PennEnvironment Executive Director David Masur (right) shakes hands with state Rep. Chris Rabb at the introduction of 100% renewable legislation.

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Pennsylvanians are ready for clean energy. And we know that if we’re going to truly tackle climate change, we need to get off of the dirty fossil fuels that create the pollution that is causing this planet-wide catastrophe in the first place.

To that end, PennEnvironment has made significant headway in our campaign to transition Pennsylvania to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, which is the timeline called for by the scientific community to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

Introducing legislation in Harrisburg

On May 7, we kicked off our campaign with a news conference at the state capitol to announce that a bipartisan group of nearly 90 state representatives and senators in the Pennsylvania General Assembly were reintroducing legislation to require Pennsylvania to get 100 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2050. The legislation would commit the state to a set of crucial benchmarks in the fight against climate change: 50 percent renewable energy and 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030, 80 percent renewable energy by 2040, and 100 percent renewable energy economy-wide by 2050.

Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Washington state, Maine, Nevada, New York and Puerto Rico have all passed similar legislation, and additional legislation is gaining support in Colorado, Maryland and Massachusetts.

Pennsylvania state Rep. Chris Rabb (Philadelphia) reintroduced the state House version of the bill, which he also proposed in last year’s session. The state Senate version of this legislation, sponsored by state Sen. Tom Killion (Delaware County), is believed to be the first 100 percent renewable energy legislation in the nation with a Republican legislator as its lead sponsor.

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Thanks for making it all possible

State legislature stops cities from tackling plastic pollution

In a late-night legislative move, leaders in the state General Assembly added language into a must-pass budget bill that creates a 12-month preemption, banning Pennsylvania cities and towns from implementing local policies to ban, or put fees on, single-use plastics such as plastic bags, straws, plastic foam take-out food containers or others currently plaguing our environment.

Citizens across Pennsylvania are clamoring for ways to address the growing single-use plastic pollution problem.

Single-use plastics have become the pollution poster children as citizens across Pennsylvania and the nation clamor for ways to address the scourge of single-use plastic pollution and litter.

“We need to use all the tools in the toolbox to tackle the environmental threat caused by plastic pollution,” said PennEnvironment’s Stephanie Wein. “We can no longer allow something that we use for only a few minutes to pollute our environment and planet for hundreds of years.”

PennEnvironment responds to Philadelphia refinery explosion

On an early morning in late June, a massive explosion at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery rocked residents awake for miles.

“The explosion and ensuing fire were a stark reminder of what environmental groups such as PennEnvironment have been saying for a long time: Fossil fuels as a source of energy are dirty and dangerous, and don’t deliver for our communities,” said PennEnvironment Global Warming Solutions Associate Kelly Flanigan.

PennEnvironment staff were quoted in news stories across the nation, including the Chicago Tribune, Philadelphia Inquirer, UK Daily Mail, NPR and NBC-10 Philadelphia.

Only a week prior to the explosion, Philadelphia City Council voted to approve a dangerous fossil fuel expansion at the Philadelphia Gas Works South Philadelphia refinery next door to the PES refinery, approving a 25-year contract to store dangerous liquified natural gas in the same community.

Proposed energy efficiency legislation could dramatically reduce climate pollution

After months of working with a group of elected officials and appliance experts, PennEnvironment joined a bipartisan group of state representatives to introduce new, far-reaching legislation that could see huge benefits for our environment and consumers.

The legislation would set energy efficiency standards for a set of commercial and residential appliances sold in the Commonwealth, and would play a critical role to help Pennsylvania tackle climate change, reduce air pollution, and save consumers and businesses money on their utility bills.

All of these appliances are competitively priced and available to Pennsylvania consumers and businesses today. Moreover, research shows that these efficiency standards will reduce climate pollution by an estimated 507 tons and save consumers approximately $217 million on their utility bills by 2025.

“The cheapest, cleanest form of energy is the energy that we don’t need to produce in the first place,” said PennEnvironment’s Flora Cardoni. “We’re excited about the bipartisan leadership on this important issue.”

Get more updates on our work online at https://pennenvironment.org.
"The vast majority of scientists agree: Climate change is real. And you don’t have to be a scientist to notice its effects, which have been caused by human activity,” Rep. Rabb said. “By transitioning to 100 percent renewable energy in the commonwealth, we can help to slow this change or face the on-going irreparable damage and its detrimental consequences.”

This announcement garnered statewide media coverage, and began PennEnvironment’s push to build support for the legislation.

**Citizens lobby for 100% renewable**

To keep up momentum, we followed the introduction of our legislation with a massive show of support from the state’s residents. On June 19, PennEnvironment turned out nearly 400 Pennsylvanians to the capitol for our annual Citizen Lobby Day, the largest environmental lobby day in the state. Concerned residents from 37 Pennsylvania counties traveled to Harrisburg, and state legislators held nearly 100 face-to-face meetings with constituents supporting 100 percent renewable energy. After a day of action, meetings and a massive rally, six more state representatives and senators added their names as cosponsors to our legislation.

**100% hits 100 cosponsors**

PennEnvironment followed up by hitting a huge milestone in support of our 100 percent renewable legislation: Only seven months into the current two-year legislative session, the 100th cosponsor signed onto PennEnvironment’s 100 percent renewable legislation in the state Legislature.

State Rep. Wendi Thomas (Bucks County) added her name as a cosponsor in late July to become sponsor No. 100. Our 100 percent renewables legislation enjoys bipartisan support in both chambers, and is now only a handful of cosponsors away from having a majority of legislators’ support in both the House and Senate.

“Clearly, we’re building huge momentum for 100 percent renewable energy,” said Flora Cardoni, director of PennEnvironment’s Climate Defender campaign. “When we look back on who had the political will to do what it takes to protect our planet from global warming, this group of legislators will be recognized for their work in Pennsylvania.”

Thank you so much for joining us as we work to make our state—and our world—a greener, healthier and more sustainable place for all of us to live in. In these pages, you’ll find the stories about the environmental victories that you’ve helped make possible to bring us closer to that goal.

So thank you once again for making it all possible with your action and support.

David Masur
Executive Director

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PennEnvironment’s Flora Cardoni (center) was joined by hundreds of citizens and legislators at a rally for 100 percent renewable energy.
Legal action leads to historic clean water victory

On July 31, PennEnvironment joined the Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, Waterkeeper Alliance and the Environmental Integrity Project to announce a historic agreement to reduce toxic pollution leaking from coal ash dumps at the Brunner Island power plant along the Susquehanna River.

For years, Talen Energy has disposed of coal ash waste along the Susquehanna River, Black Gut Creek, and Conewago Creek south of Harrisburg. Pollutants including arsenic, boron and lithium have been seeping into groundwater, the Susquehanna River and Black Gut Creek from the site.

“This enforcement action is one of historic proportions. It’s the largest penalty ever assessed at a coal ash pollution site in Pennsylvania history,” said David Masur, executive director of PennEnvironment.

The settlement requires Talen Energy to undertake significant actions at coal ash disposal areas, including addressing seeps, evaluating local water quality, excavating waste from one basin and undertaking work in others, and ensuring that all discharges fully comply with the Clean Water Act.

PennEnvironment staff, members and others at a news conference for clean water enforcement lawsuit.