Progress towards slashing global warming

Conn. moves to strengthen pollution program

Last year, the Northeast’s most significant program to reduce global warming pollution, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), came up for review. At the moment when we clearly need to step up our response to the threat of global warming, too many updated versions of RGGI that were put forth severely weakened the program.

So we rallied the support of our members and activists, and we worked to convince the RGGI states that the program must be improved. A significantly strengthened RGGI was the result, putting us on track to reduce carbon pollution from power plants by 20 percent in the next ten years.

20 percent less carbon pollution by 2023

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a key part of Connecticut’s strategy to reduce pollution from fossil fuels and shift to clean energy. By limiting carbon pollution from power plants, requiring polluters to buy permits to pollute and investing the revenues in energy efficiency and renewable energy, RGGI has helped Connecticut cut carbon pollution and reduce dependence on fossil fuels since 2009.

RGGI-funded investments are also benefiting Connecticut and the region economically, boosting economic growth in the Northeast by $1.6 billion. Strengthening RGGI would produce an additional $8 billion in economic benefits, along with 124,800 additional job-years of employment, according to a recent analysis by Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management.

In January, the Malloy administration announced it was joining other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states in dramatically strengthening the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative this year. The newer, stronger RGGI program will cap global warming pollution from power plants at current levels and then tighten them, requiring cuts of 2.5 percent each year. This is a big victory against global warming pollution, and we look forward to continuing to push the envelope and find ways to tackle carbon pollution.

Visit us online to get involved in our global warming work at www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org
**Recent action**

**Forward on climate**

In February, roughly 40,000 Americans joined us in D.C. for the “Forward on Climate” rally. Tens of thousands of others across the country gathered at dozens of simultaneous rallies to reject the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline; put a cap on carbon pollution from new and existing power plants; and expand renewable energy programs.

Earlier this year, President Obama renewed his promise to tackle global warming saying, “the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations.” And then, in his State of the Union address, he added, “If Congress won’t act soon to protect future generations, I will.”

Environment Connecticut is working to garner the public support the president needs to tackle global warming and cut carbon pollution from the source.

**Victory for offshore wind**

Thanks to the work of our staff, activists and our allies along the Atlantic Coast, we are likely to see construction begin on our country’s first-ever offshore wind turbines before the end of the year.

At the end of 2012, Environment Connecticut helped save critical wind energy tax incentives from being cut, and we worked with our allies to mobilize public support for regulators to approve offshore wind farms in places where there would be minimal environmental impacts.

Areas off of six states (Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Virginia) were approved in the last several months. We also expect two more areas off of New York and North Carolina to be approved later this year.

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**To our members**

I love the summer! Going to the beach, hiking in my favorite parks or having a barbeque with neighbors on the deck—but my favorite part of summer? Working with our citizen outreach team.

Every summer, we talk to people from all over the state and build support for cleaner air, water, and protecting our special places and all the environmental values we hold dear. This summer, passionate folks across Connecticut will be educating people about protecting the Connecticut River from destructive development.

The only way to stand up to developers and other powerful interests is by bringing committed and educated people together. Our staff in blue T-shirts will likely be in your neighborhood doing just that. When you see them—say hello for me!

Sincerely,

Chris Phelps
Campaign Director

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**Toward a greener future**

Environment Connecticut and Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentConnecticut.org.

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Keeping toxic fracking waste out of Connecticut

1.3 billion gallons of toxic waste
The Connecticut River, our smaller rivers and streams and the wildlife they support are part of what makes our state so special.

But our beautiful and clean waterways are facing a new threat—out-of-state polluters are threatening them with toxic contamination. This threat comes from drilling companies and “frackers” looking to make Connecticut the destination for their toxic wastewater.

Fracking is short for hydraulic fracturing, a practice in which drilling companies extract oil or gas deposits from deep under the ground with high-powered injections of chemical-laced sand and water.

The water—containing such toxic ingredients as benzene, manganese, methane and radioactive substances—can leach into nearby drinking water sources. Afterwards, fracking leaves an even bigger mess—billions of gallons of dangerous wastewater and nowhere to put it. Fracking in Pennsylvania alone has already generated 1.3 billion gallons of toxic waste water, and counting.

In short, fracking is an environmental nightmare that tramples forest and farmland, contaminates rivers and drinking water, pollutes the air, makes families sick and upends communities.

For the record, we’ve joined our national allies to fight fracking where ever it occurs.

The most immediate threat that fracking poses to Connecticut comes in the form of the toxic wastewater it produces. The drilling companies need some place to put it and right now nothing is stopping them from dumping it here.

That’s because in Pennsylvania, fracking has produced more than 1.3 billion gallons of benzene-laden, heavy metal-ridden, highly toxic and even radioactive wastewater—in just the past few years.

And now these drilling companies are trying to figure out where to put it. There is a chance they could set their sights on the Connecticut as a dumping ground for their toxic waste. This is terrible news for the Connecticut River and other Connecticut waterways.

Protecting our rivers and streams
Traditional wastewater plants clean polluted water and then dump it into the nearest body of water like the Connecticut and other rivers. But fracking wastewater is different. The extent of toxic pollution is far beyond anything these plants are used to processing, and the amount of waste is so large, that the toxic pollution cannot be fully removed. That means that at the end of the process, carcinogens, heavy metals and radioactive materials are dumped directly into our rivers.

Connecticut has worked hard to clean up pollution in our rivers, streams, and Long Island Sound. Environment Connecticut is working to urge our state’s leaders to do everything in their power to protect our state and its waterways from toxic fracking waste.

These numbers add up, and folks across the country are taking action:

- 1 in 3 frack jobs report using cancer-causing chemicals.
- 320 leaks or spills where fluid reached groundwater in Colorado.
- 421 drilling-waste pits that leaked into groundwater in New Mexico.
- 3,355 violations by drilling companies reported in Pennsylvania, 2008-2011.
- 40,000 Median estimate for number of wells drilled if fracking starts in New York.
- $1.6 million Amount Chesapeake Energy agreed to pay three families last summer whose drinking water was contaminated with methane.
- 1.3 billion gallons of fracking wastewater created in Pennsylvania in about 3 years.

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The Connecticut River and its surrounding landscapes represent the best of our state’s natural heritage. Unfortunately, too much of the remaining undeveloped landscape along the river and its tributaries remain at risk of destructive development. If these precious hills, woodlands and riverfront habitats are lost, the river’s water quality, diverse ecosystems, and natural beauty could be lost forever.

Congress has routinely raided the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the program intended for protecting natural treasures like the Connecticut River from destructive development.

Environment Connecticut is working to bring people together to urge Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy to make protecting places like the Connecticut River a top priority. By standing up to anti-environment members of Congress, and protecting this fragile natural treasure, our senators can leave a lasting legacy for Connecticut.