



# Winter Report

## Holding the line for our environment

### Congress threatens Connecticut's air, water

Over the past year, with the public's attention focused on the economy, anti-environmental extremists in Congress have quietly launched an all-out attack on the laws that protect our nation's waters, including Long Island Sound—as well as the air we breathe and the places we love.

It's the most radical, reckless attack on our environment in our lifetimes—and it's happening under the radar, through provisions slipped into massive budget bills.

#### 191 anti-environment votes

According to U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, in the U.S. House alone, lawmakers cast an incredible 191 roll call votes in 2011 on measures that would block the EPA from keeping our waters clean, making our air safer to breathe, and enforcing other environmental protections.

In February, the House rammed through a budget bill that took aim at our rivers and streams, our air, and funding for national parks. In August, the House passed a bill containing 39 separate environmental attacks. The voting record of Connecticut's members of Congress has been strong. Reps. Joe Courtney, Rosa DeLauro, Jim Himes, John Larson and Chris Murphy have all been consistent environmental supporters.

#### So far, we've blocked the attacks

So far, none of these attacks have become law, with Environment Connecticut research, advocacy and grassroots action helping to hold the line.



Speaker Boehner, Flickr

▲ In 2011, House lawmakers cast 191 roll call votes on anti-environment measures, including ones that would allow more pollution of Connecticut's air and water.

In 2011, we released several research reports that helped spotlight the consequences of lowering our guard against pollution. We've personally made our case to members of our congressional delegation and their aides in both Connecticut and Washington, D.C.

Our members have called, emailed or petitioned their lawmakers to reject

any bills that threaten our state's air and water.

With the Senate rejecting four of the worst proposals last fall, the tide might be starting to turn. We'll keep you informed, so you can let your lawmakers know where you stand. To sign up for alerts, visit our new website at [www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org](http://www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org).

**Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)**  
1st term Democrat from Connecticut.

**Residence:** Greenwich  
**Marital Status:** Married (Cynthia)  
**Prev. Occupation:** Attorney, Public Official  
**Prev. Political Exp.:** CT House, 1984-87; CT Senate, 1987-91; CT Atty. General, 1991-2011  
**Military:** USMC, 1970-75  
**Education:** BA Harvard University, 1967; JD Yale University Law School, 1973  
**Birthdate:** 02/13/1946  
**Birthplace:** Brooklyn, NY  
**Religion:** Jewish

[Visit Official Website](#)

### more online

◀ Find out how your representatives in Congress are voting on the environment.

Visit our online scorecard at [www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/scorecard](http://www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/scorecard) and select Connecticut.



## To our members

Over the years, my colleagues and I, along with members like you who make our work possible, have made some real progress toward protecting the air we breathe, water we drink, and our special places.

That's why it was so troubling in 2011 to see the worst assault on the environment of our lifetimes, possibly ever. Extremists in Congress are releasing attack after attack, often hidden in other legislation, that would reverse environmental protections we've worked so hard to achieve.

Fortunately, the response from a concerned public has been strong, and you'll read in this season's updates how we're forging ahead and countering this reckless legislation on all fronts. As always, I thank you for supporting us, and I'll be counting on you in the future to continue defending the places we love and values we share.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps  
Program Director

## Recent action

### 54.5 mpg standard nears finish line

Last summer, the Obama administration announced a plan to require cars and trucks to meet a 54.5 miles per gallon fuel efficiency standard by 2025. In November, the administration opened a public comment period on the proposed standards.

The standards mark the biggest step America has ever taken to fight global warming—and benefits would also be felt closer to home. By reducing oil consumption, the proposed standards would generate annual savings of \$727 million by 2030 in Connecticut alone.

Unfortunately, with the National Auto Dealers Association lobbying to weaken the new standards, and some of their allies in Congress vowing to block it altogether, this victory is not yet a done deal.

Our staff and members are urging the Obama administration to seize this important opportunity to get America off oil.

### The way forward on global warming

With gridlock on energy and climate policy in Congress, it is clearer than ever that leading states like Connecticut must take matters into their own hands to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Environment Connecticut's recent report "The Way Forward on Global Warming" finds that by adopting a suite of renewable energy and energy efficiency policies here in Connecticut and across the country, we have the potential to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions from 2008 levels by over 20 percent by 2020—and by close to 50 percent by 2030.

What we need to do now is move swiftly on this agenda and take action to reduce emissions in any way we can. By showing that these solutions work, we can use our success to lead the way on climate policy.

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▲ Environment Connecticut's Rob Sargent, right, released "The Way Forward on Global Warming" this fall.

# Danger in the air: Conn. ranked as 15th smoggiest state

The air in parts of Connecticut was unhealthy to breathe on at least 24 days in 2010, making it the nation's 15th smoggiest state, according to a report by Environment Connecticut Research & Policy Center.

The report, entitled "Danger in the Air," tabulated the number of days on which it was dangerous for children, the elderly, and people with respiratory diseases like asthma to be outside breathing the air, and ranked states and local communities.

Stamford-Norwalk and Bridgeport ranked among the top 20 smoggiest medium-sized metropolitan areas in 2011.

## Public not always alerted

On days with elevated levels of smog pollution, children, the elderly, and people with respiratory illness suffer the most.

Children who grow up in areas with high levels of smog may develop diminished lung capacity, putting them at greater risk of lung disease later in life.

Environment Connecticut's research also included new data showing that the problem is even worse than the public thought. For example, research shows that on nine days in 2010, residents in the Bridgeport area were exposed to smog levels that were found to be dangerous—but because of outdated federal air quality rules, the public was never alerted to unhealthy air levels.

Similarly, other metropolitan areas across the state were exposed to additional high-smog, no-alert days, including Danbury (eight days) and New London-Norwich (five days), as well as four other metropolitan areas detailed in the report.

## A call to clean the air we breathe

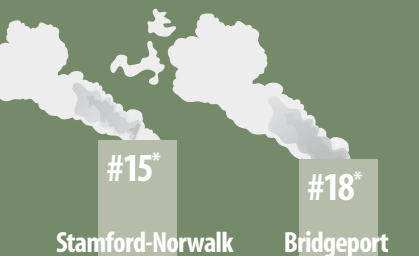
The report came as the Environmental Protection Agency began to consider new public health protections from smog pollution, which would dramatically cut smog across the country and

reduce the number of unhealthy air days in Connecticut.

Environment Connecticut's staff and members continue to urge the agency to pass significant smog reductions, in addition to other policy solutions, including:

- Reducing pollution from cars and trucks, which account for one-third of all smog-forming nitrogen oxide emissions in the United States, by improving public transit and requiring cars to be cleaner and more efficient;
- Passing state and federal policies to ensure we get more of our energy from clean wind and solar power; and
- Eliminating subsidies that help keep our nation dependent on polluting fossil fuels that put our health and environment at risk.

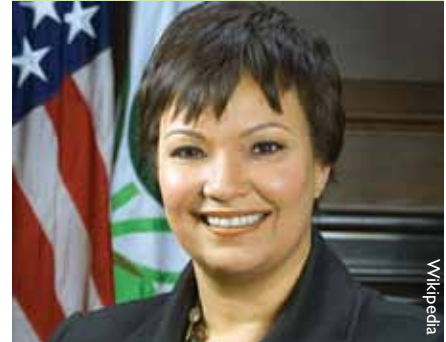
### Greatest Number of Smog Days in 2010 By Mid-Sized Metropolitan Areas



Read the full "Danger in the Air" report online:

[www.EnvironmentConnecticutCenter.org/reports](http://www.EnvironmentConnecticutCenter.org/reports)

\* Number includes additional days the air was unhealthy to breathe according to a more protective standard



## Questions for EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson

**EPA has recently worked on several clean air standards including the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. Can you explain what these standards mean for the average American family?**

*These new Clean Air Act standards mean cleaner, healthier air for American families.*

*The Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule are part of a series of common sense steps under the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions of mercury, acid gas, particulate matter, arsenic and other harmful chemicals from some of the biggest polluters in the nation.*

*These reasonable steps will provide dramatic protections to our children and loved ones—they will save tens of thousands of lives and prevent hundreds of thousands of asthma and heart attacks.*

**What's the best way for our members and supporters to express their opinions on these issues?**

*Unfortunately, we are at a point where we have to remind some leaders in Washington to put the health of their constituents above the wish lists of special interests. Speaking directly to those who want to undermine commonsense environmental protections is one of the best ways to stand up for your right to clean air and clean water.*

For the full interview, visit [www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org/page/CTE/Lisa-Jackson-interview](http://www.EnvironmentConnecticut.org/page/CTE/Lisa-Jackson-interview)

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## Winter Report

VOLUME 6 | NO. 1 | 2012

### Environment Connecticut

#### Our mission

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 Connecticut. We focus exclusively on protecting Connecticut'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.

### EPA to cut mercury, save 46,000 lives

In December, the Environmental Protection Agency moved ahead with efforts to significantly reduce mercury, soot and smog pollution from power plants. We expect these standards to save more than 46,000 lives every year. We built support across Connecticut to ensure these rules were adopted:

- We released two reports this fall on the health impacts of smog and mercury pollution. The reports also reveal how much pollution is emitted by specific power plants.
- We partnered with our national coalition of allies to help motivate more than 800,000 people across America to send the EPA public comments in support of strong action on mercury—no other single EPA rule has ever received so much public support.



◀ Here in Connecticut, the threat of mercury contamination led the Department of Health to recommend limiting your consumption of fish caught in any fresh lakes, ponds, rivers or streams.