



Superstorm Sandy delivers wake-up call

Extreme weather highlights need to cut carbon pollution

Sadly, Superstorm Sandy was the worst possible wake-up call, reminding us all that global warming is happening now, and that the resulting increase in extreme weather has tragic consequences.

And as Gov. Andrew Cuomo put it, “Anyone who says there is not a change in weather patterns is denying reality.”

Environment New York is responding to this past year’s extreme weather with a focused campaign to significantly reduce global warming pollution in the state, including strengthening the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). New York is a founding member of the RGGI program which works to reduce carbon emissions in New York and nine other states across the Northeast.

That’s because the air over a warming planet holds more moisture, which combined with higher ocean temperatures in our oceans, leads to more powerful storms. At the same time, rising sea levels mean that when storms hit our coasts, flooding is more severe. Deadlier, more powerful, more damaging storms like Superstorm Sandy are exactly what scientists have warned us will happen if we fail to reduce carbon pollution. These warnings are outlined in our report “When It Rains, It Pours.”

Clean energy for a safer future

The majority of New Yorkers and Americans have connected the dots. Most of us understand that more extreme weather is becoming more common, the planet is warming, and pollution is behind much



Photo: Patrick McFall, Creative Commons

▲ Battery Park Tunnel flooded after Superstorm Sandy

of it. Most of us also know we—as Americans and New Yorkers—can do better. We can reduce the pollution that’s behind global warming. We can rely more on energy efficiency, solar power and wind power and less on oil, gas and dirty coal.

In 2012, the nation was able to make significant reductions in global warming pollution with the passage of new, historic

federal clean car standards. These standards are the single biggest step the U.S. has ever taken to tackle global warming. But there is still work to be done to slow global warming. In 2013, Environment New York is working to reduce carbon pollution, curb global warming, slow the rise of our oceans, and leave our children a safer planet.



Photo: Big Sue, LLC

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Clean, renewable energy such as wind and solar power helps tackle global warming, which is linked to the recent increase in extreme weather.

Read more online:
www.EnvironmentNewYork.com



Photo: RNN

To our members

2013 is looking to be a year of tough, but worthwhile fights for New York's environment. But two fights have become particularly urgent in recent months.

Sadly, Governor Andrew Cuomo has taken yet another step toward allowing the dangerous gas drilling practice known as "fracking" in New York; and Superstorm Sandy served as a harsh reminder that global warming pollution has already begun to change our climate for the worse.

We face powerful polluters in our efforts to curb global warming emissions and defend the landscapes and waters that make New York special. Yet despite the challenges we face in working to protect our environment, your support, and our shared environmental values, give us the strength we need to stand strong against these threats to our clean air, clean water, and the special places that define New York.

Sincerely,

Eric Whalen
Field Organizer

Recent action

Gov. Cuomo pushes New York closer to drilling

Despite growing public opposition, Governor Andrew Cuomo recently took New York one step closer to allowing the dangerous and polluting gas drilling practice known as "fracking" to take place in the state. The governor is pressing to allow fracking—even before the state has completed its study on how gas drilling will impact our environment and our health.

In neighboring Pennsylvania, gas drilling has polluted water supplies and the air for millions of the state's residents. At the same time, it's generated more than 1.3 billion gallons of toxic wastewater in Pennsylvania, waste that is loaded with toxic chemicals, corrosive salts, and sometimes even radioactive particles. Fracking wastewater recently contaminated the drinking water supply of 325,000 residents near Pittsburgh.

With millions of New Yorkers relying on drinking water from upstate New York, gas drilling is simply too risky for our state. Environment New York is calling on Governor Cuomo to prioritize our health and safety by saying no to dangerous gas drilling in New York.

Record-setting 3 million favor action on carbon

Environment New York worked with groups across the state and nation to build support for new clean air safeguards. Together with our allies, we delivered more than two million comments in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's carbon pollution standard, which limits industrial global warming pollution from new power plants. This is the largest number of comments ever submitted during a public comment period in EPA history.

"The message is clear: New Yorkers want cleaner air and less global warming pollution. And they want the EPA to protect their kids, their families and their communities from the dangerous effects of climate change," said Environment New York Field Organizer Eric Whalen.



Photo: Staff

▲ Environment New York canvassers gathered some of the 3 million public comments favoring action on global warming pollution.

Dollars drained by dirty drilling

Photo: B. Mark Schmerling

In September, Environment New York Research & Policy Center released “The Costs of Fracking.” The report comes as Governor Cuomo is pushing to allow this dangerous drilling practice in New York. Worried about the risk fracking poses to drinking water supplies, public health and our environment, more than 100 towns and municipalities have responded by establishing bans or moratoria on this gas drilling practice.

Fracking will cost New Yorkers millions

“Fracking’s environmental damage is bad enough, but it turns out that this dirty drilling imposes heavy dollar and cents costs as well,” said Environment New York’s Eric Whalen.

If fracking begins in New York, our recent report shows that the state could wind up dealing with millions of gallons of toxic wastewater. This wastewater could end up in sewage treatment plants, in turn leading to pollution in our rivers and streams. If the wastewater is injected deep into the ground, New York runs the risk of earthquakes or long term effects of groundwater pollution that have not been fully studied.

In addition to water cleanup costs, the report shows that fracking damage exacts other tolls on communities—from millions of dollars in road repairs to health costs.

Environment New York’s new study includes the following examples of such costs:

- **Health:** In Arkansas’ Fayetteville Shale region, air pollution from fracking operations imposed health costs estimated at \$9.8 million in one year. In Texas’ Barnett Shale region, those costs reach \$270,000 per day during the summer smog season.
- **Roads to Ruin:** With fracking operations requiring thousands of trips by trucks and heavy machinery, a Texas task force approved \$40 million in funding for road repairs in the Barnett Shale region.
- **Property Value:** A 2010 study in Texas

concluded that houses valued at more than \$250,000 and within 1,000 feet of a well site saw their values decrease by 3 to 14 percent.

Moreover, as with previous extractive booms, fracking is also expected to impose long-term costs.

As noted in our report, the coal boom in Appalachia left Pennsylvania with an estimated cleanup cost of more than \$5 billion dollars. We can’t afford to have another legacy of pollution from short-sighted fossil fuel production in the U.S.

Water tainted, towns blighted by fracking

New York State Senator Liz Krueger said of the report: “We have seen the disastrous consequences of hydrofracking in other states, with tainted water supplies and whole towns and regions blighted. That should be reason enough to give us pause, but today’s report shows what many of us have suspected: Allowing fracking in New York will open the door to mounting costs that we haven’t fully accounted for and that our state and local governments probably can’t afford.”



Photo: Dan Speicher

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▲ *Environment New York’s Eric Whalen (far right) meets with a Penn. property owner about fracking near her property.*

Read the full report online at:
www.EnvironmentNewYork.org



Photo: NREL, DOE

Atlantic offshore wind on the horizon

In November, as the fate of critical wind incentives faced the approaching “fiscal cliff,” Environment New York released our latest report on wind energy. The report, “Wind Power for a Cleaner America,” outlines the core environmental and economic benefits that wind energy yields.

The report called on United States lawmakers to commit to renewable energy by renewing the wind incentives that have helped grow wind significantly in the U.S. Thanks in part to the advocacy of Environment New York and our supporters, Congress saved the incentives—and the future of American wind energy—in 2013.

America has more than doubled its use of wind power since the beginning of 2008 and is starting to reap the environmental rewards. Wind energy now displaces about 68 million metric tons of global warming pollution each year.

When key federal wind incentives were set to expire at the end of the year, Environment New York and its allies around the country went to work. Fortunately, with strong support from President Obama and our House and Senate allies—and thanks in part to the hundreds of Environment New York activists who raised their voices on the issue—Congress renewed critical wind power tax credits as a part of the beginning-of-the-year deal to avert the “fiscal cliff.”

Without these tax credits, wind power projects would have been put on the sidelines this year, meaning less clean energy, more pollution, and the loss of 37,000 American jobs. Instead, these tax credits will continue to help make wind power a true American success story.

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Environment New York

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open space. 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.

Historic victory for clean cars

Environment New York celebrated a huge victory this past August when President Obama finalized new national standards for clean cars that will slash global warming emissions and raise fuel efficiency standards to 54.5 mpg by 2025.

This is the most far-reaching step we have ever taken as a nation to tackle global warming pollution, and will be the equivalent of taking close to 2 million cars off the road.

Environment New York worked hard to help ensure this victory—our staff and volunteers organized thousands of citizens to have their voices heard in support of clean cars, we garnered media coverage across the state, and lobbied Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency and the White House to act.

Our staff also led a statewide clean cars tour this summer drumming up support for the standards and the electric vehicles they promote, earning media coverage along the way.



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Superstorm Sandy delivers wake-up call; record setting 3 million comments supporting clean air; dollars drained by dirty drilling; and more.