



**ENVIRONMENT WASHINGTON**

Clean air. Clean water. Open space.

# Winter Report

## Bag bans protect Puget Sound wildlife

### Seattle, Bellingham, Edmonds... and counting

Environment Washington is working to protect wildlife in Puget Sound by banning the single-use plastic grocery bags that can choke, starve or poison orcas, seals and other animals. Just last year, a beached gray whale was found in West Seattle with 20 plastic bags in its stomach.

#### 292 million fewer plastic bags

In December, Seattle's City Council voted to ban disposable plastic bags after receiving hundreds of public comments from Environment Washington supporters, urging them to do so. The ban will keep 292 million plastic bags out of Seattle each year.

In the weeks leading up to the vote, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center released a report noting that more than 80 governments worldwide have cut plastic pollution by taking action against disposable plastic bags. Our staff, members and supporters attended public hearings to show support for the bag ban ordinance.

We also made our case to the media: Field Director Katrina Rosen was interviewed on local television explaining why Seattle—and all of Washington—should ban disposable plastic bags, and the Seattle Times wrote an editorial supporting a bag ban after our staff pitched the idea.

#### Momentum builds for statewide ban

Bellingham, Edmonds and Mukilteo have already banned disposable plastic bags.



*Our recent report showed that more than 80 governments worldwide have taken action against plastic bag pollution.*

▲ *Too many disposable plastic bags end up as litter in Puget Sound, where they harm seals, orcas and other wildlife.*

Dow Lambert/US Fish and Wildlife Service

At press time, discussions were underway to ban the bags in Olympia, Lake Forest Park and Bainbridge Island as well. More than 1,200 Environment Washington supporters have urged their local leaders to ban disposable plastic bags, and more than 150 businesses have signed letters endorsing our campaign. By helping communities win local bag bans, we can

make an immediate impact to cut plastic pollution while we work to ban the bags statewide. To that end, Program Associate Robb Krehbiel has met with the speaker of the Washington House and the chair of the House Environmental Committee; both expressed support for a statewide ban.



Staff

### staff in action

◀ *Field Director Katrina Rosen held a press conference in Seattle to shine a media spotlight on the damage caused by disposable plastic bags. In December, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to ban the bags.*

[PHOTO CREDIT]

## To our members

As winter rain refreshes the landscape in 2012, Environment Washington hopes the new year finds you enjoying your favorite places and discovering new ones. Your financial support and activism play an invaluable role in their preservation.

I am excited to join you in continuing to protect Washington's natural treasures as your new field director. In this newsletter, you'll learn about the latest developments to protect Mount Rainier from logging and development, keep plastic bags out of Puget Sound, reduce air pollution, and much more.

This winter, go enjoy the snowy slopes of Mount Olympus, the trails along the Skykomish River, or a special place closer to home, knowing that Environment Washington is working hard to ensure they are just as beautiful for future generations.

Sincerely,

Katrina Rosen  
Field Director

## Recent action

### 54.5 mpg standard nears finish line

In November, the Obama administration officially proposed new clean car standards that represent the biggest step the United States has ever taken to get off oil and tackle global warming.

The standards would require cars and light trucks in model years 2017-2025 to meet a fleet-wide average fuel efficiency and global warming pollution standards equivalent to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025.

The environmental benefits of such a standard are enormous. By 2030, we could save more oil than we imported from Saudi Arabia last year, and slash global warming pollution by an amount equivalent to shutting down 70 coal-fired power plants.

The standard is based on a similar policy adopted in Washington in 2005, with our support, and in 13 other states from 2004 to 2008.

### Citizens speak out against oil subsidies

With Sen. Patty Murray serving as co-chair of the federal debt-reduction supercommittee, Environment Washington and our allies seized the opportunity to urge her to cut taxpayer subsidies to Big Oil.

At press events in Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia, we were joined by activists and allies to protest the fact that while the top five oil companies posted record profits of \$67 billion in the first half of 2011, they also received more than \$44 billion in taxpayer subsidies.

We also traveled to Yakima to reveal a roadside billboard urging Rep. Doc Hastings to end his support of subsidies for Big Oil. We got his attention: Rep. Hastings's office issued an official response after the local NBC TV affiliate ran a story about our efforts.

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▲ We shined a spotlight on taxpayer subsidies for Big Oil at press events in Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia and Yakima.

Staff

# Environment Washington helps hold the line in D.C.

## Congress threatens our waterways and air

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 Washington's waters, from Puget Sound to the Columbia and beyond—as well as the air we breathe and the places we love.

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.

### 170 anti-environment votes

In the U.S. House alone, lawmakers cast an incredible 170 roll call votes in 2011 on measures that would block the EPA from keeping our water 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 national parks like Mount Rainier. In July the House approved a bill that would gut the Clean Water Act, stripping the EPA of much of its oversight authority. In August, the U.S. House passed a bill containing 39 separate environmental attacks.

The voting record of Washington's representatives has been decidedly mixed. Rep. Jay Inslee has been our most consistent environmental supporter. Rep. Doc Hastings has cast 59 votes against the environment—more than any other member of our delegation.

### So far, we've blocked the attacks

So far, none of the attacks have become law, with Environment Washington research, advocacy and grassroots action helping to hold the line.

In 2011, we personally made our case to

members of our congressional delegation and their aides. Thousands of our members have also called, emailed or petitioned their lawmakers to reject any bills that threaten Washington's waters, the quality of our air, or protection of Mount Rainier and other beloved places.

With the Senate rejecting four of the worst proposals this fall, the tide might be starting to turn. We'll keep you informed, so you can let your lawmakers know where you stand. To sign up for alerts, visit our new website at [www.EnvironmentWashington.org](http://www.EnvironmentWashington.org).



## How are they voting?

We have scored each member of our state's congressional delegation based on how they have voted on environmental legislation. Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell (top, l-r) have voted for the environment on every bill. Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (bottom, l-r) voted against the environment more than 90 percent of the time.

To find how your representative is voting, visit [www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/scorecard](http://www.EnvironmentAmerica.org/scorecard) and select Washington.

flickr user: Elkulak



## 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 Standards 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 with Lisa Jackson, visit [EnvironmentWashington.org/page/wae/newsletters](http://EnvironmentWashington.org/page/wae/newsletters).

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# Environment Washington

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## ENVIRONMENT WASHINGTON

Clean air. Clean water. Open space.

## Winter Report

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## Environment Washington

### Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open space. 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 Washington. We focus exclusively on protecting Washington's air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Fed. report could help Mount Rainier

Our work continues to expand Mount Rainier National Park to protect the adjacent Carbon River Valley Rainforest, one of the last inland rainforests in all of North America.

In October, Sec. Ken Salazar released a report, "America's Great Outdoors," that lays the groundwork for new preservation efforts across the United States. We're working to make sure that the Carbon River Valley rainforest gets the protection it deserves.

We've spoken with more than 200,000 people in Washington State about this issue, and our staff members delivered thousands of public comments to Washington, D.C., urging Sec. Salazar to expand the borders of Mount Rainier National Park to protect the Carbon River Valley rainforest's unique ecosystem.

### take action online

◀ *Bicyclist crossing a footbridge in the Carbon River Valley Rainforest.*

*To add your voice to the growing call to save the Carbon River Valley by expanding the borders of Mount Rainier National Park, visit [www.EnvironmentWashington.org](http://www.EnvironmentWashington.org).*

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