

Your Fall Report

What's being done to save the bees?

By Steve Blackledge, senior director of our national conservation program

One in 7 Americans now lives in a state that restricts the use of bee-killing pesticides. How did that happen?

Here's a quick look at the progress to date:

States banning bee-killing pesticides

Neonicotinoids (or neonics for short) are a class of pesticides that have been linked to bee die-offs. They're 1,000 times more toxic to bees than DDT, and even sublethal doses cause a lot of damage. These neurotoxic pesticides attack bees' brains, making it harder for them to sleep, forage, fly and even find their way home.

Fortunately, states are recognizing the threat these dangerous pesticides pose to bees, and they're taking action to limit their use and sale. These are the nine states that have already passed laws to that effect: Connecticut and Maryland in 2016; Vermont in 2019; Maine and Massachusetts in 2021; New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island in 2022; and Colorado in 2023.

Thanks to this progress, 1 in 7 Americans now lives in a state with some restriction on bee-killing pesticides.

Next up: Our sister group Environment California is working to build support for a bill currently under consideration in California that would address non-agricultural uses of neonics, such as on lawns, gardens and golf courses. If successful, it would boost that number to 1 in 4 Americans living in a state with a similar such law. And our national network is looking for more opportunities to advance legislation in more states.



Steve Blackledge, senior director of our national conservation program, with our canvassing team on our Save the Bees campaign.

Taking neonics off store shelves

When it comes to maintaining our lawns and gardens, there are plenty of safe products on the market. Too many garden centers, however, still sell pesticides that are harmful to bees.

Conservationists have already helped convince The Home Depot and Lowe's to commit to phasing out the sale of bee-killing neonics for consumer use. Now, we're calling on Amazon, the world's largest online retailer, to do the same.

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Thanks
for making it
all possible

Is your favorite beach safe for swimming?

Even though our water is cleaner than it used to be, runoff pollution and sewage overflows still can make swimmers sick. Scientists estimate 57 million instances of people getting sick each year from swimming in polluted waters in the U.S. Those illnesses can include nausea, diarrhea, ear infections and rashes.

Our research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center released

NBC News Center Maine



John Rumpler, our national clean water director and senior attorney, spoke with local media about the threat sewage pollution poses to people enjoying popular summer destinations like Gooch's Beach in Kennebunk, Maine.

a new report, "Safe for Swimming?," which revealed that more than half of coastal and Great Lakes beaches surveyed had bacterial levels indicating potentially unsafe levels of fecal contamination on at least one day last year. As part of the report, we created a state-by-state map that allows the public to see which beaches were potentially unsafe for swimming on the greatest number of days last year.

"All of us want to enjoy a safe and healthy day at the beach," said John Rumpler, our national clean water director and senior attorney. "By calling attention to the dangers of water pollution, we can make a strong case for our elected representatives to invest in water infrastructure and stop sewage overflows."

To see if your favorite beach is safe for swimming, visit:
environmentmassachusettscenter.org.

New grants will help reconnect wildlife habitats

Mule deer, pronghorn and elk migrate up to 150 miles in the spring and summer and again to shelter from storms in the winter. These seasonal migrations are critical to the species, but the wildlife following these historic routes also must navigate a treacherous

gauntlet of highways and roads.

In May, the Department of the Interior announced new funding for wildlife crossings and connectivity to help protect these key migration paths. Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau committed nearly \$4 million in grants along with \$9.2 million in matching contributions for 13 projects in nine states that will help secure migration paths, ensure safer highway crossings for the wildlife, and reconnect habitats. The grants are made possible through the Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Migration Corridors and Habitat Connectivity program established by a past secretarial order.

Our national network helped win the inclusion of funding for wildlife crossings in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2021, and our state environmental groups have since helped win support for wildlife crossings in Colorado, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

Rooftop solar on America's warehouses could power millions of households

Covering the roofs of America's warehouses and distribution centers with solar panels could generate enough clean electricity to power every household in every state's largest city, according to "Solar on Warehouses," a new report from Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center and Frontier Group.

"If we want to create a clean energy future, we should look first to the already-built environment that could host the tools we need," said Susan Rakov, chair of Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center's clean energy program and managing director of Frontier Group. "Warehouse rooftops provide a perfect opportunity—they're big, they're flat and they're begging to be put to this crucial use."

Cumulatively, America's warehouses have almost 16.4 billion square feet of rooftop space—about twice the area of Memphis, Tennessee, one of the 30 largest U.S. cities. Putting solar on all these warehouse roofs could generate 185.6 terawatt-hours (TWh) of solar electricity each year, enough to power almost 19.4 million households and reduce global warming pollution equivalent to more than 112 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.

Get more updates on our work online at
<https://environmentmassachusetts.org>.



Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Massachusetts or Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call
1-800-841-7299 or send an email to:
PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMassachusetts.org

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Members and supporters like you have helped deliver tens of thousands of messages to Amazon, urging it to take bee-killing pesticides off its virtual shelves.

Winning federal progress for the bees

Major progress is also being made at the national level:

- In 2021, we celebrated when we won protection for bees on 11 million acres of Department of Defense-owned land.
- The Inflation Reduction Act, passed in early 2023 and advocated for by our national network, included nearly \$20 billion in additional funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) conservation programs. We're urging the USDA to use this funding to help pollinators, such as through its program to reimburse farmers for replanting prairie that provides native bees with much-needed habitat.

Now, our network is laying the groundwork for even bigger wins, as we urge the Biden administration to reinstate a ban on the use of bee-killing pesticides in wildlife refuges (the places bees should be safest) and call on the Environmental Protection Agency to restrict three of the most common types of neonics as they undergo a periodic review.

Of course, there's still a long way to go to save the bees. They face a triple threat of pesticide use, habitat loss and climate change. And the policies that have been passed so far have mainly addressed the consumer use of bee-killing pesticides, while still allowing for agricultural use.

Still, no one thought it was possible to ban DDT or any other pesticide until Rachel Carson wrote "Silent Spring" and sparked an environmental movement. Together, we can keep that movement burning bright as we work to win a ban on bee-killing neonics.

Farmers market-goers show their support for saving the bees.



Staff

Featured staff



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Johanna Neumann
Senior Director, Campaign
for 100% Renewable Energy,
Environment America

Johanna directs strategy and staff for Environment America's energy campaigns at the local, state and national level. In her prior positions, she led the campaign to ban smoking in all Maryland workplaces, helped stop the construction of a new nuclear reactor on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and helped build the support necessary to pass the EmPOWER Maryland Act, which set a goal of reducing the state's per capita electricity use by 15 percent. She also currently serves on the board of Community Action Works. Johanna lives in Amherst, Massachusetts, with her family, where she enjoys growing dahlias, biking and the occasional game of goaltimate.



Environment Massachusetts and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

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Your 2023 Fall Report

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 Massachusetts, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Massachusetts' air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Lobby day builds support for 100% Clean Act

The day before lawmakers began public hearings on the 100% Clean Act, canvassers for Environment Massachusetts lobbied more than 20 offices and delivered more than 9,000 petitions from Bay Staters in support of the 100% Clean Act.

The 100% Clean Act (H.3689) is sponsored by state Reps. Marjorie Decker and Sean Garballey. If passed, the 100% Clean Act will codify a transition to 100% clean electricity by 2035 and 100% clean heat-

ing and transportation by 2045. This bill lays out clear requirements and actions that the Commonwealth must take to reach these objectives.

Johanna Neumann, acting director of Environment Massachusetts, testified before the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy in support of the act.

"Eleven other states have already committed to 100% clean electricity, including Maine and New York by 2040, and Rhode Island by 2033," said Johanna. "It's time for Massachusetts to join the 100% club."



Environment Massachusetts canvassers at the State House. They spent all summer going door to door to collect more than 9,000 petitions from Bay Staters in support of the 100% Clean Act.