



# Winter Report

## Ohio's leaders consider clean energy

### Poll shows 80 percent of Ohio supports clean energy

Energy policy became the top priority of Ohio's leaders this fall, and Environment Ohio staff worked to ensure that requiring clean energy as part of Ohio's energy future would be a significant part of the mix.

From July through October, Environment Ohio staff met with Gov. Ted Strickland as well as countless legislators to educate them about the benefits of clean energy.

In August, Environment Ohio released "Energizing Ohio's Economy: Creating Jobs and Reducing Pollution with Wind Power." The report revealed that a commitment to developing clean energy could result in an additional 3,100 permanent, full-time jobs.

Tim Burga, chief of staff for Ohio AFL-CIO stated, "We believe that an energy plan for Ohio should be an integrated policy, including a unique standard for renewable energy sources such as wind. This will be a catalyst for creating the much needed sustainable jobs in Ohio."

In late August, Gov. Strickland announced his Energy, Jobs and Progress Plan for Ohio which included a requirement that 12.5 percent of electricity sold by Ohio utilities come from clean, renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar by 2025.

The governor's plan was introduced in the



▲ Wind power could be a big boost to the economy in Ohio's rural areas.

Ohio Senate, and Environment Ohio's Erin Bowser testified in support of the renewable energy requirement and called for important improvements to the bill. On Oct. 31, the Senate passed a slightly weakened version of the bill, which Environment Ohio will be working to improve in the House.

In a new poll released by Environment Ohio in October, 80 percent of Ohio voters said that they support setting a standard for renewable energy in Ohio that would require utilities to obtain twenty percent of our electricity from renewable sources like wind and solar by 2025. To see more data from our statewide poll, go to our Web site.



### more online

Links to additional content are posted in the online version of the newsletter: [www.EnvironmentOhio.org/newsletters/winter08](http://www.EnvironmentOhio.org/newsletters/winter08)

◀ Environment Ohio's Amy Gomberg meets with Sen. Sherrod Brown.



## To our members

Last year we took another big step in building our ability to protect our environment both here in Ohio and across the nation.

Since we started, Environment Ohio has worked with affiliates across the country to coordinate our work on environmental issues in Washington, D.C. This November we launched a new organization to serve as the conduit for that coordination: Environment America.

Environment Ohio is working closely with 22 other groups across the country to win new federal reforms on clean energy, establish higher fuel-efficiency standards and protect national parks and forests from drilling, mining and logging.

At the same time, we're still focusing our attention on needed reforms here in Ohio, such as a state clean energy standard (see page 1) and new legislation to protect our lakes and rivers from sewage pollution (see opposite).

Sincerely,

Erin Bowser  
State Director

## Recent action

### National forests worth a lot of green

America's national forests, in addition to being a welcome respite from the city and a popular vacation destination, provide a lot of valuable revenue.

Our September report, "Worth More Wild: The Value of Roadless National Forests," catalogues the many ways that roadless areas are worth more than the logs they could become. The report makes the case for protecting roadless areas—not only for their natural beauty and intangible benefits, but for the actual dollar value these places represent. Lodging and rentals, drinking water and wildlife watching are among the many revenue-generating activities that annually bring billions of dollars in revenue to states with roadless areas.

We're pushing Ohio's congressional delegation to support a law in Congress that would permanently protect roadless areas set aside by the Environment Ohio-backed Roadless Rule of 2001.

### Congress to take up mountaintop removal

In August the Bush administration moved to make it easier for the coal industry to engage in an outrageous, outdated practice known as "mountaintop removal."

In Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia and other states, coal companies literally blast the tops off of mountains in order to get at seams of coal, dumping the debris into nearby lakes and streams. The administration's rule change would make it far more difficult to challenge mountaintop removal in court under the Clean Water Act.

Many Environment Ohio members objected to the plans. We're lobbying members of Congress to overturn the rule change. So far, Reps. Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Dennis Kucinich and Timothy Ryan have joined 104 other members of Congress in agreeing to co-sponsor the measure.



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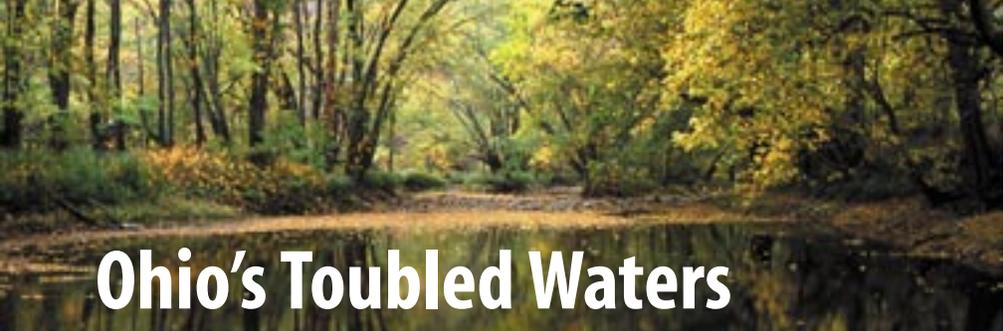
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▲ The effects of mountain-top removal mining nearing Whitesville, W.Va.



# Ohio's Troubled Waters

## New report shows Ohio's water is the most polluted in the nation

On Oct. 11, Environment Ohio's Amy Gomberg released "Troubled Waters," a report that ranked Ohio as one of the states most plagued by industrial water pollution. In fact, the report found that more than 74 percent of Ohio's major facilities exceeded the allowable pollution limits established in their Clean Water Act permits in 2005.

"Ohioans deserve clean waterways that are safe for drinking and recreation," said Amy Gomberg, environmental advocate with Environment Ohio. "Today, we are calling on Ohio's leaders to uphold the Clean Water Act by cracking down on companies whose water pollution has exceeded their permits and by ensuring that Ohioans have the information they need to protect their health and the health of their families."

Using the Freedom of Information Act, Environment Ohio obtained data on facilities' compliance with the Clean Water Act between Jan. 1, 2005 and Dec. 31, 2005. (See sidebar for data.)

"By design, the Clean Water Act and the permitting process are in place to protect public and ecological health," stated Tim Buckley, chair of Environmental Health Sciences at Ohio State University. "The violations documented in this report are an affront to public health."

## State action

The Ohio House of Representatives is considering House Bill 235, which would require sewage facilities to report all sewage overflow events to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the public.

"As an avid fisherman who frequents many of Ohio's waterways, it's extremely concerning to me that I have fished in and consumed fish from waterways that are regularly polluted with untreated waste," said Brandon Smith, the vice

president of the Ohio Game Fishing Organization.

Environment Ohio commended Rep. Scott Oelslager (North Canton), and 19 other state legislators for sponsoring HB 235, and urged the House of Representatives to enact the legislation this session.

## Federal action

Over the last six years, the Bush administration has proposed or enacted numerous policies that weaken the Clean Water Act. Congress is currently considering the Clean Water Restoration Act, legislation to ensure all U.S. waterways are protected by the Clean Water Act. Environment Ohio's staff are calling on all members of Ohio's congressional delegation to support this important legislation.

So far, Ohio Reps. Marcy Kaptur, Dennis Kucinich, Timothy Ryan and Betty Sutton have joined 167 others in co-sponsoring the bill.



**take action**



## Tell the state to clean up its act

Go to our Web site and click on "How you can help" to ask your legislators to take action on clean water and clean energy.



## Data shows polluters flout water permits

*The goals of the 1972 Clean Water Act are to eliminate the discharge of pollutants into waterways and make all U.S. waterways swimmable and fishable. Thirty-five years after the passage of this landmark environmental law, water quality has significantly improved. However, the original goals of the Clean Water Act have yet to be met.*

*Using the Freedom of Information Act, Environment Ohio obtained data on facilities' compliance with the Clean Water Act between Jan. 1, 2005 and Dec. 31, 2005. Environment Ohio researchers found that:*

- The pollutants being discharged into Ohio waterways include sewage, cyanide, copper, oil, mercury and other heavy metals.
- Ohio is ranked the number one polluter in the country, with over 1,795 exceedances of Clean Water Act permits in 2005 from 217 unique facilities.
- 74 percent of Ohio's permitted industrial and municipal facilities exceeded their Clean Water Act permits at least once in 2005.
- On average, Ohio facilities exceeding their Clean Water Act permits did so by 155 percent, or 2.5 times the legal limit.
- Polluters in Ohio reported 118 instances in which they exceeded their Clean Water Act permit by at least 500 percent over the legal limit.



Read all of our reports online at [www.EnvironmentOhio.org/reports](http://www.EnvironmentOhio.org/reports)



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## Environment Ohio

### Mission Statement

*We all want clean air, clean water and open space. 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 Ohio. We focus exclusively on protecting Ohio's air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.*

### Credits

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## Clean energy in Congress

The United States House and Senate are working to complete a federal energy bill. Last summer, the House and Senate passed different versions of energy legislation supported by Environment Ohio. As this newsletter went to print, House and Senate leaders were meeting to settle on a final version of the bill.

Environment Ohio staff in Washington, D.C., are working to make sure that the final bill contains the best provisions of each bill. The House bill included a renewable electricity standard requiring utilities to generate 15 percent of their electricity from clean sources, while the Senate bill included a provision raising gas-mileage standards to 35 mpg over the next decade. Here in Ohio, we will be running full-page ads in newspapers to raise awareness about how developing renewable energy in Ohio would be a boost for jobs and the economy.



Look at the full-page ads and read more about our work for clean energy on our Web site: [www.EnvironmentOhio.org](http://www.EnvironmentOhio.org)