A new campaign to get Illinois off oil

We can cut our oil use in half by 2050
When it comes to ending our health-endangering, environment-threatening dependence on oil, it’s time to begin looking for answers closer to home.

With Congress mired in gridlock and big oil wielding enormous political influence, Environment Illinois is calling for bold action to reduce our state’s dependence on oil 30 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050.

“Helping Illinois get off oil is a marathon, not a sprint, but we can take the first steps today,” said Environment Illinois Clean Energy Associate Bruce Ratain. “By improving energy efficiency, expanding public transit, investing in high-speed rail and other steps, we can dramatically reduce oil consumption and the pollution that goes along with it.”

The high cost of oil dependence
Our oil dependence has disastrous consequences. Oil consumption is America’s top cause of global warming. It pollutes our air with smog and remains a leading cause of asthma attacks.

This is the 21st century. It’s time to move beyond the destructive legacy of fossil fuel and transition to clean, renewable energy and non-polluting transportation.

That’s why Environment Illinois has a plan to reduce Illinois’s oil consumption 30 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050. Last summer, we released a report showing that these targets are well within our reach. We simply need the Legislature and the governor to make reducing oil consumption an official state policy and to then create a plan to meet specific reduction targets.

Building an oil-free future
What will an oil-independent Illinois look like? Cities with expanded public transit and a friendlier attitude toward walking and biking. High-speed rail and electric cars rather than oil-burning vehicles. This is not a distant dream—the technologies necessary to accomplish these goals already exist.

Our plan is bold and ambitious, but it is also urgently needed. With your help, we can convince our leaders to reduce Illinois’s oil consumption 30 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050. For the sake of our health and our planet, let’s get Illinois off oil.

#### action

- **Environment Illinois Program Director Max Muller** released a report on global warming, “In the Path of the Storm,” with Sen. Dick Durbin this spring (see page 3).

To learn more about our campaign to get Illinois off oil, visit EnvironmentIllinois.org.
To our members

This winter certainly didn’t feel like the Illinois winters we’re used to—and it only reinforced the urgency of doing everything we can to avoid the worst effects of global warming. That’s why our staff spent a week in Washington, D.C., this spring, meeting with our members of Congress and urging them to oppose efforts to roll back the Clean Air Act and move forward on important federal policies to support renewable energy.

Our work is not always easy, and while gridlock in Congress can be frustrating, I have been inspired by the hard work of my staff, our activists and volunteers and the progress we’ve made at the state level. We believe that shifting to a cleaner, healthier energy future begins at home, in our cities and towns, and in our state. And we believe the progress that Illinois is making is proving us right.

So thank you for all that you have done and continue to do. None of what we do would be possible without your support.

Max Muller
Program Director

How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Illinois or the Environment Illinois Research & Education Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentIllinois.org.

Recent action

President announces clean vehicles initiative

This spring, President Obama announced a new initiative to encourage the production of alternative fuel vehicles.

The initiative includes a $1 billion National Community Deployment Challenge, which will reward communities for deploying alternative fuel vehicles. The initiative will also make clean energy vehicles more affordable for the average American, as well as making it less costly for companies to produce electric vehicles.

“At every step, the Obama administration has faced down the cynics with the confidence that American technology and manufacturing is powerful enough to overcome our addiction to oil and lead the world in building the vehicles of the future,” said Daniel Gatti, director of our national Get Off Oil program.

House bill would drive us deeper into oil dependence

Rep. John Mica (Fla.) recently introduced a major transportation reauthorization bill. The bill includes proposals to open our coasts and the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling and to open landscapes in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming to oil shale extraction.

At the same time, it cuts all funding for bike and pedestrian safety and cripples environmental review for transportation projects. On top of this, Speaker John Boehner has said that he would attach approval of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline to this bill if it was not immediately approved.

Max Muller, Environment Illinois’s program director, had this to say about the bill: “America has waited long enough—for the sake of our planet, our children’s health, and every American struggling to pay for gas, it’s time to get our nation off of oil. We need a smarter, cleaner transportation future, not this destructive proposal that drives us down a road to deeper oil dependence.”

The “L” in Chicago. A transportation bill introduced in Congress would eliminate all dedicated federal funds for public transportation.
Every day, thousands of Illinoisans work to make our state more energy efficient. Across the state and in fields ranging from manufacturing and installation to architecture and engineering, Illinois has a thriving energy efficiency sector. At least 330 individual businesses and 737 retail outlets in Illinois are already working to increase the efficiency of our state’s homes, businesses and industry.

Energy efficiency is the quickest, cheapest, smartest way to reduce pollution and curb our dependence on fossil fuels. By continuing to invest in energy efficiency, Illinois can create jobs right now and enjoy the benefits of decreased pollution and fossil fuel dependence well into the future.

Good for our environment...
Energy efficiency reduces global warming and air pollution quickly, cheaply and effectively.

- Illinois could save 21.4 percent of the electricity and 46.9 percent of the natural gas that we currently use by implementing energy efficiency improvements, according to research by the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance.

- These reductions in energy use would cut Illinois’s total global warming emissions by 18.4 million metric tons per year. That is equivalent to the annual emissions of 3.5 million cars. They would also reduce emissions of pollutants that form smog and soot by 6 percent, making the state’s air cleaner and healthier to breathe.

- Illinois has already begun to tap its efficiency potential. In 2007, the state adopted an Energy Efficiency Resource Standard requiring electric utilities to hit targets for energy efficiency savings.

...as well as our economy.
Illinois’s energy efficiency industry creates high-quality jobs across the entire economy. More than 330 independent companies and 737 independent and chain retail outlets work to make the state more energy efficient, employing thousands of workers.

Illinois’s energy efficiency companies are part of a growing national industry. In 2006, the nation’s energy efficiency industry employed 2.1 million people, a number that could skyrocket by 2030 if the nation continues to prioritize efficiency.

- At least 63 businesses or agencies in Illinois weatherize homes and buildings to increase energy efficiency.

- At least 73 companies manufacture energy efficient products in Illinois.

- At least 120 companies in Illinois design or build energy efficient buildings, and strong demand has kept them busy throughout the recession.

Energy efficiency can be an engine of growth for Illinois’s economic future. The American Solar Energy Society projects that energy efficiency could create up to 32.1 million jobs nationwide by 2030. In such difficult times for our economy and our environment, the energy efficiency industry provides a clear bright spot.

New report says global warming to bring more extreme weather
After a year that saw many parts of the country hit by scorching heat, devastating wildfires, severe storms and record flooding, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin joined Environment Illinois to release our new report documenting how global warming could lead to certain extreme weather events becoming even more common or more severe in the future.

The report found that 24 out of 25 Illinoisans live in counties affected by federally declared weather-related disasters between 2006 and 2011. Included in this tally of weather-related disasters were the Mississippi River floods of 2011, which forced the evacuation of Cairo, Illinois. These floods were caused by two storm systems that dropped abnormally heavy rains on the region.

The report shows that the United States has experienced an increase in heavy precipitation events, with the rainiest 1 percent of all storms delivering 20 percent more rain on average at the end of the 20th century than at the beginning. This trend toward extreme precipitation is projected to continue in a warming world.

“The bottom line is that extreme weather is happening, it is causing very serious problems, and global warming increases the likelihood that we’ll see even more extreme weather in the future,” said Nathan Willcox, director of our federal global warming program.

“Carbon pollution from our power plants, cars and trucks is fueling global warming, and so tackling global warming demands that we cut emissions of carbon pollution from those sources.”
On the verge of victory for Lake Michigan

Illinois is on the verge of winning new protections for hundreds of miles of streams that feed and filter Lake Michigan. But just as President Obama is about to sign off on the biggest victory for clean water in a decade, some polluter-friendly members of Congress are doing everything they can to block him.

Thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions in the last decade, more than half of our streams and hundreds of acres of wetlands—the same waterways that flow into Lake Michigan—have not been nearly as protected as they once were. Thankfully, last April, the Obama administration proposed new guidelines to restore protections to many of our waterways. And in February, the administration announced that it was in the last stage before officially finalizing these protections. But our work is not done. As we build support for the president to finalize the guidelines, many in Congress are working to stop him. As of May, there were four separate rollback attempts in the House and Senate. Environment Illinois is committed to defending these new protections.

Once finalized, the Obama administration’s new guidelines will restore Clean Water Act protections to the streams and wetlands that feed and filter Lake Michigan.

Visit our website and tell President Obama you want to see all our waterways protected: www.EnvironmentIllinois.org.