



Winter Report

SFB579

Cleaning up our air, protecting our health

Congress' sneak attack on the environment

Backed by an outpouring of public support, the Environmental Protection Agency secured new rules to reduce mercury and other toxic air pollution, despite continued attacks from polluters and their allies in Congress.

This winter, the EPA finalized a rule to reduce mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants, while another rule to cut emissions from power plants survived a dangerous attack from the Senate.

Both are major victories, particularly for Iowa, where we rank 11th in the country for total mercury pollution released by power plants. The rules—the Mercury and Toxics Air Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule—continue to face strong resistance.

Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul attempted to block the new air pollution rules with a bill that also would have barred the EPA from implementing such a standard ever again. The U.S. Senate narrowly rejected the bill in November, thanks in part to a vote from Sen. Tom Harkin. Sen. Chuck Grassley sided with polluters and voted to block the clean air rules.

800,000 raise their voices

In addition, several states have filed a joint lawsuit to block the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard, finalized in December.

Environment Iowa and our sister groups across the country played a role in helping to generate the most public comments the EPA has ever received, in support of the



Charles Kremenak

▲ Iowa City Powerplant. New rules will decrease the mercury pollution from power plants.

mercury rule. More than 800,000 Americans spoke out against mercury pollution.

According to a recent Environment Iowa report, one in 10 American women now have blood mercury levels that are high enough to put her child at risk of brain damage if she becomes pregnant. Mercury is a neurotoxin that when ingested, most commonly by eating fish, can create

neurological health problems in adults and particularly in children and fetuses as they develop.

Once implemented, the new rules combined are expected to save more than 40,000 lives each year. Our staff and members will continue to lead the charge to protect these regulations and to push for the strongest clean air rules possible.



Shanna Leigh

take action

◀ One in 10 American women has blood mercury levels high enough to harm her child should she become pregnant.

Take action online, and tell your leaders to get serious about mercury pollution. www.EnvironmentIowa.org



To our members

Over the years my colleagues and I, along with members like you who make our work possible, have made some real progress toward protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and our special places.

That's why it was so troubling in 2011 to see the worst assault on the environment of our lifetimes, possibly ever. Extremists in Congress are releasing attack after attack, often hidden in other legislation, that would reverse environmental protections we've worked so hard to achieve.

Fortunately, the response from a concerned public has been strong, and you'll read in this season's updates how we're forging ahead and countering this reckless legislation on all fronts. As always, I thank you for supporting us, and I'll be counting on you in the future to continue defending the places we love and values we share.

Sincerely,

Dan Kohler
Regional Program Director

GREEN CENTURY FUNDS

AN INVESTMENT FOR YOUR FUTURE
TO LEARN ABOUT ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MUTUAL FUNDS

CALL 800-93-GREEN OR VISIT
WWW.GREENCENTURY.COM

Before investing, carefully consider the Funds' investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. Contact Green Century for a prospectus that contains this and other information. Please read it carefully before investing. Investments are not FDIC insured, nor are they deposits of or guaranteed by a bank or any other entity, so they may lose value.

Distributed by UMB Distribution Services, LLC 4/10

Recent action

Obama's 54.5-mpg proposal moves forward

This summer, the Obama administration announced a plan to require cars and trucks to meet a 54.5-mpg standard by 2025. In November, the administration opened a public comment period on the proposed standards—the first step toward making them a reality.

The standards mark the biggest step America has ever taken to fight global warming—and benefits would also be felt closer to home. Iowa families would have used nearly 1 million fewer gallons of oil and saved \$3.4 million over the Thanksgiving holiday if today's vehicles met the 54.5-mpg standard, according to an Environment Iowa report.

Unfortunately, the National Automobile Dealers Association is lobbying to weaken the standard, and their allies in Congress are vowing to block it. Our staff and members are urging the Obama administration to seize this opportunity to get America off oil and stop global warming.

Solar jobs provide bright spot in dim economy

Solar energy is one of the bright spots in the U.S. economy, with employment growing by 6.8 percent last year—almost 10 times faster than the rest of the economy.

The good news came from the National Solar Jobs Census 2011, which our national federation, Environment America, released in partnership with the Solar Foundation. "This report shows that solar jobs are putting people to work across the country to repower our economy while protecting our environment and our health," said Courtney Abrams, Environment America's clean energy advocate.

While Iowa has been a national leader in wind power, solar energy is also showing growth. We have potential to bring about a boom in solar development in coming years, which this report proves can provide a big boost to the state economy.



Employment in the solar industry grew at ten times the employment rate of the rest of the economy in 2011.

Progress on clean water, clean air in jeopardy

Over the past year, with the public's attention focused on the economy, anti-environmental extremists in Congress have quietly launched an all-out attack on the laws that protect our waters, as well as the air we breathe and the places we love.

Here in Iowa—with our own Great Lakes and the Raccoon River—our waters are a big part of what defines our state. We've made so much progress protecting them over the years, including recent action by the Environmental Protection Agency to restore national Clean Water rules. But that protection is under fire.

It's the most radical, reckless attack on our environment in our lifetimes—and it's happening under the radar, through provisions slipped into massive budget bills.

At stake: Protections for our waters, air and more

Polluters and their allies in Congress have doubled down on their efforts to weaken or eliminate environmental protections. Lobbyists for mining companies, developers and corporate agribusiness have lined the halls of Congress to lobby for rollbacks, and it often seems as if every piece of must-pass legislation is a vehicle for anti-environmental riders.

In the U.S. House alone, lawmakers have cast an incredible 191 roll call votes on measures that would block the EPA from keeping our waters clean, making our air safer to breathe, or enforcing other environmental protections.

In February, the House rammed through a budget bill that took aim at our rivers and streams, our air, and funding for some of America's most beloved places, from Maine's Acadia National Park to Washington's Mount Rainier. In August, the U.S. House passed a bill containing 39 separate environmental attacks.

170,000 stand strong for our waters

Fortunately, by harnessing the power of public support, we've successfully blocked these attacks so far. Our canvassers have gone door to door in communities across Iowa and across the country, educating more than 500,000 people over the last year on the importance of clean water protections. Our activists sent in 170,000 supportive comments to the EPA.

With the Senate rejecting several of the worst proposals this fall, the tide may be starting to turn.

As election season approaches, the rollback attempts will surely get worse. But Environment Iowa and our allies will continue to expose these attacks and mobilize public support so our decision-makers will stand up for clean water.



Middle Raccoon River

New rules will decrease mercury pollution in some of our most precious waters, from our Great Lakes to the Raccoon River.



Interview: EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson

The EPA has recently worked on several clean air standards, including the Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule. Can you explain what these standards mean for the average American family?

These new Clean Air Act standards mean cleaner, healthier air for American families.

The Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule are part of a series of commonsense steps under the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions of mercury, acid gas, particulate matter, arsenic and other harmful chemicals from some of the biggest polluters in the nation.

These reasonable steps will provide dramatic protections to our children and loved ones—they will save tens of thousands of lives and prevent hundreds of thousands of asthma and heart attacks.

What's the best way for our members and supporters to express their opinions on these issues?

Unfortunately, we are at a point where we have to remind some leaders in Washington to put the health of their constituents above the wish lists of special interests. Speaking directly to those who want to undermine commonsense environmental protections is one of the best ways to stand up for your right to clean air and clean water.

For the full interview, visit www.environmentiowa.org/page/iae/lisa-jackson-interview

3209 Ingersoll Ave., Ste. 210
Des Moines, IA 50312
(515) 243-5835

Environment Iowa

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430

Winter Report

VOLUME 5 | NO. 4 | 2012



Ellen MacI

Environment Iowa

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 Iowa. We focus exclusively on protecting Iowa'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.

Sustainable farming continues to grow

Sustainable agriculture has grown from a collection of visionary farmers to a viable market sector. Farmers markets are taking off particularly in Iowa, where we have an above-average 237 markets across the state.

But there is immense potential to provide food from sustainable farms to more people. We can build the market for good food and encourage more farmers to switch from growing commodity crops on chemical-intensive farms to growing food for local customers in ways that are in balance with the environment.

Environment Iowa is backing legislation that would build the market for food from local farms, and support healthy farms that grow diversified crops using sustainable practices.



more online



◀ *A farmers market in Des Moines.*

To learn more about our healthy farms campaign, visit us online at www.EnvironmentIowa.org.