



SIERRA CLUB

SIERRA WEEKLY DISPATCH

**Sampling of Weekly E-Newsletters
to Major Donors and Key Stakeholders**



Dear Supporter,

The Scandal Factory that is EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's office churned out another (chicken) nugget this week, as the [Washington Post revealed that a Pruitt staffer scheduled a meeting with the Chick-fil-A CEO](#) about a potential franchise for Pruitt's wife. This is the latest egregious ethics violation on Pruitt's ever-growing list of abuses, which includes spending more than \$3,000 on luxury pens and stationery; scoring courtside basketball tickets due to a cozy relationship with a coal baron; and deputizing staffers to secure apartments, book first-class travel, and research the purchase of a used mattress from the Trump hotel. The media blitz following the Chick-fil-A story turns the heat lamp on Pruitt up to full blast, and this renewed pressure on Trump to #BootPruitt is the direct result of the Sierra Club's FOIA request for agency emails, as highlighted at the top of Rachel Maddow's [13-minute skewering](#) of Pruitt. Your support of our legal and media work is making this happen!

Here are a few other ways we are making a difference together:

- **Amplifying Voices of the Arctic:** As the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plows ahead with plans to open the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas exploitation, [Native groups rallied to protect their sacred lands during BLM scoping meetings last week](#), with the Sierra Club offering financial and outreach support. In Anchorage, more than 130 people – including Gwich'in leaders and Indigenous elders and youth – protested outside the BLM hearing (while 43 residents voiced their opposition inside). And in Fairbanks, the majority of the 250 people who showed up at the BLM hearing spoke passionately in defense of the Native way of life and vulnerable wildlife. Meanwhile, the Sierra Club continued to pressure Chevron, challenging executives and shareholders at their annual meeting in California to stop dirty fuel development in the Arctic...or risk devastating the environment, and destroying the company's reputation.
- **NC Slims Down, Powers Up:** Last week, the [Sierra Club and our allies reached a settlement agreement with Duke Energy Carolinas to refocus its grid modernization project](#), originally slated to cost ratepayers \$13 billion over 10 years, on cutting-edge technologies that embrace the state's clean energy future. While trimming the program to \$2.5 billion, the agreement nevertheless represents the largest commitment by a utility toward EV infrastructure and battery storage in the Southeast to date. The investment would create a smarter, more sustainable grid that saves North Carolina residents money and protects the environment. In fact, more efficient electricity use, adjusted to customers' precise needs, would produce significant energy savings and reduce emissions equivalent to taking 30,000 cars off the road.
- **Reining In the Big One:** In July of last year, the Sierra Club and our allies sued the EPA to force the agency to look at the environmentally lax permitting of five refineries and power plants by Texas regulators. This week, [the EPA agreed that the state operating permit for the Port Arthur Refinery failed to include sufficient monitoring and reporting requirements on emissions](#). This is no small oversight. The Port Arthur Refinery is the largest facility of its kind in the U.S., processing up to 603,000 barrels of crude oil a day while spewing sulfur dioxide and other pollutants across a region populated by many communities of color.

Thank you again for everything that you do to protect our lands, waters, and communities.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Chin

Director of Special Projects



Dear Supporter,

We did it! Today is Scott Pruitt's last day on the job, as the most backward and corrupt EPA administrator in the history of the agency. His resignation is the culmination of a three-and-a-half-month blitz by the Sierra Club, our allies, and supporters like you to give Pruitt the boot and protect our environment, communities, and climate from his dangerous, science-denying rollbacks. Together, we launched a relentless multimedia campaign, gathered nearly 100,000 public comments calling for Pruitt's firing, and exposed an avalanche of scandals – revealed by our Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and circulated by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and other media – that ultimately forced him from office. Thank you for making this victory possible, and for staying by our side! But our work is not done. We will keep up the pressure on Pruitt's replacement, Deputy Administrator (and former coal lobbyist) Andrew Wheeler, to place the health and safety of the public above the profits of polluters.

Meanwhile, we continue to defend our bedrock environmental laws. This week, Republican Senator John Barrasso proposed legislation that would dismantle the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the landmark conservation law that brought species like the bald eagle, whooping crane, and grizzly bear back from the brink of extinction. In response, we're teaming up with a broad coalition of partners to protect the ESA. Leading up to the July 17 hearing, we'll be reaching out to champions on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, submitting letters of opposition, and rallying our community members to speak out for this important law that preserves our planet's biodiversity.

Here are a few other victories we won this past week:

- **Pipeline Now Stalled in Virginia, Too:** A week after a federal appeals court halted construction on the fracked gas Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) in West Virginia, work has stopped in Virginia as well! After 25 water quality violations were reported to the state's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Sierra Club and our allies submitted over 3,000 comments, [MVP announced that it will suspend construction activities until DEQ gives the go-ahead.](#) DEQ acknowledged that "public feedback" – your active and passionate participation – played a key role in this decision to stop construction and address the destructive erosion and sedimentation in waterways at construction sites.
- **Fuel Economy Standards Get Into Gear:** [A Trump roadblock preventing the implementation of severe penalties for fuel efficiency violations has been removed,](#) thanks to a lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club and our allies. Last week, a federal appeals court explained why it rejected the Trump administration's attempt to delay increased penalties on automakers that fail to meet required fuel economy standards. The court ruled that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration lacks the authority to delay the increased penalties indefinitely, which will force automakers to roll out vehicles that are more fuel efficient, and also promote cleaner air and a healthier climate future.
- **Keeper Makes a Save...From Mining:** After 12 years of legal action by the Sierra Club and a coalition of environmental and historic preservation groups, the [Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places has restored the Blair Mountain Battlefield Site to the Register.](#) As a result, this historic site, which commemorates a major battle in 1921 during the miners' fight for the right to organize, will be saved from devastating mountaintop removal. In defeating the coal industry's attempts to delist Blair Mountain from the National Register, we've not only preserved a vital piece of American labor history but also protected the environment and local communities from the hazards of surface coal mining.

Finally, I wanted to report back on the amazing and inspirational turnout we saw at the Families Belong Together marches and rallies last weekend, when 35,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C. and over 400,000 of you came together in 700 towns and cities across the country. While showing solidarity and support for the immigrant families torn apart by Trump's "zero tolerance" policy, we also raised more than \$50,000 and distributed these funds immediately to over a dozen organizations that are providing essential services to the families. Thank you again for everything you do.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Chin
Director of Special Projects



Dear Supporter,

As you heard this week, the EPA has announced its unacceptable replacement for the Clean Power Plan. Despite the Trump administration's increasingly desperate attempts to prop up the failing coal industry, it won't be able to stop the Sierra Club and our allies from transitioning the country to clean, affordable, renewable energy.

Dirty Power Plan Overview

Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler's plan would allow states to set regulations with zero accountability and no minimum requirements for carbon reductions from power plants. By letting states do essentially nothing, the plan falls far short of Clean Air Act requirements to cut greenhouse gas pollution. Instead, it would encourage the owners of failing coal plants to keep them running—and polluting—longer. By the EPA's own calculations, that increase in pollution would cause up to 1,400 premature deaths each year.

Our Action Plan

The Sierra Club is determined to thwart this attack on public health and our climate. Our strategy is twofold:

- 1. Keep Building Clean Energy Momentum:** The transition from coal to clean, affordable, renewable energy is still gaining momentum. Already, more than half of the nation's coal plants (270 of them) have been retired or slated for retirement, clean and cost-effective energy is coming online to replace that power, and we're almost a decade ahead of schedule in meeting the Obama administration's goal of cutting electricity-sector carbon pollution by 32% from 2005 levels. We've been able to do that through a combination of grassroots pressure, local leadership, and smart legal advocacy. There is nothing the Trump administration can do to stop us from continuing this work at the state and municipal level to replace dirty fuel plants with clean, affordable energy from wind and solar.
- 2. Fight This Plan to the Finish:** Wheeler's Dirty Power Plan must first go through a 60-day public comment period—and you can be sure that we will be heard loud and clear. On the day the plan was announced, we alerted more than a million Sierra Club members and activists by email and text. Already, more than 30,000 people have submitted their comments to the EPA (thanks if you were one of those voices!). We're rallying our members and supporters to show up at public hearings, and we're planning to rise together at Peoples Climate Movement marches across the U.S. on September 8. Meanwhile, our legal and federal policy teams are huddling with our allies to explore every possible strategy for defeating this plan. If this plan does get finalized (which can't occur until well into 2019), then we'll likely sue the EPA for failing to meet its Clean Air Act obligations.

Since states would have three years to submit their compliance plans to the EPA after the rule becomes final (assuming it even gets that far), the Dirty Power Plan wouldn't actually take full effect until well past 2020. Although this terrible—and likely illegal—plan faces strong and united grassroots opposition, we're looking at what could potentially be a long fight. With your steady support, though, we are ready.

Thanks for being with us. Together, we are stronger.

Best,

Mike

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Supporter,

Our hearts go out to the students, educators, and families at Santa Fe High School, and all the first responders and residents affected by today's horrific events in Texas. We feel, and share in, your anger, frustration, and grief. Today's tragedy is another sad reminder that it's long past time for our elected officials to enact common-sense gun control laws that protect our children and our communities. We encourage you to learn more at [Everytown for Gun Safety](#).

While we wait for our lawmakers to find the will and courage to act, we find some measure of hope in the power of people to make positive change. At the Sierra Club, we witness that unity and strength every day, made possible by your support.

Here are some ways we have been coming together, and working together, to protect our environment:

- **Gas Pipeline Out of Line:** The Sierra Club and our allies won a major victory in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals this week when [the three-judge panel invalidated a critical U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline](#). The judges concluded that the agency's permit approving the pipeline project set vague and unenforceable limits to its harmful effects on threatened and endangered species. With this decision, we have hope that the 600-mile fracked gas pipeline will never be built – despite Dominion Energy's protests – to the benefit of public health and sensitive ecosystems.
- **A #NoGrizHunt Win:** Wyoming's appalling grizzly bear hunt has been substantially curtailed, thanks to more than 50,000 of your signatures, relentless advocacy and pressure, and our whistleblowing on the state's shady deals with the Montana grizzly quota. [Wyoming has reduced the number of female grizzlies that can be killed in the proposed fall trophy hunt from two to one](#) – a significant victory because it will likely save more males from being shot as well (if one female is killed, the entire hunt is stopped). Meanwhile, our legal work continues to challenge the premature delisting of the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear from ESA protection.
- **Stranded Assets in the Arctic:** In support of our Gwich'in partners, the [Sierra Club helped organize a group of influential investors \(managing \\$2.52 trillion in assets\) who sent a letter to over 100 oil and gas companies \(and the banks that fund them\)](#), with this stern warning: Any drilling or development in the Arctic Refuge coastal plain – a sacred land that supports abundant wildlife and provides the Gwich'in people with essential subsistence – will trigger a massive public backlash with severe financial ramifications. At the same time, the Sierra Club also joined more than 100 conservation and Indigenous rights groups in signing a separate letter to dirty fuel companies and major banks, urging them not to drill in the Arctic Refuge, one of the last wild places in the United States.
- **Slamming the Brakes on Rollbacks:** Earlier this week, [the Sierra Club and our allies filed a petition for review with the U.S. Court of Appeals](#), challenging the EPA's decision to scrap clean car standards for cars and light trucks built from 2022 to 2025. The lawsuit shows our resolve to defend common-sense clean car standards from Scott Pruitt's misplaced priorities, while we continue to take automakers to task for backsliding on their previous commitments. Just last week, we led a coalition of environmental and consumer advocacy groups in delivering 250,000 of your signatures from around the country, calling on Ford and other automakers to produce cleaner, more efficient vehicles that pollute less and save families money.

Thank you again for your support and making our work together possible. Take care of each other.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Chin

Director of Special Projects



Dear Supporter,

I've got some good news about our drinking water! Yesterday, [a federal judge rejected an attempt by the Trump administration to delay the Clean Water Rule](#) (also known as Waters of the United States, or WOTUS rule), reinstating tough regulations that protect our rivers, streams, and wetlands. The judge found that the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers failed to allow for public comment on delays to the WOTUS rule, which clarifies the scope of waters protected by the Clean Water Act – one of our most vital and influential environmental laws. By putting these safeguards back in place for more than half the country, the ruling helps ensure clean drinking water for more than 117 million people. The Sierra Club and our allies will continue to work for clean water for all communities across the U.S., resisting any attempt to roll back the essential laws that serve as the bedrock for our legal fights against unchecked pollution.

So while the Trump administration continues to gut landmark conservation laws, deny climate change, and scapegoat the environmental movement, we are busy working together to protect our communities, wildlands, and wildlife. Here's more evidence of our progress, week after week:

- **We're On a Roll Stopping Pipelines:** Just days after the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a stop-work order on the 300-mile Mountain Valley Pipeline, FERC also ordered a halt to construction on the full length of the 600-mile Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) late last week. [These victories, brought about by our coordinated grassroots organizing and aggressive legal action, has delayed these destructive pipelines](#) and sent dirty-fuel developers scrambling. This is only possible through your generous support and persistent engagement at rallies, meetings, protests, and more. By working together, we're sapping the momentum of these fracked-gas projects, with the aim of grinding them to a permanent halt.
- **Keystone XL Hits XL Roadblock:** In another major pipeline win, [a federal judge on Wednesday ordered the State Department to conduct a more thorough review of the impacts of the 1,200-mile-long Keystone XL Pipeline](#), which would carry dirty tar-sands crude oil from Alberta, Canada, to Nebraska. Rejecting the Trump Administration's fast-tracked farce of an environmental assessment released last month, the judge sided with Indigenous groups, Sierra Club and our allies. The ruling demands a more extensive evaluation of the alternative route for this pipeline, which threatens critical water sources and wildlife habitat. The judge's ruling means even more delays for the KXL project – already a decade in the (un)making – and adds more fuel to the argument that TransCanada should simply shut down this environmentally disastrous and financially dubious venture.
- **Maryland's Mettle Limits Toxic Metals:** More than a year of sustained campaigning and organizing by Sierra Club staff and volunteers in Maryland resulted in a big win last week for the health of local residents and ecosystems. [The Maryland Department of the Environment issued updated permits for three coal plants \(Chalk Point, Dickerson, and Morgantown\), which include tougher standards for water pollution](#). Despite the Trump administration's attempts to roll back federal regulations, these state permits require the plants to significantly reduce toxic discharges of cancer-causing arsenic, mercury, and selenium into the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay watershed starting in 2020 (slashing toxins by up to 97% in some cases). Your thousands of signatures sent to the Governor's office, your strong presence at three public hearings, a letter to the Governor signed by more than 60 lawmakers and environmentalists, and a broad coalition of statewide and community organizations all made the difference. Our tactics are inspiring other efforts across the country to push state agencies to adopt similarly stringent controls on dirty coal waste.

Thank you for leading the way as we move ever-closer to a clean energy future!

Sincerely,

Sabrina Chin

Director of Special Projects