Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report
Thanks for making it all possible
To be an environmentalist, you’ve got to wrestle with a conundrum: We need bold action on a short timeline ... with broad public support.

We need to do a lot, quickly, to preserve a livable planet. But progress has to earn and sustain the support of the people in order to last—so progress doesn’t often come in one big swooping action. It usually comes one small-ish victory at a time.

At Environment Florida, we acknowledge the conundrum—and we embrace it. We believe in bold action on a large scale. But we work every day at the local, state and national levels to build, step by step, the support this action demands. Each college, city or state that deploys more renewable energy helps win more people over to the possibility of a world that runs on the sun and the wind. Each company or state that phases out a single-use plastic product shows more people a way to end harm to ocean wildlife from plastic pollution.

These victories are smaller than the challenges demand. But as their pace picks up, their summary effect grows. A year ago, California became the second state to commit to 100 percent zero-carbon electricity. Now, there are six states with such commitments, plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. Back in 2016, California banned single-use plastic bags. In 2019, five more states banned plastic bags, and Maine, Maryland and Vermont banned plastic foam take-out containers. Like all social changes, environmental solutions have tipping points.

Our natural world faces serious problems, and we’ve got to solve them. Our strategy is to make sure that each victory opens a door to the next. Thanks for being with us on the journey.

Sincerely,

Jenna Stevens
Campaign Director, Environment Florida
Clean Water & Air

Through our Clean Water & Air program, our staff and members tackled problems ranging from the Trump administration’s attempts to roll back clean water standards, to industrial discharges that violate the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. Below, you’ll find reports on our Get the Lead Out campaign and our efforts to bolster investment in our nation’s water infrastructure.

The grades are in: Report finds states are failing to ensure safe drinking water for our children

MARCH 21, 2019: Lead contaminates the water coming out of drinking fountains and taps at schools across the country, and at least 22 states aren’t doing enough about it.

“Get the Lead Out,” a study published March 21 by our research partners Environment America Research & Policy Center and U.S. PIRG Education Fund, examined the policies of 31 states and Washington, D.C., and assigned grades based on how well they protect children from lead in drinking water at school. Twenty-two states earned an F grade, including Florida, with only Illinois and D.C. grading above the C range.

“Waiting for more tests to confirm that our children are drinking water laced with lead is unconscionable,” said John Rumpler, senior director of our national network’s clean water campaign. “It’s time to get the lead out.”

Environment Florida and our national network are working in Florida and more than a dozen other states to protect drinking water for millions of children by advancing policies to proactively get the lead out.

Congress passes long overdue measures to protect our drinking water from lead, sewage

OCT. 23, 2018: Victories for clean water are rare in Washington, D.C., these days, so this is one to savor.

In October, Congress passed—and the president signed—America’s Water Infrastructure Act (S. 3021), which would double federal investment in safe drinking water, establish a small grant program for schools to address lead contamination, and expand monitoring of contaminants such as per- or polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Our national network’s advocates—and environmental champions such as Sen. Ben Cardin (Md.) and Rep. Paul Tonko (N.Y.)—shaped the legislation and ensured it contained the solutions we need.

“In 21st-century America, we should be able to keep lead and other toxins out of our drinking water, and sewage out of our rivers, lakes and bays,” said John. “These provisions are long overdue.”

John Rumpler, senior director of our national network’s Clean Water campaign, spoke to CBS This Morning about states’ failure to protect school drinking water from lead contamination.
Above: Our network’s report found that cities are rapidly adopting solar energy and driving the renewable energy transition.
Below: Our national network campaigned for 100% renewable energy across the country, from California (left) to Florida.
Clean, Green & Renewable Energy

With support from Environment Florida’s members, our national network promoted energy efficiency in our homes, educated city leaders about solar, and fostered the development of wind power. Here are updates on our network’s 100% Renewable Energy campaign and our research arm’s “Shining Cities” report.

St. Petersburg commits to 100% renewable energy by 2035
APRIL 23, 2019: St. Pete now has a roadmap to reach its renewable energy goals.

On April 17, the St. Petersburg City Council unanimously passed a plan to commit the city to achieving 100 percent renewable energy by 2035. The plan includes improving energy efficiency citywide, increasing the use of solar and other renewable energy sources, and reducing global warming emissions from transportation.

“As a St. Petersburg resident myself, I am proud to see my city serving as an example to cities throughout the Sunshine State and across the country,” said then-Environment Florida State Director Jennifer Rubiello. “This plan goes to show that our communities are ready and able to make the transition to clean, renewable energy.

“We still have a long way to go in St. Pete and Florida as a whole, but this is an important step that will help us reach our full potential.”

Solar power is growing fast. These cities are shining the brightest.
APRIL 9, 2019: Solar power is booming in dozens of major American cities.

“Shining Cities 2019,” researched by Environment America Research & Policy Center and released on April 9, found that solar energy capacity more than doubled in 45 of America’s 57 largest cities in the past six years. The report’s main event? The latest ranking of America’s top solar cities. Los Angeles topped the list for the second year in a row, and San Diego, Phoenix, Honolulu and San Jose rounded out the top five.

“Cities are rapidly adopting solar energy and driving the renewable energy transition across the country, bringing pollution-free power to our homes, schools and workplaces,” said Emma Searson, director of our national network’s Go Solar campaign.

The report also found that solar is not just a Sun Belt phenomenon. Other leading cities include New York City; Indianapolis; Washington, D.C.; Trenton, New Jersey; and Ypsilanti, Michigan.
This year, Environment Florida set out to ban offshore drilling off of Florida’s coasts (middle left) and to ban the worst form of plastic pollution (bottom right).

Photo credits: (clockwise from top) Chris Holm via Shutterstock, ABC Action News, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement BSEE via Flickr/Public Domain, Scott F Smith via Shutterstock, Staff
Our network’s staff and members sought to save the bees from toxic pesticides, and to spare Arctic wildlife from oil and gas exploration and drilling. Below, find more on Environment Florida’s efforts to protect wildlife from plastic pollution and drilling.

**ABC Action News hits the pavement with Environment Florida canvassers to put wildlife over waste**

**JUNE 14, 2019:** Environment Florida canvassers are going the distance this summer to protect our wildlife.

ABC Action News’ Andrea Lyon, in a segment that aired June 5, joined two of our staff as they went door to door educating Floridians on our call to ban polystyrene foam cups and containers statewide. The call to reduce plastic pollution is especially timely: Earlier this year, biologists found a rare deep-water dolphin washed ashore in Fort Myers Beach. Its belly was filled with plastic.

“Nothing we use for five minutes should pollute our environment and put species at risk for hundreds of years,” said Jenna Stevens, Environment Florida campaign organizer. “Banning polystyrene foam take-out containers is one of the most simple and effective ways to reduce our plastic pollution.”

In May, in a related Environment Florida-supported move, Gov. DeSantis vetoed legislation that would have prohibited local governments from banning plastic straws for the next five years.

**Gov. DeSantis signs executive order cutting Florida’s ties to drilling off all coasts**

**JAN. 14, 2019:** Once again, Florida has made clear its opposition to offshore drilling.

On Jan. 10, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Executive Order 19-12, “Achieving More Now For Florida’s Environment,” which implements major reforms to protect Florida’s environment and water quality. The last line of the executive order directs Florida’s Department of Environmental Protection to take action against all offshore oil and gas activities off every coast in Florida and hydraulic fracturing in the state. While the order only directs action against one type of fracturing, it is a promising first step towards prohibiting all forms of fracturing including hydraulic fracturing, matrix acidizing and acid fracking.

“The governor’s announcement is a bold step toward protecting Florida’s waters—one in line with the 90 cities and counties that have already passed resolutions and ordinances to protect Florida from dirty, dangerous drilling,” said Jennifer Rubiello, then-director of Environment Florida. “We look forward to working with him to ban all forms of fracturing in Florida and oppose drilling off of Florida’s shores.”
Above: Staff from our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with their allies, delivered 350,000 public comments in support of federal Clean Car standards to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Below: Andrea McGimsey and Environment America Research & Policy Center staff hosted a tour of an electric bus facility (upper middle and bottom right).
Global Warming Solutions

Environment Florida worked with other state groups in our network to reduce carbon emissions from power plants, transportation and other sources. Here’s more on what our network did to promote state-level action across the country and defend strong pollution standards for cars and trucks.

Wrong way for the climate: 350,000 oppose rollback of Clean Cars Standards

OCT. 26, 2018: Given the alarming ways our climate is changing, doesn’t it make sense for automakers to focus on making cars that pollute far less, if at all?

On Oct. 26, our network’s national research partner showed the Trump administration that 350,000 Americans think so. Together with coalition partners, Environment America Research & Policy Center delivered that many public comments to the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration opposing plans to roll back federal Clean Car Standards. By freezing the standards at 2020 levels, the plan would lock in more dirty air and global warming pollution.

“With the latest research telling us we’ll have a climate catastrophe on our hands if we don’t significantly slash global warming emissions, we need to move forward, not pull a U-turn,” said Andrea.

Our network is also calling on state leaders to promote zero-emission electric vehicles.

Twelve ways a governor can start tackling climate change right now

JAN. 10, 2019: As 20 new governors took office in January, a new report outlined actions all governors could take to lead the way on climate solutions.

On Jan. 10, our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center released a report titled “Climate Solutions from Day One,” which detailed 12 executive actions that governors can take immediately to help solve the climate crisis. These range from updating building codes to improve energy efficiency—as Gov. Kate Brown has already done in Oregon—to collaborating in regional climate initiatives like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

“With the stroke of a pen, governors can start cutting global warming pollution today by increasing renewable energy use, reducing transportation emissions and curbing energy waste,” said Andrea McGimsey, senior director of our national network’s Global Warming Solutions program.

Our network urged governors across the country to adopt these recommendations.

We need to move forward, not pull a U-turn.

Andrea McGimsey
Senior Director, Global Warming Solutions campaign, on the federal roll back of Clean Car standards
Our staff (partial list)

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