



Defending the Clean Power Plan

Your support builds energy for climate action

This summer, the Environmental Protection Agency finalized its historic plan to limit carbon pollution from dirty power plants, America's #1 source of global warming pollution—but fossil fuel interests and their allies in Congress are doing all they can to block the measure before it's implemented.

Environment Massachusetts and our allies are continuing our work at the state and regional levels to convince leaders in Congress on the fence to stand up for the Clean Power Plan, and urge Massachusetts' leaders to continue to lead on climate action and make plans to implement the Clean Power Plan here in Massachusetts.

Mobilizing grassroots support

Over the summer, thousands of members like you from across the country signed a petition in support of Clean Power Plan. In addition, our national citizen outreach team talked to more than 47,000 people about this important issue.

Local businesses, elected leaders, and Bay Staters also joined us for a day of action in front of the State House on July 30, calling on state officials to expand opportunities for clean energy.

MA leading the nation

The final Clean Power Plan will not only cut carbon pollution by 542 million tons and play an essential role in speeding Massachusetts' shift to renewable energy but will also set the stage for an international agreement to tackle global warming in Paris, where world leaders will convene to address this global threat in December.



Credit: Staff

▲ Supporters turned out to a rally during the Clean Power Plan day of action on July 30.

Massachusetts and eight other Northeastern states are leading the country in a major way through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a program that has cut power plant pollution by more than a third—and has boosted the regional economy by \$1.3 billion.

“To tackle a problem as big as global warming, it's going to take global action,” said Ben Hellerstein, state director for Environment Massachusetts. “Massachusetts is helping lead the nation toward a clean energy future, and that's giving the United States some real leverage in international climate negotiations.”



Credit: Suzannah Hoover Photography

take action

Learn more about our work on global warming and take action to support the Clean Power Plan online at:

www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org

◀ A canvasser on our national citizen outreach team this summer



Credit: Staff

To our members

After nine years of demonstrating your support for cleaner water, through advocacy, grassroots organizing, and your phone calls, letters, e-mails and more, we're celebrating a big victory for clean water: The EPA has restored Clean Water Act protections to 2 million miles of streams and headwaters across the country.

It's taken a monumental effort. To keep loopholes in the law, polluters outspent us. Their allies in Congress voted against us. But together, we spoke louder. Together, we convinced the Obama administration that there is broad support for clean water, and overcame polluter opposition.

This fall, we're redoubling our efforts to protect this victory from polluters' attacks in Congress. While I know it won't be easy, I'm confident that the movement we've built together is helping pave the way for healthier, cleaner waterways. I'm excited to share with you in this newsletter all that your support is accomplishing. Thanks for standing with us!

Ben Hellerstein
State Director

Recent action

Protecting the Grand Canyon from reckless mining

The Grand Canyon took millions of years to form—but uranium mining could quickly ruin this natural wonder for future generations. Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center and our allies are working to stop this reckless proposal.

Despite a ban on new mining close to Grand Canyon National Park that we helped fight for, this summer, a federal judge approved a uranium mine only six miles from the Grand Canyon's southern rim after the mining company argued that they got their permit before the ban was enacted.

We're mobilizing people to call for an urgent stop to this mine. We're also building public support to urge President Obama to permanently protect the Grand Canyon and its surrounding area from these threats by declaring a new Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument, which would conserve 1.7 million acres of land that provide critical protections to the Colorado River and its watershed.

30,000 call for stronger rules on fracking waste

This summer, as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed a portion of the Clean Water Act that regulates what kind of waste oil and gas companies can send to sewage treatment plants, Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center's national staff and our ally Clean Water Action delivered more than 30,000 comments from people like you in Massachusetts and across the country to the EPA's doorstep calling for a strong rule to protect waterways across the country.

Under current rules, toxic and hazardous wastewater from fracking operations can be sent through plants that are not equipped to process the toxins, cancer-causing compounds and heavy metals that this waste carries. As a result, many of these chemicals can make their way into waterways.

The EPA is proposing a rule to prevent local municipal treatment plants from accepting hazardous fracking waste, and Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center will be working to ensure the rule makes it over the finish line in the strongest iteration possible.



Credit: Wikimedia

Toward a greener future

Environment Massachusetts and Environment Massachusetts 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 x312 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMassachusetts.org.



Credit: Staff

▲ Our national staff and our coalition partner Clean Water Action delivered more than 30,000 comments to the EPA from Americans who want to take a stand against fracking chemicals in their local waterways.

Report finds utilities selling us short on solar

More and more of us are going solar, meeting our energy needs in a way that's clean, local and independent. Yet, according to new research by Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center, homes and businesses with solar panels may be delivering more benefits to the electrical grid than they receive in exchange from utility companies. This analysis counters increasing complaints from utilities that solar homeowners don't pay their fair share.

The new report, "Shining Rewards: The Value of Rooftop Solar Power for Consumers and Society," was released at the end of June as at least a dozen states across the country hotly debated this very issue with their citizens and utility providers.

Rewards of solar greater than costs

One of the most debated programs that promotes rooftop solar is net-metering, which credits solar panel owners at a fixed rate—often the retail price of electricity—for providing an excess of power to the grid. Programs like this have been instrumental to helping solar energy skyrocket across the country by making solar more economically attractive, but utilities have increasingly begun to attack them as unjustified "subsidies."

"Shining Rewards" tells a different story. The report found that utilities were actually underpaying solar panel owners—not subsidizing them. Of the 11 net-metering studies reviewed, eight found that the value of solar energy was higher than the local retail electricity rate. And, the median value of solar power across all 11 studies was nearly 17 cents per unit, compared to the nation's average retail rate of 12 cents.

"While some utilities claim they're subsidizing solar panel owners, our report shows the opposite is probably true," said Rob Sargent, energy program director at Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center and the report's co-author. "If anything, utilities should be paying people who go solar more, not less."

Of course, the advantages of solar power extend beyond the economic—they also include valuable benefits for the environment and society at large. Solar avoids greenhouse gas emissions, reduces air pollution that harms public health, creates jobs and spurs local economies.

More pro-solar policies needed

The report sheds light on the debate raging in more than a dozen states across the country over how much solar panel owners should be compensated for the power they produce. For example, Nevada is considering imposing a new fee for solar panel owners who sell excess power. Arizona Public Service wants to lower the reimbursement rates for solar power. And in Wisconsin, the Public Utility Board aims to increase fees on certain solar customers.

Solar power is widely popular with the public, and policies such as net-metering have encouraged a wide and varied distribution of rooftop solar. Yet, such debates often stall pro-solar policies, keeping residents from taking advantage of solar power and states from growing their use of renewable energy.

"Solar power's rewards are far greater than its costs," Sargent concluded. "That's why we should be encouraging more of it across the country, not penalizing it."



Staff in action

▲ Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center Energy Program Director Rob Sargent leads a discussion on net-metering at Intersolar 2015, a conference attended by thousands of solar industry players.



10-city tour highlights stalled solar projects

This July, Environment Massachusetts organized a two-week, 10-city, "Soak Up the Sun" tour to bring attention to solar projects across the state that have been stalled because of limits on net-metering, a key solar program in Massachusetts. During the events, city and town officials, solar business owners, nonprofit leaders and local residents spoke about solar projects in their communities that have been affected by the caps placed on the solar program this past March.

More than 170 cities and towns have been hit by the cap on net-metering, which allows solar panel owners to receive full compensation for the electricity they provide to the grid. As a result of the cap, many businesses, local governments and nonprofits hoping to install solar panels are no longer able to do so.

"Across Massachusetts, people are eager to go solar, but the net-metering caps are holding them back," said Environment Massachusetts State Director Ben Hellerstein. "Our state's leaders should act soon to raise the net-metering caps and commit to a goal of getting 20 percent of Massachusetts' electricity from solar by 2025."

Last year, Massachusetts ranked fourth in the nation for the amount of solar energy installed, with enough solar added to the grid to power 50,000 homes with clean energy. The solar industry also supports more than 12,000 jobs statewide. With this momentum, state officials should expand opportunities for solar—not limit them.

▲ Environment Massachusetts State Director Ben Hellerstein speaks at the Soak Up the Sun rally on the steps of the Massachusetts State House.

Credit: Michael Matti via Flickr; CC BY-NC 2.0

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294 Washington St., Ste. 500
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 747-4400

Environment Massachusetts

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Environment Massachusetts

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 Massachusetts, Incorporated, a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Massachusetts' air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Credit: Staff

Biggest clean water victory in a decade

Thanks to your support, the Obama Administration finally closed loopholes in the Clean Water Act that left more than 4,000 miles of streams in Massachusetts at risk of pollution—but now polluters and their allies in Congress are taking steps to derail this historic action. Environment Massachusetts has launched a new phase of our clean water campaign to ensure that doesn't happen.

Along with our allies, our person-to-person outreach efforts reached more than 1 million households, and hundreds of farmers, small businesses and local officials across the country this summer. We've also placed paid advertisements in newspapers, organized phone calls to senators and held rallies.

"Thanks to this historic action, the drinking water for one in three Americans, and our favorite rivers, lakes and streams will be cleaner," said John Rumpler, senior attorney with Environment Massachusetts. "Now we need our senators to stand up to the polluters who want to dismantle these critical protections."



Support our efforts

Help us protect the Clean Water for America rule.
Donate at: www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org

Environment Massachusetts joined Curt Spalding, the regional administrator for U.S. EPA, New England Region, and leaders from the Charles River Watershed Association and Save the Harbor / Save the Bay to celebrate the EPA's Clean Water Rule.