



Winter Report

Blue Ridge Kirtles

Momentum builds to defend N.C. from fracking

Gearing up for a fight in the Legislature

Last summer, at the urging of Environment North Carolina and allied groups, Gov. Bev Perdue vetoed state Sen. Bob Rucho’s pro-fracking measure, which would have set the stage for fracking near the Deep River, where gas companies have begun to purchase thousands of acres in drilling leases.

Unfortunately, the fight to preserve our rural landscapes is far from over.

When legislators reconvene for a brief six-week session this May, pro-drilling lawmakers will almost certainly push to repeal North Carolina’s prohibitions on fracking, opening the door to drilling not just the Deep River, but also areas beneath Jordan Lake, Falls Lake, and the Dan River, where gas deposits are also suspected.

Before the May session, Environment North Carolina will ramp up its organizing efforts, collecting thousands more petition signatures; turning citizens out to public hearings; meeting with state leaders face to face; and building more support among local media, businesses and other leaders who shape opinions in each district.

Fracking threatens land, air and drinking water

Fracking, short for hydraulic fracturing, has emitted toxic air pollution and marred landscapes across the country. It’s also suspected in more than 1,000 cases of drinking water contamination—and a recent Duke University study linked fracking to methane in drinking water wells.



j.HenryFair

▲ A flow-back pit stores fracking wastewater tainted with carcinogenic chemicals.

Last summer, as Sen. Rucho pushed his pro-fracking bill through the General Assembly, Environment North Carolina worked with allies and helped turn the tide, convincing the governor to issue a veto, and preventing House lawmakers from overriding her action.

Come the spring session, Environment North Carolina will redouble efforts to

protect the rural Piedmont—and all our land—from destructive drilling.

“So far, we’ve kept efforts to frack North Carolina at bay,” said Elizabeth Ouzts, director of Environment North Carolina. “But in the coming short session, we’ll need to keep defending the governor’s veto—and redouble efforts to protect our treasured land from destructive drilling.”



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◀ Residents of heavily-fracked Pennsylvania describe pollution and lack of accountability from gas companies.

Fracking could impact the drinking water for as many as 2.4 million residents in NC. Read more online. www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org.



To our members

I've got good news, bad news and better news. First the good news. As we closed the book on 2011, we celebrated a step toward protecting the rural Piedmont, and all of North Carolina, from the threat of toxic gas drilling—at least for now.

The bad news? The gas industry and its allies in the General Assembly continue to spend time and money in Raleigh trying to open up our rural landscapes and our waters to dangerous gas drilling.

Fortunately, there's better news. From Raleigh to Pittsboro, Tar Heels are calling on Gov. Bev Perdue and the rest of our leaders to protect North Carolina from drilling. And the best news of all? North Carolinians from all walks of life care deeply about our environment, our health and the places we love. No matter how powerful the gas industry may be, when people come together to defend our environmental values we almost always find a way to win. Thanks for joining us.

Elizabeth Ouzts, State Director

Recent action

54.5-mpg standard will clean air, protect OBX

This summer, the Obama administration announced a plan to require cars and trucks to meet a 54.5 miles per gallon standard by 2025. The standards are a critical step to getting North Carolina off oil—and protecting places like the Outer Banks from dangerous drilling.

By reducing oil consumption, the proposed standards would also generate an annual savings of \$45 billion at the pump by 2030 across the country. Our report “Gobbling Less Gas for Thanksgiving” spelled out how much American families would have saved during the holidays if the standards were in effect today.

Unfortunately, with the National Auto Dealers Association lobbying to weaken the new standards, and some of their allies in Congress vowing to block it altogether, this victory is not yet a done deal. Environment North Carolina's staff and citizen members are urging the Obama administration to seize this important opportunity to cut our oil dependence, stop global warming, and help protect our beaches.

Half of N.C. lawmakers score 'zero' on environment

A record 55 representatives and 24 senators failed to cast a single contested vote in favor of the environment in 2011, a reflection of the repeated attacks waged by the General Assembly on the state's air, water, and open spaces last year.

The scorecard tracks 10 contested votes in the House and 10 in the Senate on a range of bills that have largely become law, including those that push back a key deadline in the Jordan Lake clean-up plan, remove protections for an unspoiled Western North Carolina trout stream, and drastically limit the conservation of important green spaces across the state, such as those that surround the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The pro-drilling, pro-fracking Senate Bill 709, which stalled in the House following Gov. Bev Perdue's veto, is the one bright spot of the scorecard.

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Mind Gutter

▲ New standards for cleaner cars will ease our oil addiction, helping to protect places like the Outer Banks from dangerous drilling.

Offshore wind, not oil rigs, for North Carolina's coast

Ollie Jay

Obama announces new protections for Atlantic coast

This November, in a move supported vigorously by Environment North Carolina and its national federation, the Obama administration finalized plans to keep the Outer Banks, Wrightsville Beach, and the rest of our shores rig-free until at least 2017.

Earlier this year, under pressure from Big Oil, the president had begun to waver on a 2010 decision that protected 200 million acres off the Atlantic Coast from drilling. This action followed the receipt of tens of thousands of public comments gathered by Environment North Carolina and allied organizations, along with an endorsement from dozens of coastal businesses.

The November announcement reaffirmed the president's original commitment to protect North Carolina's coast for at least another five years.

"Today the Obama administration stood up to Big Oil and protected our beaches from the risk of a devastating spill," said Margaret Hartzell, policy advocate for Environment North Carolina. "But we won't rest until the protections for our coast are permanent—and we finally tap clean, renewable energy, like offshore wind."

Offshore wind means clean energy, green jobs for N.C.

Drilling off our coast poses serious environmental threats and jeopardizes nearly 70,000 jobs. In contrast, if North Carolina were to build an offshore wind farm, it would mean clean, renewable energy—and as many as 20,000 new jobs for Tar Heels.

Nearly three years ago, researchers at UNC concluded there's enough wind off the coast of North Carolina to power the entire state—and then some.

In fact, developing just a fraction of our

wind potential could supply energy to 20 percent of the state.

This fall, Environment North Carolina worked to build support for offshore wind, encouraging new legislation to spur the development of turbines. In particular, staff and supporters are pushing a bill to give incentives for as much as 5,000 megawatts of offshore wind over the next 20 years, the equivalent of seven major coal-fired power plants.

Further, last summer, Environment North Carolina backed the creation of Gov. Bev Perdue's offshore wind task force, which will craft recommendations for the development of turbines. Staff and volunteers fanned out up and down our coast, enlisting the backing of more than 50 coastal businesses for this proposal.

"North Carolina has more potential for offshore wind than any Atlantic state," said Hartzell. "Combine that with our world-class research institutions and existing green energy incentives, and North Carolina can chart a clean energy future, with offshore wind at the forefront."



Justin Wyne

take action



The new mercury standard will reduce toxic pollution in our air and water, including Falls Lake. Visit our website to read more, and to thank the president for protecting our environment and health.



whitehouse.gov

Interview: EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson

With the backing of Environment North Carolina, the EPA has recently issued two new standards to cut pollution from power plants. Can you explain what these standards mean for the average American family?

These new Clean Air Act standards mean cleaner, healthier air for American families.

The Mercury and Air Toxics Standard and the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule are part of a series of common sense steps under the Clean Air Act to reduce emissions of mercury, acid gas, particulate matter, arsenic and other harmful chemicals from some of the biggest polluters in the nation.

These reasonable steps will provide dramatic protections to our children and loved ones—they will save tens of thousands of lives and prevent hundreds of thousands of asthma and heart attacks.

What's the best way for our members and supporters to express their opinions on these issues?

Unfortunately, we are at a point where we have to remind some leaders in Washington to put the health of constituents above the wish lists of special interests. Speaking directly to those who want to undermine environmental protections is one of the best ways to stand up for your right to clean air and clean water.

For the full interview, visit www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org/page/NCE/Lisa-Jackson-interview

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Environment North Carolina

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FrankKehren

Environment North Carolina

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and green 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 North Carolina. We focus exclusively on protecting North Carolina's air, water and green spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

New efforts to preserve Blue Ridge

In the last session, over protests from Environment North Carolina and allied groups, the General Assembly slashed conservation funds by 85 percent, laying unprotected Blue Ridge land vulnerable to development.

This winter, in the run-up to the General Assembly's shortened six-week session, Environment North Carolina is laying the groundwork for an all-out push to restore funding to our premiere preservation programs—and put those dollars to use conserving scenery along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

“Driving down the Parkway feels like a trip through a national park, just what its creators intended when they built it 75 years ago,” said Elizabeth Ouzts, Environment North Carolina state director. “We have North Carolina's conservation efforts partially to thank for the incredible views—and in the next session, we'll be building support for these very programs.”



more online

◀ *Skinny Dip Falls in the Blue Ridge mountains. In the coming six-week session, Environment North Carolina will be working with state leaders to restore funding to our premiere conservation program. Read more online. www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org*