Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report

Thanks for making it all possible
From the Acting Director

To be an environmentalist, you’ve got to wrestle with a conundrum: We need bold action on a short timeline ... with broad public support.

We need to do a lot, quickly, to preserve a livable planet. But progress has to earn and sustain the support of the people in order to last—so progress doesn’t often come in one big swooping action. It usually comes one small-ish victory at a time.

At Environment Washington, we acknowledge the conundrum—and we embrace it. We believe in bold action on a large scale. But we work every day at the local, state and national levels to build, step by step, the support this action demands. Each college, or city or state that deploys more renewable energy helps win more people over to the possibility of a world that runs on the sun and the wind. Each company or state that phases out a single-use plastic product shows more people a way to end harm to ocean wildlife from plastic pollution.

These victories are smaller than the challenges demand. But as their pace picks up, their summary effect grows. A year ago, California became the second state to commit to 100 percent zero-carbon electricity. Now, Washington is one of the six states with such commitments, plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. All of the progress that follows wouldn’t have been possible without the dedication and passion of Environment Washington State Director Bruce Speight, who sadly passed away, surrounded by family, this September. See page 2 for a remembrance of Bruce.

Our natural world faces serious problems, and we’ve got to solve them. Our strategy is to make sure that each victory opens a door to the next. Thanks for being with us on the journey.

Sincerely,

Pam Clough
Acting Director, Environment Washington
In Remembrance:

Environment Washington mourns the passing and celebrates the life of our state director Bruce Speight, who died in Seattle on Sept. 20, following a long illness. He was 45 years old.

To all who knew him, Bruce was easygoing, affable, fun-loving. He was also a consistently effective champion of the environment and the public interest, an organizer who made an outsized impact on clean energy, wildlife preservation, campaign finance reform and many other issues.

With Environment Washington, he organized our successful campaign to pass the state’s 100% Clean Electricity Bill, which requires utilities to obtain 100 percent of their electricity from carbon-free energy sources by 2045. He also launched and led our campaign to protect Puget Sound’s Southern Resident orcas, rallying more than 15,000 people to call for action to restore salmon populations, a key food source for the endangered orcas. In April 2019, the Washington Legislature allocated $750,000 to study the issue.

The stereotype of an activist is someone stern, often angry and self-righteous. Bruce was none of these things. He enjoyed people and people enjoyed him. Washington has more clean energy, less plastic pollution and more hope for the future of our children and the places we love thanks to who Bruce was, the work he did and the way he inspired others to act.

With joy and purpose, we’ll honor his memory and carry on that good fight.
Above: Gov. Jay Inslee donned one of our network’s 100% renewable hats before he signed the 100% clean electricity bill into law. Below: Our national network campaigned for 100% renewable energy across the country, from California to Florida (right).
Clean, Green & Renewable Energy

With support from Environment Washington’s members, our national network promoted energy efficiency in our homes, educated city leaders about solar, and fostered the development of wind power. Here are updates on our work to increase renewable energy in Washington.

Gov. Inslee signs Washington state to clean energy
MAY 8, 2019: Washington is the latest state to go all-in on clean, carbon-free electricity.

On May 7, Gov. Jay Inslee signed the 100% clean electricity bill into law, requiring utilities to obtain 100 percent of their electricity from carbon-free sources by 2045. The law also eliminates coal-powered electricity from the grid by 2030.

Washington is proving that where there’s a will to do something about climate change, there are several ways. The 100% clean energy bill, paired with energy efficiency and clean transportation measures, will clean up our air and water. Washington will not only be a healthier place to live, but it will also show other states a pathway to a clean energy future.

Washington follows Hawaii, California, Puerto Rico and New Mexico in committing to 100 percent clean electricity. Our staff or members of our national network were key advocates for the bills in Washington, California and New Mexico.

Washington to adopt energy-saving standards for household appliances and products
APRIL 24, 2019: The cleanest energy is the energy we don’t use—but dishwashers, refrigerators and water coolers all continue to use energy even when we’re not using them. New legislation could change that.

A set of appliance efficiency standards, HB 1444, passed out of Washington’s state Senate and House on April 15 and 18, respectively. With the adoption of these standards, Washington state will prevent 176 thousand metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, the equivalent of taking 38,000 cars off the road each year.

“These types of rules often go unnoticed, but they are a sensible and significant way to improve the health of both people and the planet,” said Rob Sargent, senior director of our national network’s 100% Renewable Energy campaign. “By applying these common-sense measures, our state will take a big bite out of pollution by reducing the amount of unnecessary energy wasted by common products.”

If Gov. Jay Inslee signs the bill into law, Washington will be the second state in the nation to adopt these updated standards.
This year, Environment Washington launched our Save Our Orcas campaign to save the Southern Resident orcas from extinction. Our staff delivered more than 15,000 petition signatures calling on Washington senators to take action.
Conservation

Our network’s staff and members sought to save the bees from toxic pesticides, and to spare Arctic wildlife from oil and gas exploration and drilling. Below, find more on our national network’s efforts to protect wildlife from plastic pollution and revive the country’s best conservation and recreation program.

Six states in six months choose Wildlife Over Waste
JULY 2, 2019: In the first half of 2019 alone, six states took strong action to rein in plastic pollution.

New York, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and Oregon all banned single-use plastic bags, joining California, which banned them in 2016. Maine also became the first state to ban single-use polystyrene foam containers, and Maryland became the second a month later. Bags and polystyrene are seldom recycled. Instead, they often end up in our rivers and oceans, where they never fully degrade and pose a threat to wildlife for years to come.

“Our Wildlife Over Waste campaign is based on the principle that nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute our environment for centuries,” said Steve Blackledge, senior director of our national network’s Conservation program. “When we started this year, it was only California. Now it’s a movement.”

Our network’s staff were instrumental in winning the California ban, and campaigned for the laws in Maine, Connecticut, Oregon and Maryland.

More than 15,000 Washingtonians act to save our orcas
AUG. 20 2019: If you’re like many other Washington residents, you want the state to do all it can to save some of our most beloved, yet vulnerable wild animals: the Southern Resident orcas.

With three more local orcas gone missing and presumed dead this summer, more than 15,000 Washington residents signed our petition urging Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell to help save the orcas by removing four dams along the Lower Snake River. As Environment Washington canvassers explained to petition-signers, the decline of Chinook salmon, which make up 80 percent of the orcas’ diet, is a big factor in the orca’s demise. Dams obstruct 140 miles of salmon pathways along the Lower Snake River.

“We need our senators and state leaders to help lead our region to a solution that restores the Lower Snake River, protects salmon and orcas, and invests in and transitions communities,” said Environment Washington’s Nick Schmitt.
Above: Staff from our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with their allies, delivered 350,000 public comments in support of federal Clean Car standards to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Below: Environment Washington Research & Policy Center’s Bruce Speight presented King County with an award for its commitment to replace its entire bus fleet with electric buses (bottom right).
Global Warming Solutions

Environment Washington worked with other state groups in our network to reduce carbon emissions from power plants, transportation and other sources. Here’s more on what our network did to promote state-level action across the country and defend strong pollution standards for cars and trucks.

Wrong way for the climate: 350,000 oppose rollback of Clean Cars Standards

OCT. 26, 2018: Given the alarming ways our climate is changing, doesn’t it make sense for automakers to focus on making cars that pollute far less, if at all?

On Oct. 26, our network’s national research partner showed the Trump administration that 350,000 Americans think so. Together with coalition partners, Environment America Research & Policy Center delivered that many public comments to the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration opposing plans to roll back federal Clean Car Standards. By freezing the standards at 2020 levels, the plan would lock in more dirty air and global warming pollution.

“We with the latest research telling us we’ll have a climate catastrophe on our hands if we don’t significantly slash global warming emissions, we need to move forward, not pull a U-turn,” said Andrea.

Our network is also calling on state leaders to promote zero-emission electric vehicles.

Twelve ways a governor can start tackling climate change right now

JAN. 10, 2019: As 20 new governors took office in January, a new report outlined actions all governors could take to lead the way on climate solutions.

On Jan. 10, our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center released a report titled “Climate Solutions from Day One,” which detailed 12 executive actions that governors can take immediately to help solve the climate crisis. These range from updating building codes to improve energy efficiency—as Gov. Kate Brown has already done in Oregon—to collaborating in regional climate initiatives like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

“With the stroke of a pen, governors can start cutting global warming pollution today by increasing renewable energy use, reducing transportation emissions and curbing energy waste,” said Andrea McGimsey, senior director of our national network’s Global Warming Solutions program.

Our network urged governors across the country to adopt these recommendations.

We need to move forward, not pull a U-turn.

Andrea McGimsey
Senior Director, Global Warming Solutions campaign, on the federal roll back of Clean Car standards
Our staff (partial list)

Pam Clough
Acting Director

Bruce Speight
State Director (2015-2019)

Rob Sargent
Senior Director, Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy

Bronte Payne
Director, Campaign for 100% Renewable Campuses

John Rumpler
Senior Director, Clean Water for America Campaign and Senior Attorney

Andrea McGimsey
Senior Director, Global Warming Solutions Campaign

Steve Blackledge
Senior Director, Conservation Campaign

Jesse Torrence
Senior Director, Climate Campaigns

Emma Searson
Director, Go Solar Campaign

Morgan Folger
Director, Clean Car Communities

Bart Johnsen-Harris
Environmental Defense: Our Water, Advocate

Doug Casler
Director, Membership