



**ENVIRONMENT WASHINGTON**

Clean air. Clean water. Open space.

# Your Fall Report

## Time to turn the tide on plastics

### More than 40 percent: Used once, thrown away

It's clear we have a plastic problem. Over the past six decades, we've produced more than 9 billion tons of the stuff, most of which now clogs our landfills—or worse.

Too often, this plastic pollution ends up in our rivers, lakes and, ultimately, our oceans. Experts estimate that millions of tons of plastic enter the ocean every year, where it forms enormous garbage patches and harms and even kills wildlife.

#### What a waste

With millions of pieces of plastic floating in the water, it's easy for a bird, turtle or whale to mistake it for food.

It's a costly mistake. When animals eat plastic, it can block their digestive tracts—and they starve as a result.

This was the sad case of a pilot whale that died in June after swallowing more than 80 plastic bags. In all, experts found 17 pounds of plastic lodged in his stomach.

#### Wildlife over waste

Nothing we use for a few minutes should be allowed to pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years.

Environment Washington is calling for a statewide ban on one of the worst forms of plastic: polystyrene foam cups and containers, like the kind you get from restaurants and coffee shops.

This summer, we worked to educate business owners, decision-makers and all Washingtonians about the costs of plastic pollution. In all, more than 300,000 members and



Jason Kam via Flickr, CC BY-ND 2.0

▲ *This is just the plastic pollution we can see. Scientists estimate that millions of pounds of plastic wash into our oceans every year.*

supporters from across the country joined our national network in calling for bans.

Cities and communities are already starting to listen. Baltimore passed a ban on foam cups and containers in April, joining hundreds of other cities across the country that have taken action to ban single-use plastics like bags, straws and foam cups.

Companies are getting the message, too, as McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts both pledged to replace foam cups and containers with 100 percent recycled materials by 2019.

With your support, we'll build on this momentum and convince more cities and, eventually, our state to choose wildlife over waste by banning single-use plastics.



Staff

### Take action

We need your help to protect wildlife in our rivers, lakes and oceans from plastic pollution. Take action online to urge our leaders to ban foam cups and containers in Washington.

[www.EnvironmentWashington.org](http://www.EnvironmentWashington.org)

◀ *This summer, our national network organized beach and park cleanups across the country to raise awareness around plastic pollution.*



Staff

## You make it possible

You care about clean air and water, a healthy climate, and all the places that make Washington beautiful—and so do I. That's why I'm proud to share with you the work we accomplished over the summer.

Environment Washington launched our new Wildlife Over Waste campaign to tackle the mountains of plastic trash produced each year by building public support for bans on items like plastic foam cups and containers.

At the same time, we celebrated a decade of clean energy progress with the release of our sister organization Environment Washington Research & Policy Center's new report showing the incredible advances states like Washington have made on solar and wind power since 2008.

Thank you for making all this work possible with your action and support.

Bruce Speight  
State Director

## Action for our environment

### How can you protect the jaguar's home?

Picture your high school's football field. Now picture 40 of them. That's how much tropical forest the world lost every minute during the past two years. It's a terrible blow to wildlife, as deforestation drives out rare and endangered species like jaguars and orangutans. But what can we do about it here in Washington?

Many of these forests are being clear-cut or burned down to make way for palm oil and soybeans to be used in our everyday products and in farm animal feed. It's a terrible and tragic trade-off. What's more, as the preservation of tropical forests remains critical to slowing global warming, we know the stakes are even higher—for people as well as wildlife.

Environment Washington is calling on U.S.-based agribusinesses like Cargill and Bunge to end their role in tropical deforestation. With your support, we can slow the loss of endangered species and the pace of climate change by saving the world's tropical forests.

### King County leads the way on electric buses

In July, Environment Washington Research & Policy Center recognized King County Metro for its commitment to a 100 percent electric bus fleet.

A report by Environment Washington Research & Policy Center found that a full transition to electric buses in Washington state could avoid an average of 89,567 tons of climate-altering pollution each year—the equivalent of taking 17,291 cars off the road. The report also highlighted King County Executive Dow Constantine's commitment to replacing the county's entire bus fleet with electric buses by 2040.

"We applaud King County for their leadership and commitment to electrifying transportation," said Bruce Speight, state director at Environment Washington Research & Policy Center. "They're showing that it can be done and providing an example for other public transit agencies—as well as school districts—to follow."

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Ricky Osborne Photography

▲ Environment Washington Research & Policy Center's Bruce Speight (left) presents King County Executive Dow Constantine with an award for his environmental leadership at a press conference in Bellevue.

# Renewables are rising in Washington

How quickly are renewable technologies taking hold in Washington? Faster than most experts predicted just a few years ago.

Technologies that were once considered novelties, like wind turbines, solar panels, energy-saving LED light bulbs and electric cars, are now commonplace in America's energy landscape. Virtually every day, we see new developments that make renewable energy more abundant and more affordable than ever.

"Renewables on the Rise," a report released in July by Environment Washington Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group, explores just how far we've come—and what steps we can take today to build a cleaner, greener future.

## 600 percent increase

The last decade has seen explosive growth in the key technologies needed to power America with clean, renewable energy.

Today, our nation produces nearly six times as much renewable electricity from the sun and the wind as we did in 2008. That's enough renewable energy to power more than 34 million homes, or roughly 1 in 4 homes across the country.

At the same time, the average American uses nearly 8 percent less energy than a decade ago, due largely to more energy efficient lighting, appliances and cars—even as our population grew by 20 million.

Of course, building an economy that relies on clean, renewable energy means ending the use of fossil fuels for all activities, including transportation.

## 395,000 electric cars

More than 395,000 electric vehicles have been sold over the last decade. We saw sales surge by 24 percent in 2017 alone, fueled by lower prices, better performance, and a range of attractive and affordable new car models.

We know that repowering America with clean, renewable energy is essential to phasing out carbon pollution by 2050—a necessary step to prevent the worst impacts of global warming.

It will also improve our health by preventing harmful air pollution and eliminating the dangers of extracting, transporting, processing and burning fossil fuels.

Fortunately, our country has renewable energy resources vast enough to power the nation several times over. Businesses, universities and colleges, local governments, and our state can lead the way by setting their sights on meeting all of our energy needs with renewable energy, and by adopting bold targets to move us in that direction.

We've already made incredible progress toward getting all our energy from clean, renewable sources. Now, Environment Washington is calling on decision-makers at all levels to adopt policies aimed at reducing the amount of energy we waste and repowering America with clean, renewable energy.



Athel Rogers Photography

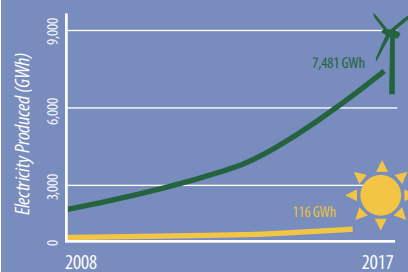
## Explore more online

▲ Environment Washington Research & Policy Center's report, "Renewables on the Rise," found that clean energy is booming in America—and we can expect dramatic growth in the near future.

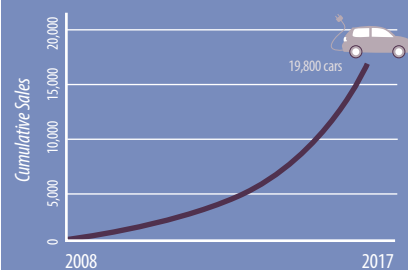
Read the full report at:  
[www.EnvironmentWashingtonCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentWashingtonCenter.org)

# PROGRESS ON CLEAN ENERGY IN WASHINGTON

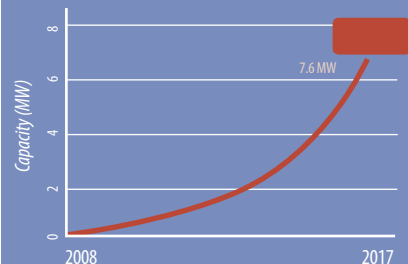
## Growth of solar & wind energy



## Growth in electric vehicle sales



## Growth in battery storage



## FROM 2008-2017

- Solar growth: 229-fold
- Wind growth: twofold
- Electric vehicles: 19,800 sold
- Utility battery storage: 8 MW

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# Environment Washington

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## Your Fall Report

VOLUME 11 | NO. 1 | 2018

### Environment Washington

#### 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 Washington, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Washington'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.

Bus Stoecker/Shutterstock



## Why 219,000 said no to bee-killing 'neonics'

Every year, bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides are used on millions of acres of farmland across the U.S.—but they don't stay there. Whether sprayed on crops or applied to seeds as a coating, recent studies show that neonics are drifting far beyond the field, even showing up in our rivers and lakes.

This is bad news for bees—and us, as we rely on bees to pollinate many of the world's most common crops. And as the pace of bee die-offs continues to accelerate, it's clear that urgent action is needed.

Environment Washington supporters joined a coalition of food safety and environmental groups to deliver 219,000 public comments to the Environmental Protection Agency, calling for a ban on bee-killing pesticides. "Given the facts at hand about the harm neonics do to bees, the EPA should move quickly to ban these dangerous pesticides," said Steve Blackledge, senior campaign director. "We don't have time to wait."



### Support our efforts

**Support efforts to ban bee-killing pesticides.**

Donate online at:  
[www.EnvironmentWashington.org](http://www.EnvironmentWashington.org)

◀ *Environment Washington members and supporters were among the 219,000 public comments our coalition delivered calling for a ban on bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides.*