



Your Winter Report

Historic climate policies won in California

You helped us push for clean energy bills

With record drought and devastating wildfires affecting California and the West Coast, we need to do all we can on global warming, and we need to act fast. Thanks to your help and support, California is rising to the challenge, and leading the country forward with bold new policies to address this threat.

Environment California celebrated several big wins in the state Legislature this fall with bills that set a high goal of 50 percent clean energy by 2030, increase energy efficiency in buildings, and divest the state from coal—becoming the first state in the nation to do so.

50 percent clean energy by 2030

In September, the California State Assembly passed Senate Bill (SB) 350, which requires 50 percent of the state's electricity to come from renewable sources and doubles energy efficiency in buildings, both by 2030.

Unfortunately, the third original goal of SB 350, decreasing petroleum use in vehicles, was stripped from the bill following pressure from the petroleum industry. Even so, the bill directs electric utilities to displace big oil and accelerate the widespread electrification of the cars, trucks and buses we drive every day, and “achieve the goals set forth in the Charge Ahead California Initiative,” which Environment California co-sponsored in 2014.

Setting a global example

California made another historic commitment to tackling global warming in October when Gov. Jerry Brown signed SB 185 (deLeón), which divests California from



Credit: Nicolas Kaviani

▲ Director Dan Jacobson and actress Amy Smart applaud the passage of SB 350, which requires California to transition to 50 percent clean energy by 2030.

coal—one of the leading sources of global warming pollution in the nation.

“Each day, drought, wild fires and record temperatures remind Californians that we must act on climate,” said Michelle Kinman, clean energy advocate for Environment California. “By getting our state pension funds, CALPERS and CALSTRS, to divest

from coal companies, we’ve committed to protecting our health, environment and economy, and setting a strong example for other states and countries to follow.”

Together, these bills helped strengthen the United States’ position as a leader on global warming policies at December’s international climate change summit in Paris.



Credit: Eric Garcetti via Flickr CC BY 2.0

take action

Take action online to support clean energy in California:

www.EnvironmentCalifornia.org

◀ Gov. Jerry Brown (sitting) signs into law SB 350, which requires California to get 50 percent clean energy by 2030.



Credit: Guillermo Briseno GBS Photography

You make the difference

As a member of Environment California, you're helping us win tangible results for our environment. We all want the next generation to be able to enjoy the same great parks we treasure, clean air and water, and a safer world free from the threats of global warming.

That's why in the face of discouraging setbacks in Washington, or opposition from powerful special interests, I'm counting on members like you, who share these values, to stand with us as we work for a greener future.

The advances we make for our environment are shaped by people like you who translate their hope for a better future into action and advocacy. So, even though at times the road feels riddled with obstacles, I feel hopeful. Together, we're making strides on global warming, clean water and protecting the places we love by building people power and amplifying the call on our elected officials to be champions for our environment.

Thanks for standing with us.

Dan Jacobson
Legislative Director

**Invest fossil fuel free.
Because her future matters.**



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Recent action

We won! President Obama rejects Keystone XL

Your support won a monumental victory this November when President Obama rejected the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline—a pipeline designed to transport tar sands from Canada across the United States.

Together, Environment California and our members fought alongside our allies for years against 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.

"The Keystone XL pipeline would slam the accelerator on global warming, so we're thrilled that President Obama is applying the brakes," said Anna Aurilio, director of our Global Warming Solutions program. "The victory belongs to all the Americans who have been fighting for years for their water, their communities, and their kids' future, and it's a crucial step toward the 100 percent clean energy future the climate crisis demands."

New studies show health impacts of fracking

This October, Environment California renewed our call on Gov. Jerry Brown to ban fracking in California when a newly released study found that living near fracking operations is tied to premature births.

The study, which observed data from 2009 to 2013 in areas of Pennsylvania where fracking is conducted, found that the top 25 percent of mothers most exposed to fracking were 40 percent more likely to give birth preterm than the quarter who were least exposed.

Through the winter, our staff have been knocking on doors across the state to educate Californians about what's at stake and urge them to add their name to our petition to ban fracking. So far, thousands of Californians like you have taken action with us. With your help, we'll keep the pressure on Gov. Brown this spring.



▲ Environment California outreach staff take a stand against fracking in California.

Who's standing in the way of you going solar?

Solar energy is booming across the country. In just the last three years, America's solar photovoltaic capacity tripled, largely driven by just 10 states, according to recent research by Environment California Research & Policy Center.

Yet, as solar grows and generates increasing amounts of clean energy at increasingly affordable prices, electric utilities, fossil fuel interests and powerful industry front groups have begun chipping away at the key policies that have put solar energy on the map in the United States—often in the face of strong objections from a supportive public.

Leading states have strong policies

Environment California Research & Policy Center's annual report "Lighting the Way," released for the third time in September, found that solar's recent and growing success is due not to the nation's solar potential but rather to policies that have allowed increasing numbers of homeowners, businesses, communities and utilities to "go solar."

Of the top 10 states in the report for solar capacity per capita—Hawaii, Arizona, Nevada, California, New Jersey, New Mexico, Vermont, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Colorado—all have renewable energy requirements and nine have laws that allow solar customers to connect to the electrical grid, or earn credit for excess electricity sent back to the grid. These 10 states are responsible for 86 percent of today's solar electricity capacity.

Special interests stand in the way

The continued success of solar power, however, has been threatened by recent attacks on key solar policies. Environment California Research & Policy Center's report, "Blocking the Sun," released in October, documented 12 fossil-fuel-backed groups and electric utilities that are running some of the most aggressive campaigns to slow the growth of solar energy in the United States.

These campaigns are often waged in the dark, with industry-funded think tanks providing model legislation and political cover that allow in-state electric utilities to attack key solar energy policies.

In mid-2015, at least 21 states had either ongoing or recently resolved proceedings around policies to slow the growth of solar energy.

"By wide margins, Americans support pro-solar policies," said Michelle Kinman, Environment California Research & Policy Center solar program coordinator. "That's why fossil fuel interests and their front groups have resorted to shady and deceptive tactics to undermine them. Ultimately, it's up to state leaders to reject these attacks and support a clean energy future."

Our research recommends that state decision-makers resist utility and fossil fuel industry influence by rejecting policies that place restrictions or tariffs on solar or rollback renewable electricity standards. In addition, state leaders can do more to encourage solar energy's growth by embracing ambitious goals for solar energy and adopting policies that will help meet them.

Credit: Elena Elisseeva/Shutterstock



Outpouring of support for critical solar policy

Pushing wheelbarrows overflowing with signed petitions from Californians across the state, Environment California Research & Policy Center and a diverse coalition of allies delivered more than 130,000 signatures in support of solar net metering to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

California leads the nation in solar power, but the state's big utilities are lobbying the CPUC to end net metering, a critical policy that allows consumers with solar panels to receive full retail credit for excess electricity they send back to the grid. Net metering is the bedrock policy that has allowed California's rooftop solar industry to grow tremendously, and makes the technology more accessible to low- to moderate-income households.

"It's not an accident that California is the nationwide leader in solar energy, with more solar power installed on homes, schools, businesses, farms and parking lots than any other state," said Michelle Kinman, clean energy advocate with Environment California Research & Policy Center. "Weakening the primary policy that helped us reduce pollution and spur a new and vibrant clean energy economy would be a huge mistake for California."

Credit: Michael Quintero



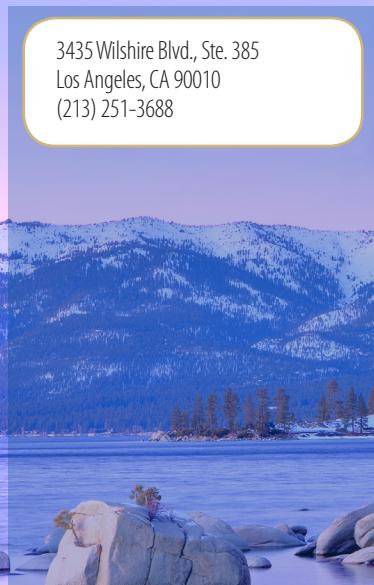
Explore more online

▲ Environment California's Michelle Kinman releases "Lighting the Way"

To read our research on solar's growth and the obstacles it faces, visit:

www.EnvironmentCaliforniaCenter.org.

▲ Environment California Research & Policy Center staff and allies deliver signatures in support of solar to the California Public Utilities Commission.



Credit: Nicholas A. Tonelli via Flickr, CC BY 2.0

Environment California

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment California. We focus exclusively on protecting California's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Environment California

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Californians will vote on bag ban this year

Last summer, Environment California canvassed the state to spread the word and garner support to save California's statewide bag ban, which thousands of Californians and members like you helped pass in the fall of 2014. The measure is under attack by the chemical industry, which has put a question on the 2016 ballot in an attempt to repeal the law.

With November's election rapidly approaching, we're doubling down this year to educate people about the importance of banning single use plastic bags to keep plastic out of the Pacific Ocean. Plastic pollution kills thousands of birds, marine mammals and sea turtles each year.

In the past five years, more than 140 cities, counties and towns—representing about one-third of California's population—have voted to go bag-free. Thanks to your help in putting these local bag bans in place, we've reduced the number of plastic bags by 6 billion per year. Now it's up to us to save the California Bag Ban and keep that number dwindling.

Support our efforts

Support our efforts to save the bag ban.
Donate online at:
www.EnvironmentCalifornia.org.

◀ Environment California supporters joined our call to support the bag ban.

Credit: Staff

