Most favorable landscape in years

On November 6, Minnesota voters overwhelmingly rejected the radical anti-environment agenda that had dominated the Legislature in recent years.

This political shift has major implications for Minnesota’s environment. With some of the biggest opponents of clean energy, clean water and conservation being replaced by representatives and senators who favor commonsense protections for our environment, we have an opportunity to make once-in-a-generation progress for the places we love and the environmental values we share.

And Environment Minnesota staff and supporters are taking full advantage of the state’s greener political landscape: We’re seizing the moment and pushing hard for more solar power and cleaner rivers in 2013.

Solar campaign heats up
Along with the Solar Works for Minnesota Coalition, Environment Minnesota is pushing to get 10% of Minnesota’s energy from solar by 2030.

Minnesota has huge solar potential. And there is overwhelming public support for a 10% solar standard—but fossil fuel lobbyists and their allies in the Legislature have prevented it from becoming a real possibility for years.

But things have changed: Minnesota voters sent these polluter-friendly politicians packing. Now, the path to a 10% solar standard is cleared. In 2013, Environment Minnesota is committed to winning more clean, renewable solar power.

Ending runoff pollution to our rivers
Minnesota’s rivers and streams are part of what make this state so great. Yet a staggering number of our waterways—nearly half—are too polluted for fishing and swimming. The culprit? Runoff pollution from industrial agriculture, development and sewage.

Now that the political landscape has shifted, we’re seizing the chance to permanently protect our rivers and streams from being fouled by runoff pollution. We’re advocating for clear science-based standards for runoff pollution, more effective cleanup plans for polluted waterways, and greater accountability for agricultural pollution.

Environment Minnesota’s Michelle Hesterberg and Maria Herd set up shop to talk to St. Paul residents at a local coffee shop.

To learn more how you can help, visit us online at EnvironmentMinnesota.org.
To our members

Thanks to members like you, 2012 was a great year for Minnesota. And in 2013, we’re gearing up for even bigger things.

Along with our coalition partners and allies, we helped convince the Environmental Protection Agency to create strong standards for soot and other air pollution from coal plants. And with your help, we gave President Obama and our House and Senate allies the support they needed to renew critical wind power tax credits. Locally, we helped make it far easier to install solar on public buildings in Minnesota.

I have high expectations for 2013. Environment Minnesota will be urging our leaders to shift us away from dirty energy like coal and oil and take strong action on climate change.

I’m confident that with your support, we can make huge progress in 2013. As always, thanks for standing up with us. You make it all possible.

Sincerely,

Ken Bradley

Recent action

Attack on Superior National Forest deflected

In September, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would make it much easier for companies to conduct dangerous mining on thousands of acres in the Superior National Forest. The bill would have transferred tens of thousands of acres to the state, allowing the land to be managed intensively for logging, mining and other extractive industries—making it much easier to conduct toxic sulfide mining in the area. The bill also would have exempted the land exchange from environmental review and cut the public out of the decision-making process.

We immediately pressed our senators not to pursue a similar bill in the Senate. We directed thousands of calls, letters, and petitions to Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken and met face-to-face with the staff of both. In the end, we successfully kept the bill out of Senate consideration in 2012 and are now in a strong position to protect Superior National Forest from toxic sulfide mining in 2013.

Report shows benefits of wind

A new Environment Minnesota Research & Policy Center report shows that Minnesota’s current power generation from wind energy displaces as much global warming pollution as taking 757,000 cars off the road per year. Wind power also saves enough water to meet the needs of 59,800 Minnesotans—important in a year of extreme droughts across the region.

In 2012, Environment Minnesota worked hard to extend crucial tax credits for wind production. “Wind power is already replacing the dirty and dangerous energy sources of the past and creating a cleaner, healthier future for Minnesotans,” said Michelle Hesterberg of Environment Minnesota. “We can continue on this path of cutting dangerous pollution and saving water if Congress acts to extend critical wind incentives.”
A new way to honor supporters
Environment Minnesota is proud to announce the establishment of our Green Future Fund.

Environment Minnesota is working with the Solar Works for Minnesota coalition to pass a solar energy standard that will ensure the state gets 10% of its energy from the sun by 2030. Solar Works for Minnesota is a coalition of more than 150 non-profits, businesses and unions working collaboratively for a 10% solar standard.

This standard will lead to the installation of roughly 5,200 megawatts of solar by 2030—enough energy to power 700,000 homes.

Utilities stand in the way
Despite the environmental, health and economic benefits of solar power, some Minnesota utilities are dragging their feet and standing in the way of more solar. They've built their business around the dirty, dangerous fuels of the past, and they're reluctant to change.

Together, we can win
To overcome their influence, Environment Minnesota is mobilizing thousands of people across the state to urge their legislators and Gov. Mark Dayton to set a 10% solar energy standard.

Along with the Solar Works for Minnesota coalition, we'll also be shining a media spotlight on the issue and talking directly to our lawmakers about the benefits of clean, renewable solar energy.

With your support, Minnesota can set a 10% solar standard and reach 700,000 solar roofs by 2030.

To take advantage of this huge, untapped solar resource, Environment Minnesota and the Solar Works for Minnesota coalition are calling for a 10% solar energy standard.

These legacy donors are helping to ensure that Environment Minnesota will continue to flourish—protecting the places we love and the values we share—for years to come. “We appreciate all of our supporters,” said Environment Minnesota’s Ken Bradley. “I feel a special gratitude toward those members who have the vision and generosity to plan a gift that will protect our state’s environment beyond their own lifetimes.”

Establishing a legacy gift also offers donors a few advantages. Some supporters wish they could give more, but can’t right now. Including Environment Minnesota in your estate plan costs nothing today, while ensuring support for our mission in the future. Legacy gifts may also offer tax benefits. (Your professional advisor can help you determine any tax advantage.)

As a Green Future Fund donor, with your permission, we’ll recognize your gift in our annual report and other publications, helping to inspire other members to make their own legacy gifts. Of course, you may also choose to give anonymously. Either way, any specific details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential.

If you’d like to become a member of the Green Future Fund, or if you just have questions, contact our planned giving coordinator, Marilyn Tesauro, at 1-800-841-7299 or PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMinnesota.org.

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In October, Environment Minnesota joined with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to host our second-ever Coffee with Congress event, in which Minnesotans gather to discuss the most pressing environmental issues of the day with one of our members of Congress. This time, we met with Rep. Keith Ellison of Minnesota’s 5th district. Rep. Ellison is one of the most active champions of environmental issues in Congress, advocating for a cleaner, greener future for all Minnesotans.

Over coffee, Rep. Ellison and the numerous activists, organizers and others in attendance discussed a wide range of issues, including the (successful) battle to renew wind power tax credits, attempts in Congress to block critical clean air and clean water rules, and threats to the Boundary Waters. We also discussed what Minnesotans can do to stand up for our air, water and open spaces.