



# Winter Report

Photo: Larry McGalley, Creative Commons

## For lakes protections, the time is now

### Vital clean water rules yet to be finalized

Despite overwhelming public support, the Obama administration has yet to finalize proposed clean water protections for the waterways that feed the Great Lakes, and the lakes are still suffering the results of toxic pollution and development.

When it comes to protecting the Great Lakes, there should be no hesitation. The lakes are too important to risk. That's why Environment Michigan is making an all-out push this winter to protect the lakes for good.

### Righting a wrong

In the past decade, two polluter-friendly Supreme Court decisions left nearly half of the streams and wetlands that feed and filter the Great Lakes open to unlimited dumping and development. Each year, millions of pounds of toxic pollution are dumped into Michigan's waterways, much of which makes its way into the Great Lakes.

In April 2011, at the urging of Environment Michigan, our supporters and our allies across the country, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed guidelines to fix these loopholes in the Clean Water Act. Along with our national federation of state groups, we talked to half a million people and gathered more than 100,000 public comments in support of the proposed guidelines.

### What's the holdup?

It's been almost two years. So why hasn't President Obama finalized these crucial



Photo: iJckr user, Viewoftheworld, Creative Commons

▲ Lake Superior. Environment Michigan is making an all-out push to finalize crucial protections for the streams and wetlands that feed the lakes.

guidelines?

The main culprits are big polluters and their allies in Congress. Anti-environment politicians in Congress have voted for bill after bill to weaken clean water safeguards in recent years. And Exxon-Mobil and other industrial polluters have even threatened legal warfare if the rules are finalized.

### Pushing past the polluters

To overcome the special interests and politicians that are holding clean water protections hostage, Environment Michigan is talking to thousands of Michiganders and building a broad movement in support of the Great Lakes. We're showing President Obama the support he needs to finalize these commonsense protections.



Photo: iStock

### more online

*Toxic pollution threatens the Great Lakes, but proposed clean water guidelines can fix this.*

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



## To our members

I believe 2013 could be a turning point for our environment. The recent rise in extreme weather—including the tragedy of Hurricane Sandy and the record-breaking drought that scorched the country last year—has made global warming impossible to ignore, and hardened my resolve to shift Michigan away from dirty energy and cut our carbon pollution. I know you feel the same way.

Of course, there will be challenges: Anti-environment politicians will continue to cater to the interests of big polluters. But the climate change deniers and the dirty energy lobby are losing their grip on public discourse; they're on the wrong side of science, and the wrong side of history.

Environment Michigan will keep fighting the good fight. And with you by our side, we can make 2013 a year to remember.

Sincerely,

Dan Kohler  
Regional Director

## Recent action

### In Sandy's wake, urgency on global warming

Hurricane Sandy was a wakeup call on global warming for all of us across the country. Thousands of homes were damaged or lost; entire communities were submerged under water; lives were disrupted; the costs were estimated to be as high as \$60 billion; and tragically, dozens of people lost their lives.

Most of us understand that more extreme weather is becoming more common, the planet is warming, and pollution is behind much of it. America can do better. We can reduce the pollution that's behind global warming. To achieve this, Environment Michigan is pushing for more solar power and wind power and working to reduce our dependence on coal, oil and gas.

We can no longer allow Big Oil and King Coal to hold America's clean energy future hostage. It's time for our leaders to heed Hurricane Sandy's wakeup call and embrace clean energy, clean air and a safer future.

### Report details steep costs of fracking

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has spread rapidly throughout Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and other states in recent years, leaving a trail of contaminated water, polluted air, and marred landscapes in its wake. As the fracking boom intensifies in Michigan and Gov. Rick Snyder moves forward with his plan to make the state a leader in this dirty gas drilling, Environment Michigan has released a report highlighting the steep monetary costs of fracking. Whereas the battle over fracking is often framed as a clash between its adverse health and environmental effects and its economic benefits, Environment Michigan's new report, "The Costs of Fracking," finds that in addition to the dangers it poses to our safety, fracking also imposes heavy dollars and cents costs on the public. These costs are incurred in cleaning up contaminated water, repairing ruined roads, addressing health issues, and more. You can read the full report online at [www.EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports](http://www.EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports).



▲ A fracking pad in Butler County, Pa. Inset: John Rumpler, senior attorney with our national federation, speaks with nearby resident Janet McIntyre.

# Michigan wind power cuts carbon pollution

Photo: Steve Morse, Creative Commons

## As if 79,000 cars stopped polluting

After last summer's unprecedented heat and drought prompted Michiganders to call for action in tackling global warming and the rise in extreme weather, Environment Michigan released a new report in December documenting the benefits of wind power in cutting global warming pollution and shifting us away from dirty, dangerous fossil fuels.

The report, "Wind Power for a Cleaner America: Reducing Global Warming Pollution, Cutting Air Pollution, and Saving Water," shows that Michigan's current power generation from wind energy displaces as much global warming pollution as taking 48,000 cars off the road per year. The Environment Michigan report also shows that wind power saves enough water to meet the needs of 3,300 Michiganders.

## Continued growth essential

Environment Michigan was joined by Kali Fox, regional manager for Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Virg Bernero, mayor of Lansing, and Jessica Yorko, environmental justice coordinator for Ingham County, in releasing the report and touting wind energy's environmental benefits to date, as well as the benefits Michigan will see in the future if wind power continues to grow.

"Wind power is already replacing the dirty and dangerous energy sources of the past and creating a cleaner, healthier future for Michiganders," said Virginia Shannon of Environment Michigan. If wind development continues at a pace comparable to that of recent years through 2016, Michigan would reduce global warming pollution by the equivalent of taking an additional 169,000 cars off the road, and save enough water to meet the needs of an additional 11,300 Michiganders.

"Clean energy technologies reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create the jobs of the future right here in Michigan," said Sen. Stabenow. "Wind and other

Michigan energy businesses have already helped Michigan become number one in the country in clean energy patents. We're in position to be number one in clean energy manufacturing and clean energy jobs as well."

## Wind has health benefits, too

The report also highlighted the fact that today's wind energy in Michigan is delivering results for public health, by avoiding 260 tons of smog-causing pollution and 420 tons of soot pollution. More than 777,500 children and adults in Michigan suffer from asthma; increasing the air pollution benefits of wind power can save lives.

Despite the benefits of wind energy and widespread public support for federal policies to promote renewable energy, fossil fuel interests and their allies in Congress have vigorously opposed programs that promote wind production. But in January, President Obama and Congress agreed to extend wind power tax credits as part of the deal reached to avert the fiscal cliff.

"We must invest wisely in a future with cleaner air, fewer extreme weather events, and smarter use of our water resources. And wind power will be a major part of that," said Shannon.



report

Environment Michigan State Associate Virginia Shannon presents our latest report on the benefits of wind power. To read the report, visit us at [EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports](http://EnvironmentMichigan.org/reports).



## Campaign to help Michigan go solar

It's the 21st century. We should be less dependent on oil and coal and rely more on clean, renewable sources like solar power. Going solar is a no-brainer for our environment: There's no pollution, no carbon footprint, it never runs out, and it only gets cheaper over time. If we're going to meaningfully address global warming and shift away from the dirty, dangerous fuels of the past, solar must become an integral part of our energy economy. But too often, our leaders at the state and federal level have failed to take the lead on solar.

Luckily, we have the power to go solar right here in our cities and towns. That's why Environment Michigan is working with city councils, local officials and clean energy advocates in cities across the state to establish strong solar energy standards and encourage investment in solar projects at the local level.

Michigan is still far too dependent on dirty energy: Nearly 60 percent of our electricity comes from coal, all of which is imported from out of state. We can do better. Solar is a homegrown, clean, renewable solution that not only benefits our environment, but creates jobs and strengthens local economies as well. For the sake of our future, Michigan cities must go solar.



Visit us online to learn how you can help:  
[EnvironmentMichigan.org](http://EnvironmentMichigan.org)

103 E. Liberty, Ste. 202  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
Ph: (734) 662-9797

# Environment Michigan

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## Fall Report

VOLUME 7 | NO. 3 | 2013

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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.

## Environment Michigan applauds soot rule

On December 14, the Obama administration strengthened air quality standards for particulate matter or "soot" pollution. Soot pollution is the deadliest of the common air pollutants, causing thousands of premature deaths every year across the country through a variety of cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. It also contributes to haze that hangs over many of Michigan's cities, towns and parks. Sources of soot pollution include power plants and diesel trucks and buses.

The strengthened standards, which were supported by Environment Michigan, better reflect the latest scientific research. The new standard will outline how much soot pollution can be in the air and still be safe to breathe; overall, soot standards were strengthened by about 20 percent. Environment Michigan applauds the Obama administration for standing up for clean air.



Photo: Flickr user encphotos

### ◀ The Grand Haven Municipal Power Plant.

*Environment Michigan applauded the Obama administration's recent decision to strengthen standards for soot pollution.*