



Winter Report

Prop. 23: Big Oil's loss is our gain

Voters opt to stay a clean energy leader

We can breathe easier: Despite the best (and well-funded) efforts of a few oil companies to roll back California's landmark Global Warming Solutions Act, California voters weren't fooled. In the end, the state voted 61 to 39 percent to reject Prop. 23, the largest margin for any of the nine statewide ballot measures.

"This was a victory for common sense and hope in our future," said Environment California's Bernadette Del Chiaro. "Thanks to California voters, our state will continue to lead the nation in building the clean energy economy of the future."

169 million tons less pollution

If Prop. 23 had passed, it would have dramatically slowed our progress on solutions to global warming, allowing oil refineries and other polluters to put another 169 million tons of pollution into our air.

The proposition also would have derailed efforts to promote clean energy, which is why clean energy entrepreneurs endorsed a "no" vote and spoke out strongly against Prop. 23.

A strong grassroots campaign

Environment California staff, members and volunteers played a strong part in the "No on 23" campaign, focusing largely on young voters, who overwhelmingly support clean energy and strong action against global warming, but are historically less likely to vote than older age groups.



staff

▲ Environment California organizers and volunteers held rallies outside of Valero stations to protest its support of Prop. 23.

Environment California organizers, teaming up with CALPIRG and other student organizations, worked on more than 40 college and university campuses across California, raising awareness among students about Prop. 23 and encouraging students to vote no on Election Day.

Together, more than 1,000 volunteers

took part in the campaign, holding hundreds of thousands of face-to-face conversations, gathering more than 160,000 pledges to vote no on Prop. 23, and making 20,000 reminder phone calls in the days leading up to Election Day. The Los Angeles Times wrote: "No environmental campaign in U.S. history can boast the level of activism in California this year."



staff

more online

◀ It wasn't just the World Series that pitted California against Texas—it was on the ballot. Our organizers show their support before the big game.

Learn more online:
www.EnvironmentCalifornia.org/newsletters/winter11



To our members

Without question, the defeat of Prop. 23 was a big win for our environment. As the dust of the election settles, and we see new faces in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., we've got some big challenges ahead of us. But we also know that if we come together, we can overcome just about any opposition.

As I said to The New York Times, "You don't get a victory like this and not have it ripple through."

It's time to get to work. Some of California's environmental treasures are at risk, from toxic mining proposed within 10 miles of Yosemite to the swirling soup of plastic trash that's twice the size of Texas off our shore.

Thanks for staying with us as we work to make sure that the future for California is a green one.

Dan Jacobson
Legislative Director

Recent action

S.F. promotes alternatives to dangerous nail polish

San Francisco became a safe nail salon pioneer this fall, when the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an innovative program that will encourage the city's nail salons to replace toxic nail polish with safer products through a Nail Salon Recognition Program. Over the past three months, Environment California teamed up with nail salon workers and public health advocates in a push to take the poison out of nail polish.

For years, three hazardous chemicals have been standard ingredients of nail polish: Dibutyl phthalate, formaldehyde and toluene. Known collectively as the Toxic Trio, they are associated with cancer, birth defects, asthma and other chronic diseases. Nail salon workers are exposed to these chemicals on a day-to-day basis.

Clean cars save \$234 million

With the Obama administration considering a new round of fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks as millions of us took to the road last Thanksgiving, Alex Wall, an associate with Environment California's Washington, D.C., office, got to wondering: How much money would Americans save if we drove ultra-efficient cars that traveled 60 miles per gallon, instead of the current 26.4 mpg average?

After crunching the numbers, Alex came up with an answer: A cool \$234 million. That's enough money to put another 58 million pumpkin pies on holiday tables.

California's decision to adopt Clean Car standards helped spur the Obama administration to raise gas mileage standards to 35 mpg between 2016 and 2025. Now it's time to take the next step.

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▲ The Chevrolet Volt at the AltCar Expo in Santa Monica. Research indicates that ultra-efficient cars could save Americans millions of dollars.

Jose Gil, Shutterstock.com

Report: As park visits rise, funds are being cut

First, the good news: the number of people enjoying national parks has been surging. Over just the last year, we've seen a 4 percent rise in visitors. For example, Golden Gate Recreation Area—one of the world's largest urban parks—drew more than 15 million visitors in 2009, nearly half a million more than the previous year.

What's the bad news? Even as the number of visitors to California's national parks—from Redwood to Joshua Tree—is on the rise, these great places and others face budget cuts in the coming year, leaving them with fewer resources for maintenance, upkeep and stewardship.

An Environment California report, titled "The Best of America Under Threat from Underfunding," exposed the growing threat that funding shortfalls pose to parks like Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

"Last year, visitors poured into these great parks to go hiking, camping, kayaking and rafting," said Environment California's Dan Jacobson. "Yet just as their popularity grows, they are under threat from underfunding."

Golden Gate visits up 500,000

Stretching along nearly 60 miles of coastline in San Francisco and around San Francisco Bay, Golden Gate Recreation Area is one of the most heavily visited national parks. It serves as the "backyard" national park for Bay Area residents and an attraction that draws visitors from around the world.

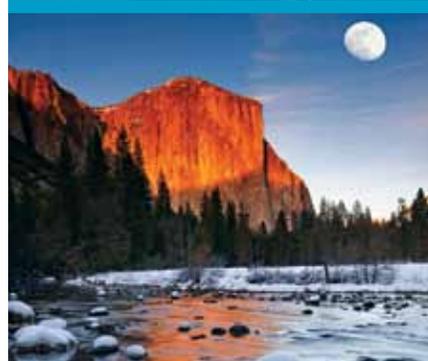
It is a park where visitors can hike, run, windsurf, and explore the region's natural and cultural wealth. The park encompasses San Francisco icons, including Alcatraz Island, historic forts, and cable cars, as well as some of the most beautiful and undeveloped stretches of Pacific Coast. Despite 500,000 new visitors, the park has seen its budget cut 1.5 percent. We're

working to make sure our parks have the resources to remain protected.

Gold mines threaten Yosemite

Chemical gold mining is a notoriously toxic business, using cyanide and sulfuric acid. The defunct Summitville gold mine in Colorado famously devastated all aquatic life along a 17-mile stretch of the Alamosa River. Yet, within 10 miles of Yosemite's borders, there are more than 285 mining claims.

In order to protect Yosemite, Environment California is launching a new effort to call on Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to declare a ban on all mining that could in any way affect the health of Yosemite National Park.



Surrounded

Mining claims on all sides of Yosemite threaten the park. Environment California is calling for a ban on new mines that could harm this iconic place.

36,000 solar jobs—and counting

Fueled by the Environment California-led Million Solar Roofs Initiative, California continues to lead the pack for solar jobs, with 31 percent of all solar jobs nationwide.

According to a new study produced by the Solar Foundation and Green LMI Consulting, 36,000 Californians now work in the solar energy industry.

Across the country, employment figures for solar power have nearly doubled in the last year, and are expected to grow another 26 percent in the coming 12 months—at a time when overall job growth is only expected to grow 2 percent.

"At a time when many companies and whole sectors were slowing down, the solar industry is on a meteoric rise," said Bernadette Del Chiaro, Environment California's clean energy advocate. "We are on the way to tapping the sun's potential by generating pollution-free energy and a tremendous number of good, green jobs along the way. And California, as an early adopter of forward-looking solar programs, is leading the pack."

In the coming months, Environment California will continue to advocate for expanded solar programs in California including meeting Gov. Jerry Brown's goal of building 12 GW of solar power, more than two dozen coal-fired power plant's worth of electricity.

Above: Energy Advocate Bernadette Del Chiaro (far right) speaks with homeowners who took advantage of solar incentives.

3435 Wilshire Blvd. #385
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Phone: (213) 251-3688

Environment California

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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.

L.A. County approves plastic bag ban

On Nov. 16, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors voted 3-to-1 to enact a ban on single-use plastic bags, which will cover nearly 1.1 million residents countywide. The ban prohibits stores from giving away plastic bags; instead, if you forget your reusable bags, stores are required to sell recycled paper bags at 10 cents per piece. Los Angeles County uses 6 billion plastic bags each year—nearly all of which end up in landfills, cluttering streets or floating out to sea.

After the California State Senate failed to pass a statewide ban on plastic bags in the fall, Environment California turned our campaign to back local bans. Moving forward from the victory in Los Angeles, we're working to pass more local plastic bag bans and bans of Styrofoam takeout containers across the state.

NOAA



◀ Underwater, plastic bags are often mistake for food, killing as many as 1 million marine animals yearly.

➡ For more information about our work to ban plastic bags statewide, go to www.EnvironmentCalifornia.org.