Dear Environment Connecticut members,

The past year was one of change. In Washington, D.C., a new president and Congress finally started taking global warming seriously—catching up to states like Connecticut. In May, President Obama announced that he was clearing the way for Connecticut and other states to implement tough limits on global warming pollution from cars and trucks, and that those same standards would be implemented nationwide. Meanwhile, Congress is debating energy and global warming legislation that, while not perfect, represents a huge step forward in the fight against global warming.

Here in Connecticut, we have been leading the charge to protect our environment and build a clean energy economy. We worked with allies and lawmakers to craft sweeping solar power legislation that would result in the construction of enough solar to power 100,000 homes. The bill passed through the state House of Representatives unanimously in 2009, and we will redouble our efforts to get it through the full Legislature in 2010.

We celebrated a major victory with the expansion of Connecticut’s Bottle Bill to include water bottles. This measure, which industry lobbyists vigorously opposed, finally became law this year. It will result in millions of additional recyclable bottles being returned for deposit annually—instead of ending up as litter or in landfills and incinerators.

Finally, special interests tried this year to roll back numerous laws protecting Connecticut’s air, water and landscape. We successfully defeated their proposals to weaken environmental enforcement. Our successes working to protect our environment are due to your generous support throughout the year.

Thank you for making it all possible.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps
Program Director

Nancy Pyne
Field Fellow

Rob Sargent
Senior Policy Analyst

Anna Aurilio
Federal Legislative Director
Go solar, Connecticut!

Working to pass the state’s Solar Bill

Imagine if every rooftop in Connecticut glittered with an array of solar panels. We could slash energy costs, reduce global warming pollution, and create thousands of jobs.

Environment Connecticut worked to pass a state Solar Bill that would create 300 megawatts of power from rooftop solar systems—enough to power 100,000 homes. This infusion of clean energy would also lead to a 3 million ton decrease in global warming emissions—the equivalent of taking 500,000 cars off the road. The Solar Bill enjoyed broad support and passed through the state House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, power companies lobbied against the bill, and the state Senate refused to bring it to a vote. We’ll take the fight back to the Legislature in 2010.
Connecticut’s Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency funds are crucial weapons in the fight against global warming pollution. Financed by utility customers, these valuable funds pay for programs to cut electric bills and install solar systems. With the state government facing a budget crisis in 2009, Gov. Jodi Rell tried to pilfer tens of millions of dollars from the funds. Her proposal put hundreds of Connecticut’s green jobs at risk and threatened efficiency programs that save homeowners and businesses more than $3 for every dollar spent.

Environment Connecticut moved quickly to mobilize a coalition of environmental groups, clean energy businesses and consumer and business advocates to oppose the governor’s short-sighted plan. Fortunately, our efforts paid off—the state Legislature rejected Gov. Rell’s repeated proposals to raid the funds, leaving these important programs safe for another year.

Ultra-efficient homes can be built to generate all needed energy on-site.
At Environment Connecticut, we believe that the best way to jump-start our economy is by bringing our infrastructure into the 21st century. As the state government grappled with the recession, we provided a blueprint for a “green” economic recovery. In March, Environment Connecticut and a coalition of environmental groups released “The Green Infrastructure Engine: Sustainable Development for Connecticut,” a report recommending smart policy choices that would allow the state to strengthen the economy and protect the environment at the same time.

The report highlighted opportunities to repower Connecticut with clean energy. We can help Connecticut families save money through energy efficiency investments, and by investing in renewable power, we can cut global warming pollution and create new jobs across the state.

The report also called for continued investment in clean water infrastructure, including urgently needed upgrades to wastewater treatment plants to cut pollution flowing into Long Island Sound and other Connecticut waterways. Finally, we made the case for defending working farmland from development—not only to preserve the landscape, but also to strengthen local agriculture and protect the nearly 20,000 jobs it creates throughout the state.


Read the report and others on our Web site: www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org/reports
Preserving Connecticut

Landmark Bottle Bill expansion

In 2009, we won a major victory for Connecticut’s environment. After years of debate, the Connecticut Legislature finally expanded the Bottle Bill to include bottled water—despite the millions of dollars opponents spent to kill the idea. Connecticut joined states, such as Oregon, that have expanded their Bottle Bills in recent years to increase recycling rates and fight litter.

The Bottle Bill is one of the most successful, common-sense environmental laws on the books. Before it was first passed in 1978, millions of bottles and cans littered our state’s beaches, parks and roadways.

Today, more than 1 billion of those bottles and cans are re-
Preserving Connecticut

Landmark Bottle Bill expansion deemed for deposit each year statewide, keeping our open spaces clean and litter-free. In combination with municipal recycling programs, the Bottle Bill has boosted Connecticut’s recycling rate for beverage containers to twice that of states without a similar bottle deposit law, according to the Department of Environmental Protection.

A Bottle Bill for today
Despite this success, in recent years the Bottle Bill failed to keep up with the times. In the 1970s, the vast majority of disposable beverage containers were for carbonated drinks such as beer and soda—so the original Bottle Bill only applied to carbonated beverage containers.

Today, of course, the market for non-carbonated beverages is huge, with bottled water accounting for the lion’s share. By expanding the Bill to include bottled water and sports drinks, hundreds of millions of additional containers will be redeemed and recycled each year instead of ending up as litter or further crowding our overflowing landfills and incinerators.

The new Bottle Bill expansion also allows the state to retain unclaimed bottle deposits, rather than leaving them in the hands of the industry as a windfall profit, as had been done in the past. Instead, the Legislature and governor used this money, over $20 million, to help close the state’s budget gap.

Environment Connecticut urged the Legislature to dedicate future revenue to supporting state and municipal recycling programs.
Fighting the developers end-run on regulations

Industry groups tried to roll back laws on everything from global warming to enforcement of environmental permits in 2009. Environment Connecticut thwarted their efforts in one high-profile example: Developers attempted an end-run around the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act by exempting a major airport expansion in Oxford from environmental review requirements.

This measure—opposed by environmental regulators, advocates and local citizens alike—was killed in a legislative committee only to reappear later, hidden in an unrelated bill on clean water. In a front-page story in the Hartford Courant, Environment Connecticut condemned this back-room attempt to skirt the state’s environmental protection laws. Ultimately, the measure was withdrawn, and it was agreed that the project would move forward with full environmental review.
Fighting the developers end-run on regulations

Clean Water

Court’s decisions threaten state’s waterways

The Farmington River, Candlewood Lake, Long Island Sound—our rivers, lakes and coastal waters define what it means to be from Connecticut. But last year, they faced a renewed threat from polluters. Into each of these great bodies of water flows a series of smaller streams and wetlands. If the smaller upstream waters are polluted or impaired, the larger waters pay the price.

A pair of misguided Supreme Court decisions put Connecticut’s rivers, lakes and coastal waters at risk by removing Clean Water Act protections from millions of acres of wetlands and thousands of small streams across the United States.

Environment Connecticut’s staff in Washington, D.C., worked to restore Clean Water Act safeguards to the small streams and wetlands that have been left unprotected.

The shore at Niantic. Connecticut’s waterways make the state what it is.
Environment Connecticut supporters

Citizen support is the cornerstone of Environment Connecticut. Thousands of Connecticut citizens supported Environment Connecticut by making membership contributions in Fiscal Year 2009. The members listed below were particularly generous in backing the organization’s research and advocacy. Names that appear in italics denote our monthly supporters. These members provide stability to the organization’s resources through our monthly giving program.

Foundation support

The Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization, and conducts research and public education on emerging environmental issues. Contributions to the Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center are tax-deductible. To find out more, contact Christopher Phelps at (860) 231-8842.

The Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center would like to thank the following individuals and foundations for supporting our work in 2009:

- Jim Covino
- Energy Foundation
- Mertz Gilmore Foundation
- John Merck Fund
Financial information
Charts reflect combined financial information for the environmental work conducted by Environment Connecticut and the Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center.

FY09 Expenses
- Program 83%
- Fundraising 16%
- Administrative 1%

FY09 Programs
- Clean Energy 46%
- Global Warming 27%
- Preservation 14%
- Clean Water 13%

Growing a greener Connecticut
Environment Connecticut gratefully accepts bequests and gifts of securities to support our work. Your gift will assure that we can continue to protect Connecticut’s air, water and open spaces for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or e-mail plannedgiving@EnvironmentConnecticut.org.
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