



# Summer Report

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## Historic action taken for clean water

### EPA rule to close loopholes is good news for our beaches

For more than a decade, Environment New York and our national federation, Environment America, has been working to close polluter loopholes in the Clean Water Act that have left more than half New York's streams, our beaches and the drinking water for more than 11 million New Yorkers at risk. This past March, the Environmental Protection Agency finally put forth a long-awaited proposal to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act, a major victory for our waterways and our beaches, since pollution upstream can contribute to more beach closings each summer.

#### 1,300 beach closings

In 2012, there were more than 1,300 beach closings at New York City-area beaches, due to pollution and bacteria. Polluters should not be allowed to treat our waterways like a personal sewer. That's why Environment New York has launched a massive summer campaign to protect our waterways and beaches.

This grassroots campaign will educate thousands of New Yorkers about the benefits that the proposed protections could have for our critical and iconic waterways, such as Long Island Sound, the Finger Lakes and the Hudson River. Our staff also expect to collect 13,000 public comments in support of the EPA's proposal and recruit hundreds of fishing groups, businesses and local officials.

"This summer's grassroots campaign is no small undertaking, but we know that building support for this rule is the best chance



Dan Deluca / Creative Commons

▲ Orchard Beach on Long Island Sound

we have at protecting our state's waters and beaches," said Heather Leibowitz, director of Environment New York.

#### "Legal warfare" to block action

In the wake of the proposal's announcement, polluters from the Farm Bureau to the coal industry promised to do everything in their power to defeat this clean water plan, including in their own words, start "legal warfare" to keep the EPA from taking action.

"When finalized, this rule would be the biggest step forward for clean water in more than a decade," said Leibowitz. "More than 200,000 farmers, anglers and other Americans have urged the Obama administration to close the loopholes. Now it's time to push past the polluters and finish the job. With the support of New Yorkers, we can restore Clean Water Act protections to thousands of miles of New York streams—and protect our beaches downstream."



John A. Anderson

### take action

We can win the biggest victory for our waterways—but only if enough of us speak out. Visit our website to take action: [www.EnvironmentNewYork.org](http://www.EnvironmentNewYork.org)

▲ Tern in Oyster Bay



Staff

## To our members

I hope this note finds you well and gearing up for summer hiking, fishing, or canoeing trips with friends and family on the Appalachian Trail or in the Adirondacks. After a winter like this past one, there's nothing like feeling the warmth of the sun on your face or being out in the fresh air.

For years, experiences like these are part of what Environment New York has been fighting for—to make sure New Yorkers from every corner of the state can experience their local environment without worrying about pollution, fracking, logging, and development. This summer's no different. We've launched a huge grassroots effort to protect waterways from Long Island Sound to local streams across the state by closing loopholes in the Clean Water Act.

Protecting the places we love is invaluable work. But it's also not easy. It takes people coming together to get it done.

Thank you for your support.

Heather Leibowitz  
Director

## Recent action

### Green Future Fund: A new way to honor supporters

Environment New York's new Green Future Fund honors donors who ensure a greener future for New York by remembering Environment New York or our sister group, Environment New York Research & Policy Center, in their estate plans.

Including Environment New York 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 email [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNewYork.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNewYork.org).

### Wind energy delivers huge benefits for New York

Wind energy is on the rise and providing huge environmental benefits for our state, according to a new report released by Environment New York Research & Policy Center this spring. Wind energy is already allowing New York to avoid more than 1.8 million metric tons of climate-altering carbon pollution—the equivalent of taking 382,203 cars off the road.

The report, "Wind Energy for a Cleaner America," also shows that today's wind energy in New York avoids 1,724 tons of smog-causing nitrogen oxides, which contributes to asthma, and 2,130 tons of sulfur dioxide, which is a major component of acid rain. New York's wind is also saving the state more than 800 million gallons of water per year.

And this may just be the beginning. New York could be on track to see an 86 percent increase in wind production in the next five years. If state and federal officials commit to continued progress, New York could reduce the carbon pollution equivalent of more than 288,931 passenger vehicles.



## Toward a greener future

Environment New York and Environment New York 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@EnvironmentNewYork.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNewYork.org).

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▲ Wind turbine in East Aurora, N.Y.

Bob is Traveling / Creative Commons

# A one-two punch in global warming fight

Hugh Cree/ Creative Commons

As public concern about extreme weather ramps up, New York is proving that we can make a difference in the fight against global warming. Our clean energy policies, such as the Zero Emission Vehicle program, are significantly cutting emissions of carbon pollution—the leading cause of global warming—according to a report released by Environment New York Research & Policy Center this past spring.

The report, “Moving America Forward,” showed that New York’s Energy Efficiency Policy reduced carbon pollution by at least 1.7 million metric tons in 2012—an amount equivalent to the annual emissions from 350,000 cars.

“By using energy more efficiently, and by generating more power from clean, renewable sources, we are delivering a one-two punch in the fight against global warming,” said Heather Leibowitz, director of Environment New York. “We’ve proven that we have what it takes to protect our children and future generations from the worst impacts of climate change.”

Scientists say extreme weather, like Superstorm Sandy, foreshadows what could be a new normal of weather extremes that could threaten our future if we fail to act on climate. Coal- and gas-fired power plants are America’s largest source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming.

## The next step in the fight

Environment New York pointed to the Environmental Protection Agency’s plan to move forward with limits on carbon pollution from power plants as the next step to fight global warming and shift to clean energy.

Right now, the EPA limits arsenic, lead, soot and other pollution from power plants—but not carbon pollution. Power plants are America’s largest source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming, accounting for about 40 percent of total emissions.

## Firm national limits needed

“If we are to successfully meet the challenges that climate change presents, we must invest in innovation and energy efficiency,” said N.Y. Congressman Paul Tonko. “Study after study warns against the dangers of continued ignorance of climate change, and state and federal leaders must work together to promote a cleaner environment for future generations, while harnessing the massive job growth potential a clean energy market possesses.”

Environment New York continues to work with our leaders to protect our health, environment and communities from the worst consequences of global warming and to be a voice for clean energy solutions.

“Climate change presents a threat to the economy, public health, and global security,” said Tonko. “If we are to successfully meet the challenges that climate change presents, we must invest in innovation, energy efficiency, and find new ways to reduce our crippling dependency on foreign oil. I thank Environment New York for their tireless efforts to enhance public health, boost the economy, and make our environment a better place for our children and grandchildren.”



**Moving America Forward**  
State and Federal Leadership Is Producing Results  
in the Fight against Global Warming

**research**

To read the full report visit,  
[www.EnvironmentNewYorkCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentNewYorkCenter.org)



Solar panels in Brooklyn

Aeon Solar/ NREL

## RGGI Victory: New York commits to deeper cuts in power plant pollution

New York has announced improvements to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a pioneering effort to clean up climate-altering carbon pollution from power plants. The changes to the program will reduce power plant pollution in the region by 15 percent within the decade.

In February, New York and eight other states announced a new agreement to make deeper cuts in carbon emissions from power plants. The state’s recent action locks into place a stronger limit on climate-altering pollution. Through 2020, the new limit will prevent as much pollution as would be emitted by 16 million cars. At the same time, it will generate more than \$8 billion in economic benefits, including energy bill savings, and more than 120,000 job-years of employment across the region.

RGGI states have cut carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 40 percent since 2005. The program has also generated funding for clean energy programs, which are accelerating the rate at which the region is moving away from polluting fossil fuels. The program boosted regional net economic output by \$1.6 billion and created 16,000 jobs in its first two and a half years of operation, including \$326 million in economic benefits and more than 4,000 jobs in New York.

Visit our website at:   
[www.EnvironmentNewYork.org](http://www.EnvironmentNewYork.org)  
to learn more about our efforts to  
tackle global warming pollution.

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# Environment New York

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## Summer Report

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### Environment New York

#### 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 New York. We focus exclusively on protecting New York'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.

## Telling the cold, hard truth about fracking

As Gov. Andrew Cuomo continues to weigh a decision on whether to allow hydraulic fracturing in New York, residents next door in Pennsylvania recently recounted their stories of illness, water contamination, and damage to their livelihoods because of dirty drilling operations. Environment New York Research & Policy Center recently presented a report documenting these stories as the latest evidence for rejecting fracking.

In the report, "Shalefield Stories," Judy Armstrong Stiles of Bradford County, Pa., spoke of the barium and arsenic that was found in her drinking water, and then in her blood, after Chesapeake Energy began drilling on her land. Armstrong's story was just one of many accounts of the real and severe consequences of fracking in communities across the country.

"Behind the alarming numbers that outline fracking's environmental damage, there are real people whose lives have been gravely impacted by these polluting practices," said Heather Leibowitz, director of Environment New York Research & Policy Center. "These are their stories, and it is our responsibility to heed their words of warning on fracking."



Shale Field Stories

### more inside ↗

*New York commits to deeper cuts in power plant pollution; wind energy delivers benefits for state; summer campaign launched to close legal loopholes in Clean Water Act, and more.*

◀ *Nancy Bevins of Smyrna, speaks to a crowd about the tragic fracking accident that took her son's life.*