Dear Environment Ohio members,

Some are calling it a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Now we have to make the most of it.

With Barack Obama in the White House and more pro-environment members elected to Congress, we have new hope of building the world's first new energy economy, solving our planet's climate crisis, and preserving our country's natural heritage.

Yet the seeds of change were planted long before Nov. 4, in states like Ohio.

Take clean energy. In 2008, Environment Ohio helped to pass a renewable energy standard, which will ensure that more of our electricity comes from wind, solar and other clean, renewable forms of power. The bill also included a provision to help Ohio reduce its energy consumption through new efficiency standards—the cheapest and fastest way to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Or, consider our forests, parks and open spaces. In 2008, Ohioans showed overwhelming support for the Clean Ohio Fund, a ballot measure that will help to protect some of Ohio's most beautiful places for future generations.

We’re proud to have played a role in these achievements. Now, with the promise of a fresh start in Washington—and new opportunities to build on our progress in Ohio—we’re hitting the ground running in 2009 to make the most of this opportunity for historic change.

Thank you for helping to make it all possible.

Amy Gomberg
Program Director
Citizens cast their vote for a clean Ohio

America lost 21.6 million acres of forests, fields, and farmland to development from 1992 to 2003—an area larger than the state of Maine. Ohio is also facing a tight budget in 2009, and history has shown that open space funding is often one of the first programs on the chopping block.

That’s why Environment Ohio launched a campaign in the fall of 2008 to ensure that Ohio’s voters were getting out to the polls to protect Ohio’s open space. We went door to door, built broad-based coalitions, and drew media attention to ensure that Ohioans voted yes on Issue 2, the Clean Ohio Fund.

On Nov. 4, the Clean Ohio Fund passed with overwhelming support. The program will dedicate $400 million to cleaning up and preserving threatened waterways, parks and natural areas. The program has already helped to clean up more than 170 abandoned industrial waste sites. Now, thanks to your votes, it will be able to continue to clean up and protect Ohio’s open space for years to come.
Ohio’s Clean Energy Future

Big victory for renewable energy and energy efficiency in Ohio

Ohio has the renewable energy potential, manufacturing base and technological know-how to create a clean energy future. That’s why in 2008, Environment Ohio made it a priority to educate Ohio’s key decision-makers about the benefits of clean energy. In May 2008, our work met with success when Gov. Ted Strickland signed into law one of the strongest clean energy bills in the country.

Environmental groups, wind and solar businesses, labor organizations, consumer groups and many others applauded the work of Gov. Strickland and Ohio’s legislative leaders, most notably Speaker Jon Husted, for making this investment in Ohio’s future. The bill will ensure that 12.5 percent of Ohio’s energy will come from clean, renewable sources—like wind and solar power—by 2025, and reduce overall energy consumption by 22 percent using energy efficiency.

Clockwise from left: Environment Ohio’s Amy Gomberg with Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher; Environment Ohio staff with Gov. Ted Strickland at the bill signing; Speaker Husted announces his support for clean energy policy; Amy Gomberg inspect solar panels on a statewide clean energy tour.
More clean energy, more green jobs
Ohio’s new renewable energy standard will help to reduce pollution and eliminate the need for expensive new nuclear or coal-fired power plants, but it will also help Ohio to take advantage of a new green economy.

Our research shows that there are already hundreds of companies in Ohio contributing to the green energy industry, including First Solar, which employs nearly 700 people in Perrysburg, and Cardinal Fasteners in Bedford Heights, which sells more than 1,000 different component parts used in wind turbines. Companies like these will help to create thousands of new, green jobs across the state.

Research lights the path to a new energy future
Can Ohio really depend on renewable power to supply all of our electricity? Yes we can, according to a November 2008 Environment Ohio report. The study, entitled “Renewing America,” offers a blueprint for repowering Ohio and our nation with clean, renewable energy. Smart new investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects—including more wind farms, like the one in Bowling Green—will help us to reduce pollution and rebuild our struggling economy.

Our report demonstrates that a future powered by clean energy is not some distant dream. We have the technology, the tools and the know-how to use energy more wisely and to get more of our energy from the sun, the wind and other clean, renewable sources.

As 2009 began, President Obama proposed an economic recovery program that would include many of the measures in our report. Environment Ohio urged our congressional delegation to support the president’s plan. And on Feb. 17, 2009, the president signed into law an economic recovery plan that invests over $70 billion in renewable energy, energy efficiency and green infrastructure.
Stopping Global Warming

Building the support we need to reduce Ohio’s carbon pollution

The clock is ticking. Scientists warn that we need to dramatically reduce our carbon footprint by slashing emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 in order to prevent the worst effects of global warming. Unfortunately, in 2008, the polluters and their lobbyists prevailed in Congress, convincing their Senate allies to block the Boxer-Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act.

Due in large part to the fact that approximately 86 percent of Ohio’s electricity is generated by burning coal, Ohio is now the fourth-largest contributor of carbon dioxide pollution in the country. That’s why Environment Ohio will continue to urge our state’s congressional delegation to support a science-based national global warming plan, with a strong carbon emissions cap. Locally, we’ll be building support for Gov. Strickland’s participation in the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord—a regional effort to reduce emissions—so that Ohio can begin to do its part to solve the climate crisis.
According to NASA, seven of the eight warmest years on record have occurred since 2001. These above-average temperatures led Environment Ohio to look closely at recent temperature trends and the effects that they could have on Ohio.

In October, we released “Feeling the Heat,” a report that identified 2007 as one of the warmest years on record and showed that average temperatures across Ohio in 2007 were up at least 1 degree Fahrenheit above the historical average.

Then, in December, we took this research a step further and released “What’s at Stake: How Global Warming Threatens the Buckeye State.”

This report showed that global warming could cause a plethora of environmental problems that could have a further impact on Ohio’s economy. For instance, if carbon pollution is left unchecked, the water level in Lake Erie could lower, damaging Ohio’s fishing, shipping and tourism industries.

“It’s not just about the polar bears and Arctic ice-caps anymore,” stated Amy Gomberg, Environment Ohio’s program director. “Climate change poses threats to Ohio’s environment that could have a negative impact on our economy, as well.”
Historic action to protect the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes are so vast that they’re visible from the moon. But when too much water is taken out of the lakes, everything from shoreline wildlife to fishing and boating are disrupted.

Environment Ohio partnered with Environment Illinois, PennEnvironment and other members of the Environment America federation to support the Great Lakes Compact, the regional agreement that prohibits nearly all new or increased out-of-basin water diversions from the Great Lakes.

To help build support for the compact, Environment Ohio released a report showing that we should turn to water efficiency before draining more water from the Great Lakes.

In September, our campaign culminated in congressional approval of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, ensuring more sustainable use of Great Lakes’ water for future generations.
Voters choose environmental champions in 2008

Environmental progress at the federal level has all too often been blocked by a handful of votes in the House and Senate and an administration openly hostile to the environment. That’s why Environment Ohio endorsed, and worked to elect, Barack Obama for president.

Starting in the summer of 2008, we compiled and distributed reports comparing the presidential candidates’ records on key environmental issues. Additionally, Environment Ohio’s partner organizations in states across the country endorsed 30 pro-environment congressional candidates. Now, thanks to the voters, we have more allies in Congress and the White House and new opportunities for progress in D.C.

In the coming year, we’ll be working with our new leaders in Washington to make sure that we get to work repowering Ohio and America with clean energy, refueling our state with better transportation options, and rebuilding our homes and businesses to use energy more efficiently.
Environment Ohio Foundation Support

The Environment Ohio Research & Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization, and conducts research and public education on environmental issues. Contributions to the Environment Ohio Research & Policy Center are tax-deductible. To find out more, contact Amy Gomberg at (614) 460-8732.

The Environment Ohio Research & Policy Center would like to thank the following foundations for their support in 2008:

- The Columbus Foundation
- David and Inez Myers Foundation
- Edwards Mother Earth Foundation
- The Energy Foundation
- The McKnight Foundation
- Karen and Michael Jones Fund of the Lurie Charitable Fund of the Columbus Foundation
- The George Gund Foundation
- The Joyce Foundation
- The Cleveland Foundation
- The Kresge Foundation

Growing a greener Ohio

Environment Ohio gratefully accepts bequests and gifts of securities. Your gift will ensure that we can continue to protect Ohio’s air, water and open spaces for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or email: Planned giving@EnvironmentOhio.org.

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