Dear Environment Michigan Members,

It’s been an exciting year.

With President Obama calling for action to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, we worked with Michigan’s Congressional delegation to win historic new investments in clean energy, putting us on the path to a future that runs on the sun and the wind.

After years of effort, we won a big victory for Michigan’s air and water: The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality finalized rules requiring coal-fired power plants to reduce their mercury pollution by 90 percent by 2015.

We started down the road to reducing pollution from our vehicles and becoming a leader on fuel technology. We’re campaigning for a “clean fuels” standard, which would promote such promising Michigan innovations as advanced battery technology and cellulosic biofuels.

Knowing that these victories will mean cleaner energy, cleaner water and healthier communities in Michigan makes me incredibly proud. But none of these successes came easy: On each of these efforts, we had to overcome strong opposition from special interests and polluters with teams of high-paid lobbyists working to maintain the status quo.

As you’ll read in this report, our combination of research and advocacy helped us move these issues forward and achieve real results for our environment. We started with independent research, took common-sense solutions directly to the decision-makers, and reached out to citizens and other organizations to get them involved. But none of that could have happened without the support of our members. We appreciate all that you do, and look forward to working with you this year.

Sincerely,

Shelley Vinyard
Environmental Associate
Repower Michigan

Two big steps toward a clean energy economy

What if Michigan's towns and cities were powered by the sun and the wind? What if every new home, school and office built in Michigan was a green building? This year, Environment Michigan and our colleagues across the country built support for two important policies that will help make that vision a reality.

Our staff mobilized grassroots action to keep the stimulus package green. The economic recovery plan that President Obama signed this February invested $78.6 billion in clean energy, efficiency and public transit—the largest investment in renewable energy ever. In May, the White House announced a plan to reduce our country's oil consumption from cars and trucks by 1.8 billion gallons by 2016. The plan mirrors the Clean Cars Program that Environment Michigan and our nationwide network, Environment America, have been working to pass since 2005.
Global Warming

**Historic votes on Capitol Hill**

Can we build a new economy powered by clean energy? Can we act boldly and quickly enough to reduce our carbon footprint and draw our planet back from the brink of a climate disaster? Global warming is the challenge of a lifetime, but not because our country lacks the technology or expertise to confront it. The real challenge is building support for the action that’s required, especially given the influence powerful oil and coal interests have on Capitol Hill.

We helped build that support this year to combat climate-changing emissions from the transportation sector. In May, President Barack Obama announced the first-ever federal standard for vehicle efficiency, which mandates that new cars and light trucks average 35.5 miles per gallon. Now, we’re taking the next steps to cut transportation emissions even further.
A different climate in Washington

With the election of Barack Obama and the most pro-environment Congress in decades, hopes are high for a clean break from the delay and denial that characterized the Bush administration’s approach to climate policy.

Over the last year, we outlined a vision on energy and climate policy to put our country on the right track: getting 100 percent of our electricity from renewable sources, improving efficiency in our homes and businesses, and cutting global warming pollution by at least 80 percent by 2050. During the presidential transition, Federal Global Warming Program Director Emily Figdor and Federal Director Anna Aurilio worked to build support for this vision with the new administration.

Despite setbacks, historic progress in Congress

During the first half of 2009, the House of Representatives debated new legislation to combat global warming. We focused our energy on building support among citizens and constituencies that could influence the congressional representatives whose votes would be essential to the bill’s passage.

Our staff educated citizens and lawmakers on the consequences of inaction or delay on global warming solutions. We mobilized our grassroots activists—our staff gathered more than 5,000 petition signatures during one-on-one conversations with Michiganders and from supporters who took action on our Web site.

In July, the House voted to pass the energy and climate bill by a narrow seven-vote margin. Eight members of Michigan’s congressional delegation voted for this historic legislation. We’re working this year to see it through the U.S. Senate, and make sure it stays as strong as possible.
Our Rivers, Lakes and Streams

Clean Water Act protections threatened

For three decades, the meaning of the Clean Water Act was as clear as a backwoods stream: Lake Michigan? Protected. Lake Huron? Protected. Lake Houghton? Protected, along with all Michigan waterways, big and small.

Into each of these great bodies of water flows a series of smaller streams and wetlands. If the smaller upstream waters are polluted or impaired, the larger waters pay the price.

Our rivers, lakes and coastal waters define what it means to be from Michigan. But last year, these iconic waterways faced a renewed threat from polluters. A pair of misguided Supreme Court decisions put Michigan’s rivers, lakes and coastal waters at risk by removing Clean Water Act protections from millions of acres of wetlands and thousands of small streams across the country.

Protecting Michigan’s waterways from pollution will preserve them for recreation, like sailing in Traverse Bay (left) or fishing in one of Michigan’s many waterways, while protecting wildlife like the egret (bottom middle).
Environment Michigan’s staff has been working throughout the year to restore Clean Water Act safeguards to the small streams and wetlands that recent Supreme Court decisions left unprotected. Although there is still work to be done, we’ve made real progress.

- We won our first victory in June, when a Senate committee approved the Clean Water Restoration Act. If it passes, the bill will restore the protections for small streams and wetlands that the Supreme Court stripped away.

- In October, Environment Michigan’s Senior Environmental Attorney, John Rumpler, testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on unlawful pollution threatening our waterways.

- We and our national federation got the attention of local media in more than a dozen states in October, when we released a report on toxic chemicals in the Great Lakes and our nation’s other iconic waterways.


You can find this and other reports on our Web site, www.EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports.
National Forests

A time-out for our last wild forests

Every last acre of our national forests should be protected and preserved—for the beauty and enjoyment they offer to all of us, the clean air and the clean water they supply to our communities, and the home they provide to a rich array of wildlife.

In recent years, the battle over the fate of many of our national forests has been waged around the Roadless Rule—the largest conservation initiative in American history. This rule extended protection to nearly 60 million acres of roadless, and therefore still wild, forests—from the woods on both sides of our state that together make up Huron-Manistee, up past Hiawatha, all the way to Ottawa National Forest.

President Clinton enacted the rule, but President Bush suspended and repealed it, opening the door for mining and timber companies.

Ottawa National Forest
Since 2001, Environment Michigan has worked as part of a broad coalition to restore the Roadless Rule. During the presidential campaign, then-candidate Obama promised to restore it. Yet soon after President Obama’s inauguration, we learned that something was amiss.

Despite the president’s support for the Roadless Rule, Bush-era officials within the Forest Service were still approving plans for logging, mining and other destructive activities in roadless forests in Colorado, Idaho, Oregon and Alaska. In April, we documented our findings in our report, “Quietly Paving Paradise,” and urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to call a time-out on new road-building plans.

**A temporary reprieve for our wild forests**

Six weeks later, on May 28, Secretary Vilsack announced a temporary halt on permits for destructive activities within the national forest. His sweeping directive protects millions of acres of the most pristine forests in America. Still, there is much work to be done. The halt is only temporary. And while Secretary Vilsack’s order ostensibly covered 8.5 million acres of Alaska’s Tongass National Forest, the largest temperate rainforest in the world, officials subsequently authorized some extractive activity.

This summer, along with our coalition partners, we generated enough support for forest protections to gain the attention of Congress. In October, the National Forest Roadless Conservation Act was introduced in Congress with 156 House sponsors, including six of Michigan’s representatives: Reps. John Conyers, John Dingell, Dale Kildee, Carolyn Kilpatrick, Sander Levin and Gary Peters. The Senate version has 25 sponsors.
Environment Michigan Supporters

Citizen support is the cornerstone of Environment Michigan and the Environment Michigan Research & Policy Center. Thousands of Michigan citizens supported Environment Michigan by making membership contributions in fiscal year 2009. The members listed below were particularly generous in backing the organization’s research and advocacy. Names that appear in italics denote Monthly Supporters. These members provide stability to the organization’s resources through our monthly giving program.

Development Committee—contributed $1,000 or more.
Jim Aidala • Elizabeth Anderson • Susan Holcombe • Douglas H. Phelps • Elizabeth Mary Price • Brenda Ramsby

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Financial information
Charts reflect combined financial information for the environmental work conducted by Environment Michigan, the Environment Michigan Research & Policy Center and Environment Michigan’s citizen outreach programs.

Growing a greener Michigan
Environment Michigan gratefully accepts bequests and gifts of securities to support our work. Your gift will assure that we can continue to protect Michigan’s air, water and open spaces for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or e-mail plannedgiving@EnvironmentMichigan.org.

2009 Annual Report