

## Portland and Eugene ban the bag for good

### Bans mark new victories for Pacific wildlife

In October and November, Environment Oregon advocates congratulated Portland Eugene City Councils for taking a strong stand against plastic pollution. Eugene became the third city to ban the bag and Portland unanimously improved existing policy with a stronger ban.

“Portland Mayor Sam Adams and Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy should be applauded for leading the way in protecting the Pacific,” said Sarah Higginbotham, state director at Environment Oregon. “With thousands of citizens calling for a strong bag ban, city leaders responded and took meaningful action.”

### Thousands stand up to polluters

Environment Oregon delivered over 5,000 petitions of support for bag bans in the state’s two largest cities, and helped enlist the support of dozens of businesses. Environment Oregon was joined in support of these bag bans with Surfrider Foundation, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Willamette Riverkeeper, Tualatin Riverkeepers, Oceana, Portland Audubon Society, Oregon Shores and Many Rivers Sierra Club.

Portland expanded its ban to include not just large retailers, but all stores and restaurants. The expansion takes effect Mar. 1 for large retailers—larger than 10,000 square feet—and Oct. 1 for all others.

### The two largest cities’ big impact

As the two largest cities in the state, Eugene and Portland’s bans will make a significant impact.



Photo: Andrew Cattellier, Creative Commons

▲ Wildlife like puffins are threatened by plastic bag litter.

Oregonians use approximately 1.7 billion plastic bags each year, and too many of them end up as litter in our ocean. Today, there are 100 million tons of trash in the North Pacific Gyre. In some parts of the Pacific, plastic amazingly outweighs plankton six to one.

In the early months of 2013, we plan to build support for banning the bag in more cities, including Bend, Hood River

and Ashland, building momentum to ban the bag statewide.

“Last year we won tremendous victories for our campaign eliminating 350 million plastic bags from the waste stream,” said Higginbotham. “At the start of 2013, one in five Oregonians lives in a bag-free community. Together, we could make this the year all plastic bags are banned from Oregon.”



### Our bag ban progress

- ★ Bag ban passed
- ★ Growing grassroots action



## To our members

Some things are just too important not to do right.

In the case of our campaigns, this statement couldn't be truer. It became particularly relevant when we started to work on the "better bag ban" in Portland. We knew that the Pacific and its wildlife were worth more than a bag ban that didn't extend to all restaurants and retailers. So we went after what was right.

And of course, it's at the heart of our new campaign to go solar in Oregon. In 2012, we got a huge wake-up call on global warming, and stalling any longer to make the transition to clean energy would be a huge mistake.

In just the first few months of 2013, we're already aware of new threats, where we'll have to stand up for what's right. And we're sure glad to have you by our side as we do.

Thanks,

Sarah Higginbotham  
State Director

## Recent action

### Applause for life-saving soot standards

On Dec. 14, we applauded the Obama administration for strengthening air quality standards for particulate matter or "soot" pollution by approximately 20 percent.

Soot pollution is the deadliest of the common air pollutants, causing thousands of premature deaths every year across the country through a variety of cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. It also contributes to haze that hangs over many cities, towns and parks. Sources of soot pollution include power plants and diesel trucks and buses.

The strengthened standards, which were supported by Environment Oregon, better reflect the latest scientific research. The new standard will outline how much soot pollution can be in the air and still be safe to breathe.

### In storm's wake, urgency on global warming

Hurricane Sandy was a wakeup call on global warming for all of us across the country. Thousands of homes were damaged or lost; entire communities were submerged under water; lives were disrupted; the costs have been estimated to be as high as \$50 billion; and, tragically, dozens of people lost their lives.

Most of us understand that more extreme weather is becoming more common, the planet is warming, and pollution is behind much of it. America can do better. We can reduce the pollution that's behind global warming. We can rely more on energy efficiency, solar power and wind power and less on foreign oil and dirty coal.

We can no longer allow Big Oil and King Coal to hold America's clean energy future hostage. It's time for our leaders to heed Hurricane Sandy's wake-up call and embrace clean energy, clean air and a safer future.

The climate is changing – are your investments?

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Solar Works for Oregon  
The Best Potential of Solar Power to Protect Our Environment and Create Jobs

Photo: NASA

▲ Clean energy solutions become crucial in the wake of Superstorm Sandy. Read our report, "Solar Works for Oregon" online at [www.EnvironmentOregon.org/reports](http://www.EnvironmentOregon.org/reports)

# Wind power for a cleaner, greener Oregon

Photo: Yurman, Flickr

As Superstorm Sandy and its aftermath prompt more Americans to call for action tackling global warming, Environment Oregon released a report in January showing how current power generation from wind energy prevents as much global warming pollution as taking 550,000 cars off the road in Oregon each year.

The report, “Wind Power for a Cleaner America: Reducing Global Warming Pollution, Cutting Air Pollution, and Saving Water,” touts wind energy’s huge environmental and health benefits to date, as well as future benefits if wind power continues to grow. State Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Citizens’ Utility Board of Oregon, and Oregon Community Wind spoke out at the report release to emphasize these benefits.

“Wind power is already replacing the dirty and dangerous energy sources of the past and creating a cleaner, healthier future for all Oregonians,” said Charlie Fisher, field organizer at Environment Oregon. “We must continue to promote these huge benefits across our state and the nation.”

## Like taking 560,000 cars off the road

America has more than doubled its use of wind power since the beginning of 2008.

Over the next three years, at the current rate of expansion, power generation from wind energy would double, and with that, wind energy would then prevent as much global warming pollution as taking an additional 560,000 cars off the road in Oregon.

On Jan. 2, as part of the “fiscal cliff” deal, critical tax credits for offshore wind were extended for the year—a huge step toward promoting wind throughout the nation and in Oregon.

The main federal incentives for wind power—the renewable energy Production Tax Credit and the offshore wind Investment Tax Credit—had expired on Dec. 31, 2012.

## Wind saves water

More water is withdrawn from lakes, rivers, streams and aquifers in the United States for the purpose of cooling power plants than for any other purpose. Wind energy can contribute to water conservation. Our report shows that wind could save enough water to supply the annual water needs of a city the size of Boston.

This is especially important on the heels of the U.S. Department of Agriculture finding that 80 percent of agricultural land was impaired by drought in 2012—the most extensive drought in the United States since the 1950s.

## ...and your health

Wind power can also save lives by avoiding 137,000 pounds of smog-forming emissions and 91,000 pounds of soot-forming emissions every year. This is good news for the almost 30 million Americans suffering from asthma, and many more suffering from other respiratory conditions.

“For the sake of both our environment and health, there’s no time to wait,” said Fisher. “We must move forward on wind.”



Photo: Nicole Banker

## read more



State Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (right) and Environment Oregon Field Organizer Charlie Fisher (left) at our wind report release.

Read the full report online at:  
[www.EnvironmentOregonCenter.org/reports](http://www.EnvironmentOregonCenter.org/reports)



Photo: P. Medved, Flickr

## Priorities for 2013 legislative session

The 2013 state legislative session reconvened this February. Here are a few key priorities:

**Banning the Bag:** We have an opportunity to ban bags statewide and keep this harmful garbage from polluting the Pacific. The out-of-state plastic bag industry, however, wants to protect their polluting profits no matter the cost to marine wildlife. Oregonians know that nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute the ocean for hundreds of years—and we’ll be asking them to speak up.

**Going Solar:** There’s no excuse for Oregon to still get 50 percent of our energy from dirty energy sources, like coal. This session, while we’re working to prevent the fossil fuel industry from rolling back our good progress on repowering Oregon, we’re also putting forward a bold solar agenda to put up 250,000 roofs by 2025. Going solar will protect our environment and create jobs.

**Getting Off Oil:** Our addiction to oil is dangerous and dirty. We have an opportunity to get Oregon off of oil and power our vehicles with cleaner fuels. The petroleum industry is already fighting us every step of the way with a misinformation campaign and expensive lobbyists, but the costs to Oregon are too great to let them win.

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# Environment Oregon

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## Winter Report

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### Environment Oregon

#### Our mission

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

## Putting up 250,000 solar roofs by 2025

In the early months of 2013, we're already calling on state legislators to put up 250,000 solar roofs by 2025.

Oregon has more than enough sunshine—and citizen support—to become a solar leader. Even in the often-cloudy Willamette Valley, the sun still shines more in a year than it does in Germany, the world's largest solar market.

But now, less than one percent of our state's energy comes from this free, abundant source, when we could be generating power on every home, office, school, warehouse and retail store. Within a little over a decade, Oregon could produce 30 times as much solar energy as it does today—preventing 3.8 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution.

"Solar is not only a no-brainer for our environment, but a boost for our economy," said Sarah Higginbotham, state director. "And this winter, we've been working to spread that message."



Photo: Oregon DCT

### more inside

Portland approves a better bag ban; Sandy gives a global warming wake-up call; Report shows Oregon's wind potential; and more.

◀ Oregon Department of Transportation workers install solar panels as part of Oregon's Solar Highway program.