



Winter Report

Historic victory to tackle global warming

PennEnvironment helped clean cars cross finish line

For years, our gas-guzzling vehicles have polluted the air we breathe, continued our dependence on oil, and fueled global warming. But with the Obama administration's historic new clean car standards, which were finalized this past August, America took the single largest step we have ever taken to cut our global warming pollution and end our dependence on oil.

The new standards will require vehicles to meet the equivalent of a 54.5 miles-per-gallon standard by 2025—doubling today's standard. It will cut pollution by 8.4 million metric tons—the equivalent of taking 1.2 million cars off the road—and save 720 million gallons of fuel.

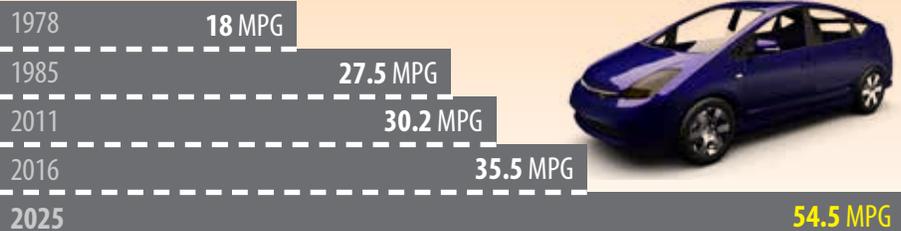
These standards were put into effect after years of hard work by PennEnvironment's members, our allies in the environmental and faith communities, and supportive elected officials.

Clean cars: from Pennsylvania to D.C.

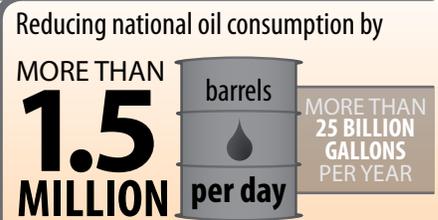
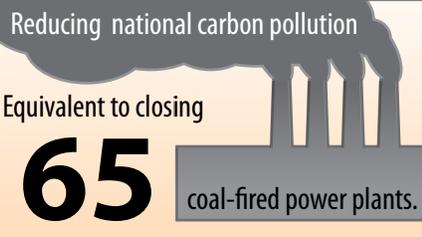
Long before the Obama administration took office, Pennsylvania and 13 other states were developing and implementing their own state-level clean car standards. This charted a path for pollution reductions for those states, and pushed automakers to begin developing cleaner cars.

PennEnvironment helped ensure that Pennsylvania adopted its state-level standard in 2005 by working with groups ranging from the American Lung Association of Pennsylvania to Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future to demonstrate broad support

A look at national fuel-economy standards



What will the new standards mean for our environment?



for the standard. Thousands of citizens signed petitions backing our position.

And, when the Obama administration decided to hold one of three national hearings on the clean cars proposal in Philadelphia, PennEnvironment staff recruited businesses, faith leaders, elected officials and concerned citizens to testify in support of new clean car standards—packing the

room with dozens of testifiers.

What's next? A recent PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center report, "Charging Forward," highlighted the growing use of electric vehicles in Pennsylvania. The new clean car standards will help accelerate the growing electric vehicle market, which we found will cut pollution by over 20,000 tons a year.



Photo: The White House

more online

◀ PennEnvironment Federal Global Warming Program Director Nathan Willcox was invited to attend the historic proposal of the new clean car standards with President Obama.

Learn more about this groundbreaking victory on our website:
www.PennEnvironment.org



Photo: Staff

To our members

The latest crop of legislators, both in Washington, D.C., and Harrisburg, need to remember what all of us already know—protecting our environment needs to be a top priority.

In 2012, we fought for the issues we believe in. In 2013, we will need to fight just as hard. Protecting our rivers and streams, keeping Pennsylvania safe from dangerous Marcellus Shale gas drilling, fighting global warming, and cleaning up our air will all be top priorities for PennEnvironment this year.

None of this will be easy, but I have seen time and time again that when we work together and raise our voices, we can win.

I'm looking forward to working side-by-side with you to continue to protect our environment. Thanks for all your support.

Sincerely,

David Masur
Director

Recent action

Report tallies the true costs of fracking

Firing a new salvo in the ongoing debate over the gas drilling practice known as fracking, a recent PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center report documents the millions of dollars of costs related to everything from air pollution to ruined roads to contaminated property.

As one example, the report points to Dimock, Pa., where fracking operations contaminated the drinking water wells of more than a dozen households for roughly three years. Just providing those 14 families with a permanent new source of clean drinking water would have cost an estimated \$11.8 million.

PennEnvironment staff released the report at events in Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Harrisburg, and Scranton. State Rep. Phyllis Mundy of Luzerne County noted that, “We should have learned from our experience with the coal industry, that without mandating the appropriate environmental protections and costs recovery mechanisms, taxpayers will be left to foot the bill.”

Study details wind power’s benefits for Pa.

As Hurricane Sandy, its aftermath, and other extreme weather events prompt more Pennsylvanians to call for action to tackle global warming, PennEnvironment released a report showing that Pennsylvania’s current power generation from wind energy displaces as much global warming pollution as taking 218,000 cars off the road per year. If the growth in wind energy continues, that number will rise by an additional 185,000 cars.

The PennEnvironment report, “Wind Power for a Cleaner America”, touts wind energy’s environmental benefits to date, as well as future benefits if wind power continues to grow in Pennsylvania and across the nation.

“We must increase wind power in Pennsylvania,” said PennEnvironment Director David Masur. “We cannot afford the devastation of more storms like Hurricane Sandy.”

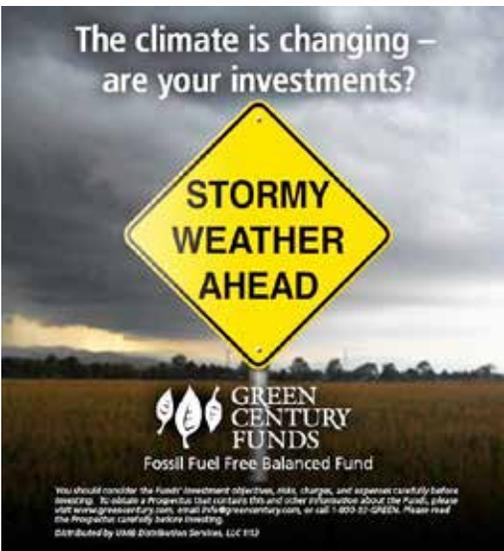


Photo: Staff

Duke Energy/Creative Commons

▲ PennEnvironment Field Associate Mary Kate Ranii (left) releases our “Wind Power for a Cleaner America,” report in Erie. North Allegheny Windpower Project (right)—approximately 95 miles east of Pittsburgh.

Study finds more extreme weather in Pennsylvania

Photo: jeolisp

On the heels of Hurricane Sandy, and nearly a year after Tropical Storm Lee led to record flooding that devastated large parts of Pennsylvania, a PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center Report confirms that extreme rainstorms and snowstorms are happening much more frequently.

The report, “When It Rains, It Pours,” looks at the increasing trend of extreme downpours that have flooded Pennsylvania and the region over recent years, destroying homes, washing out roads, and uprooting lives.

Extreme rainstorms and snowstorms are found to be 52 percent more frequent now than they were in 1948.

Bigger storms equal bigger damage

The report, based on an analysis of state data from the National Climatic Data Center, found that the heavy downpours or snowstorms that used to happen on average once every 12 months, now happen every 7.9 months. Moreover, the biggest storms are getting bigger. The largest annual storms in Pennsylvania now produce 23 percent more precipitation, on average, than they did 65 years ago.

It is clear that the flooding and storms we’ve experienced in recent years are becoming the new norm, with costly ramifications for Pennsylvania and the region.

With scientists predicting even greater increases in extreme precipitation in the years ahead, the United States and the world must take action to reduce pollution that contributes to global warming.

Rallying to tackle extreme weather

PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center organized three news conferences around Pennsylvania, highlighting recent damaging storms. The extreme weather highlighted in the report includes:

- In August of 2011, Hurricane Irene dumped 4.55 inches of rain in only a few hours, leading to 400,000 power outages,

400 downed trees, and seven collapsed buildings in Philadelphia alone.

- The February 2012 blizzard that hit Pittsburgh dumped 21 inches of snow on the area, forcing massive school closings and bringing the region’s public transportation to a grinding halt. All told, this blizzard was the fourth largest snowstorm in Pittsburgh history.
- The remnants of Tropical Storm Lee dropped 10-12 inches of rain along the Susquehanna River, bringing it to a record high of 42.6 feet, flooding large parts of Wilkes-Barre and Harrisburg, and requiring the evacuation of more than 100,000 Pennsylvanians.

Since the report was released prior to Hurricane Sandy, the devastating effects of this storm weren’t included, only further adding to the growing concern of extreme weather.

“As the old saying goes, when it rains, it pours—especially in recent years as bigger storms have hit Pennsylvania more often,” said Adam Garber, field director for PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center. “We need to heed scientists’ warnings that this dangerous trend is linked to global warming and do everything we can to cut carbon pollution today.”



PennEnvironment Director David Masur was featured on NBC 10 releasing our “When It Rains, It Pours” report.

See the report on our website: www.PennEnvironment.org



Hurricane Sandy: Another wake up call

The planet has delivered another wake up call in the form of Hurricane Sandy, with tragic consequences.

This time, the storm flooded streets across the Pennsylvania, washed away boardwalks and piers all along the Jersey Shore, toppled trees and knocked out power up and down the East Coast, damaged tens of thousands of homes across the United States, and cut short the lives of dozens of our fellow Americans.

Now PennEnvironment is working to make sure our leaders understand what everyday citizens already know: This is what global warming looks like. And that the time to make serious, sustained cuts in global warming pollution is now.

Unfortunately, Pennsylvania emits the third highest level of global warming pollution in the U.S., behind only Texas and California.

But PennEnvironment is showing our elected officials that the time for action is now—most recently by collecting 140,000 public comments in support of tough limits on global warming pollution. And, we’ll continue to work in the coming year to make sure that our elected officials don’t just talk the talk, but walk the walk.

We’ve never seen a storm like Sandy before. And, we’re doing everything in our power to stop these storms from becoming the “new normal.”

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PennEnvironment

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 PennEnvironment. We focus exclusively on protecting Pennsylvania'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.

"Parks for Cash" legislation defeated

Everyone has a favorite park: somewhere they go for a walk in the fall as the leaves turn, or for a picnic on a beautiful day, or to toss a frisbee in the summer.

That's why it was shocking to see elected officials in Harrisburg push legislation that would allow local politicians to sell off these lands to the highest bidder for quick and easy cash.

Fortunately, quick scrutiny and the public outcry from PennEnvironment's members and activists helped defeat this shortsighted proposal—and keep our parks protected—by getting thousands of emails, phone calls and letters into the state Senate during the waning days of the legislative session.

In 2013, we'll continue to work with our coalition partners to watchdog the legislature and help ensure that this proposal doesn't rear its ugly head again.



◀ *Kardon Park, in Chester County.*

Local officials and activists are working to save the park from development. The "Parks for Cash" scheme would have undermined these efforts. PennEnvironment helped defeat the scheme, at least for now.