



Summer Report

Big win: More clean energy coming to Ohio

Ohio 26th state to pass clean energy standard

On May 1, Gov. Ted Strickland signed SB 221, making Ohio the 26th state to enact a renewable energy standard. Environmental groups, wind and solar businesses, labor organizations, manufacturers 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 by 2025, and reduce overall energy consumption by 22 percent.

"Ohio is now on the map for clean energy development that will reduce pollution, eliminate the need for expensive new coal-fired power plants, and take advantage of a booming new green economy that will create jobs," stated Erin Bowser, Director of Environment Ohio.

More than half of the states in the U.S. now have renewable energy standards. Other Midwestern states, including Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota, have also put renewable energy standards into place and Michigan is currently considering one.

"Clearly this is a case of individual states leading the way in the face of failed attempts by Congress to pass a national renewable energy standard," stated Bowser.

Ohio will reap both environmental and economic benefits from generating more clean energy. This is due to the fact that Ohio is better positioned than most states to reap the economic rewards of investing



▲ Environment Ohio staff members thank Gov. Strickland for his leadership on clean energy.

in clean energy because of its extensive manufacturing base and skilled workforce.

Environment Ohio and a coalition of partners, including business leaders, clean energy developers and many others, worked to ensure that an effective policy was put into place that would allow Ohio to receive all of the benefits of clean energy, including reduced pollution and

economic development.

"As a developer of wind energy projects in many states across the country, we know how important it is for a state to have a renewable energy standard in place that actually establishes a market for clean energy from day one," stated Beth O'Brien, representative of Babcock & Brown, a major investor in clean energy.



more online

Environment Ohio's Amy Gomberg (center) looks at solar panels as part of a clean energy tour.

Links to additional content are posted at: www.EnvironmentOhio.org/newsletters/summer08, including more information about our big clean energy win.



To our members

Although cleaner energy policies are being enacted here in Ohio, there remains a lot of work to be done at both the state and federal level to protect our environment. For eight years, our president has pushed the country in the wrong direction on global warming, energy policy, clean air, clean water, mercury, our right to know about toxic chemicals, endangered species and more.

It will, for sure, take years for the next president to repair the damage. Yet, in some ways, the next president also has a strong foundation upon which to build a powerful environmental legacy, thanks to the victories we've helped win in many states. In the next few months, we'll continue to fight back against the Bush administration's anti-environmental moves. We'll also continue to fight for more progress on clean energy, global warming and more at the state level—progress we can build on in an even bigger way once Jan. 20 rolls around.

Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,

Erin Bowser
State Director

Recent action

Will Congress overturn Bush administration policy?

As the U.S. House and Senate prepared this spring for hearings on legislation to strengthen clean water protections for smaller streams and wetlands, Environment Ohio enlisted Reps. Marcy Kaptur, Dennis Kucinich, Timothy Ryan and Betty Sutton as co-sponsors of the Clean Water Restoration Act.

Over the past five years, the Bush administration's "No Protection" policy and decisions in favor of polluters made by the U.S. Supreme Court have chipped away at protections for smaller streams and wetlands by narrowly defining the Clean Water Act. The Bush administration's policy has put 59 percent of the stream miles in the continental United States at risk of increased pollution. More than 110 million Americans rely on drinking water from public waters fed by these streams. The Clean Water Restoration Act would restore strong Clean Water Act protections to these streams and wetlands across the country.

EPA comes up short on new smog standards

Environment Ohio pressed for stronger smog standards that would force more polluters to clean up. On Jan. 3, Margie Alt, executive director of our national federation, Environment America, joined several of our allies in urging Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen Johnson to strengthen the nation's smog standards.

But Johnson announced in March that the agency would adopt a new smog rule that is less protective of public health than the one recommended by EPA's own scientific advisers. In addition, under the guise of "modernizing" the Clean Air Act, Johnson called for fundamental changes to the act, including requiring implementation costs to be considered in setting air quality standards and allowing states and local areas to ignore air pollution problems. Half of all Americans live in places where air pollution threatens public health. The EPA's smog standards force polluters that exceed air pollution limits to clean up, but several studies show that smog standards are too low to protect public health.

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▲ We're pushing for stronger protections for rivers, lakes and streams.

Doing Ohio's part to stop global warming

As the nation's fourth leading emitter of carbon dioxide, the primary global warming pollutant, Ohio has a special duty to do our part to help stop global warming.

Scientists agree that in order to avoid the worst effects of global warming we need to reduce pollution by 15 to 20 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. In order to meet these targets, we need Ohio's leaders to set a cap on the amount of pollution that we are emitting today, and require strong emission reductions over time.

That's why Environment Ohio is calling on our leaders to do more to curb our carbon footprint and get Ohio on the right track. And Environment Ohio is in an excellent position to do just that. Last winter, Environment Ohio's Amy Gomberg was appointed to the Midwestern Advisory Board for action on global warming.

Scientists predict that, unless we act now to stop global warming, there will be significant changes in Ohio's climate. Our research has shown that recent average temperatures in Columbus are already two degrees above the 30-year average.

This spring's torrential downpours underscore the findings of a report we released last December. The report, "When it Rains, It Pours: Global Warming and the Rising Frequency of Extreme Precipitation in the United States," examines trends in the frequency of large rain and snow events across the continental United States from 1948 to 2006. Findings in the report show that in Ohio, storms with heavy rainfall are 43 percent more common today than they were 60 years ago.

Warmer temperatures will also mean lower water levels in Lake Erie, which will threaten wildlife and tourism, and require more dredging for Ohio's shipping industry.

Acting regionally

While Congress continues to debate ways to curb global warming pollution, many individual states and regions are moving ahead and taking action now. Last November, six Midwestern Governors signed onto a regional cap and trade program called the "Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord" to reduce global warming emissions across the region.

Gov. Ted Strickland decided to sign on to the agreement as an observer, not a full participant.

"Ohio can't afford to sit back and watch the consequences of global warming happen all around us; we need to take action, now," said Environment Ohio's Amy Gomberg. "That's why Environment Ohio is calling on Gov. Strickland to become a full participant in the Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord."

Over the summer, we'll be talking to thousands of Ohioans across the state to build support for Gov. Strickland's participation in this regional effort, so that Ohio can begin to do its part to curb global warming pollution.



More online

Read our report, "When It Rains It Pours," and tell Gov. Strickland to sign on to real global warming solutions on our Web site: www.EnvironmentOhio.org



Boosting renewables will boost economy

Last year Congress made great progress towards a new energy future by passing an Environment Ohio-backed increase in gas mileage standards—the first such increase in 30 years. But much remains to be done to achieve the new energy future that our country needs.

Unfortunately, power plant owners and coal interests, aided by the Republican leadership in the Senate and the White House, blocked attempts to pass a renewable electricity standard as part of a package of clean energy tax incentives in the energy bill passed last year.

The next avenue for action is to convince Congress to extend existing renewable energy tax incentives, which expire at the end of 2008. The American Wind Energy Association predicts that failing to extend the tax credits could cost the U.S. economy 75,000 jobs and a wealth of investment opportunities.

"As one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States, the clean energy industry is a shining light in an otherwise lackluster economy. If Congress does not act, many promising renewable energy projects will screech to a halt," said Environment Ohio Director Erin Bowser.



Get a more detailed list of ways that renewable energy helps the economy on our Web site, www.EnvironmentOhio.org



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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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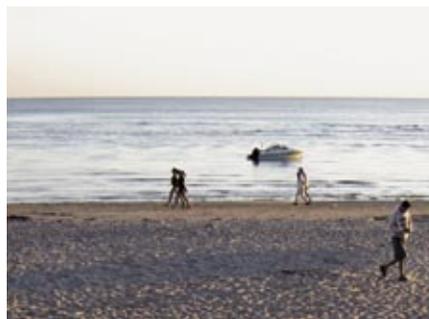
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Protection for the Great Lakes

It's obvious to most of us that the Great Lakes are only as healthy as the streams and wetlands that feed them, but the Bush Administration's EPA doesn't seem to agree.

Over the past several years, the EPA has rewritten the rules in ways that could strip thousands of miles of streams and acres of wetlands here in Ohio of their Clean Water Act protections. That's not just a threat to those waterways, but also to all of the waterways they feed into, up to and including Lake Erie.

That's why we're working to help pass the Clean Water Restoration Act, which would make it clear that the Clean Water Act applies to all of America's waterways.



 To read more about our efforts to protect Lake Erie and all of America's waterways, go to page 2 or check us out online at: www.EnvironmentOhio.org