



## Shifting the balance to healthy, local food

### Agriculture dominated by polluting factory farms

Farming should help the environment, not hurt it. Yet large-scale, industrial farms that cause a host of problems for our water, air and quality of life, dominate agriculture today.

Highly specialized mega-farms' use of chemical fertilizers, pathogens from antibiotics, pesticides and other harmful practices have polluted more than 100,000 miles of rivers and streams across the country.

Factory farms also contribute to global warming and air pollution because of their intensive energy use and because they regularly truck food great distances. Emissions resulting from fertilizer use and animal production alone constitute 7 percent of total greenhouse gas pollution in the U.S.

### 100 organic farms and 200 markets

While North Carolina is home to more than 150 organic farms and 200 farmers markets, the vast majority of our food still comes from outside the state from polluting mega-farms. N.C. State University researchers estimate that less than 1 percent of the food sold in our supermarkets is grown in the Tar Heel state.

This summer, as Congress debates a new version of the Farm Bill, Environment North Carolina is calling for a shift in support to local, sustainable farms. The Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act would incentivize sustainable farms and help create networks to allow those farms to supply more North Carolina schools, res-



Photo: Donald Lee Pardue, Creative Commons

▲ Farm in Lee County

taurants and stores. Congressmen David Price and Mike McIntyre have already sponsored the legislation, and we are urging the rest of the state's congressional delegation to follow suit.

Last summer, the U.S. Senate passed their version of the Farm Bill, including amendments supported by Environment North Carolina to fund Farm-to-School programs and offer organic crop insurance. How-

ever, the U.S. House of Representatives never took up the legislation. A stopgap Farm Bill approved as part of the fiscal cliff deal in January will expire in September of this year, providing lawmakers another chance to promote sustainable farms.

"Too much of agriculture today is dominated by polluting factory farms," said Elizabeth Ouzts, director. "But it doesn't have to be this way, especially here in North Carolina."



Photo: Donald Lee Pardue, CC

### more online

For more information on our campaign to support sustainable farms, visit [www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org](http://www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org) or follow us on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/EnvironmentNorthCarolina](http://www.Facebook.com/EnvironmentNorthCarolina).

◀ Farmers market in Willow Springs



Photo: Staff

## To our members

There's no doubt that the environment has taken a beating from policy makers in Raleigh as of late. From massive cuts to our land protection programs, to the constant cry of "drill, baby, drill," too many in our state capitol appear intent on undoing protections for our air, water and open spaces, and stalling our progress towards a clean energy future.

That's why your continued membership is so critical. It's that time of year again—the time when one of our staff members in our trademark blue t-shirt will knock on your door to tell you about our work to protect the state's environment. I hope you'll continue to support the work that we do. Now, more than ever, we need you and thousands of people like you to join us in standing up for the places we love and the values we share. After all, against sometimes-incredible odds, your membership is allowing us to make progress.

Thank you for being with us,

Elizabeth Ouzts  
Director

## Recent action

### Legislature could snatch away solar victory

Solar power is clean, virtually pollution-free, locally generated, inexhaustible and a proven jobs-creator. And it's a growing part of North Carolina's energy mix and economy, thanks to smart policies that we helped put in place in recent years.

Propelled by these policies, North Carolina ranked fifth in the nation for installed solar projects in 2012 and is on track to be fourth in 2013, according to the Solar Energy Industry Association.

Yet no good deed goes unpunished in the current North Carolina Legislature. A House committee narrowly approved Rep. Mike Hager's bill to undo the state's clean energy standard. A separate Senate measure would dismantle our clean energy tax incentives.

"We're at a tipping point, where North Carolina can become a major leader in solar power," said Elizabeth Ouzts, Environment North Carolina's state director. "Yet these lawmakers seem ready to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. We've come too far to turn back now."

### Lawmakers dismantle environmental commissions

Developers, polluters, and other special interests would be allowed to write the environmental rules that are supposed to keep them in check, according to a measure that passed the Senate earlier this year along party lines.

"This bill lets the foxes guard the hen house," said Elizabeth Ouzts, state director.

The measure, sponsored by Sen. Bill Rabon would fire all members of several key environmental and energy commissions, and allow a majority of the newly appointed members to represent developers, polluters, and other special interests.

The House version of the bill, adopted in March, would restore requirements that a majority of commissioners not represent the industries they are supposed to regulate. As of press time, the two versions had not been reconciled.



## Toward a greener future

Environment North Carolina and Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org).

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Photo: Apple, Inc.

▲ Apple's data center in Maiden is powered by solar photovoltaics.

# Challenges ahead for the Blue Ridge

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Following two years of record-lows for the state's land conservation funds, Gov. Pat McCrory proposed a 40 percent cut to land conservation funds in his 2013-2014 proposed budget, dealing another blow to the programs designed to protect vulnerable lands alongside the Blue Ridge Parkway and other treasured green spaces. The governor also proposed raiding dedicated funds for state parks and natural areas.

"The governor's budget is bad news for the Parkway and other treasured green spaces," said Environment North Carolina Field Associate Liz Kazal. "You would think protecting one of North Carolina's most prized landscapes would be a higher priority."

## Two-thirds of surrounding land vulnerable

The Blue Ridge Parkway is the state's most iconic drive, covering famous peaks from Mt. Mitchell to Grandfather Mountain. But the parkway's scenery is at risk, with two-thirds of the surrounding forests and farmlands vulnerable to unplanned development. The state's land conservation programs, first created in 1986, have protected tens of thousands of acres along the Parkway since their inception.

Environment North Carolina called on the General Assembly to restore the dedicated revenues diverted by Gov. McCrory and do better for the state's flagship conservation fund, the Clean Water Fund, to which the governor allocated \$6.75 million, compared to the Fund's historic high at \$100 million.

## Paths to progress

At the federal level, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) allocates royalties from offshore oil drilling to the purchase of privately-owned, ecologically important conservation lands, such as those that surround the Parkway.

Unfortunately, Congress annually raids the LWCF for non-conservation purposes, leaving a legacy of backlogged

conservation and recreation needs.

Sens. Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, and two dozen other U.S. Senators have stepped up for the conservation of our natural areas by co-sponsoring legislation that would put an end to the annual raid on LWCF funds. The budget passed by the U.S. Senate in March also includes full funding for the program, more than 50 years old. In the House, a bipartisan group of more than 150, including Reps. Mike McIntyre, David Price, G.K. Butterfield, Mark Meadows, George Holding, and Howard Coble, have all urged appropriators to fully fund LWCF.

"I applaud these members of our congressional delegation for their continued leadership in protecting our parks and forests by supporting full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund," said Kazal. "We urge the General Assembly to follow their lead and be a champion for North Carolina's natural heritage by restoring funds to our conservation programs for the upcoming year."



Photo: John Brumbaugh/Bigstock

## more online



For more information on our work to protect the Blue Ridge, visit [www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org](http://www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org)



Photo: TexPix/Publishing/Bigstock

## Fracking by the numbers

Out-of-state oil and gas companies have already bought upwards of 9,000 acres to drill in Chatham, Moore and Lee counties, and the General Assembly has created a polluter-friendly commission to pave the way for the controversial drilling practice—as early as 2014—over the objections of thousands of North Carolinians and local elected officials.

We refuse to let the drinking water that serves 400,000 become tainted—and we have a plan to convince state leaders to maintain North Carolina's moratorium on fracking.

The process has contaminated water supplies and increased air pollution around the country. A study from North Carolina's environmental protection agency estimated that the drinking water for hundreds of thousands could be at risk. Consider the legacy of devastation and pollution this act has left in other states:

**320** leaks or spills where fracking fluid reached groundwater in Colorado.

**421** drilling waste pits have leaked into groundwater in New Mexico.

**3,355** state environmental law violations by drilling companies in Pennsylvania from 2008-2011.

Approximately **1.3 billion** gallons of fracking wastewater was created in Pennsylvania in about three years.

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# Environment North Carolina

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## Summer Report

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### Environment North Carolina

#### 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 North Carolina. We focus exclusively on protecting North Carolina'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.

## Slowing the rush to frack in our backyard

The N.C. Senate passed a bill this winter to lift the state's moratorium on fracking, the controversial form of natural gas drilling, beginning March 2015. As of press time, the measure, which contains a laundry list of incentives for oil and gas companies, was stalled in the House, due in part to our continued urging that this practice is dangerous and should not be allowed in our state.

The bill allows the underground injection of wastewater, which has been linked to earthquakes in other states. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources recommended against the practice last spring, citing North Carolina's unique geology.

"This bill is a desperate giveaway to big energy companies at the expense of our water," said Elizabeth Ouets, director of Environment North Carolina. "It threatens Jordan Lake, the Eno River, and the drinking water for more than 400,000 North Carolinians. We applaud the House leadership for slowing this terrible idea."



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### more inside

*Challenges ahead for the Blue Ridge; Keeping solar going strong; Shifting the balance to healthy, local food, and more.*

◀ *Gas drilling well in western Pennsylvania*