

2024 PROGRAM REPORT



PIRG

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

YOUR SUPPORT MADE IT POSSIBLE



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Whether in the best or worst of times, we can find opportunities to improve our communities and our lives.

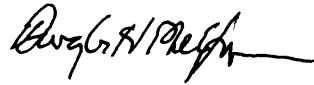
In this report, we share with you just some of the ways in which our staff and members worked together to make our lives a little healthier, safer and more sustainable, and the marketplace a little more honest and transparent.

You'll find how your actions and generosity helped make it easier to obtain refunds for canceled airline flights, and to purchase simpler-to-repair smartphones and other products that would otherwise end up in the trash. You'll also see how our staff and members worked together to reduce plastic waste, keep "forever chemicals" from poisoning our water and families, and much more.

There's no end to the challenges the modern world poses to the quality of our lives. We're grateful to you for the opportunity to meet this challenge, together.



Faye Park
President, PIRG



Douglas H. Phelps
Chairman, Board of Directors, PIRG

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



“I’ve been supporting PIRG for a long time because the issues they work on are fundamental to our community and the values we share. I like that PIRG works not only on environmental issues but also consumer protection. Having someone to advocate for the public who’s not tied to a corporation or moneyed interest is so important.”

Josh S., Member

Photos: (Cover) Emily Rusch, director of state offices, advocates for reduced plastic pollution in oceans. (Left) PIRG President Faye Park. Credits: (Cover) Ricky Mackie. (Left) Michael Stevens, CB Media.

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
RIGHT TO REPAIR



Thanks to you, our devices are becoming easier to fix

Many consumers would prefer to keep their next smartphone or laptop working longer so they don't add to the local landfill while wasting their money. That's why U.S. PIRG Education Fund released "Failing the Fix": a report that grades the major tech companies on how easy it is to repair their electronic devices. (See the chart to the right.)

Fortunately, this year saw a modest uptick in the repairability of major smartphone brands. That comes in part because of PIRG's advocacy. After PIRG helped push Right to Repair laws over the finish line in California, Colorado, Minnesota and elsewhere, companies like Apple responded to consumer demands by designing easier-to-fix phones.



FAILING THE FIX 2025: REPAIRABILITY GRADES			
	LAPTOP		CELLPHONE
ASUS	A-	Apple	B-
acer	B+	Google	B-
DELL	B-	motorola	C+
Microsoft	B-	SAMSUNG	C-
SAMSUNG	B-		
hp	C		
Apple	C-		
Lenovo	F		

Photos: (Left) Laptop repair from a June 2024 PIRG workshop. (Above, clockwise) PIRG's latest 'Failing the Fix' report documents the repairability of major electronics brands; Nathan Proctor, senior director of PIRG's Right to Repair Campaign, educates an audience about the need for more fixable electronics; PIRG's cellphone repairability scores; PIRG's laptop repairability scores. Credits: (Left) Ben Lohrentz. (Above, clockwise) Alec Meltzer, staff, staff.

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

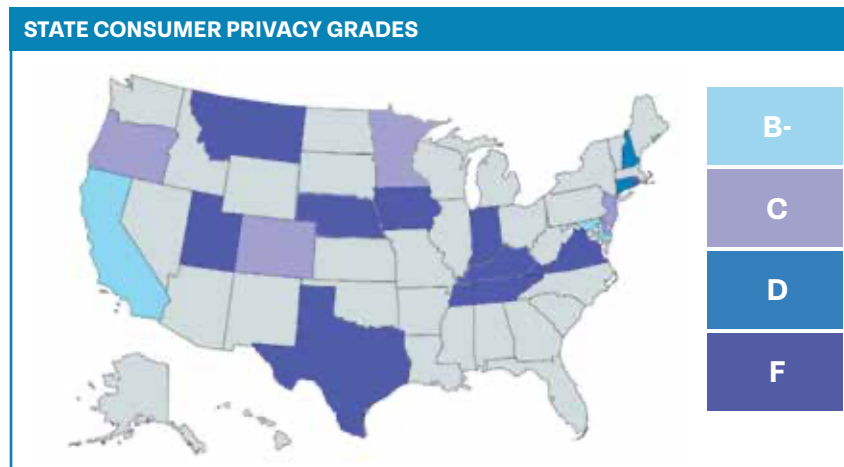
CONSUMER PROTECTION



‘Don’t sell my data’: PIRG advocates for consumers

People should have control over their personal data. But in today’s online marketplace, our personal information can be traded without our permission. Whether warning consumers about toxics in toys or shining a light on how well the largest phone companies protect us from robocalls, PIRG has long been an advocate for the consumer. But as markets widen and grow more complex, so too do the threats buyers face.

PIRG’s Don’t Sell My Data campaign protects people, especially children, by giving tips about online privacy. We’ve also helped legislators pass stronger privacy laws by identifying common privacy law pitfalls in U.S. PIRG Education Fund’s annual state consumer privacy scorecard.



PIRG offers dozens of consumer guides on topics ranging from buying refurbished electronics to avoiding online scams.

Photos: (Left) PIRG’s R.J. Cross, director of Our Online Life Program and the Don’t Sell My Data Campaign, educates the public about data privacy. (Above) Teresa Murray, PIRG’s Consumer Watchdog, discussing PIRG’s “Trouble in Toyland” report. (Below) PIRG’s grades for state privacy laws. Many states do not provide sufficient online protection. Credits: (Left) CNBC. (Above) ABC. (Below) Scorecard report put out by U.S. PIRG Education Fund and the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC).

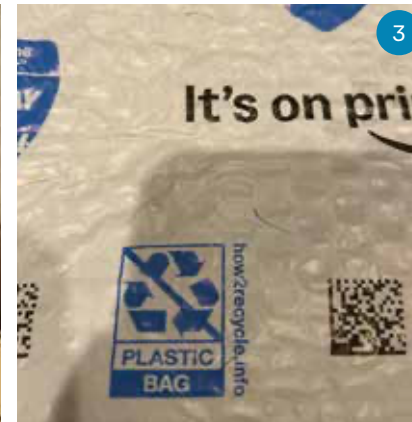
ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST BEYOND PLASTIC



Less plastic waste being dropped on your doorstep

Amazon generates more than 208 million tons of plastic waste every year, much of it non-recyclable and therefore bound for landfills or our waterways and oceans. That's why back in 2023, PIRG and its allies delivered over 138,000 petition signatures calling on Amazon to eliminate wasteful plastic packaging from its shipments.

And it appears that the company is listening. Amazon has committed to phase out plastic air pillows from all North American shipments by the end of 2024 – eliminating 15 billion plastic air pillows per year. But there's still more work to do. Now we're urging Amazon to set a hard deadline for its transition away from all plastic packaging waste.



Photos: (Left) Amazon's wasteful plastic envelopes and air pillows. (Above, clockwise) 1 Jenn Engstrom and PIRG's Truth in Recycling Investigation put tracking devices into "recycled" Amazon packaging to find out where they really went. The majority did not go to facilities suited for recycling Amazon packaging. 2 Amazon air pillows. 3 Amazon packaging from September 2024, with a logo indicating it is not recyclable. 4 New paper alternatives to air pillows. Credits: (Left) Used by permission of Oceana. (Above, clockwise) Staff, imageBROKER.com / Alamy Stock Photo, staff, Hadrian via Shutterstock.

ELECTRIC BUSES AMERICA



Staff

In September, PIRG released a report showing that schools purchased over 6,000 electric school buses in 2023. Thanks in part to PIRG education campaigns, thousands of students will no longer be exposed to bus exhaust and other unsafe pollution on their morning trips to school.

BAN TOXIC PFAS



Leise Jones Photography

In April, PIRG celebrated a major win for public health when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set six limits on toxic PFAS, called “forever chemicals,” in drinking water. According to the EPA, the move will prevent thousands of deaths.

HIGH VALUE HEALTH CARE



Athel Rogers Photography

In November, PIRG hosted an information session on Capitol Hill in support of the bipartisan Health Care PRICE Transparency Act. PIRG also successfully encouraged price reductions for medications that treat diabetes, heart failure and other life-threatening conditions.

PIRG **W** CONSUMER WATCHDOG



NicoElnino via Shutterstock

In November, PIRG responded to skyrocketing numbers of airline passenger complaints by updating our Flyers' Bill of Rights guide and promoting it on national and local media outlets. In May, PIRG successfully encouraged Congress to ensure flyers receive prompt refunds and improved customer service.

GET THE LEAD OUT



Duplass via Shutterstock

In October, the EPA announced a 10-year deadline to replace most of the nation's lead drinking water pipes. PIRG members had spent years advocating for rapid removal of these toxic pipes because lead harms how children think, learn and behave.

FOOD SAFETY



Holiday Photo: Top via Shutterstock

In January 2025, years of PIRG advocacy came to fruition when the Food and Drug Administration banned the use of Red No. 3 in food. Despite proven links to cancer, the dye was added to candy, slushies and maraschino cherries for decades.

50 YEARS OF ACTION & RESULTS

PIRG is part of a federation of independent, state-based, citizen funded Public Interest Research Groups. Together, we have a long legacy of victories in the public interest—including state and local wins that have provided blueprints for action nationwide.

1971: First PIRGs founded

Students start the first college campus chapters of Minnesota PIRG, Missouri PIRG and Oregon Student PIRG. PIRGs form in 20 more states over the next decade, and U.S. PIRG is founded in 1983.

1982: MASSPIRG saves the Bottle Bill

After winning a 9-year campaign to pass the Bottle Bill, MASSPIRG faced a new challenge: an industry attempt to repeal it. More than 8,000 citizen volunteers got to work, ultimately helping to defeat the repeal with a convincing 59% of the vote.



1984: PIRG hits student voter registration milestone

PIRG's newly launched National Student Campaign for Voter Registration registers 750,000 student voters in its first year, increasing the registration of 18- to 24-year-old voters by 17%.

1986: PIRG wins drinking water protections

PIRG plays a key role in passing strong new federal Safe Drinking Water Act amendments to better protect groundwater sources of drinking water and increase the pace at which contaminants are regulated.

1989: 'Trouble in Toyland' report sparks action

PIRG's first annual "Trouble in Toyland" report is released, warning parents of the hidden dangers of certain toys on the market. U.S. PIRG Education Fund has since published 36 other reports, resulting in more than 150 recalls.

1998: PIRG wins reduction of pesticides in schools

CALPIRG, MASSPIRG and Maryland PIRG help win a series of laws to reduce the use of pesticides linked to cancer and other serious health problems in public schools throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.



Photos: (Above, left to right) MASSPIRG's Mindy Lubber and Doug Phelps promote the Massachusetts Bottle Bill in 1981; PIRG's Lucinda Sikes speaks to the media about toy safety; CALPIRG staff attorney Teri Olle shakes Gov. Gray Davis' hand after he signed the Healthy Schools Act into law. Credits: Staff; staff; staff.



Five decades ago, groups of college students began investigating problems from shady business practices to illegal pollution. They called themselves PIRG—Public Interest Research Groups. U.S. PIRG and the PIRG network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.



2010: PIRG helps create CFPB

PIRG co-founds a coalition that, alongside U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, wins the creation of the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Since opening its doors in 2011, the CFPB has helped return \$16 billion in relief for consumers.

2012: PIRG helps win national clean car standards

Following years of advocacy by the state PIRGs, the Obama administration implements new national clean car standards calling for the average mile-per-gallon standard across the U.S. fleet of cars to hit 54.5 by 2025.

2015: Tyson Foods announces antibiotics phase-out

PIRG helps convince the nation's largest poultry producer, Tyson Foods, to commit to no longer using medically important antibiotics in their chicken, paving the way for other corporations to follow suit.

2018: PIRG helps win free credit freezes for consumers

In the wake of several high profile data breaches, including at credit bureau Equifax, PIRG helps pass a federal bill ensuring access to free credit freezes for all consumers to help prevent damage from identify theft.



2021: Apple agrees to provide greater Right to Repair access

PIRG and allies convince Apple to provide consumers greater access to replacement parts, tools and repair manuals. Formerly against Right to Repair, Apple's reversal of policy was a massive win for the movement.

2023: PIRG holds Amazon accountable for plastic waste

PIRG and allies send 137,000 petition signatures to urge Amazon to phase out single-use plastic. In response, the company agrees to phase out its blue-and-white plastic envelopes.

Photos: (Above, left to right) Former PIRG Consumer Program Director Ed Mierzwinski (right) works with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's first director, Richard Cordray, to create stronger safeguards for consumers in the financial marketplace; PIRG's Right to Repair Senior Campaign Director Nathan Proctor speaks at an event; PIRG's Sujatha Jahagirdar Bergen speaks about antibiotic resistance in 2014. Credits: KC PHOTO; Leise Jones Photography; Beverly Jensen Photography.



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

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