



Our program report

on the actions you made possible

Fiscal Year 2024

Kettle River

For a greener Minnesota



A letter to our supporters

In the Superior National Forest, which is located at the southernmost edge of the boreal forest ecosystem, a few trees have been alive nearly as long as our country has existed. They're the elders in a multigenerational forest that provides shelter to animals and plants, from Canadian lynx to bluebead lilies, along with adventure to people from all walks of life.

Over the past year, Environment Minnesota staff and supporters worked to stop plans to log the oldest trees in the Superior and other national forests across the nation—just one of the actions we advocated to put our country on a greener, healthier path.

We also worked to expand and celebrate the accelerating rise of rooftop solar power; to stop the careless dumping of tiny plastic pellets that are making an oversized contribution to the pollution of our oceans, lakes, rivers and streams; and much more.

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



Lisa Frank

On behalf of Environment Minnesota

Environment Minnesota 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@EnvironmentMinnesota.org

EnvironmentMinnesota.org

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(Left) Environment America Executive Director Lisa Frank makes the case in April 2024 for energy efficiency standards. The U.S. Department of Energy later finalized on April 30 a new water heater efficiency standard that will reduce pollution and lower utility bills. Photo credits: (Front cover) Frank Kennedy MN via Shutterstock; (left) Yazan Aboushi.

10 trillion 'nurdles'



WILDLIFE OVER WASTE

We called for plastic-free waters

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.

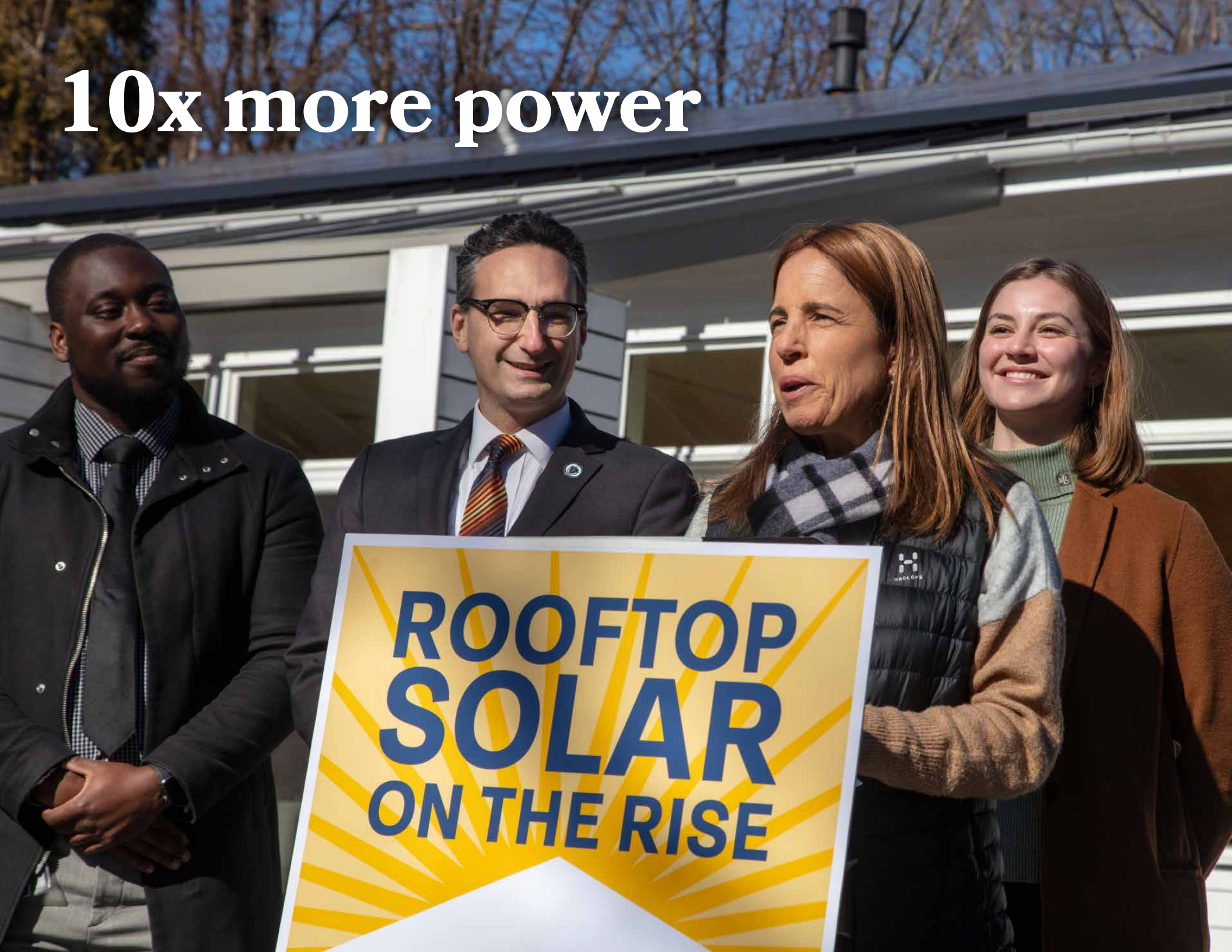
Plastic “nurdles,” which are tiny plastic pellets used in making plastic products, have been spilled or dumped into rivers, streams and other waterways, where they can be eaten by wildlife. About 10 trillion pellets are carried into our oceans each year, making them the second-largest source of marine microplastic by weight.

In December 2023, our Pennsylvania affiliate worked with Three Rivers Waterkeeper to take legal action against Styropek, a plastic manufacturer found discharging nurdles into a tributary to the Ohio River. On April 10, staff gathered in Washington, D.C., to lobby for bipartisan support in Congress for the Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act, which would ban the discharge of tiny plastic nurdles.



(Left) Our efforts around the country exposed the breadth of the microplastic problem. (Above, clockwise from top) Our national staff and allies meet with Sen. Dick Durbin about microplastic pollution; a handful of nurdles; Steve Blackledge, director of our national conservation campaigns, huddles with staff before lobbying members of Congress. Photo credits: (Left) Garrick Schmitt; (above, clockwise from top) Athel Rogers; Brendan Gibbons, Oil & Gas Watch News; Athel Rogers.

10x more power



ROOFTOP
SOLAR
ON THE RISE

The image shows four people standing in front of a house with solar panels. From left to right: a Black man in a dark jacket and tie, a man with glasses in a suit and tie, a woman in a plaid scarf and vest, and a woman in a brown coat. They are all smiling. The sign they are holding has a yellow background with blue rays and the text 'ROOFTOP SOLAR ON THE RISE' in blue. The house behind them has solar panels on the roof.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

We're accelerating the rise of rooftop solar

Rooftop solar, which produces energy right where it is needed, is growing rapidly. Our partners Environment America Research & Policy Center released a report in February that showed that in 2022, small-scale rooftop solar produced enough energy to power 5.7 million typical American homes, a tenfold increase over the last decade.

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

In the past year, members like you pushed to expand solar energy use. In January, we delivered the signatures of more than 11,500 supporters urging FedEx to install solar panels on its warehouses and parking lots by 2035. Our members also called on IKEA and Walmart to tap into their solar potential, now made more possible thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act.



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

(Left) Nationwide, we held events and invited our members who love solar power technology to participate. (Above, top to bottom) Johanna Neumann (center), our national clean energy campaigns director, on the solar rooftop of a warehouse; Student Ashanti Mclean at an event celebrating the growth of renewable energy; U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (center) on a tour of the solar panels at a local church. Photo credits: (Left) Tim O'Connor; (above, top to bottom) Tim O'Connor; Tim O'Connor; staff.

50 million acres



SAVE OUR FORESTS

Hundreds of thousands of us called for new protections for old-growth forests

As our supporters know, the most special forests are often the oldest, composed of trees that have been standing for longer than most of us have been alive. That's why in 2022 we called for new protections against logging on federal lands for more than 50 million acres of mature and old-growth forests, including the hundred-year-old-plus trees in the Superior National Forest.

Last year, we reported that our coalition helped convince President Biden to direct the U.S. Forest Service to develop policies protecting mature and old-growth forests, and we delivered over 500,000 public comments supporting strong action.

In December 2023, the administration took the next step and proposed a plan for adding new safeguards against logging. Our coalition gathered another 100,000 comments to urge the administration to strengthen and follow through on this plan.



(Left) Superior National Forest. (Above, clockwise from top) Some of our national canvass team, excited to launch their summer outreach campaign; a great horned owl; a black bear. Photo credits: (Left) dylbromander via Shutterstock; (above, clockwise from top) staff; Tim Malek via Shutterstock; BGSmith via Adobe Stock.



Beth Ruggiero-York via Shutterstock

In August 2023, President Biden and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced the new Environment America-backed national monument, Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon. More than 900,000 acres of land will be protected from new toxic uranium mining.



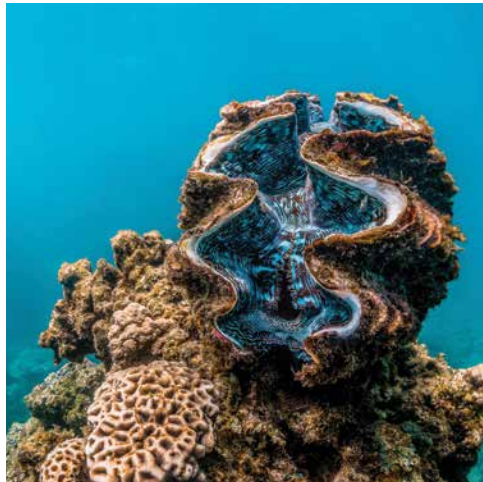
Tony via Adobe Stock

In April, advocates from Environment America traveled to Washington, D.C., to call on 70 congressional offices to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and other pro-environment bills. The act would provide \$1 billion each year toward the conservation of bees, trout, bison, whales and other wildlife.



Marc Olivier Le Blanc

From April to July, applications for the Monarch and Pollinator Highway Program opened up for states. This program supports bee-, butterfly- and other pollinator-friendly practices, like reducing mowing and introducing native plants along state and federal highways. We urged Congress to fund the program.



Aaron via Adobe Stock

In June, our partners Environment America Research & Policy Center released a report, “We don’t need deep-sea mining.” Mining for materials such as cobalt and copper would destroy coral ecosystems and spread plumes of disruptive sediment. The report showed how reducing electronic waste could render such mining economically unnecessary.



Abby Wilcox

In July, our partners PennEnvironment and Clean Air Council secured a historic \$42 million settlement against the U.S. Steel Corporation for Clean Air Act violations. The settlement includes a \$5 million penalty, \$37 million in pollution control upgrades, and the closure of 10% of the facility’s coke ovens.

WILDLIFE OVER WASTE



Oceana

In June, Amazon announced its plans to phase out plastic air pillows in North American shipments by year’s end. This move, along with an 11.6% reduction in single-use plastic from 2021 to 2022, paves the way for other corporations to join the drive to reduce plastic pollution and microplastic proliferation.

OUR LEGACY: A GREENER AMERICA

Together, our national network has 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.



2007: 5 states join regional climate pact

Environment Massachusetts, Environment Maine, Environment New Hampshire, Environment New Jersey and Environment Rhode Island help convince their states to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)—a climate program that cuts power plant pollution.

2011: Nation sets first mercury coal standards

Environment America helps win the first nationwide standards for limiting mercury from coal power plants. The Mercury Air and Toxics Standards go on to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants by 86%

between 2011 and 2017.

2012: We help secure national clean car standards

Environment America plays a key role in securing new national clean car standards equivalent to 54.5 mpg that will make super-efficient cars the norm by 2025. This win sets automakers on a path toward improving fuel efficiency across their fleets and even helps usher electric vehicles into the mainstream.

2012: New rules to curb pollution from drilling

Environment America and our national network helps win new standards to



curb air pollution from gas drilling operations. These rules will help reduce smog and protect people from toxic pollutants like benzene that can cause cancer.

2012-2014: 4 states spearhead local plastic bag bans

Between 2012 and 2014, Environment Oregon, Environment California, Environment Rhode Island and Environment Washington help pass bans on single-use plastic bags in various municipalities and counties. California passes the nation's first statewide plastic bag ban in 2014, and nine more states follow suit over the next eight years.

(Left to right) Dena Mottola with Environment New Jersey speaks with NJN News about climate change; our staff meet with President Obama at an event celebrating the new fuel efficiency standards; Environment California's Dan Jacobson calls for the passage of the statewide plastic bag ban. Photo credits: NJN News; White House; Staff



2015: Pres. Obama rejects the Keystone XL pipeline

Environment America helps convince President Obama to reject the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. Our national network and our members worked alongside our allies for years to stop this project, which State Department officials estimated would produce 26 million metric tons of carbon pollution each year—the equivalent of 5.7 million cars.

2020: U.S. military phases out PFAS use

Environment America helps win a law compelling the military to phase out its use of firefighting foams containing toxic PFAS chemicals,

which have contaminated drinking water in communities across the country.

2020: Conservation gets \$900 million annually

After winning the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 2019, Environment America wins full funding of \$900 million annually for the LWCF the following year. It's the nation's most effective conservation and recreation law, putting billions of federal dollars into national and local parks, playgrounds and trails across the country over the last 50 years.



2021: Clean air, water get a boost in infrastructure bill

Environment America advocated to help pass a major bipartisan package to improve our transportation and power infrastructure and ensure clean water and broadband access across the U.S. over the coming decades.

2022: Historic investment in climate action

In 2022, President Biden approved our country's largest-ever investment in clean energy and climate solutions. Environment America advocated for expanded tax credits for clean energy, giving people crucial support for a transition to a cleaner future.

(Left to right) The Keystone XL pipeline mid-construction; our staff distribute lawn signs calling on Congress to fully fund the LWCF; Environment America's John Rumpler talks to the media about polluted water at the beach highlighted in our "Safe for Swimming?" report. Photo credits: Reinhard Tiburzy via Shutterstock; Suzanne Navarro Photography; WCSH

Our staff

To see a full staff list and learn more about our campaigns, visit us online at EnvironmentMinnesota.org.

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