Annual Report
Recapping our work in 2014 for our members
To our members

“By working with many of you, we have made major strides in cleaning our air, solving global warming, and reducing the amount of plastic we are dumping into our ocean.”

I feel really good about Environment California’s progress in 2014. By working with many of you, we have made major strides in cleaning our air, solving global warming, and reducing the amount of plastic we are dumping into our ocean.

Working closely with Gov. Jerry Brown, California Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León and Speaker Toni Atkins, we passed a number of groundbreaking bills to bring more than 1 million clean cars to California and focus them in the most polluted and disadvantaged parts of the state. We worked with city leaders like Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti to increase the amount of solar in Los Angeles and across the state. And, finally, working with Secretary of State Alex Padilla, we passed the first statewide ban on single-use plastic bags.

As happy as we are with our success, there is more work to be done. Fracking continues to threaten California and we need Gov. Brown to rethink his position on this issue. The Plastic Bag industry has collected signatures to put a question on the ballot to repeal our ban on single-use plastic bags.

This coming year promises to be fantastic. In December 2015, the world will meet in Paris to solve climate change. If the world follows California’s leadership we can do it.

With your help, we can make 2015 another great year.

Thanks,

Dan Jacobson
Legislative Director
From the High Sierra to our beautiful coast, California’s parks and open spaces deserve permanent protection from encroaching development and pollution. In 2014, Environment California rallied people across the state to join our call for the president to make preserving California’s special places a priority. We won two new national monuments in California and ramped up efforts to permanently protect Berryessa Snow Mountain.

Victory! Two new national monuments won
More than 200 state legislators from across the country joined Environment California and our allies in calling on President Obama to fulfill his State of the Union promise to use his authority to protect public lands—and he did.

- In March, we won a campaign to formally protect Stornetta Public Lands when the president expanded the California Coastal National Monument, protecting more than 1,600 acres of beach, wetlands, dunes and waterways along northern California’s scenic coastline.

- In October, President Obama declared all 346,000 acres of the San Gabriel Mountains a national monument, protecting the forest from development and setting it aside as a recreational area.

President urged to protect Berryessa-Snow Mountain
In 2014, Environment California also launched a new campaign calling on the president to declare the Berryessa-Snow Mountain region a national monument. The region stretches nearly 100 miles from the shores of Lake Berryessa to the flanks of Snow Mountain in the Mendocino National Forest.

- In August, 100 local businesses joined our efforts and released a letter calling on the president to permanently protect the area.

- Together with local conservation group Tuleyome, Environment California Research & Policy Center released a video in September highlighting business owners who have taken a stand for Berryessa-Snow Mountain.
Los Angeles City Council member Paul Koretz spoke at a press conference with Environment California about the city’s bag ban, which helped pave the way for the statewide bill.

Keep Plastic Out of the Pacific

From atop a bluff near Half Moon Bay to the sands of San Diego, the Pacific Ocean looks majestic and enduring. But the Pacific takes in huge amounts of new plastic pollution everyday. We’ve been on the forefront of protecting the Pacific from plastic for the last decade, and with the help of our members, we leveraged the momentum of our 138 local bag ban wins and helped pass the nation’s first-ever statewide ban to protect the ocean.
Historic statewide bag ban won—but on hold until 2016

In September 2014, Gov. Jerry Brown took a bold step to clean up our beaches, reduce pollution in the Pacific, and eliminate one of the biggest threats to sea turtles and other marine wildlife by signing into law the first-ever statewide ban on plastic bags. The ban, which would phase out plastic bags in grocery stores, pharmacies and convenience stores, was slated to take effect July 2015.

But the plastic bag industry stymied the law by submitting signatures to place a referendum on the ballot. They’re looking to overturn the law during the 2016 election. Not on our watch.

138 local bag bans paved the way for statewide victory

Our staff and members never took “no” for an answer. We spent the last eight years working toward what will be state’s greatest step toward protecting the Pacific from plastic pollution: a statewide single-use plastic bag ban.

When the Capitol wasn’t ready to pass a ban, we went local. We helped educate the public through media events, workshops and by going door-to-door. Hundreds of thousands of Californians joined our call and helped us advocate to local decision-makers. Now, 138 cities and counties have passed local bag bans protecting the ocean.

Then, after years of organizing across the state, holding meetings with elected officials, delivering hundreds of thousands of petitions, and Californians making countless phone calls to the governor and other decision makers, we won a statewide policy to protect the ocean. Now we have to see it over the finish line.

Plastic bag industry spent $3 million to repeal law

The bag ban has faced strong opposition from the plastics industry since the beginning. But after we won the state ban in the Legislature, the American Progressive Bag Alliance, a group funded by plastic bag manufacturers, announced their aim to overturn the law.

Led by Hilex Poly, a South Carolina-based plastic bag manufacturer, the Big Plastic lobby quickly spent $3 million to qualify a repeal question for the California ballot. Now it’s up to us to save the California bag ban so we can keep more plastic out of the Pacific. Environment California is a lead member of the coalition working to save the law.
No Fracking in California

As we experience our worst drought in recorded history, the oil and gas industry wants to use millions of gallons of our water to frack for oil. No way. In 2014, we launched our “Truth About Fracking” tour to counter the industry’s snake oil pitch. We flew in activists that live on the frontlines of fracking to speak with the governor’s staff. We educated more than 250,000 people through face-to-face interactions. And we trained more than 100 Californians on how to fight fracking in their communities.
Amidst worst drought in history, local activists urged ban on fracking

Big Oil wants to use millions of gallons of our water, lace them with toxic chemicals, and frack for oil from Sacramento to L.A. Talk about a bad idea. If we let oil companies unleash this hugely controversial drilling process, we’ll be in for an environmental nightmare.

Together with thousands of our citizen members and coalition partners of all stripes, we launched our “Truth About Fracking” tour in 2014—just the first step in protecting California from fracking.

More than 100 activists mobilized to fight fracking

We ran “fracktivist” trainings in six different cities across that state. We showed more than 100 local activists how to organize against fracking in their own communities, preparing them with tips on how to lobby their representatives, get their friends and neighbors to make phone calls, and write strong letters to the editor to shine a brighter spotlight on the issue in the local media.

We also made sure Gov. Jerry Brown heard us loud and clear by collecting more than 51,000 signatures on our petition to ban fracking and bringing the issue right to his doorstep. We enlisted local business owners and residents in the governor’s hometown of Oakland to put up anti-fracking decals in their storefronts and signs in their front yards.

Momentum is on our side: Recent polling shows that 68 percent of Californians now believe fracking doesn’t have a place in California. But the fight is far from over.

L.A. City Council may vote to ban fracking

We won our first big step in protecting our state from fracking in February 2014 when the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to move forward with a moratorium on fracking.

In the weeks leading up to the vote, Environment California came together with our coalition partners in Los Angeles to help Angelenos call on their council members to support the measure.

After countless phone calls, petition signatures and public testimony from Environment California members and others, the City Council unanimously approved moving forward with a fracking moratorium.
Global Warming Solutions

Together, we took bold steps to reduce global warming pollution. Working with a broad coalition, we helped educate the public and collect 8 million comments from Americans to urge President Obama to limit power plant carbon emissions—America’s number one source of global warming pollution. In 2014, the president proposed just such a plan—one that would cut power plant pollution by 30 percent within the next decade.

A historic plan to tackle global warming

From severe storms to wildfires and drought, the consequences of global warming are becoming increasingly clear. Scientists say climate change could tip toward catastrophe if we don’t do more and act faster. The good news is that in 2014, the president took decisive action to address this threat when he moved forward with the Clean Power Plan, or, what the New York Times called “the strongest action ever taken” by a president on climate change.

- The Clean Power Plan would reduce power plant pollution by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, making it instrumental to fulfilling the commitment with China to reduce global warming emissions by at least 26 percent in the next decade.

- Throughout the year, together with our national federation and a broad coalition, we collected 8 million comments of support for limiting carbon pollution from dirty power plants, which we delivered to the EPA on Dec. 2, as the public comment period for the plan ended.

- The Clean Power Plan is a huge deal—but it’s not a done deal. The proposal has been the subject of fierce attacks by the coal industry, some utilities and their allies in Congress, who have vowed to do everything in their power to block the plan.
Global warming is happening now, and the need to revolutionize our transportation sector has never been more urgent. Over the last 30 years, we've ratcheted down California's emissions by spearheading the best clean car policies in the nation. And in 2014, we won a historic victory with the Charge Ahead California Initiative, which will put 1 million electric vehicles on the road in less than 10 years.

**New initiative won to put 1 million electric vehicles on the road**

The cars, trucks and buses that we drive every day in California are our state's largest contribution to global warming pollution. That's why revolutionizing the way we get from point A to point B in California is critical if we're going to tackle global warming pollution in a big way. Environment California has a long tradition in pushing our state to lead the nation in cleaner car policies that clean up our air and tackle global warming.

In 1989, we helped pass unprecedented low- and zero-emissions vehicle standards, which served as a framework that 13 other states adopted. These state-based policies gave President Obama room to double fuel-efficiency standards across the country—one of the most significant moves our nation has taken to tackle global warming—which eliminates pollution equivalent to that of 194 coal plants.

In 2014, we did it again. We secured support for clean vehicles from more than 80 mayors and city council members, more than 30,000 Californians and a growing number of powerful allies, including public health advocates, business leaders, faith-based groups and more. We held first-of-their-kind “Electric Vehicle Ride & Drive” events in low-income communities. And in close partnership with our allies in the environmental and environmental justice communities, we spearheaded legislation that will put 1 million electric vehicles on the road in less than 10 years. This policy will serve as another model for the rest of the country, and will help increase access to electric vehicles in low-income communities, which are hardest hit by pollution.
Go Solar, California

2014 was a breakout year for solar power in America. Another home or business in the United States went solar every four minutes, and the rate keeps getting faster. In 2014, we urged our leaders to go big on solar and leave dirty energy behind. By crafting and promoting state and local policies, Environment California and our national federation have played a major role in the clean energy boom and continue to work to defend and expand pro-solar initiatives.
Ambitious goals for solar power now seen as readily achievable

According to research released in 2014, solar power is growing so fast across the country that goals once considered ambitious are now seen as readily achievable, and California is leading the way. By tapping the power of the sun, we can break our dependence on fossil fuels and move to clean energy that’s virtually limitless, local and independent. In 2014, Environment California called on our decision-makers to continue embracing solar power and growing policies and programs to help repower our state.

Smart policies led solar to triple in three years

Nationwide, the amount of solar power tripled from 2011 through 2013, thanks in part to policies that Environment California and our national federation helped win. California is an example for the country, ranking number three in solar electricity capacity.

- In August, Environment California Research & Policy Center released a report, “Lighting the Way,” which found that just 10 states are responsible for 89 percent of the solar currently installed in the United States. This research recommended that the key to success is strong policies that are enabling increasing numbers of homeowners, businesses, communities and utilities to go solar.

- In order to facilitate strong solar policies, Environment California Research & Policy Center’s report “Shining Cities,” released in April, recommended that states set ambitious goals for solar and commit to them, let the government lead by example by installing solar panels on public buildings, encourage communities to invest in solar, and more.

Let’s get to 30 percent solar power by 2030

Solar is growing so rapidly that the nation is on pace to achieve a goal of 10 percent solar by 2030, with huge benefits for the environment. According to “Star Power,” a report released in November by Environment California Research & Policy Center, achieving this goal would cut 280 million metric tons of carbon by 2030, the equivalent of taking 59 million cars off the road.

In 2014, Environment California urged Gov. Jerry Brown to commit to generating 30 percent of California’s energy from the sun by 2030. Together with our national federation, Environment California worked to build support for solar-friendly policies to realize this goal. Nearly 400 civic leaders have signed letters, and more than 20,000 citizens have signed petitions calling on governors across the country to go big on solar, while more than 500 solar industry leaders have urged the Obama administration to make renewable energy a top priority.
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