocacy by grassroots advocates, Milwaukee—and Wisconsin as a whole—continues to make significant progress in replacing lead pipes. Public schools in Milwaukee have installed more than 3,200 water stations with lead removing filters.

Even low levels of lead exposure can lead to

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, Wisconsin Environment 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.

learning disabilities, including ADHD, as well as antisocial behaviors and depression. In states like Wisconsin, children's blood lead levels are already more than double the national average, so further lead exposure can be especially harmful.

The best approach to getting the lead out of drinking water is the installation of lead-filtering water stations, which replace a lead-bearing water source, like fountains, while capturing the lead that comes from plumbing.

We're building a coalition to win statewide funding and statewide policy to require lead-removing filters in all Wisconsin schools. Now let's get the lead out in every school across Wisconsin.

## **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 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



Amanda Mills, USDCDP, Public Domain

*Milwaukee leads the way in protecting kids from lead exposure in school drinking water.*

**Help protect the climate  
with your investments.**

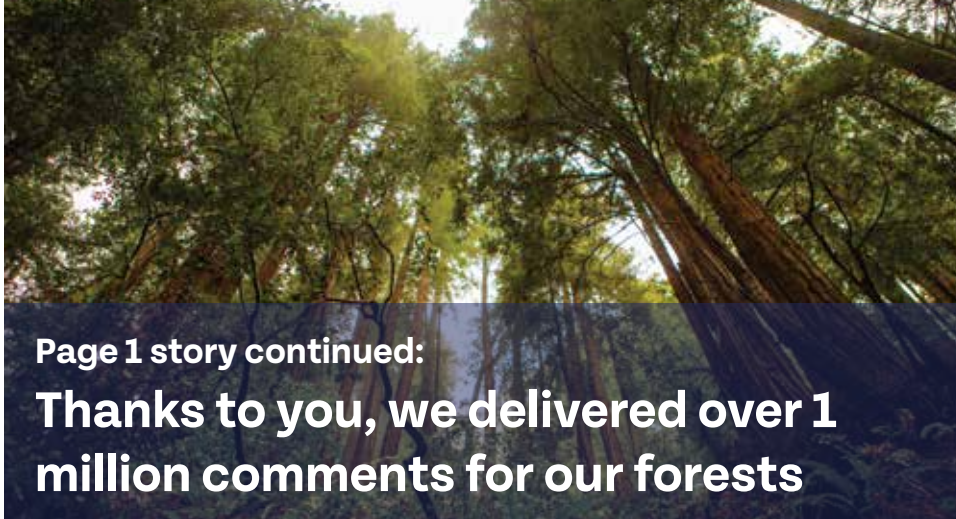
[www.greencentury.com/divestto](http://www.greencentury.com/divestto)



**GREEN  
CENTURY  
FUNDS**

Distributed by UMB Services, LLC. 11/21





## Page 1 story continued: Thanks to you, we delivered over 1 million comments for our forests

### 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

Wisconsin Environment 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.

333 W. Brown Deer Rd.  
Unit G #359  
Milwaukee, WI 53217  
(608) 251-1918

# Wisconsin Environment



**WISCONSIN**  
ENVIRONMENT

## 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 US renewable energy growth

Renewable energy continues to rise across the country. On Oct. 22, Environment America Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group released the latest Renewables on the Rise dashboard that found that the U.S. produced more than three times more renewable energy in 2023 than in 2014, showing growth in every state.

Here are three ways America's clean and renewable energy technologies grew in the last 10 years:

1. America produced enough wind energy to power nearly 39 million typical homes in 2023—more than twice as much wind energy as in 2014.
2. America produced enough solar energy to power 22 million homes in 2023—more than eight times as much solar energy as in 2014.
3. There were nearly 3.3 million electric vehicles on American roads at the end of 2023—a 25-fold increase from 2014.

“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 America 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