



Summer Report

County-wide bag bans make history

16 percent of Californians soon to be bag-free

The momentum is building: Seven more California communities banned disposable plastic bags in just the first few months of 2012. Monterey, Sunnyvale, Millbrae, Dana Point and Carpinteria all passed city-wide bag bans.

Alameda and San Luis Obispo counties passed pioneering bans that cover not only the unincorporated county area, but all of the incorporated cities that lie inside the county borders as well. San Francisco expanded its bag ban to cover all types of retailers, and added a 10-cent charge for paper bags, too. These local bans make an immediate impact to cut ocean pollution and help pave the way for a statewide ban.

Bags banned in 40 towns

“The bag ban movement is getting stronger all the time,” says Environment California’s Dan Jacobson. “Bags are now banned in more than 40 communities, and 16 percent of Californians are or soon will be living bag-free. As we launch our summer campaign, we’re in a great position to capitalize on this momentum.”

This summer, hundreds of Environment California outreach staff are speaking with more than 100,000 citizens statewide about the need to ban the disposable plastic bags that are polluting the Pacific and harming wildlife.

Averting ecological disaster

Millions of tons of trash are swirling in the North Pacific Gyre, and it’s becoming an ecological disaster: Turtles and



Jeff Myers

Alameda and San Luis Obispo counties passed first-of-their-kind bans that cover all the territory within county borders. Millbrae, Dana Point and Carpinteria passed city-wide bans.

seabirds frequently ingest floating plastic, mistaking it for food. They also get entangled in bags and often drown or die of suffocation.

What’s really scary is that scientists tell us that the plastic in the ocean may never biodegrade. With so many reusable alternatives available, there’s no reason to keep polluting our environment with these wasteful pieces of trash.

Many more bag bans in the works

After years of effort, the tide is turning against plastic bags. As this newsletter goes to print, there are many more local bag bans in the works, from the City of Los Angeles to Humboldt County, Sacramento to Solano Beach. Check out our website for up-to-the-minute reports on our progress.



Jeff Myers

A big day for our ocean

Environment California hosted the 5th annual Ocean Day in March, when 73 ocean advocates and experts from 45 different organizations convened at the Capitol to educate decision-makers about the threats our ocean faces, and what they can do to help.



To our members

Dear Environment California member,

I'm excited. This summer, we're launching our biggest public outreach campaign ever to ban disposable plastic bags. You know the plan: By winning local bans up and down the state, we make an immediate impact to cut plastic pollution and build momentum to ban the bags statewide.

At the same time, we're getting emails nearly every week from people who want to ban the bags in their town, and want to know if we can help. Of course we can! We've already helped get more than 40 communities covered by local bag bans, and many more bans are in the works.

Our goals for the summer are huge, but a big win requires big effort. I'm proud to be working with you to rid our state of plastic bag pollution once and for all.

Thanks for being with us,

Dan Jacobson
Legislative Director

Recent action

Clean cars victory to cut smog pollution 75 percent

The California Air Resources Board made automotive history in January. California's new clean car standards—the toughest in the nation—will cut smog-forming pollution from tailpipes by 75 percent and will push the new car market closer to the ultimate goal of 100 percent zero-emission vehicles.

“Once again, California is in the driver's seat when it comes to cleaning up our cars and trucks,” said Bernadette Del Chiaro, clean energy program director for Environment California.

At the hearing, Environment California delivered postcards signed by more than 10,000 of our supporters to the ARB in favor of stronger standards.

The rule requires automakers to start producing cleaner cars in California, so that in 2025, 15 percent of cars will be fully electric, hybrid or run on hydrogen.

More than 300 businesses sign on to save parks

With dozens of California's state parks slated for closure, Environment California has been building a broad coalition of businesses, environmental groups and local elected officials to keep our parks open and secure a stable source of funding so that they are never threatened again.

In partnership with the California State Parks Foundation, we've organized more than 300 local businesses to sign a letter calling on Gov. Jerry Brown to keep state parks open. Many of the businesses will also help spread the word about the campaign by hanging a poster in their establishments urging patrons to take action. We're also urging the governor to reconsider budget cuts that would leave state beaches without lifeguards and reduce the number of park rangers by 20 percent.



Mick Crane Photography/Alamy.com

How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment California or the Environment California Research & Policy Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentCalifornia.org.



Pio Pico State Park; Flickr user California Pete; Inset: Staff

Environment California's Sean Carroll and Mac Farrell talk with U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (San Jose) about efforts to save Pio Pico state park.

California's solar market doubles in two years

Report charts progress in 700 cities statewide

California's solar market has doubled in two years, according to a recent analysis from Environment California Research & Policy Center. The report, "California's Solar Cities 2012," catalogs the amount of solar power installed by over 700 cities and towns across the state. When we compare these findings with a similar analysis that we conducted in 2009, we can see that the amount of solar power has doubled.

"From Fresno to San Francisco and Clovis to Culver City, solar power is becoming a mainstream technology throughout California," said Michelle Kinman, Environment California's clean energy advocate. "Solar power is booming in California and with the right leadership, we can continue to benefit from the cleaner air and local jobs that this industry inevitably brings."

Solar city mayors honored

San Diego leads all California cities, with 4,500 solar panel installations generating 37 megawatts of clean energy. Next in line in terms of solar capacity: Los Angeles, San Jose, Fresno, San Francisco, Bakersfield, Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Oakland and Chico. (see chart.)

We released our Solar Cities report in January at press conferences in San Diego, with Mayor Jerry Sanders; in Sacramento, with Mayor Kevin Johnson; in Fresno, with Mayor Ashley Swearingin; and in Los Angeles with school district and business leaders. Members of the solar industry, solar power customers, and environmental leaders joined us at these events to congratulate California's solar cities.

Investing in solar is a sound decision for California's cities, bringing direct environmental and economic benefits. Every megawatt of solar power installed prevents the emission of nearly 700 pounds of smog-forming pollution per year, and

a recent report by The Solar Foundation shows that the solar industry employs more than 25,000 people in California.

1200% more clean energy by 2020

While we celebrate the progress of these solar cities, we cannot sit back and bask in the sunshine. By enacting smart policies to promote growth and create jobs, we can increase our solar market twelve-fold by 2020, as envisioned by Gov. Jerry Brown.

The governor's vision is powerful, but so are the entrenched interests of the utility companies and others who want to keep us stuck using old-fashioned fuel sources that are dangerous to extract and toxic to burn. That's why Environment California has been making the case for solar, framing the issue in the media and gathering support from citizens and officials to make Gov. Brown's vision a reality. As this newsletter went to print, thousands of citizens and more than 80 elected officials up and down the state had joined Environment California in endorsing Gov. Brown's vision for 12 gigawatts of clean energy by 2020.



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Top 10 Solar Cities

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| ① San Diego | ⑥ Bakersfield |
| ② Los Angeles | ⑦ Sacramento |
| ③ San Jose | ⑧ Santa Rosa |
| ④ Fresno | ⑨ Oakland |
| ⑤ San Francisco | ⑩ Chico |

▲ Clean Energy Advocate Michelle Kinman released our report at a press conference in San Diego.

Interview

Mark Smith is the CEO of Solar Forward, which has been installing solar panels in the Los Angeles area for more than 20 years.

What motivates your customers to install solar panels?

It's a solid investment for anybody to go solar. The numbers just make sense. Thanks to net metering—a vital policy by which a solar owner can send excess electricity back to the grid for others to use during sunny days and draw a credit during the night—my own home system generates 70 percent of the electricity that I use, and my electricity bill is zero.

How is business these days?

We do zero advertising; we are a referral-based business. Our customers are happy because they are getting immediate value for their dollar, so it works.

How would you describe California's solar potential?

The utilities try to make it difficult for Californians to see the true value of solar by continually changing the landscape for permitting and incentives, but it makes zero sense not to go solar. Given California's climate and the propensity for people to go green and want to go green, the potential for solar energy in California is huge.

Breaking news: As this newsletter went to print, the L.A. City Council approved a pilot program that will help more Angelenos install solar panels on their rooftops. Environment California is part of a broad coalition that advocated for this crucial policy, known as a "feed-in tariff."

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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.

Yosemite support reaches 49 states

In February, we sent an email inviting supporters to help protect Yosemite from toxic mining by urging the Obama administration to create a buffer zone around the park. Thanks to our enthusiastic supporters, who forwarded the message to family and friends, the administration received more than 10,000 messages from concerned citizens in 49 states within a week.

In early March, Legislative Director Dan Jacobson and Preservation Associate Mac Farrell flew to Washington, D.C., to make the case for Yosemite in face-to-face meetings with officials from the U.S. Department of the Interior and the White House.

Yosemite National Park is home to breathtaking natural monuments, endangered species and beloved trails and campsites. But 185 active gold mining claims within 10 miles of the park's borders could threaten this pristine natural treasure. Environment California is spearheading the campaign to keep industrial mining away from Yosemite.



KC PHOTO

recent action

◀ *Environment California Legislative Director Dan Jacobson (center left) met with National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis (center right) in Washington, D.C., to talk about toxic mining claims on Yosemite's borders.*