



Winter Report

Eighty-nine bag bans and counting

Local efforts win big for Pacific wildlife

Only a few short years ago, San Francisco made history with its first-in-the-nation law banning single-use plastic bags. Now, 89 California cities and counties have banned plastic bags—from San Jose to Los Angeles, and from South Lake Tahoe to Santa Barbara. Now we're only 11 cities away from 100 California bag bans.

So far, more than 11.8 million Californians, nearly a third of our state, live somewhere that has voted to phase out single-use plastic bags. Yet, plastic bags are still the most common litter on California beaches, and harm sea birds and turtles that mistake them for food.

We have more work to do to keep plastic out of the Pacific, so Environment California has been helping Californians take action to protect the ocean and its wildlife.

Will San Diego be next?

This winter, Environment California's Nathan Weaver worked with local elected officials, Environment California members, and volunteers in San Diego and Sacramento to move the cities' proposed bag bans forward.

In San Diego, Weaver held a news conference to show that local businesses and civic and environmental leaders are ready to move forward with a plastic bag ban.

In front of six TV cameras, Canvass Director Blake Kopcho delivered over 10,000 petitions and 50 letters of support from local businesses to the San Diego City

County ban (blue) **City ban** (green) **Ban in progress** (yellow)

Sen. Alex Padilla (left) and Environment California's Nathan Weaver call for a bag ban in San Diego.

Map callouts include: Arcata, Mendocino County, Oakland, Marin County, South Lake Tahoe, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Diego, Pasadena, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Huntington Beach.

Cy Kuckenbaker

Council calling for a citywide bag ban.

Sen. Alex Padilla, who is working to ban plastic bags statewide, flew down to speak to Environment California's citizen outreach staff and members. He said, "I am thrilled with Environment California's efforts to phase out single-use plastic bags in our state. They know, as I do, that

single-use plastic bags litter our coastline and kill thousands of seabirds, fish and marine mammals along our shores."

Sea World, the San Diego Tourism Authority, San Diego Coastkeeper, and the offices of Solana Beach City Council Member Peter Zahn, and California Sen. Marty Block were also there in support.



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more online

Want to ban the bag in your city? Check out our activist toolkit online: www.EnvironmentCalifornia.org/resources

◀ To a sea turtle, a plastic bag looks like a jellyfish.



To our members

Lately, I've been asked a lot about fracking. Big Oil would tell you that they can frack thousands of wells, from San Jose to L.A., and even off the coast of Santa Barbara, without wasting and contaminating our water, polluting our air and our ocean, trampling our landscape, or triggering earthquakes.

Despite the millions of dollars they've spent on PR, I'm not buying it.

Our staff, supporters and allies in our national federation have seen first-hand how fracking is tearing up and poisoning the land, contaminating water supplies, sickening families, and, yes, even triggering earthquakes in states across the country.

It's time to bring the truth about fracking to California—and straight to Gov. Jerry Brown. And with your help, that's exactly what we're going to do.

Sincerely,

Dan Jacobson
Legislative Director

Recent action

Charge Ahead: A call for a million electric vehicles

Exhaust from cars, trucks and buses pollute our air and contribute to global warming. But we know we can start to fix this by transitioning to cleaner and more efficient vehicles.

Environment California has teamed up with Communities for a Better Environment, The Greenlining Institute, Coalition for Clean Air, and NRDC to launch "Charge Ahead California" this winter. The group's goal is to put a million electric vehicles on California's roads over the next decade and ensure that all Californians, especially communities most impacted by air pollution, benefit from zero tailpipe emissions.

Environment California's Dan Jacobson and Michelle Kinman met with the governor's staff in the Capitol to make the case for California shifting its fleet to electric, and brought the voices of 10,000 other Californians with them. This spring, we will continue to build support for revolutionizing the way we drive.

Local actions = More solar than ever before

Do you know what unites the cities of Lancaster, Sebastopol, Richmond and Los Angeles? These communities and their local leaders have recently made big moves to bring their cities more solar power.

Lancaster and Sebastopol have made headlines for their groundbreaking mandates that all new buildings must be equipped with solar panels. Richmond leaders also slashed permit prices for residential solar panels. This will make it easier for homeowners to install solar energy systems. And Los Angeles started the largest urban solar power program in the country, enabling solar power on commercial properties throughout the city.

These efforts have opened the door for all Californians to play an important role in building a new, clean energy future for our state. Now it's "game on" for other cities across the state to continue to lay the groundwork for the next great energy transition—one that will transform our economy, protect our health, and preserve our environment for generations to come.

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▲ LA. Mayor Eric Garcetti's chief sustainability officer tweeted "With your help and many others we will get there. Lets get more people out to support solar!!!" after seeing our volunteers showing their support for the city going solar last fall.



Matthew Connolly/Shutterstock.com

Expanding Yosemite

An island of agreement in a sea of discord

Yosemite National Park is one of the crown jewels of California. Not only do Californians seem to agree on this point, but so do politicians—in Sacramento and D.C.

Californians and our elected officials on both sides of the aisle are coming together to add a 1,600-acre wildlife corridor to Yosemite National Park.

“We’ve seen Congress do some frustrating things, but it’s as if we’re in a sea of political chaos, and Yosemite is that island of agreement,” said Environment California’s Nathan Weaver.

Work to protect at-risk wildlife corridor

Yosemite National Park protects over 760,000 acres of waterfalls, granite cliffs and backcountry. And each season, deer, black bears, and other animals migrate back and forth between Yosemite and the adjacent Sierra National Forest.

But one of the best routes to get there is a section of land that—until very recently—was owned by developers and set to be turned into vacation homes.

Our coalition partners at the Pacific Forest Trust have been acting as the land’s caretakers, but we must act quickly to add this land to Yosemite National Park and protect it from future development.

As a first step, the California Legislature unanimously passed a resolution calling on Congress to expand Yosemite and protect a vulnerable wildlife corridor.

Then, a bill was introduced in Congress to expand Yosemite by Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Jim Costa. Environment California has been helping Californians call on their members of Congress, especially in the House, to stand up for Yosemite. Sixteen representatives have co-sponsored the House bill so far—12 of them from the California delegation.

In order to gain more support from representatives in southern California, our staff

went door-to-door in San Diego for two weeks. They talked to more than 2,600 neighbors face-to-face about calling on their representative to protect Yosemite’s wildlife by expanding the park.

At the end of the two weeks, Rep. Scott Peters, who represents downtown San Diego, signed onto the House bill to expand Yosemite as a co-sponsor. Reps. Susan Davis and Juan Vargas, who also represent districts in and around San Diego, have not yet signed onto the legislation. Environment California will continue to prod members of Congress to champion Yosemite’s expansion.

Despite support, Yosemite shuts down

Starting Oct. 1, the partial government shutdown closed Yosemite National Park on its 123rd birthday.

While even Google celebrated the anniversary of our state’s most popular park, the gates were shuttered to tourists and neighbors of the park. We used the political moment and the public’s discontent with Congress to help Californians speak up for Yosemite and its wildlife.

So far, more than 14,000 Californians have joined our call for Congress to expand Yosemite.



Tim Williams/Creative Commons

worst b-day ever

As Yosemite prepared to celebrate its 123rd birthday, the government shutdown led to its closure. Thousands of Environment California members spoke up and took action through our website.



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Effort to protect kit fox grasslands

San Joaquin kit fox families are part of what makes California unique. But soon, they could be gone.

Too many of the grasslands that kit fox families need to thrive have already been lost. Only 7,000 of these foxes are left on Earth. And their habitat is the largest remaining native grassland in California—the Carrizo Plain.

That’s why Environment California has launched a campaign to protect the Carrizo Plain and Los Padres National Forest of the Central Coast—important kit fox grasslands that are vulnerable to drilling and development.

If we allow drilling in the last few homelands of the kit fox, we’d not only lose precious open space, but the dust and smoke of industrial development would dim the landscape and take over the home of these animals.

Environment California is helping Californians call on their decision-makers in Congress to make this amazing grassland a wilderness area—the highest protection status we have in our toolbox.

With enough public support, we can permanently protect grasslands for the San Joaquin kit fox and 300,000 acres of pristine landscapes on the Central Coast from drilling and development.

So far, Environment California has helped more than 5,000 Californians contact their representatives to protect the Carrizo Plain and Los Padres National Forest by making it a wilderness area.

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Environment California

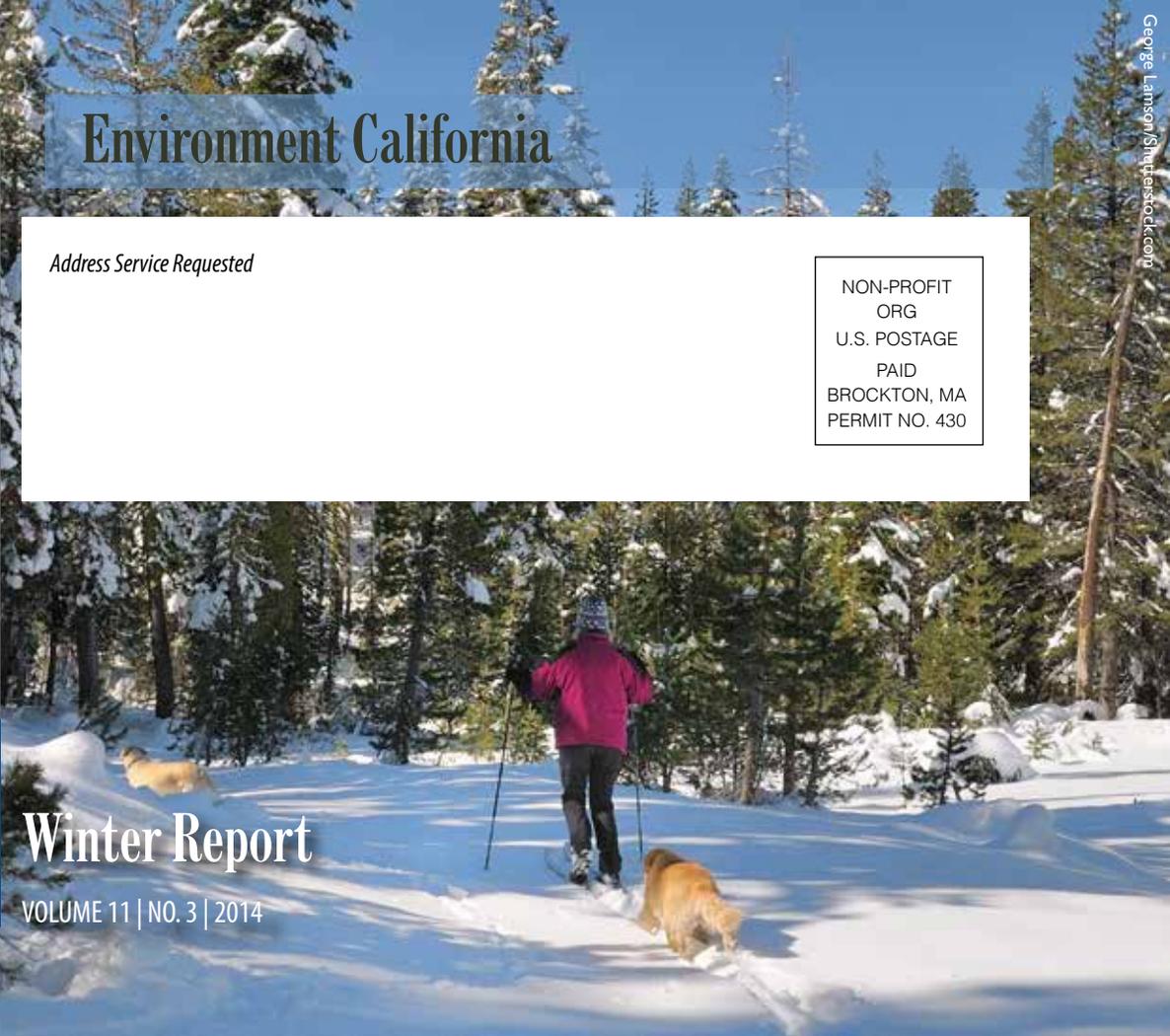
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Environment California

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.

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Color in this Valentine's Day action to protect CA!

Show your love for California as it is—without fracking rigs up and down the state—by coloring in this valentine.

1. Color the valentine below.
2. Cut the valentine out. (Don't forget to read the rest of the newsletter first!)
3. Put the valentine in an envelope and send it to: Environment California, ATTN: Dan Jacobson, 1314 H St. Ste. 100 A, Sacramento, CA 95814.
4. We'll deliver it to the governor's office in person.

