



## ENVIRONMENT MARYLAND Your Winter Report

# A chance to restore our environment

*Wendy Wendlandt, acting president of our national partner Environment America, talks about what we've lost under the Trump administration—and how to get it back.*

Under the new Biden-Harris administration, we're eager to get back to the work of building a better world, instead of fighting to fend off backsliding. And we're looking forward to a president who will engage in that campaign with us.

Yet we also need to repair the damage done under the previous administration: undoing the Clean Power Plan; weakening fuel economy efficiency standards; allowing commercial fishing in marine preserves; lifting a ban on oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The list includes at least 100 protections for the environment that the Trump administration either ended or worked to undermine. Reading through the list is like flipping through a scrapbook of favorite photographs—which someone has defaced with a Sharpie.

Thousands of Americans—advocates, attorneys, biologists, epidemiologists, engineers, socially conscious entrepreneurs, elected leaders, government regulators, organizers and, last but not least, ordinary citizens with extraordinary spirit and perseverance—have worked together to put these protections in place, abide by them, and defend them.

A couple of examples: Together, over many years, our national network's clean air advocates and climate activists helped fight for and win laws requiring cleaner cars in more than a dozen states, one hard-won campaign after another. Then we



*We rallied to the defense of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the wildlife—including caribou—that live there.*

promoted and won increased fuel economy standards to match those state laws at the federal level.

For a second example, in the years before online petitions, we collected a million actual signatures from Americans who wanted to keep still-wild areas in our national forests protected from mining, drilling and logging, and convinced then-President Clinton to adopt the Roadless Rule.

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Thanks  
for making it  
all possible

## 'The Fierce Urgency of Fire': Environment America Research & Policy Center hosts webinar on vital climate actions

If you're worried about extreme weather events, you're certainly not alone.

On Sept. 22, our national research partner, Environment America Research & Policy Center, hosted a webinar called "The Fierce Urgency of Fire" to discuss how wildfires,

foam containers. Commonly referred to as Styrofoam, these single-use plastic containers break down easily and persist in the environment, polluting waterways and putting wildlife at risk. The ban, originally due to take effect in July, was postponed in June due to concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"First and foremost, we want to shift away from the culture of single-use," said Environment Maryland State Director Kate Breimann on the importance of reducing plastic waste despite the obstacles. "We think about when we had leaded gas and leaded paint, and people said, 'It's going to be hard for the industry,' ... But now we have a healthier world."

Environment Maryland is continuing to call for reducing plastic waste through our Wildlife Over Waste campaign.

## Baltimore City Council passes ban on toxic pesticides that threaten pollinators and public health

In Baltimore, a new pesticide ban will protect both our people and the planet.

On Oct. 5, the Baltimore City Council voted to restrict the use of three toxic pesticides: neonicotinoids, chlorpyrifos and glyphosate (the main ingredient in the widely used weed killer Roundup). Neonicotinoids, called "neonics" for short, are known to harm bees—pollinators critical to keeping our ecosystems healthy. Chlorpyrifos and glyphosate threaten public health and aquatic life.

"Our pollinators are dying at an unprecedented rate, and banning these chemicals is a critical first step to protecting our bees, our food and our planet," Environment Maryland State Director Kate Breimann told CBS Baltimore. "We're grateful to Councilwoman [Mary Pat] Clarke for sponsoring this legislation and to the council for voting it through."

Environment Maryland urged passage of this ban as part of our Save the Bees campaign. We're now calling for Baltimore Mayor Jack Young to sign the ban into law.

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentmaryland.org>.

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The sky in parts of California and Oregon turned orange in September due to the nearby wildfires.

hurricanes and other extreme weather events underscore the urgent need for climate action. More than 100 people watched the presentation.

"Any time that you're faced with a huge problem, like how do we break our country and our planet's addiction to fossil fuels and decouple everything from that, it's a massive undertaking," said Johanna Neumann, senior director of our national network's Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy.

"Let's make bold steps on solar, let's make bold steps on wind, secure that progress and then do it again.

## Maryland's plastic foam ban goes into effect

After a delay, Maryland is getting back to tackling the plastic pollution crisis.

On Oct. 1, a state law went into effect banning restaurants, schools and other food service businesses from using polystyrene





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Those snapshots of environmental progress belong to all Americans.

In debates about water, air, land use, open spaces and oceans, Environment Maryland and our national network have researched problems and constructed solutions, taken our campaigns to the American people, collected public comments, and led groups of citizen lobbyists to Washington, D.C. We've lost more battles than we've won. But over the years, up against legions of well-funded lobbyists, we've beaten a lot of odds and notched some crucial victories for the environment.

Why? Because, like most Americans, we could see that America the Beautiful was in danger of becoming less open, more covered with asphalt, more polluted, more barren of animal life, more dependent on dirty fossil fuels and life-threatening chemicals, more overrun by the waste that those materials produce, and more bereft of wonder. And we could see, with our own eyes, glimpses of

the dire future that lies ahead if we do not act immediately to curtail global warming.

From the first days of the Trump administration, the president sought to un-protect the American environment—to throw the nation into reverse when it comes to the quality and sustainability of our land, water, air, oceans and open spaces. Making cars cleaner, preserving wilderness, and dozens of other important ways we've collectively protected our environment—and our children—were unravelled by the administration in four years.

Whether it's in the courts, in Congress or in the executive branch, we are resolved to restore these protections.

We've got a scrapbook with a lot of pages left to fill.

*By Wendy Wendlandt, acting president, Environment America*

*From sea to shining sea, there are so many special places Americans love—and over the past four years, far too many were threatened by actions the Trump administration took.*



Image contributions from activists with our national network



Kimball Nelson

Thank you for supporting and sustaining our work—still done at a safe social distance—to keep our air and water clean, to defend our public lands, and to protect our climate and environment for future generations.

Your action and support allows us to keep up the work you'll read about in these pages. Thank you for standing with us.

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## Your Winter Report

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### 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 Maryland, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Maryland'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.

## Polluting companies quick to exploit Trump administration's 'Dirty Water Rule'

Companies have been asking the government whether waterways they'd like to pollute or pave over are still protected under the Clean Water Act. In short, the answer is "no."

On Sept. 10, a report from Bloomberg Law found that polluting businesses are taking advantage of the Trump administration's "Dirty Water Rule" to gain federal exemptions for their destruction of our nation's

streams and wetlands. In effect since June, the rule has narrowed federal protection of water bodies under the Clean Water Act, and companies have won rulings that no federal protection applies for 758 out of 1,085 waterways examined by federal officials—including, more recently, much of Georgia's wildlife-rich Okefenokee Swamp.

"Wetlands and streams are crucial to the health of our iconic waters—from the Okefenokee to the Puget Sound," said John Rumples, senior director of our national network's Clean Water for America Campaign. "Yet the Dirty Water Rule wiped out protections for countless streams and wetlands—a move that was rebuked by the Environmental Protection Agency's own science advisors."

Environment Maryland is working to overturn the Dirty Water Rule in Congress and the courts.

*A White Heron in Okefenokee Swamp.*



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