Dear Environment Minnesota members,

This year, we’ve been part of some exciting victories for the environment. We’re starting to see real change across the country that’s coming with real leadership in Congress and the White House: Our nation has started down the road to a future powered by 100 percent clean energy. The spring and summer saw the passing of a green economic recovery plan, and Congress has spent summer, fall and early winter considering comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation. Our nation has also taken the first of many steps to protect the planet from the worst effects of global warming, by regulating carbon pollution and cleaning up dirty coal plants through the EPA.

The opportunities and victories we’ve seen this year grew from our hard work over the long term. President Obama announced the first-ever federal vehicle gas-mileage standard this year—after 14 states had already adopted such standards and a dozen more (including Minnesota) considered them. The efforts of Environment America, our national federation, were key in getting these state-level standards passed. Nationwide victories like this make our state-level dedication and organizing worthwhile.

But with all this exciting progress has come a rising tide of opposition. Polluters, big developers and industry opponents are wielding more money and influence than ever to stick to the status quo. Bitterly partisan debates are breaking out around the most important issues, and some of our leaders aren’t being as bold as they need to be. But in Minnesota, we know environmental values and the vision for a clean energy future go deeper than any differences that divide us. We all want clean air, clean water, protected wild places and a healthy planet for ourselves and generations to come.

Your support will help get us there. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Samantha Chadwick
Environmental Associate

Rob Sargent
Senior Policy Analyst

Dan Kohler
Regional Program Director

Emily Figdor
Global Warming Program Director
Lakes, rivers and streams

Restoring protections for our water

“Land of 10,000 Lakes” isn’t just a slogan. Whether we’re swimming for an afternoon in Lake Calhoun, or on a canoe trip up north, it’s our waterways that make our experience special.

Yet, even three decades after the passage of the Clean Water Act, we still have a long way to go to clean up our waters and protect our health. In October, we released a report documenting that facilities in Minnesota dumped over 2 million pounds of toxic chemicals into our rivers in 2007.

A solution may be around the bend, and we’re working with lawmakers to make sure it passes. Congress is considering legislation, drafted by Rep. Jim Oberstar (District 8), which will restore the Clean Water Act to its original purpose: to protect all of our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands.

Canoeing on South Sturgeon Lake.
Repower America

Building a clean energy economy for Minnesota

This year, Environment Minnesota and our national federation, Environment America, made gains toward our vision of an America that runs on 100 percent clean energy, depends on half the oil we use today, and creates 80 percent less global warming pollution by 2050.

We started 2009 with a push to make sure our nation’s economic recovery plan was based on clean energy. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that came of those efforts included unprecedented investments in clean energy, energy efficiency, and alternative transportation. The recovery plan is already starting to transform the way our nation uses energy as it puts people back to work from coast to coast: retrofitting buildings to be more efficient, building new, cleaner transportation options such as buses and light rail, and harnessing more and more homegrown wind and solar power.

Environment Minnesota staff present Sen. Al Franken (second from left) with postcards from state residents calling for clean energy.
Momentum for strong U.S. policy

The House of Representatives’ approval of the American Clean Energy and Security Act in June marked a clear break from the inaction that characterized the federal government’s response to global warming during the previous eight years. The bill is the first-ever to put a cap on U.S. global warming emissions, and it contains provisions to fuel the transition to a clean energy economy.

But the vote in the House was extremely close, with just a seven-vote margin of support (five members of Minnesota’s delegation voted for the bill). As the Senate considers this legislation, we’re leading a diverse group of allies in Minnesota, pushing for action. We’re also working to give President Obama the backing he needs to make a strong international deal for our planet’s future.

Leading by example

Minnesota is ready to take advantage of the new clean energy economy, and we’ve already taken steps to lead the way. We’re ranked fourth in the nation for our installed wind power capacity, and have as much annual solar power potential as more obvious locations like Houston and Miami.

Our strong state Renewable Energy Standard means we’re moving toward getting 25 percent of our energy from clean sources by 2025, and taking other steps to reduce our dependence on dirty energy. We’re gathering support from across the state to make sure that our Congressional delegation brings Minnesota’s leadership to the national level.
Clean cars

On the road to clean cars in Minnesota

Early this year, Environment Minnesota worked with Rep. Melissa Hortman (Brooklyn Park) and Sen. John Marty (Roseville) to encourage the Legislature to adopt a Clean Cars standard that would put more fuel-efficient cars on the road, keeping the air cleaner—35 percent of Minnesota’s carbon dioxide pollution comes from the transportation sector—and saving Minnesotans money at the pump.

We faced obstacles at the state level, with Minnesota lawmakers failing to adopt the fuel efficiency standard. But in May, President Barack Obama announced the first-ever federal standard for vehicle efficiency, which mandates that new cars and light trucks in every state average 35.5 miles per gallon. We’ll work to ensure that when the mandate takes effect in 2016, we’re already taking the next steps to cut transportation emissions even further.
A time-out for our last wild forests

During his campaign, President Obama promised to restore the Roadless Rule—which protects nearly 60 million acres of wild forests—after the Bush administration repealed it. Yet, Bush-era officials within the Forest Service continued to approve plans for logging, mining and other destructive activities in wild forests.

In April, we documented this in our report, “Quietly Paving Paradise,” and urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to call a time-out on new road-building plans. On May 28, Secretary Vilsack announced a temporary halt on permits for destructive activities within the national forests, protecting millions of acres of the most pristine forests in America. To ensure that the halt is made permanent, we worked with our coalition partners to generate enough support to gain the attention of Congress: In October, the National Forest Roadless Conservation Act was introduced in Congress.
Global warming

Despite setbacks, historic progress in Congress

During the first half of 2009, the House of Representatives debated new legislation to combat global warming. We focused our energy on building support among citizens and constituencies that could influence the congressional representatives whose votes would be essential to the bill’s passage.

Our staff educated citizens and lawmakers on the consequences of inaction or further delay on global warming solutions. We also mobilized our grassroots activists—our staff gathered thousands of petition signatures during one-on-one conversations with Minnesotans across the state and from supporters and members who took action on our Web site.

In July, the House voted to pass the energy and climate bill by a narrow seven-vote margin.
Transportation is responsible for more than two-thirds of our nation’s oil consumption and nearly a third of our carbon dioxide emissions. In fact, our research shows that transportation is the biggest source of global warming pollution in Minnesota. To make us more energy independent and reduce pollution, we need to build a transportation system that uses less oil, takes advantage of alternative fuels, and shifts as much of our travel as possible from transportation modes that consume a lot of energy to those that consume less.

Last year, people drove fewer miles and replaced many of these trips by using more public transportation—record growth that has largely carried over to 2009. Overall, Americans took approximately 10.7 billion trips via public transportation last year, saving more than 4 billion gallons of gasoline.

In terms of global warming, public transportation reduced carbon dioxide emissions—the leading cause of climate change—by 37 million tons in 2008. The latest science indicates that we need to reduce global warming pollution 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 to stave off the most severe impacts of climate change. Meeting this goal will require emissions reductions from all sectors of the economy, especially the transportation sector, which is the second largest and fastest growing source of carbon dioxide pollution.
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Financial information
Charts reflect combined financial information for the environmental work in Minnesota conducted by Environment America and Environment America Research & Policy Center outreach programs.

**FY09 Income**
- Citizen Contributions 73%
- Foundation Grants 27%

**FY09 Expenses**
- Program 73%
  - Fundraising 25%
  - Administrative 2%
- Repower America 60%
  - Green Economy 32%
  - Global Warming 4%
  - Clean Air and Water 4%

**FY09 Programs**
- Repower America 60%
- Green Economy 32%
- Global Warming 4%
- Clean Air and Water 4%

Growing a greener Minnesota
Environment Minnesota gratefully accepts bequests and gifts of securities to support our work. Your gift will assure that we can continue to protect Minnesota’s air, water and open space for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or e-mail plannedgiving@EnvironmentMinnesota.org.