



Environment Florida helps hold the line

Congress's sneak attack on the environment

Over the past year, with the public's attention focused on the economy, anti-environmental extremists in Congress have quietly launched an all-out attack on the laws that protect America's waters, like the Everglades and Tampa Bay—as well as the air we breathe and other places we love.

It's the most radical, reckless attack on our environment in our lifetimes, and it's happening under the radar, through provisions slipped into massive budget bills.

191 anti-environment votes

In the U.S. House alone, lawmakers cast an incredible 191 roll call votes in 2011 on measures that would block the EPA from keeping our rivers clean, making our air safer to breathe, or enforcing other environmental protections.

In February, the House rammed through a budget bill that took aim at the Everglades, our rivers and streams, our air, and funding for national parks. In July the House approved a bill that would gut the Clean Water Act, stripping the EPA of much of its oversight authority. In August, the U.S. House passed a bill containing 39 separate environmental attacks.

So far, we've blocked the attacks

So far, none of the attacks have become law, with Environment Florida research, advocacy and grassroots action helping to hold the line.

In 2011, we personally made our case to



▲ Environment Florida fought a budget bill that took aim at wetland ecosystems.

members of our congressional delegation and their aides.

Thousands of our members have also called, emailed or petitioned their lawmakers to reject any bills that threaten our treasured Everglades region, not to mention our state's rivers, the quality of our air and the

protection of our rich landscapes.

With the Senate rejecting four of the worst proposals this fall, the tide might be starting to turn. We'll keep you informed, so you can let your lawmakers know where you stand. To sign up for alerts, visit our new website at www.EnvironmentFlorida.org



more online

◀ [How are they voting?](#)
[Find out how your representative in Congress is voting on the environment.](#)

[Visit \[www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/\]\(http://www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/\) scorecard and select Florida.](#)

To our members

In the long run, prosperity depends on a healthy environment. It's hard to imagine feeling very prosperous, after all, without clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and healthy food to eat.

Yet some industries, politicians and others persist in claiming that we have to choose between a clean environment and a sound economy. Well, as it turns out, time after time, the economic benefits of environmental protection outweigh the short-term costs. And, in the long run, a healthy environment is the keystone to a vibrant and prosperous society. So, like many of my fellow Floridians, I choose a clean environment, because clean air, clean water and open spaces matter to me and our well-being

With the support of people like you, we'll keep standing up against short-sighted industries and politicians.

Thanks for being with us.

Aliki Moncrief
State Director

Recent action

54.5-mpg standard nears finish line

In November, the Obama administration officially proposed new clean car standards that represent the biggest step the U.S. has ever taken to get off oil and tackle global warming.

The standards would require cars and light trucks in model years 2017 to 2025 to meet a fleet-wide average fuel efficiency and global warming pollution standards equivalent to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025.

The environmental benefits of such a standard are enormous. By 2030, we could save more oil than we imported from Saudi Arabia last year, and slash global warming pollution by an amount equivalent to shutting down 70 coal-fired power plants.

Environment Florida joined our national federation in supporting the standard, which is based on similar standards adopted in 14 states.

Study finds Florida seventh in solar jobs

Across the nation, jobs in the solar energy sector are growing much more rapidly than average industries, according to a Solar Foundation report released by Environment Florida.

The report, "National Solar Jobs Census 2011: A Review of the U.S. Solar Workforce," showed that more than 4,000 Floridians are employed in the solar industry, ranking the state seventh in the nation for jobs in this clean energy sector. California, with its 25,000 solar jobs, ranks first in the country.

Environment Florida's research and advocacy have helped spur solar's growth in the state, starting with recent work to restore some funds to a popular solar incentive program.

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▲ Construction workers install solar panels.

The way forward on global warming

The U.S. set a new record for weather disasters in 2011. Tornadoes, wildfires and a blistering heat wave were among the 12 disasters costing more than a billion dollars each. This extreme weather has provided a daily reminder of what scientists warn could be “the new normal” as fossil fuel pollution warms our world.

If we want to avoid the worst consequences of global warming, we must dramatically reduce the carbon pollution that we pump into the atmosphere—and soon. Yet Washington is not doing enough, stalled by the influence of Big Oil and the coal industry, and short-term partisan politics in Congress.

“Humanity is running out of time to stop the most dangerous impacts of global warming,” said Paul Rolfe, federal field associate for Environment Florida. “With Congress unable to forge agreement on this pressing crisis, it’s more important than ever for states like Florida to take matters into their own hands.”

Congress is not the only way

Fortunately, despite the lack of action in Congress, victories in cities, states and towns across the country are beginning to turn the tide. According to a report we released this December, we can dramatically reduce global warming emissions through continued state and local action.

The report, “The Way Forward on Global Warming,” shows that policies at the local, state and federal levels can cut the nation’s carbon pollution 20 percent by 2020 and 34 percent by 2030 from 2008 levels.

Furthermore, according to our study, many policies, including ones that we have championed here in Florida, have already yielded a reduction of more than 539 million tons of carbon pollution—equivalent to 7 percent of U.S. global warming pollution in 2007.

Thanks to such forward-looking policies, America’s global warming emissions in 2009 were the lowest they have been since 1995.

Success begets success

As we’ve seen in Florida, once clean energy takes root, it becomes even more popular. Homeowners are enjoying the comfort and cost savings of cleaner, more efficient energy systems. Communities are being revitalized as new clean energy industries prosper. Jobs in clean energy are on the rise (see page 2). As a result, the stranglehold that fossil fuel industries once had over our political system is starting to loosen.

Across America, our national federation is waging campaigns that tap into broad public support for clean energy. For example, our sister groups are promoting increases in solar energy, similar to the ones we’ve achieved here, in Arizona, Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota, California, Colorado, New Mexico and North Carolina.



Jason Flom

news

Director Aliko Moncrief is joined by some young friends at Cornerstone Learning Community to discuss the way forward on global warming on the steps of the state capitol.



To read our report, “The Way Forward on Global Warming,” visit www.envf1.org/way4ward2011



whitehouse.gov

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson

The EPA has recently worked on several clean air standards, including the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. Can you explain what these standards mean for the average American family?

These new Clean Air Act standards mean cleaner, healthier air for American families. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule are part of a series of common sense steps under the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions of mercury, acid gas, particulate matter, arsenic and other harmful chemicals from some of the biggest polluters in the nation.

These reasonable steps will save tens of thousands of lives and prevent hundreds of thousands of asthma and heart attacks.

What’s the best way for our members and supporters to express their opinions on these issues?

Unfortunately, we are at a point where we have to remind some leaders in Washington to put the health of their constituents above the wish lists of special interests. Speaking directly to those who want to undermine commonsense environmental protections is one of the best ways to stand up for your right to clean air and clean water.

For more from Lisa Jackson, visit www.EnvironmentFlorida.org/page/FLE/Lisa-Jackson-interview

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Environment Florida

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 Florida. We focus exclusively on protecting Florida'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.

A new push for Lake Okeechobee

More than half of the historic Everglades has already been drained or paved over, and what remains—including Lake Okeechobee—is plagued by polluted runoff from nearby agricultural operations. In 2000, the Florida Legislature made a promise to reduce agricultural runoff into Lake Okeechobee. But today, tons of pollution from fertilizers and manure continue to flow into the lake every year, jeopardizing its delicate ecosystem and smothering its diverse wildlife.

In late 2011, a group of South Florida lawmakers united to refocus attention on the need to restore the Everglades and solve ongoing pollution problems, like runoff from the agricultural lands to the north of Lake Okeechobee. This November, Environment Florida members and supporters sent hundreds of emails to the group, called the Everglades Caucus, urging them to focus attention on the lake's worst polluters.

In the coming months, Environment Florida will continue working with the caucus and its members, urging them to make meaningful progress for Lake Okeechobee and the rest of the Everglades.



Caprain Kim, Creative Commons

◀ Tons of pollution from fertilizers and manure continue to flow into Lake Okeechobee every year, jeopardizing its delicate ecosystem and smothering its diverse wildlife, such as this resident Great Blue Heron.

Read more online at:
www.EnvironmentFlorida.org