



Photo: Alexey Stopot/Shutterstock

# Fall Report

## Thousands take action to halt spread of fracking

This summer, Environment Michigan staff fanned out across the state and talked to tens of thousands of Michiganders about the need to protect the Great Lakes from the recent boom in hydraulic fracturing for natural gas, or “fracking.”

### A toxic threat to the lakes

The fracking boom has descended on Michigan, and the threat to the Great Lakes is enormous. The oil and gas industry has snatched up millions of acres of mineral rights across the state, and Encana Oil and Gas, Inc. alone has plans to conduct this dirty gas drilling in 1,700 new locations.

Gas drilling using hydraulic fracturing poses risks of pollution throughout the process. Water is mixed with toxic chemicals and injected into wells to fracture the surrounding rock and extract shale gas, generating huge amounts of contaminated wastewater. In Kalkaska County, a single fracking site contaminated 42 million gallons of freshwater during its drilling process.

This toxic fracking waste can leak, spill, seep into groundwater or otherwise find its way into our waterways. In May 2012, 40,000 gallons of fracking wastewater were sprayed on dirt roads in Cheboygan and Kalkaska Counties as “dust control.” The roads sprayed were as close as one mile from Lake Huron, and all it takes is a rainstorm to wash this contaminated wastewater into the lake.

### Resistance to fracking grows

The Great Lakes are too important to put at risk of toxic pollution. That’s why Environment Michigan is working to build massive opposition to fracking throughout



Photo: Dean Pennala/Shutterstock

▲ The rise of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas, or “fracking,” in Michigan is threatening the Great Lakes with pollution.

the state and halt the spread of this dirty gas drilling.

This summer, Environment Michigan staff pounded the pavement and talked to more than 19,000 people, educating them about the dangers of fracking and the urgent need to take a stand for the lakes. And more than 7,500 people signed

petitions to their local and state leaders urging them to take action to halt the spread of fracking.

This fall, Environment Michigan will continue to educate the public, advocate directly with elected officials, and build the strong grassroots opposition it will take to protect the Great Lakes.



Photo: Staff

### more online

◀ This summer, Environment Michigan staff talked to more than 19,000 people about the need to protect the Great Lakes from fracking.

To learn more and take action, visit us at [www.EnvironmentMichigan.org](http://www.EnvironmentMichigan.org).



Photo: Staff

# To our members

In June, President Obama announced a plan to address global warming. The plan includes increased clean energy and energy efficiency, as well as cuts to carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.

These are crucial steps in the increasingly urgent fight against global warming, and President Obama's announcement comes after years of advocacy from Environment Michigan and our allies.

The president's speech was heartening and exciting. But it will take strong, committed activism to make this plan work—at the grassroots level, in the Capitol, and in Washington. We need to cut our dependency on dirty energy, increase our use of clean energy like solar and wind, boost energy efficiency, and dramatically cut our carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Here at Environment Michigan, we're ready for the work ahead of us. And we're so grateful to have you on our side.

Sincerely,

Dan Kohler, Regional Program Director

# Recent action

## Proposed fracking rules fail to protect natural heritage

In May, as one of the first major policy decisions for new Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed scant protections for America's natural heritage with its revised rules for hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." The move comes even as the oil and gas industry is seeking to expand drilling near treasured places and drinking water sources for millions of Americans.

In fall 2011, the Obama administration's science advisory panel on fracking recommended the "preservation of unique and/or sensitive areas as off limits to drilling." Yet the BLM's proposal does nothing to implement this core principle: It fails to bar the use of toxic chemicals near sensitive areas; establish safe standards for fracking well construction; or even ban the use of open fracking waste pits. "We urge President Obama to step in and protect our natural heritage—and our drinking water—from dirty drilling," said John Rumpler, senior attorney for Environment Michigan.

## Fighting back against cuts to our parks

In June, the National Park Service released a memo planning for cuts to parks across the board—cuts to every park, including treasured areas like Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore here in Michigan. The cuts would result in reduced hours of operation, fewer services, and in some cases, even closure.

Our parks aren't just an integral part of our natural heritage; they're also a major economic boon. Michigan's national parks, monuments and historic sites attracted \$159 million in tourism spending in 2011 alone. But year after year, Congress slashes funding for programs that keep our parks open.

Together with our national federation of state groups, Environment Michigan is mobilizing broad public support for our parks and calling on Congress to give these special places the resources they deserve.

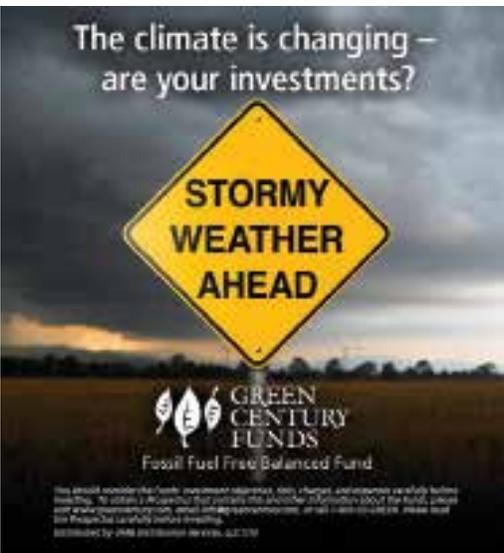


Photo: Andrew McFarlane

▲ Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Environment Michigan is calling on Congress to stop the cuts and give our parks the funding they deserve.

# Obama announces new plan to address global warming

Photo: Creative Commons

On June 25, President Obama announced a climate plan that will set limits on carbon pollution from power plants, advance energy efficiency and increase the nation's commitment to renewable energy.

In the aftermath of severe droughts in the Midwest, Hurricane Sandy, and other extreme weather events, the president's plan to address global warming was loudly applauded by Environment Michigan and many others.

"Today, President Obama responded to the millions of Americans who have spoken out on behalf of their communities and their families, urging him to lead on climate," said Frank Iannuzzi, campaign coordinator with Environment Michigan.

## Responding to an urgent threat

Left unchecked, global warming is projected to bring to Michigan more intense storms and more unhealthy air days. Scientists have warned that the window is rapidly closing for making the necessary cuts in carbon pollution to protect future generations from the worst consequences of global warming.

To respond to this threat, the president's plan contains several key components. It will:

- **Limit carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.** The president directed the Environmental Protection Agency to set limits on carbon pollution from new and existing power plants, which currently lack any such federal limits despite being the largest single source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming.
- **Invest in energy efficiency.** New efficiency measures for buildings and new appliances will cut carbon pollution by reducing our overall energy demand.
- **Build more renewable energy.** The plan focuses on expanding production of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar, especially on public lands.

- **Support affected communities.** The president's plan will help ensure that communities are better equipped to prepare for and recover from the impacts of global warming.

- **Rebuild U.S. leadership internationally.** The president's plan calls for the U.S. to actively engage in international efforts to address global warming.

## Massive grassroots support

Environment Michigan offered special praise for the president's pledge to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants. More than 3.2 million Americans, including thousands of Environment Michigan members, supporters and allies, submitted public comments last year in support of the president setting limits on carbon pollution from power plants.

"Carbon pollution from power plants is a huge part of the global warming problem. Today President Obama acknowledged this and mapped out a plan for cleaning up this pollution," said Iannuzzi. "We also know that this plan is just one important step in a multi-year effort, and that the proof of the plan's success will be in the pudding. Environment Michigan stands ready to assist the president in following through on this critical commitment."



## research

*In June, the president announced a plan to address global warming.*

*To read our report on global warming and extreme weather, "In the Path of the Storm," visit [www.EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports](http://www.EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports).*



## Solar power crucial to climate change plan

Clean, renewable energy like solar power will be an integral part of federal efforts to address global warming.

In June, in his speech on climate change, President Obama emphasized the importance of clean energy in his plan to fight climate change: "The plan I'm announcing today will help us double again our energy from wind and sun."

## 250,000 by 2030

Michigan has huge solar potential, but we still get nearly 60% of our electricity from carbon-intensive coal.

We're pushing to change that. Environment Michigan is working for 100,000 new solar roofs in Michigan by 2020, and 250,000 solar roofs by 2030. To accomplish this, we're working at the local level. Michigan cities have vast solar potential, and we're working with cities across the state to set smart, ambitious solar goals and establish programs that will put solar on thousands more homes, businesses and public buildings.

Cities such as Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids are leading the charge for solar power with strong solar goals and innovative programs.

As the Obama administration moves forward in implementing its plan to address climate change, solar energy in Michigan will continue to flourish. And Environment Michigan will continue to push leaders at the local, state and federal level to support solar power and the clean, renewable electricity it provides.

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### Environment Michigan

#### 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 Michigan. We focus exclusively on protecting Michigan'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.

## Leaders called on to support energy efficiency

In June, with the House Energy and Commerce hearing on the Department of Energy's budget taking place, Environment Michigan urged Congress to fund a critical energy efficiency program.

America's buildings are responsible for nearly one-third of our global warming pollution. Energy efficiency programs are the fastest, cheapest and cleanest way to cut the pollution fueling global warming, and save consumers money at the same time.

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is a key federal program that helps low-income families, seniors and individuals with disabilities make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. But in 2012, Congress drastically slashed funding for the program; without an increase in funding for the coming financial year, it's unlikely that the WAP will be able to continue to operate at all in some states. Environment Michigan called on Congress to fully fund the WAP and support commonsense energy efficiency improvements.



### more inside

*Thousands take action to stop fracking; fighting cuts to our parks; President Obama announces climate plan, and more.*

◀ *Installing energy efficiency measures.*