



ENVIRONMENT OREGON Your Fall Report

In our DNA

We relaunched Environment Oregon’s door-to-door canvassing offices in June, with a full set of health precautions in place to keep our staff and members of the public safe.

Our staff are visiting neighborhoods across Oregon to build support for reintroducing sea otters to the Oregon coast.

I’m excited to share our plans with you and let you know how you can add your voice to this grassroots movement.

Canvassing is in our DNA

Canvassing—going door-to-door—has been a core part of our work at Environment Oregon since the beginning. We canvass to educate the public about the problems facing our environment, build support for solutions and raise money to fund our campaigns.

Many of our senior staff, including me, got their start working on the canvass.

I remember showing up for my first day in a canvass office, nervous at the prospect of talking to people about politics, but quickly coming to realize the power of canvassing. I learned that a group of idealistic, hard-working people with a smart, strategic campaign can make real change, if they do the work of bringing the public along with them. As it turns out, a lot of people want to come along.

The experience of my first summer canvass, seeing what a dif



Our staff are building grassroots support for bringing sea otters back to Oregon, one conversation at a time.

ference face-to-face conversations can have in making change, is why I’m here, 15 years later, still doing this work.

One of the biggest reasons we’re excited to relaunch our canvass offices is to recruit the next generation of the environmental movement. We’re helping students and recent graduates develop a passion for social change, and maybe even launch a career working to protect our planet.

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Thanks
for making it
all possible

59,000 supporters, 40 lawmakers tell Whole Foods to put 'planet over plastic'

A massive environmental crisis requires a massive call to action.

That's why our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with our friends at U.S. PIRG Education Fund and the Student PIRGs, delivered a letter to Whole Foods on May 6, 2021—signed by nearly 60,000 supporters,

and more than a dozen other states to follow California's lead—until the Trump administration tried to revoke their authority.

On April 26, the Biden administration started the process of undoing this action—checking off one of the “First things to fix” identified by our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, in a series of 20 recommendations shared with the Biden team.

“Thank you, President Biden, for taking this first step,” said Morgan Folger, Destination: Zero Carbon campaign director with our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center. “Now it's time to reaffirm that states can and should lead the way for clean air and cleaner cars.”

Vehicle tailpipes are a major source of climate-changing, health-harming air pollution. A report by our research partners showed that in 2018, 108 million Americans lived in areas that experienced more than 100 days of degraded air quality.

Oregon commits to 100 percent clean energy

Today, 1 in 3 Americans live in a place committed to 100 percent clean energy. This year, Oregonians finally joined this environment-friendly club.

On July 27, Gov. Kate Brown signed a bill committing the state to 100 percent clean electricity by 2040. The policy marks one of the fastest transitions to emission-free electricity to date, requiring an 80 percent greenhouse emission reduction by 2030, a 90 percent reduction by 2035, and a 100 percent reduction by 2040. Environment Oregon built support for clean energy by distributing educational materials to more than 400,000 Oregonians and rallying support on the issue.

“It's thrilling to see Oregon once again leading the country on clean energy and climate action,” said Celeste Meiffren-Swango, Environment Oregon state director. “Powering our state with clean energy, instead of dirty fossil fuels, cuts climate-changing emissions and helps keep our air and water clean, ensuring a green and healthy future for all Oregonians.”

Renewables are set to deliver the vast majority of the zero-emissions electricity target.

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentoregon.org>.

Staff



Our national network's Oceans Associate Reino Hyyppa (top, center) joined legislators and supporters for a virtual rally against plastic waste.

including 40 state lawmakers—calling on the grocer to phase out single-use plastic packaging in its stores. Once an environmental leader that stopped providing plastic bags to its customers at checkout in 2008, Whole Foods recently earned an “F” for its plastic policies in a report by environmental group As You Sow.

“Nothing we use for just a few minutes should pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years,” said Kelsey Lamp, Protect Our Oceans campaign director for Environment America Research & Policy Center, our national research partners. “That's why the companies that rely on single-use plastic to package their products must adopt more sustainable packaging options or eliminate single-use plastic packaging altogether.”

“Change is possible, and Whole Foods should lead the way to a future where we put the planet over plastic.”

Back on course: Biden administration moves to allow states to set stronger vehicle emissions standards

For nearly 50 years, federal law allowed California to set stronger clean air standards



Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Oregon or Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

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



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Bringing the sea otters back

Like the gray wolves that famously changed the ecology of Yellowstone National Park when reintroduced in 1995, sea otters are a keystone species. These otters eat sea urchins and maintain balance in the kelp ecosystem.

Without otters around to keep sea urchins in check, the urchins will mow down kelp forests and create a kind of wasteland called an “urchin barren.” This is happening at an alarming rate off the Oregon coast, with one count finding 350 million purple sea urchins in a reef. As warming waters kill off sunflower sea stars, the other natural predator of the purple sea urchin, kelp is left defenseless.

Every day without sea otters is another day of an ecosystem out of balance—one that is biologically poorer, less resilient and less helpful in our fight against climate change.

The good news is that there will soon be a

proposal before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reintroduce sea otters. So we’re working with the Elakha Alliance to do the research to support sea otter reintroduction, and we’re confident that the science will support both the need to bring the sea otters back and the feasibility of doing so. But, especially with so much competition for scarce attention and resources, we know it will make a difference if the Fish and Wildlife Service understands that this restoration effort enjoys strong.

That’s why we’re going door to door and talking to tens of thousands of Oregonians to sound the alarm about what’s happening to the kelp ecosystems off of our coast, and building public support for reintroducing sea otters.

By Celeste Meiffren-Swango, Environment Oregon state director

With supporters from across Oregon on our side, we’re confident we can bring sea otters back to our state.



Staff



Kimball Nelson

Thank you for supporting our work to take on the vast environmental challenges we face and to create a greener, healthier, more sustainable world. In these pages, you’ll find the stories of the advocacy you made possible.

Your action and support allow us to keep working for a better world. Thank you.

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
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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, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus 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.

Over 47,000 supporters tell Amazon: Stop selling bee-killing pesticides

To save the bees, our staff have asked the world's largest online retailer to stop selling the pesticides that kill them. And we're not alone.

In March, Environment Oregon and our national network kicked off our campaign to convince Amazon to take neonicotinoid pesticides (or "neonics")—the substances linked to a troubling decline in bee populations—off its (virtual) shelves.

By August, campaigners with our network had collected more than 47,000 petition signatures online and in 10 communities across the country.

"We need to reduce the use of this pesticide that's contributing to the collapse of our most important pollinators," said Malia Libby, our national Save the Bees campaign associate. "Amazon should join other retailers in doing the right thing and taking it off its shelves."

Our ask is far from unprecedented: The Home Depot and Lowe's have already pledged to phase out the use of neonics on their live plants, and Lowe's has committed to taking the pesticides off its shelves altogether.

Our national network's summer canvassers talked to tens of thousands of people across the country about our campaign to get Amazon to stop the sale of bee-killing pesticides.



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