Amidst drought, a call to act on climate

Mobilizing to finalize the Clean Power Plan

As a result of global warming fueled by pollution from power plants and cars, trucks and buses, Californians today live in a different climate than their parents and grandparents experienced—and without urgent action to clean up this pollution, our children will grow up in a more dangerous world.

Yet, even as California experiences one of the worst droughts ever recorded, many in Congress vow to kill President Obama’s Clean Power Plan to reduce global warming pollution by 30 percent by 2030.

Hotter temperatures, more drought

According to an analysis by Environment California Research & Policy Center, young adults in California are already experiencing a more extreme climate than their predecessors did in the 1970s.

The report, “Dangerous Inheritance,” found that if the United States and the world continue to emit more carbon pollution, by the end of the century the temperature will have risen five to 10 degrees, leading to more drought, crop failure and wildfires.

Taking bold action in California

Fortunately, even with Congress stalling, Californians and our elected leaders are taking bold action on global warming.

In April, echoing a series of bills in the state Legislature to reduce global warming pollution, Gov. Jerry Brown issued an executive order of his own to go above and beyond the targets set by the Clean Power Plan. The governor’s plan will cut greenhouse gases in California by 40 percent below 1990 levels in the next 15 years by decreasing the use of petroleum in vehicles and increasing energy efficiency in buildings.

“We applaud Gov. Brown’s bold plan to tackle California’s contribution to global warming,” said Clean Energy Advocate Michelle Kinman. “Now, we need to make sure we show the same leadership on a national level by finalizing the Clean Power Plan.”

Laguna Lake (in September 2014) is completely dry as a result of California’s drought.
To our members

The past few months have brought some incredible victories for the environment, from President Obama’s vetoing of a bill forcing approval of the Keystone XL pipeline to 4 million people speaking out to save the bees.

Of course, we still have our work cut out for us. With a Congress that officially denied the science behind global warming and dirty energy companies that continue to pollute and threaten our environment, it’s more important than ever that we speak out for California’s air, water and open spaces.

In the coming months, Environment California will talk to people across the state, gather thousands of petitions and mobilize local support to protect California’s waterways, reduce global warming pollution, and grow solar power in our communities.

It’s only through our members, like you, that we can do so. Thanks for making it all possible.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dan Jacobson
Legislative Director

Recent action

Green Future Fund: A new way to honor supporters

Environment California’s new Green Future Fund honors donors who are helping to ensure a greener future for California by remembering Environment California or our sister group, Environment California Research & Policy Center, in their estate plans. Including Environment California in your planning costs nothing today, while protecting the places we love and the values we share for the future.

With your permission, we’ll recognize your gift in our publications, inspiring other members to make their own legacy gifts. Or you may choose to keep your gift private. Either way, any details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential.

To enroll in the Green Future Fund, or to learn more, call 1-800-841-7299 ext. 312, or e-mail PlannedGiving@EnvironmentCalifornia.org.

4 million urge President Obama to save the bees

In March, Environment America along with a coalition of beekeepers, farmers, business owners and other environmental and food safety advocates rallied in front of the White House and delivered more than 4 million petition signatures calling on the Obama administration to put forth strong protections for bees and other pollinators.

Environment America and our allies urged President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency to take swift action to protect bees from a dangerous class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids.

These pesticides are linked to rapid bee decline, and in turn, threaten our food supply. With more than 90 percent of foods dependent on bees for survival, it’s imperative that we protect bees from this toxic threat.

Toward a greener future

Environment California and Environment California Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentCalifornia.org.
Cities leading the country forward on solar

The use of solar power is expanding rapidly across the country and playing a key role in meeting our energy and environmental challenges. Major cities, such as Los Angeles, are playing key roles, according to “Shining Cities,” a new report released by Environment California Research & Policy Center. With another panel or project installed every three minutes last year, solar jobs growing at a rate faster than the economy, and plummeting costs, we’re harnessing more energy from the sun and getting closer to leaving climate-altering dirty energy behind.

Los Angeles ranked #1 in solar

As population centers, urban areas can have an important influence on the way we power our grids across the country. The report found that, at the end of 2014, 20 cities accounted for 6.5 percent of the installed solar in the country. And the 65 cities analyzed have installed more solar capacity than was installed in the entire country at the end of 2009. In total, the United States has enough solar electricity to power 3.5 million homes—a number that will continue to grow if cities like Los Angeles make strong commitments to growing solar power.

Los Angeles ranked among the nation’s solar leaders at #1 in the list for total solar installed. Leading cities like Los Angeles owe their solar success largely to growing clean energy markets in tandem with local government policies. These include: streamlining the permitting process for solar power in order to cut costs; removing cost barriers to solar energy adoption by adopting permitting policies and tax incentives; and partnering with local utilities to set renewable energy goals and financial incentives.

Reducing threats of global warming

Solar power mitigates the dangerous impacts of global warming by reducing harmful pollution, improves air quality, and increases demand for local jobs in solar panel installation and manufacturing.

“Solar is taking off across the country, yielding huge payoffs for the environment, public health and the economy,” said Rob Sargent, director of Environment California’s Go Solar campaign. “Continuing progress in Los Angeles will be important to meeting our environmental and energy challenges.”

Big utilities resistant to change

With momentum building, Environment California is urging the state to set a bold goal of 30 percent solar by 2030. Civic leaders, citizens, social media users and businesses have joined Environment California and our national federation’s call to support strong policies to facilitate reaching this goal. Nearly 600 civic leaders from across the country have stood up for strong solar goals, and 1,000 businesses have signed on to the campaign.

In the face of solar power’s rising popularity and feasibility, however, utilities across the country are campaigning to increase fees for rooftop solar.

“With prices going down and concern about global warming going up, solar power is growing rapidly across the country,” said Sargent. “We need federal, state, and even more city leaders to embrace the policies that allow solar to shine.”

LA Mayor Announces First-Ever “Sustainability pLAn”

This April, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti released the first-ever 20-year sustainability plan for the city, setting bold goals for electric vehicle infrastructure, public transit, solar power and water conservation. The plan aims to reduce the city’s greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050 and reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled.

Environment California joined Mayor Garcetti at the plan’s signing in Echo Park. Thanks in part to our efforts to increase the use of electric vehicles through the Charge Ahead coalition and to call for strong solar policies, Los Angeles, and California on the whole, has become a leader in these areas.

The plan will continue to build on solar initiatives such as feed-in tariff and net metering programs, and increase the total megawatts of local solar photovoltaic power to 1,800 MW by 2035, from an estimated 132 MW currently installed.

“California cities are some of the country’s most valuable players when it comes to solar power and clean energy,” said Michelle Kinman, clean energy advocate with Environment California. “We applaud Mayor Garcetti’s leadership, and his commitment to developing these resources in Los Angeles as an example for the rest of the state.”

Take action

Legislative Director Dan Jacobson discusses the “Shining Cities” report.

To urge your elected officials to set ambitious solar goals and support strong solar policies, visit:
wwEnvironmentCalifornia.org

(Above) Advocates for the LA Clean Energy Coalition, including Environment California’s Michelle Kinman (center), celebrate the release of Mayor Garcetti’s “Sustainability pLAn.”
It’s up to us to save the bag ban

California voters will get their say next year on the state’s first-in-the-nation ban on plastic bags, after the law’s opponents in the plastic bag manufacturing industry gathered enough voter signatures this February to qualify a ballot repeal question in 2016.

They’re looking to overturn the law. Not on our watch. This summer, our citizen outreach team will talk with tens of thousands of Californians, and shine a spotlight in the media about the importance of casting a vote to save the bag ban.

Californians throw away 123,000 tons of plastic bags each year, many of which end up in the ocean. Local bag bans in California have already reduced bag use by 6 billion bags per year—a number that will keep going down if the statewide ban succeeds.

more inside

Learn more about our efforts to reduce global warming pollution, grow solar power in California and more inside!

Environment California Legislative Director Dan Jacobson talks to the media about the statewide plastic bag ban.