Annual Report
Recapping our work in fiscal year 2015 for our members
To our members

“Behind each accomplishment were engaged and committed people like you who joined us in fighting for a cleaner, greener and healthier future. I’m grateful for the energy you bring to these fights, and the staying power you give our efforts.”

From record-breaking, devastating wildfires and severe storms, it has become abundantly clear that global warming is happening now and requires bold action.

Unfortunately, opposition from the fossil fuel industry and their allies in Washington, D.C., stand in the way of meaningful action, from ensuring clean water to realizing the full potential of solar power.

The challenges we face in protecting our environment are formidable, and daunting. But this past year also gave me a lot of hope for the future. At Environment Maryland, 2015 was all about people power. And, together, we have a lot to be proud of.

We took the biggest step for clean water in a decade: Since 2006, a pair of polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions left 2 million miles of streams without guaranteed protection under the Clean Water Act. After nine years of advocacy, and 800,000 comments from people like you, we saw these protections restored.

And, finally, we acted on climate: After Americans submitted 8 million comments of support for limiting carbon pollution from power plants, President Obama finalized the Clean Power Plan, which will do just that for the first time ever. Marylanders’ voices helped advance the policy and build the political will to win this victory, which will make a major dent in our country’s contribution to global warming pollution and sets a precedent for other nations to follow.

As you’ll read in the following pages, behind each accomplishment were engaged and committed people like you who joined us in fighting for a cleaner, greener and healthier future. I’m grateful for the energy you bring to these fights, and the staying power you give our efforts. And working together, I am optimistic about our prospects for the future.

Thanks,

Christy Leavitt
Environment Maryland

Margie Alt
Environment America Executive Director
No Bees, No Food

Millions of bees are dying off, with alarming consequences for our environment and our food supply. This past fiscal year, Environment Maryland mobilized grassroots support for protecting these vital pollinators. With your support, we called on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to declare a nationwide moratorium on neonicotinoids—a class of bee-killing pesticides.

Fighting to give bees a chance

We rely on bees to pollinate everything from almonds to strawberries, to the alfalfa used to feed dairy cows. Yet, beekeepers report losing on average 30 percent of all honeybee colonies in recent years.

Scientists point to several causes behind the problem, including a class of bee-killing insecticides known as neonicotinoids, or neonics. Your support helped us call on the EPA to ban this dangerous class of pesticides.

4 million urged President Obama to save the bees

In March 2015, Environment Maryland and our national team, along with a coalition of beekeepers, farmers and others, delivered more than 4 million petitions calling on the Obama administration to issue strong protections for pollinators.

In May, the White House issued a new plan to stem the deaths of pollinators, but it fell short of banning neonics. Now, we’re calling on federal officials to ban the use of neonics on farms and in garden stores.
Global Warming Solutions

You helped Environment Maryland and Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center win the greatest step the United States has ever taken to address the climate crisis. Working with a broad coalition, we helped educate the public, engage elected leaders, and deliver an overwhelming 8 million comments of support for limiting power plant pollution—paving the way for President Obama and the EPA to finalize the historic Clean Power Plan.
You helped get the historic Clean Power Plan over the finish line

From record-breaking drought and devastating wildfires, to extreme downpours and flooding, Americans are feeling the impacts of global warming now. Scientists predict that without drastic cuts in global warming emissions, these effects will become catastrophic. In 2015, President Obama took decisive action to address this threat by moving forward with the Clean Power Plan: the first-ever limits on carbon emissions from power plants—America’s largest source of global warming pollution.

Thousands of supporters like you took action

Environment Maryland and our members came together to help build the momentum necessary to finalize the Clean Power Plan and push past strong opposition from the fossil fuel industry and climate-deniers in Congress.

- Our national citizen outreach team had face-to-face conversations with more than 47,000 people about the threat of global warming and the solutions the Clean Power Plan offers.
- During the public comment period for the Clean Power Plan, our national team, including Environment Maryland’s members and supporters, submitted more than 713,000 comments in support of a strong plan.
- Nationwide, hundreds of elected officials and solar businesses, and nearly 1,000 health professionals joined the chorus of support for limits on power plant pollution.

Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center showed need to limit carbon pollution

In 2015, Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center analyses shone a spotlight on the threat of global warming and the meaningful impact of limiting carbon pollution from power plants.

- The report “America’s Dirtiest Power Plants” found that coal-fired power plants are America’s number one source of global warming pollution. Curbing this pollution will be essential to tackling the threats of climate change.
- The report “Dangerous Inheritance” revealed that the current generation is experiencing hotter temperatures and more intense storms than their predecessors did 40 years ago—and without urgent action to curb carbon pollution, global warming will continue to contribute to dangerous heat waves, severe storms, rising sea levels and more.
In 2015, Environment Maryland and Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center celebrated the biggest victory for clean water in a decade! In May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule to restore Clean Water Act protections to thousands of waters across the country. Our public education and outreach efforts, bolstered by action taken by our members, allies, and a diverse coalition of businesses, elected officials and farmers, built the momentum necessary to get the Clean Water Rule past polluter opposition and signed into law.
Winning the biggest step forward for clean water in a decade

For nearly a decade, Environment Maryland has gone toe-to-toe with powerful polluters and their allies in Congress to restore the Clean Water Act and protect our waters—permanently. And in 2015, your support of our efforts finally paid off when President Obama restored federal protections to more than half the nation’s streams, which feed drinking water sources for one in three Americans.

10,000 miles of streams in Maryland regained protection

The Clean Water Rule closed loopholes in the Clean Water Act, returning protection to more than 10,000 miles of streams in Maryland. You gave Environment Maryland the resources to recruit and mobilize a diverse and powerful coalition, and rally the grassroots to demand action.

- We helped our national team gather more than 800,000 comments and held more than half a million face-to-face conversations about the need to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act.
- Thanks to your support, we also won regulations that will reduce phosphorous pollution runoff from agribusiness in Maryland. The regulations will help farmers better identify the risk associated with the chemical, to stop it from moving into our rivers and streams.
- Disappointingly, at press time, a federal appeals court blocked the new protections we just won for our waters. We’ve put together a legal strategy to defend the Clean Water Rule, and given its strong legal and scientific basis, the courts should ultimately reject all efforts to weaken it.

Research highlighted the legacy of the Clean Water Act

Our waterways provide drinking water, essential habitat for wildlife, and treasured destinations for fishing, swimming and boating. Last year, together with our affiliated state groups across the country, Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center’s research on the threats facing the Chesapeake Bay and the impact of the Clean Water Act earned nearly 1,000 media hits nationally.

The report “Wasting Our Waterways” documented toxic pollution entering our waterways and threatening our health and drinking water supplies. It found that 206 million pounds of toxic chemicals were dumped into America’s waterways in 2012 alone.
Go Solar, Maryland

Solar power is growing so fast across the country that goals once considered ambitious are now seen as readily achievable. Spurred by pro-solar policies that you helped win, we’re getting more of our energy from the sun, putting us on the road to 100 percent clean energy. In 2015, Environment Maryland and Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center highlighted hard-hitting research and galvanized public support for bold solar goals.
Solar power tripled in three years, with no signs of slowing

It’s time for Maryland to go big on solar power. The amount of solar capacity in the United States is growing rapidly, tripling in just the past three years. By tapping the power of the sun, we can break our dependence on fossil fuels and move to clean energy that is virtually limitless and pollution-free.

Strong policies fuel solar’s success

With another panel or project installed every four minutes in 2013 and the rate only getting faster, solar power is on the rise across the country.

- Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center’s report “Lighting the Way” found that the top 10 states for solar, which hold 87 percent of the nation’s total installed solar electric capacity, have implemented strong policies that are enabling increasing numbers of homeowners, businesses, communities and utilities to “go solar.”

- “Shining Cities,” a report we released in March, found that cities are also playing a crucial role in growing national solar capacity: Just 20 cities accounted for 6.5 percent of total installed solar. Baltimore ranked 34th in our report.

Let’s get to 20 percent solar—and beyond

Thanks to your support, in 2015 Environment Maryland helped pass HB 1087, which will enable Maryland residents to invest in community solar projects, greatly expanding the amount of renewable energy in the state.

To show the broad support for solar and push for more solar-friendly policies, Environment Maryland met with elected officials, generated media attention and organized events with local businesses, leaders and local Marylanders.

Environment Maryland’s members like you turned out in large numbers for our solar lobby day and renewable energy rally in February, showing strong public support from the community for solar. We also gathered support for local community solar bills in Maryland, with many of you calling and emailing the governor’s office to push for more solar.

Achieving a goal of 10 percent solar nationally by 2030, with 20 percent solar by 2025 in Maryland, would generate enough clean energy to replace half the nation’s coal-fired power plants.