



# Summer Report

## Momentum builds to ban plastic bags

### Media blitz, mayoral support in Eugene

Momentum is building across the state to ban the disposable plastic bags that pollute our waters and harm wildlife.

Environment Oregon’s press conference with Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy focused attention on the issue before a key City Council meeting in February. In Corvallis, we’re pushing back against the plastic bag industry’s delay tactics as the City Council considers a bag-ban ordinance. In Ashland, we’ve helped more than 100 businesses and 1,400 citizens voice their support for reducing plastic ocean pollution.

### Mayor joins press conference

In a press conference with Environment Oregon, Mayor Kitty Piercy voiced strong support for Eugene’s proposed bag ban, reminding those present that “the ocean is all of ours.”

“We have two great rivers here that experience the effect of plastics, and the animals that live in them experience the effects of plastics,” Mayor Piercy said. Our local coalition members, including Surfrider, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Bring Recycling and the NW Grocery Association made public comments at a Eugene City Council meeting that night, urging councilors to support the bag ban ordinance.

Our efforts have garnered attention in major television, print and radio news outlets in Eugene, including a feature story in Eugene Weekly, and an interview with Environment Oregon Director Sarah Higginbotham on KLCC FM.



▲ Clockwise from top left: Environment Oregon Director Sarah Higginbotham at a press conference in Corvallis; Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy speaks in support of a plastic bag ban; supporters in Eugene sign petitions.

### Radio interview amplifies message

“We can make a huge impact on the amount of plastic that makes its way into our waterways and oceans,” Higginbotham told KLCC. “Oregonians use 1.7 billion plastic bags a year, and so by banning bags in Oregon’s second largest city...we’ll be able to make a big difference.”

These media outreach efforts in Eugene and other cities are vital to our campaign to keep plastic out of the Pacific. By mobilizing massive public support, we can push past the plastic-bag industry and win local bans that make an immediate impact on plastic pollution while building momentum for a statewide ban.



### more online

◀ Turtles and seabirds frequently ingest floating plastic, mistaking it for food. They also get entangled in bags and often drown or die of suffocation.

Visit [www.EnvironmentOregon.org](http://www.EnvironmentOregon.org) or [Facebook.com/EnvirOregon](https://www.facebook.com/EnvirOregon) for updates on our campaign to ban disposable plastic bags.

Top-left: corvallisribdics.com. Bottom-left and right: Nicole Barker.



## To our members

Our advocacy has taken me all over our great state and afforded breathtaking glimpses of Oregon's most special places: sweeping vistas along the Columbia River Gorge dotted with springtime's earliest wildflowers, the sight of Redfish Rocks on a foggy morning in Port Orford, the rolling wildlands after a rainstorm along the Umpqua River and the snowy slopes of Mt. Hood under a full moon.

More often than not, pictures of these iconic places grace the walls of our lawmakers' offices. They provide the perfect backdrop to emphasize that Oregon's clean air, clean water and open spaces are not negotiable. This spring, I personally made our case to members of Oregon's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., state legislators in Salem and local officials in the Willamette Valley.

Thank you for making this important work possible.

Sincerely,

Sarah Higginbotham  
State Director

## Recent action

### Historic step to cut carbon pollution

On March 27, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed limits on carbon pollution from new power plants. If enacted, they will be the first nationwide limits on the largest single source of the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

As scientists, doctors and other experts have been warning us for years, cutting this carbon pollution is critical because global warming will likely bring everything from dirtier air and more deadly heat waves, to more devastating floods and extreme weather.

Of course, the proposed limits on carbon emissions have polluters pretty upset. The coal lobby is betting millions of dollars that if they turn up the political heat, President Obama will back down. Working with our national federation of environmental groups, we're mobilizing thousands of Oregonians to make sure that doesn't happen.

### Building a better America

American families could cut global warming pollution from buildings by 30 percent and save about \$450 every year on their energy bills by 2030 if we invest in energy efficiency today, according to a report from our sister organization, Environment America Research & Policy Center. "Building a Better America" shows that every state in the country could see massive energy savings.

Oregon is leading the way. In 2011, the state Legislature extended the Residential Energy Tax Credit, so Oregonians can derive even greater financial benefit from making their homes more energy-efficient and helping preserve Oregon's environment.

"It's time to build a better America by investing in efficiency," said Environment Oregon Director Sarah Higginbotham. "Bold efficiency measures that slash energy use in our homes and businesses can reduce pollution and save consumers money."



## How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Oregon or the Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentOregon.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentOregon.org).



flickr user: David Owen

▲ Tax incentives make it easier for Oregonians to invest in efficiency and clean-energy upgrades, like these solar panels at Zenger Farm in Portland.

# Victories in Salem for our ocean, air, clean energy future

This legislative session in Salem was marked by a slew of attacks on our environment, with polluters' allies in the Capitol trying to use a struggling economy as an excuse to roll back environmental protections. We called them out on every such attempt, and we won important victories to protect marine life habitat, shift Oregon to clean energy, and prevent key environmental programs from being gutted.

## New marine reserves secured

After years of effort in collaboration with scientists, fisherman, government agencies and local leaders of coastal communities, we secured three new marine reserve sites and ensured continued implementation of the two current marine reserves, which Environment Oregon helped win in 2009.

With ocean habitat in steep decline, marine reserves are vital sanctuaries for marine life. Three years ago, Environment Oregon helped pass legislation to protect two coastal water areas as marine reserves and to consider adding additional reserves in the future. While Gov. Kitzhaber and the Oregon Legislature allocated funding to implement Oregon's marine reserve program in 2010, the state had yet to designate the additional marine reserve sites. In this legislative session, we took that crucial step.

This important victory brings us closer to establishing the marine reserve system Oregon needs to preserve our quality of life and the bounty of the ocean for generations to come.

## Clean air standards maintained

We successfully fought to maintain crucial standards at the Department of Environmental Quality, assembling a coalition of 26 organizations to urge legislators not to gut current safeguards for our air, land and water.

Because Oregon's natural heritage can only be protected if its environmental departments and regulators are given the

tools and resources to do their jobs, we worked to ensure that DEQ is an equal player in the budget debate.

## Energy programs defended

At the same time, we joined with our allies to successfully defend Oregon's strong renewable energy standard from being rolled back.

Thanks to that standard, which we helped win, Oregon is on track to get 25 percent of our energy from clean, renewable sources by 2025, reducing air pollution, helping fight global warming and attracting billions in clean-energy investment to our state. Our strong building codes and tax incentives for homeowners to invest in efficiency upgrades have saved Oregonians hundreds of millions of dollars and made a dramatic impact on carbon pollution.

We will continue working to make sure that special deals, loopholes and exemptions for polluters don't undermine the state's environmental goals and clean energy targets.



## A win for our ocean

After years of effort by Environment Oregon and our allies, the Legislature voted to protect 38 square miles of ocean as marine reserves. The expansion of our marine reserve network includes critically needed protections for Cascade Head, Cape Falcon and Cape Perpetua (pictured above). Combined with two small pilot reserves, Redfish Rocks and Otter Rock, these will help maintain healthy reefs and protect vital habitat for rockfish and seabirds.

Noah Strycker\*



## On the verge of victory for the Willamette

*We're on the verge of winning major new protections for the streams and wetlands that feed and clean the Willamette, the Columbia and all of our waters. But just as President Obama is about to sign off on the biggest clean water victory in decades, some polluter-friendly members of Congress are doing everything they can to block our progress.*

*In the last decade, polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions weakened the Clean Water Act, putting nearly 57 percent of Oregon's streams at risk and jeopardizing the sources of drinking water for 1.7 million Oregonians.*

*In February, the Obama administration announced that it is in the last stage of finalizing guidelines to restore these critical protections, reaffirming what the Clean Water Act stated 40 years ago: Polluters should not dump and developers should not build in ways that harm the streams, wetlands and tributaries that feed our nation's waters.*

*Environment Oregon, in concert with our national federation, played a critical role in getting the administration to act—from talking to more than half a million people about the issue last year to gathering 88,000 public comments in support of the proposed guidelines to mobilizing more than 500 local elected officials, farmers, and recreational businesses to speak out for clean water.*

*Our work is not done, but we're committed to securing these critical protections in the months to come.*

Visit [www.EnvironmentOregon.org](http://www.EnvironmentOregon.org) for updates on our work to protect all of Oregon's waters.

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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.

## Clearcuts threaten Crater Lake

With the Bybee Timber sale threatening clearcuts all the way to the western boundary of Crater Lake National Park, our campaign to protect the critical wildlife habitat surrounding the lake kicked into high gear this spring.

Now, our citizen outreach staff is mobilizing thousands of Oregonians across the state to ensure that President Obama directs the National Forest Service not to let timber companies clearcut thousands of acres of forest. This is a crucial step in our long-term plan to win permanent protection for 500,000 acres surrounding Crater Lake.

Along with coalition partners Umpqua Watersheds and Oregon Wild, we're building grassroots momentum and generating support by hosting presentations around the state featuring a breathtaking slide show of the proposed wilderness. We also joined national environmental leaders at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference this spring to discuss new protections for Crater Lake.



◀ Clearcuts like this one on the 209,000 acre "Millicoma Tree Farm," owned by Weyerhaeuser Company, are commonplace in Oregon.

To subvert Oregon's law limiting clearcuts to 120 acres in size, logging companies leave thin strips of forest between each 120-acre block.