EPA pushes tough plans in Pa., Md., and Va.

The Chesapeake Bay will become less polluted under a new cleanup plan called for by the Environmental Protection Agency and supported by Environment America.

The EPA’s plan will set a regional pollution reduction goal that states bordering the Bay must meet. To ensure the EPA plan succeeds, our state staff are pushing state decision-makers to develop and implement strong cleanup plans.

1.1 billion pounds of manure

Runoff pollution creates a dead zone in the Bay every summer where wildlife cannot survive. Corporate agribusiness is one of the main culprits. Our researchers found that on the Delmarva Peninsula alone, Perdue and other poultry companies raise 568 million chickens every year, generating an estimated 1.1 billion pounds of manure—much of which flows into the Bay.

In November, we released “Corporate Agribusiness and America’s Waters,” to educate decision-makers and the public about the toll that massive amounts of animal waste have taken on the Bay. For decades, agribusiness giants have pressed lawmakers to reject mandatory limits on pollution, arguing that voluntary efforts would suffice. But the Bay’s dead zone offers stark proof that the voluntary approach has failed and we need to do more.

States pushed to get with the program

When President Barack Obama ordered the EPA to establish a state-by-state Bay cleanup plan in 2009, Environment America launched a campaign to ensure that the final plan would include mandatory pollution reductions.

As Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia developed their own Bay cleanup plans this fall, our state affiliates made the case for strong action directly to decision-makers. When Virginia Gov. Bob McConnell defiantly submitted a business-as-usual plan with no penalties for pollution, Environment Virginia activists sent e-mails to remind him that the public supports strong protections for the Bay.

Fifty local farmers joined Environment Maryland’s call for tough limits on all sources of pollution into the Bay. In September, Gov. Martin O’Malley announced that his state’s plan would require agribusinesses to change at least some of their most polluting practices.

A farmer’s view

“I’m a small farmer raising sheep, goats, hogs and chickens... If I can clean up after my animals, then a big company like Perdue certainly can do it too.”

- Maryland farmer William Morrow
Once again, the political winds have shifted. New faces abound on Capitol Hill and in many statehouses across the nation.

But regardless of who is making the decisions, with your help we’ve made some real progress over the past year—extending clean energy tax credits, protecting our coastline from offshore drilling, stopping drilling pollution from threatening Glacier National Park, and pushing for stronger protections to keep agribusiness pollution out of the Chesapeake Bay, to name a few.

Of course, there is much more to be done—especially since powerful interests and their allies in Congress have set their sights on some of our most successful environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act. But I know that with the facts on our side, with the vast majority of Americans agreeing with us, and with the continued support of loyal members like you, we’ll balance the scales against the well-heeled corporate lobbyists and win meaningful victories for the places we love, the health of our families, and the environmental values we share.

Thanks for standing with us!

Margie Alt
Executive Director

Recent action

At long last, offshore wind takes off

The stage is set for America’s first offshore wind projects to power hundreds of thousands of East Coast homes, thanks in large part to campaigns we waged both nationally and at the state level in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland and other Atlantic states.

In August, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie signed Environment New Jersey-backed legislation committing the Garden State to enough offshore wind to power 350,000 households. In October, after a nine-year battle, Massachusetts’ Cape Wind project secured the nation’s first offshore wind lease. Working with Gov. Martin O’Malley, Environment Maryland helped promote an offshore wind plan for Maryland, which federal regulators approved in November.

In December, our state affiliates along the coast from Georgia to Maine joined the National Wildlife Federation to release “Offshore Wind in the Atlantic.” The report highlighted the potential for offshore wind along the Atlantic coast—enough to power 55 million households—and the benefits that developing offshore wind presents for their states.

State victories will slow the rush to drill in N.Y., Pa.

As oil and gas companies rushed to drill, our state affiliates in New York and Pennsylvania won new policies to protect state lands and drinking water from pollution.

PennEnvironment’s David Masur joined Gov. Ed Rendell as he signed an executive order declaring 800,000 acres of state forestlands off limits to drilling leases. In New York, Environment New York’s Eric Whalen and other staff called for a ban on drilling in the region that supplies 9 million New Yorkers with drinking water. Environment New York helped mobilize thousands of people to contact state leaders in support of a ban, and in December Gov. David Paterson issued an executive order banning the most dangerous forms of drilling until July 2011.

As we continue to build on these state successes, we are calling on Congress to reinstate federal safeguards to protect drinking water from gas exploration.

Pennsylvania’s moratorium on drilling leases will protect more than 800,000 acres of state land—like Black Moshannon State Park, above.
In what the L.A. Times called the biggest environmental campaign in U.S. history, this fall Environment California joined allies across the state to defeat Proposition 23, a ballot proposal that would have overturned California’s landmark global warming law. Thanks to the historic campaign, California voters overwhelmingly rejected Prop. 23 on Election Day.

Prop. 23, which was largely promoted and bankrolled by Valero, Tesoro and other Texas-based oil companies, would have blocked California’s precedent-setting Global Warming Solutions Act from being implemented. In the four years since the law took effect, it has already helped attract $9 billion in clean technology investments and helped double the use of wind and solar power in California.

Environment California and its partners rallied more than 1,000 volunteers and held hundreds of thousands of face-to-face conversations with Californians to build opposition to Prop. 23. As part of a robust get-out-the-vote effort to seal the deal, volunteers gathered pledges to vote No on Prop. 23. In the end, the measure was defeated in a landslide, with 61 percent of voters casting a No vote.

With Congress stymied, states act
Moving forward, Environment America will continue to help ensure that states like California lead the way in tackling global warming.

Our staff and members across the country are urging the EPA to adopt the strongest possible standards to protect our air and our health, and tackle global warming. At the same time, we remain vigilant against efforts by polluters and their friends in Congress to block or weaken tough rules. We helped defeat such an attack by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and others in 2010, but we anticipate similar assaults in the 112th Congress.

EPA to reduce power plant pollution
In the coming months, the Environmental Protection Agency is poised to develop standards that would make the nation’s two largest sources of air and global warming pollution—cars and power plants—a great deal cleaner.

First, the EPA has proposed new fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks (see sidebar). And soon, regulators will begin developing rules to cut toxic pollution from power plants, which could save roughly 10,000 lives annually once implemented. We’re expecting the EPA to begin developing new global warming pollution standards for power plants as well.

Our staff and members across the country are urging the EPA to adopt the strongest possible standards to protect our air and our health, and tackle global warming. At the same time, we remain vigilant against efforts by polluters and their friends in Congress to block or weaken tough rules. We helped defeat such an attack by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and others in 2010, but we anticipate similar assaults in the 112th Congress.

How many turkeys can you buy at 60 mpg?

With the Obama administration developing a new round of fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks as millions of us took to the road last Thanksgiving, our Global Warming Associate Alex Wall got to wondering: How much gas and how much money would Americans save on holiday travel if we drove ultra-efficient cars that traveled 60 miles per gallon, instead of the current 26.4 mpg average?

After crunching the numbers, Alex came up with an answer. Cleaner cars would cut holiday oil use by 80 million gallons—saving American families a cool $234 million on Thanksgiving travel alone. That’s enough money to put another 13 million turkeys on holiday tables.

And it’s just one more reason—along with our desire to help get America off oil and reduce our nation’s carbon footprint—that Environment America is joining the members of our national federation and other environmental advocates in calling for new government rules that will ensure that by 2025 the average car sold in the United States will go 60 miles per gallon.

After 14 states adopted clean car standards over the last decade, the Obama administration raised current standards to 35 miles per gallon between 2012 and 2016.

Want to read more?

Our newsletter and additional content are available online at www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/newsletters/winter11.

Visit www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/reports to learn more.
First, the good news: As Glacier National Park celebrated its 100th birthday in 2010, 200,000 more people than the year before visited to hike its mountain trails or catch a glimpse of the grizzlies, wolves and bighorn sheep that make their homes there.

The bad news is that Glacier could face funding cuts, even as the number of park visitors grows to some of the highest levels ever. Proposed budget cuts in the coming year, on top of an overall maintenance backlog of $280 million, could jeopardize the park’s ability to maintain the picturesque Going-to-the-Sun road or provide clean drinking water at all campsites.

Unfortunately, Glacier is not alone. This fall, Environment America released “The Best of America Under Threat from Underfunding,” which highlighted the same disturbing trend—growing visitorship and proposed budget cuts—at national parks across the country. We’re hopeful that Americans will continue to visit our parks in large numbers, so we are working hard to urge Congress to give these special places the resources they need.