



# 2008 Annual Report





**“We have the chance to turn last year’s successes into lasting change for Massachusetts’ environment.”**

**Margie Alt  
For Environment Massachusetts**

## From the staff

*Reflecting on the year behind us, I’m struck by the significance of what we’ve accomplished together.*

*The clean energy policy we championed—now law—will invigorate our clean energy economy and encourage new technology, all while reducing our dependence on coal, oil and natural gas (see Page 3).*

*Running a citizen-powered campaign that made Beacon Hill sit up and take notice, we passed a long-term plan to cut our carbon footprint and require our biggest polluters to ratchet down emissions (see Page 7).*

*And, joining forces with friends and allies across the country, we helped to usher in a pro-environment president and Congress that, I hope, really will bring change we can believe in (see Page 2).*

*Looking forward to the year ahead, I’m hopeful, but mindful that we’ll face serious challenges. We’ve got our work cut out for us.*

*In this climate of financial insecurity and fear, we’re going to need all the help we can get to make sure our elected officials stand strong, don’t bow to special interest pressure, and keep Massachusetts moving in a green direction.*

*Using the economy as an excuse, big industries will move to scuttle and delay enforcement of the Global Warming Solutions Act, even as scientists find evidence that climate change is happening more quickly than predicted. And with an economy turned sour, it’s going to take a lot of hard work to ensure our country seeks out a green economic recovery instead of continuing down the same wrong path on energy.*

*Yes, the challenges we face are significant. But so are the opportunities with which we’re now presented. We have the chance to turn last year’s successes into lasting change for Massachusetts’ environment. We can work to undo the damage of the last eight years, and even pioneer bold new policies to protect our country’s natural heritage. It’s possible this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Now we have to make the most of it.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Margie Alt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "A".

# Election 2008: Voters choose environmental champions

In 2008, voters elected the most pro-environment president and Congress in recent memory. The results of this historic election set the stage for a once-in-a-generation opportunity to break the logjam on crucial environmental initiatives, from reducing the pollution that causes global warming to investing in projects to bring 100 percent of our electricity from clean renewable sources to protecting our most treasured special places.

In recent years, progress at the federal level has been blocked—all too often by just a handful of votes in the House and Senate and a presidential administration that was openly hostile to the environment.

That's why Environment Massachusetts joined Environment America Voter Action to endorse, and work to elect, Barack Obama for president and 28 pro-environment congressional candidates to bring new leadership, strengthen the environmental majority, and help overcome some of the worst obstacles to change in Washington, D.C. On Nov. 4, voters elected all of the candidates we endorsed.

## Getting out the vote

Starting in the summer of 2008, we compiled and distributed more

than 60 individual reports comparing the candidates' records on key environmental issues. With the help of members and supporters, we knocked on hundreds of thousands of doors, asking voters to elect the pro-environment candidates that we endorsed. In the days before the election, Environment Massachusetts members joined in efforts in New Hampshire to help get out the vote for the environment.

## Opportunity for progress

We know that Congress and President Obama are facing a daunting series of challenges, especially on the economic front. But, thanks to the voters, we now have more allies in Congress and the White House.

As 2009 began, we had already met with the Obama transition team and voiced support for some of his first, critical appointments, such as Sen. Ken Salazar, who was nominated to head the Department of Interior. And even before the new Congress kicked off, we began one-on-one meetings with all of the newly-elected candidates we endorsed.

Now it's our challenge to make the most of this opportunity to make real progress for the environment in Washington, D.C.



*Clockwise from top left: President Obama. Volunteers from Massachusetts went door-to-door in New Hampshire to help get out the vote for the environment. Benedict Pond, Bear Town State Forest.*

P. 1 Photo credit: I.K. Nelson.

P. 2 Photo credits, clockwise from top left: J.H. Grant\*; staff; Flickr user Cape Cod Cyclist, under a Creative Commons license.



*Gov. Deval Patrick signed the Green Communities Act on July 2, 2008, which will increase our use of clean energy and bring new green jobs to the Commonwealth.*

# New clean energy law cuts wasted energy, gives green power a boost

Cape Wind is just the beginning.

We're on the brink of a breakthrough moment for clean energy in Massachusetts thanks to major advances in the past year.

What will it mean? First and foremost, a big investment in energy-efficient technologies and buildings that will slash our energy demand. Secondly, a promise to quintuple the amount of power we get from clean, homegrown sources of energy.

It's the kind of change Environment Massachusetts staff and policy experts have advocated for years. And it shows that with cutting-edge policy in place, the promise of clean energy may be closer than many of us had imagined.

## A clean power breakthrough

When Gov. Deval Patrick signed the Green Communities Act—the legislation that enables our strong new package of clean energy policies—he called it “the best clean energy bill in America.”

But only 18 months earlier, we wouldn't have agreed. When it was first released in early 2007, we were disappointed with the Legislature's plan to tackle our energy problems. It would have

kept us dependent on dirty fossil fuels, while doing little to address skyrocketing energy demand. We considered it a step backward.

Backed by the voices of Environment Massachusetts members and supporters, our staff and allies pushed state leaders again and again to strengthen the final product.

Eventually, major commitments by legislative leaders, including former House Speaker Sal DiMasi and Gov. Patrick, helped to completely overhaul the legislation. The law is all the more impressive for its evolution over the course of a year and a half.

## Cut waste, boost renewables

The cheapest, cleanest and fastest way to solve our energy problems is to get serious about energy efficiency. And that's what Massachusetts will do in the coming years, as we work to cut energy waste by 30 percent.

The Green Communities Act directs Massachusetts utilities to save every last watt possible when it makes more fiscal sense to reduce use than build more polluting power plants. That directive, combined with the upgraded building efficiency codes contained in the

P. 3 Photo credit, clockwise from left: Yobidaba\*; DOE/NREL; Staff. P. 4 Photo credit: Povl E. Petersen\*.

law, will mean lasting energy use reduction in Massachusetts.

We'll also see a boom in new wind and solar installations thanks to provisions that promise Massachusetts will get at least 15 percent of its energy from green sources by 2020. Communities across the Commonwealth will get increased assistance to build and install turbines under the law.

### **But coal isn't green**

There are a few provisions in the bill we still don't support. Chief among them is a measure that could provide taxpayer money to subsidize the construction of new coal plants using coal gasification technology.

Coal companies have tried to pass off the process as cutting-edge and green, but, as of today, it remains expensive and unproven, and bottom line, it keeps us dependent on coal. In the coming year, we'll fight attempts to use taxpayers' dollars to subsidize the construction of new coal plants in Massachusetts, and we'll push state leaders to put in place a full moratorium on new coal plants.

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► *Cape Wind would provide enough energy to meet 75 percent of Cape Cod and the Islands' electricity demand.*





*Clockwise from left: John Drummond Kennedy State Park. Mohawk State Forest. Hopkinton State Park.*

## Massachusetts' parks and forests: Protecting our natural legacy

From world-class beaches to old growth forests to critical habitat for rare species, Massachusetts has nearly 1 million acres of treasured public lands. But what will tough financial times mean for our already underfunded parks and forests?

At the beginning of 2008, state public lands faced a maintenance backlog of over \$1.25 billion. We applauded when Gov. Deval Patrick announced a much-needed and long overdue budget increase of \$16 million for environmental programs in Massachusetts, including more than \$5 million for maintenance and infrastructure projects on public lands.

But subsequent cuts have winnowed down the operating budgets for staff and programs critical to Massachusetts' public lands by \$19.5 million dollars, effectively reducing the budget below the 2008 level. And state leaders have yet to fully address the long-term funding that will be critical to address the backlog of projects needed to ensure the health and safety of our state public lands.

### **An all hands on deck effort**

At many of Massachusetts' state parks, signs of neglect are already apparent, from leaking roofs in visitor centers to missing signage and poorly maintained trails. The

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has been hit particularly hard with budget cuts. These cuts have prevented the agency from hiring staff to tend to these maintenance problems. Additionally, DCR has been unable to expand programs that would benefit forests, parks, waterways and open spaces.

To turn things around, Massachusetts will need to make a renewed commitment to our public lands, and a serious investment in funding for capital projects to keep our natural places safe and properly preserved. Much needed projects include dam removals, open space preservation, and conservation programs in state forests.

Environment Massachusetts joined with over 260 other organizations and businesses in the Commonwealth to call on state leaders to make that investment by passing an environmental bond bill that would provide funding for maintenance and capital improvements on public lands.

In October 2007, Environment Massachusetts, Massachusetts Audubon, The Sierra Club of Massachusetts, and thirty other state and local conservation groups submitted a letter to Gov. Patrick and legislative leaders calling on Beacon Hill to ensure that

P. 5 Photo credits, clockwise from top left: Flickr user Parl; Flickr user Frances Duncan; Flickr user Jim Plumb (all under a Creative Commons license).  
P. 6 Photo credit: Jim Lozouski\*.

the environmental bond bill included funds to address the maintenance backlog and increase funding for land preservation.

In July of 2008, the environmental bond bill was adopted by the Legislature, allocating \$1.66 billion over the next five years toward environmental programs. It was signed into law by the governor in mid-August, marking a much-needed turnaround for the state's funding of our parks and open spaces.

### **Recent cuts still threaten parks**

After decades of budget cuts our threatened parks were thrown a lifeline by these recent increases.

However, in the current fiscal situation even these modest gains are threatened. Over the last few months, Gov. Patrick has cut back on several of these necessary budget increases, lopping more than \$9 million dollars from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Given the current budget outlook, further cuts are likely to be proposed.

While this is a time for belt tightening, it is critical that we make budget cuts wisely and still work to preserve and protect the open spaces that give Massachusetts its character and make our communities so much richer.

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► *Turkey Hill Brook in Moore State Park.*





*Environment Massachusetts' Winston Vaughan speaks at a global warming rally at Faneuil Hall.*

## Global warming: Massachusetts gets serious about climate change

Solving global warming is the challenge of a generation. And it's a challenge Massachusetts isn't about to back away from.

In 2008, our staff and members called on Massachusetts' leaders to enact a do-what-it's-going-to-take response to global warming: action strong enough to ensure our state pulls its own weight, and sets a high bar for other states and our leaders in Washington, D.C., to meet.

In August, the call was answered when Gov. Deval Patrick signed our Global Warming Solutions Act into law, committing Massachusetts to slash our carbon footprint down to a size that will help cool the planet. The new law requires slashing emissions to 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, and 80 percent by 2050.

What will it take? To meet these targets, we'll need to cut pollution across the board—from power plants, transportation, manufacturing and other carbon dioxide emitters. We'll also need to maximize our potential to tap clean sources of power and cut down on energy waste (see Page 5).

### **The clock is ticking**

Massachusetts' plan of action mirrors the strong response top climate scientists agree will be necessary to combat

the worst effects of global warming. Already the Arctic sea ice is vanishing so quickly that some scientists predict the sea will be ice-free in summer within the next few decades. The longer we delay emission curbs, the harder it will be to achieve the cuts necessary to avert even more catastrophic effects.

That's why we called for a swift response, and one bold enough to serve as a template for other states and the federal government to follow.

### **Grassroots push pays off**

Big carbon polluters fought hard against the Global Warming Solutions Act, and were nearly successful in delaying a final decision on the bill as the Legislature prepared to take its final recess on July 31.

But a powerful grassroots push mobilized by Environment Massachusetts supporters kept lawmakers' feet to the fire. More than 25,000 Environment Massachusetts members, online activists and supporters signed petitions and e-mailed or called their representatives in the months before the final vote.

In addition to the flood of calls and e-mails to lawmakers' offices, Environment Massachusetts members attended more than 20 in-district

P. 7 Photo credit: CJ Gunther/Greenpeace.



## Feeling the heat

### Global Warming and rising temperatures in the United States

*In October, we released "Feeling the Heat," a report that identified 2007 as one of the warmest years on record. Key findings for the report included:*

- *In 2007, the average temperature at the Blue Hill Weather Observatory near Boston was 1.2 degrees Fahrenheit above normal.*
- *Worcester's above-average temperatures in 2007 are part of a warming trend. Between 2000 and 2007, the average temperature was 1.2 degrees Fahrenheit above the historical average in Worcester. Nationally, the average temperature during this eight-year period was at least 0.5°F above normal at nearly 90 percent of the weather stations.*

- *Logan Airport reported a 50 percent increase in the number of 90 degree Fahrenheit days over a period of 44 years. In 2007, it experienced 12 days where the temperature hit at least 90 degrees Fahrenheit, 7 more days than the historical average.*

*These seemingly small temperature changes reinforce predictions about global warming and are, in historical terms, dramatic. Scientists project that the average temperature will increase 3 to 7 degrees over the next century, a rapid and unprecedented increase in comparison with the best available records from the last several thousand years.*

face-to-face meetings with legislators, urging them to pass the Global Warming Solutions Act.

The push paid off when the Massachusetts Legislature put its final stamp of approval on the bill hours before recessing for the year. The vote in both houses was unanimous. A week later, Gov. Patrick signed the bill into law. We consider it one of 2008's signature accomplishments for our state's environment.

### New England acts together

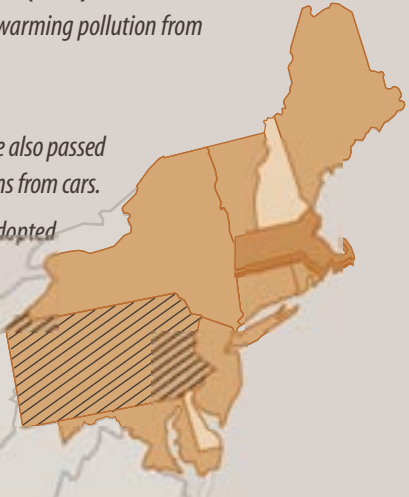
We also celebrated the culmination of a decade-long push to bring together 10 Northeastern states—including every state in New England—in a

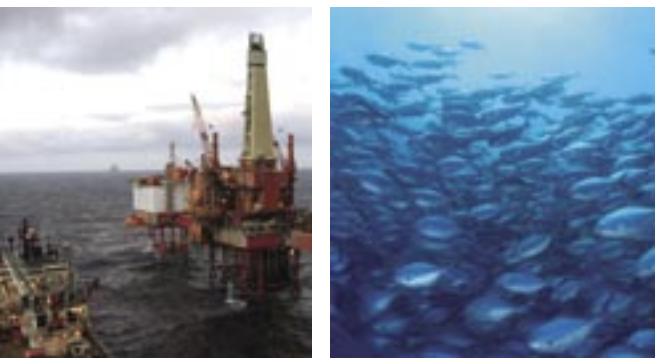
joint effort to slash emissions from one of the top sources of global warming pollution: power plants. In September, the signatories of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative held the first-ever auction of pollution permits under a cap-and-trade program expected to cut power plant carbon pollution 10 percent over the next decade.

Power plant operators have a stronger incentive to cut emissions now that they'll pay for every pound of pollution they emit. And the incentive will become even stronger as the amount of pollution permitted under the plan is ratcheted down over the coming years.

### A regional view of action on global warming

- ▶ **The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)**  
*These states have promised to cut global warming pollution from power plants 10 percent by 2019.*
- ▶ **Cleaner cars**  
*These states are members of RGGI and have also passed standards to limit global warming emissions from cars.*
- ▶ **Pennsylvania did not join RGGI but has adopted the Clean Cars Program.**
- ▶ **Setting the bar**  
*This year, Gov. Deval Patrick signed our Global Warming Solutions Act into law, which will slash emissions 80 percent by 2050.*





Top: Environment Massachusetts volunteers taking signed petitions to the National Marine Fisheries Service in Gloucester. We're working to stop oil drilling and overfishing off our coast.

## Whales' habitat protected, but threat of drilling looms

Destructive overfishing, coastal pollution from fertilizers and toxic materials, oil and gas drilling, habitat destruction from bottom trawling and coastal dredging and filling, and global warming all affect the ocean's health and ability to bounce back from changes.

Many populations of whales are depleted or threatened with extinction, including the 400 or so remaining North American right whales that feed off Massachusetts' coast. In 2008, Environment Massachusetts members and supporters came together to call on federal regulators and Congress for action to protect our oceans and the species that depend on its health for survival.

### Standing up for Stellwagen Bank

To protect the humpback whales, the world's last-remaining North American right whales and other ocean life that depend on the waters off our coast, Environment Massachusetts called for an end to practices that damage the health of Massachusetts' ocean sanctuaries.

Stellwagen Bank, the rich feeding ground running from Cape Ann south to Cape Cod, was designated a national marine sanctuary in 1992. Unfortunately, reckless industry practices are now threatening the

whales and the ecosystem. Ships have struck and killed endangered right whales. Whales are getting caught in discarded fishing gear. Bottom-trawling is destroying the fragile ocean floor that nourishes the entire ecosystem.

We called for an end to these destructive practices, and saw progress in December, when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a new rule requiring large ships to slow down in order to avoid collisions with the endangered North American right whale.

### A threat to Georges Bank

But ocean protection suffered a major setback in October when, in the heat of a presidential campaign and with gas prices spiking, Congress failed to renew a 27-year-old moratorium on new drilling off our coasts.

We protested the end of the drilling moratorium. Along with Rep. Ed Markey (Malden), we attempted to introduce a special provision in the U.S. House of Representatives to extend ongoing protection for Georges Bank from drilling. East of Cape Cod, Georges Bank's shallow floor supports a rich coastal ecosystem, home to seals, dolphins, sea turtles and as many as 600 humpback whales.

P. 9 Photo credits, clockwise from top: Staff; Simon Pedersen\*; Graham\*.  
P. 10 Photo credit: Brett Atkins\*.

## Stopping overfishing

In October, we witnessed an attempt by the Bush administration to weaken the rules that protect America's fisheries from commercial overfishing. We joined with other members of Environment America in fifteen coastal states to oppose the rollback, and collected more than 40,000 petitions from Americans in support of maintaining the environmental review currently required to protect ocean ecosystems from further degradation.

The rollback pushed by the Bush administration would have severely limited the ability of the public to participate in key decisions about fishing. The proposed rules would also hand more responsibility to the same regional fishery management councils that have for many years turned a blind eye to destructive overfishing.

The public outcry paid off. In December, the rule was withdrawn, leaving the environmental review process intact. In the coming year, we'll work to convince the new administration to strengthen the role of science in the management of fisheries.

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▶ *A humpback whale breaches.*





*Chemicals from manufacturing can be found in the bodies of the peregrine falcon.*

## Keeping dangerous chemicals out of our environment

Polluters continue to pump billions of pounds of toxic chemicals into our air, land and water each year, many of which can cause cancer and other severe health problems.

Chemicals sprayed on laptops and mattresses are now found in the bodies of some species of wildlife, including the peregrine falcon. Mercury contaminates fish across the nation, and scientists are finding many of these same toxins in our bodies.

In 2008, Environment Massachusetts, working with our partners in the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, called on Beacon Hill leaders to help our state switch to safer chemical alternatives and phase out dangerous toxins.

### **Finding and using better alternatives**

In March, the Massachusetts Senate took the first steps toward policy that could help to phase out many toxins and one day make products across America safer.

The Senate passed the Environment Massachusetts-backed Safer Alternatives Bill, which would require manufacturers to use existing, safer alternatives to many of the chemicals most dangerous to our health and well-being.

Under the bill, the state would set

up a reasonable plan to help businesses make the transition, as well as provide the technical assistance, grants and loans, and research and development assistance to make the transition a success.

It would also spur research and development to find safe alternatives to dangerous chemicals for which we do not yet have a viable replacement, taking advantage of Massachusetts' brainpower and tech-powered economy.

The legislation would direct state agencies to create a research and development plan, and then tap Massachusetts' brightest minds to find the replacements for toxics that cause cancer, developmental disabilities, infertility, diabetes and other diseases and disorders.

### **Looking ahead**

The Safer Alternatives Bill encountered strong opposition from many chemical companies and manufacturers' lobbyists, but passed its first hurdle with Senate approval.

Unfortunately, the bill wasn't taken up before the full Massachusetts House of Representatives, and thus wasn't enacted before the Legislature recessed in July. We'll continue to push for its implementation in the year ahead.

P. 11 Photo credits: Stephan Angue\*.

# Pushing for cleaner cars, cutting diesel soot

Massachusetts' air quality continues to suffer as a result of the cars and trucks on our roads.

Cars and trucks cause 40 percent of the smog pollution in the state, and generate one-third of the state's global warming emissions. Soot from diesel trucks and buses continues to pose a major threat to the health and well-being of thousands of Massachusetts citizens.

In 2008, Environment Massachusetts worked to cut the amount of diesel soot pollution in our air, as well as to uphold recent progress to slash emissions from cars sold in the Commonwealth.

## Cut soot to protect our health

Pollution-control equipment, combined with cleaner fuels, would reduce hazardous diesel soot pollution emitted by many buses and trucks by up to 90 percent.

That's significant, because diesel soot pollution is especially dangerous to human health. Each year, hundreds of Massachusetts citizens suffer heart attacks and premature death as a result of the fine particles in soot pollution that can become lodged in lungs and even pass into the bloodstream. Thousand more suffer asthma attacks and respiratory disorders brought on by the pollution.

We pushed the Massachusetts Legislature to require dirty diesel engines used in the state to install pollution-control equipment, but Beacon Hill failed to call a vote for the clean air provision before the full membership of the Massachusetts Senate or House of Representatives.

## Fighting for clean cars

Massachusetts has already put laws on the books to require car dealers to sell cleaner, less-polluting cars. And we're not alone: 12 other states have adopted the same policy, designed to cut warming pollution from cars and trucks 30 percent by 2016.

But in February of 2008, the Bush administration, against the recommendations of career scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency, put a halt to state laws requiring manufacturers to cut pollution from their vehicles.

With our support, state leaders have already begun to fight back against the rollback. Attorney General Martha Coakley joined a lawsuit brought on by states affected by the Bush pro-pollution rule. In one of his first official actions, President Obama urged his EPA head to re-examine the Bush Administration decision, paving the way for it to be overturned and for cleaner cars to come to Massachusetts and other states.



*Tougher emissions standards will reduce toxic air pollution from cars and trucks.*

P.12 Photo credits, top to bottom: James Morgan\*; Adrian Baras\*.

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