



Clean Energy Success In The States



 **CLEAN ENERGY FOR ALL**

 **LCV**



In 2023, clean energy development in the U.S. took off like never before, following years of ambitious state and local climate leadership, with a boost from historic federal funding opportunities through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. As the nation feels the devastating impacts of the climate crisis and fossil fuel pollution, the solution is clear and it's here: an equitable transition to 100% clean energy.

Through the Clean Energy for All campaign, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) and our more than 30 state affiliates (together, the Conservation Voters Movement) have grown and mobilized grassroots power into a strong and strategic movement demanding that our leaders respond with the urgency that science and justice demand to confront the climate crisis, hold corporate polluters accountable, and unleash the benefits of clean energy for everyone, everywhere.

When we launched the Clean Energy For All campaign in 2018, 100% clean energy was a pioneering goal, but thanks to five years of building momentum, we have raised the bar and secured bold commitments to clean energy from state and local leaders across the United States, including 100% clean energy commitments in 15 states in the Conservation Voter Movement. This year, Minnesota and Michigan joined this growing list by passing legislation to achieve 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040, and in Michigan, setting one of the country's fastest timelines to build renewable energy.

Nationwide, clean energy commitments are becoming a reality and in 2023, enough new clean energy was brought online to power 3 million homes. Now, unprecedented federal funding is making clean energy and energy efficiency opportunities more accessible, helping people and communities everywhere save money, breathe cleaner air and drink cleaner water. This year, the country's first commercial offshore wind project began producing electricity, utilities planned for large-scale clean energy buildout, customers made their voices heard in energy decisions, and clean energy manufacturing spurred economic growth and brought jobs across the country. States removed obstacles to solar power, called for cleaner and safer energy for transportation and buildings, increased protections for communities most impacted by pollution, and made massive investments in clean energy infrastructure. These victories are the result of new, stronger partnerships that center environmental justice and workforce development.

In the end, the exciting progress in this report shows that, with sustained advocacy, we are turning clean energy commitments into our reality. And the reality we are building is clean energy for all.



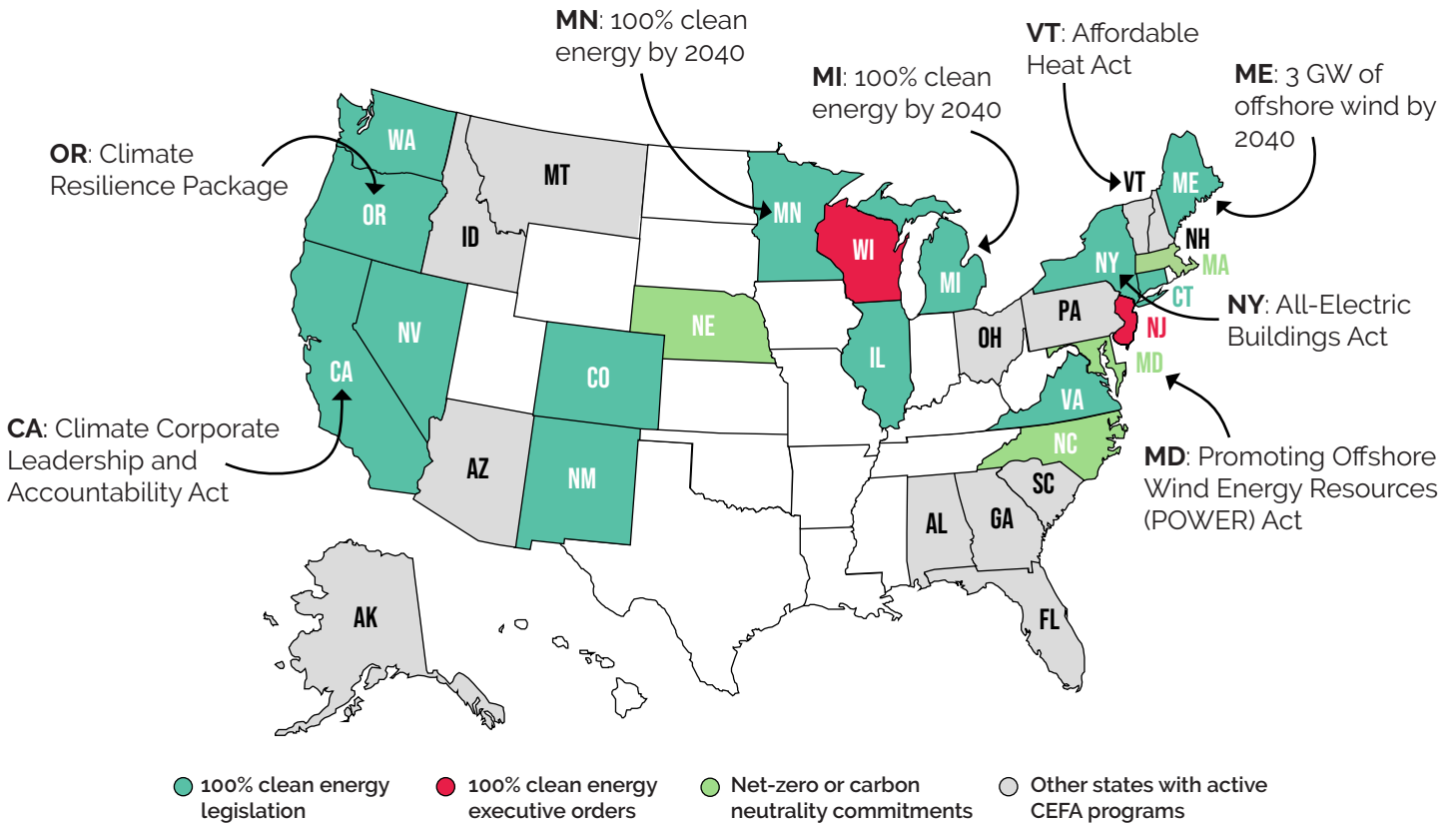
By the Numbers

Clean Energy for All 2023 Accomplishments

- MORE THAN**
 **4,000** Meetings with Decision-makers and Staff
- MORE THAN**
 **120,000** Public Messages Sent to Decision-makers
- MORE THAN**
 **25,000** People Turned Out to Events
- NEARLY**
 **2,000** Mentions of Clean Energy For All States and Work in the Press



CEFA Clean Energy Achievements



More than 40% of people live in a place that has committed to 100% clean energy





CALIFORNIA

California's Clean Energy Progress



HOLDING CORPORATE POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

California passed the Climate Corporate Leadership and Accountability Act, which set first-in-the-nation requirements for companies whose annual revenue exceeds \$1 billion to disclose their full carbon footprint – direct and indirect climate emissions – in a way that is easily understandable and available to the public. In addition, the Climate-Related Financial Risk Act mandates companies with at least \$500 million in revenue report their climate-related financial risks and declare the risk mitigation measures they are taking.



ADVANCED CLEAN FLEETS

California continued to lead the country in vehicle regulations and created new standards requiring truck fleets to transition to 100% zero-emission electric vehicles by 2042 and mandating 100% electric medium- to heavy-duty vehicle sales after 2036.



INITIATING OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT

California directed the state Energy Commission to study and recommend strategies for procuring offshore wind energy and creating pathways for building port infrastructure with a focus on in-state job creation.



CLEANING UP DIRTY OIL INFRASTRUCTURE

California passed a law requiring oil well operators to cover all costs of safely closing old wells and restoring the site. This addresses the problem of large oil companies selling low-producing wells to smaller companies that cannot afford the clean up, pushing the costs onto taxpayers. California also strengthened regulatory oversight and enforcement of polluting oil facilities.

The CVM Difference

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL VOTERS

The Climate Corporate Data Accountability Act was the top priority for California Environmental Voters (EnviroVoters) in 2023, and was the third ever piece of legislation sponsored by the organization. EnviroVoters worked with cosponsors and legislators for over two years to craft bill language, create messaging and press strategies, garner media coverage, and address misinformation and educate the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which is responsible for implementing the policy. EnviroVoters aligned environmental groups in California into a coalition and built important relationships with business leaders, pushing them to declare public support for the bill. In addition, EnviroVoters ran a grassroots campaign that included a series of three virtual advocacy trainings, driving attendance to legislative hearings, arranging constituent lobby meetings, and generating calls and messages to nearly 20 key legislators. Their efforts secured the support of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, who championed the bill this session, winning the final needed votes.

Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) was developed over two-years after EnviroVoters successfully pushed Governor Gavin Newsom to support clean truck goals and issue his 2021 executive order, which began the ACF rulemaking process. EnviroVoters recommended and advocated for six clean energy champions to be appointed to CARB and then extensively lobbied the board and gave testimony with coalition partners to strengthen the draft rule. With community-based allies, EnviroVoters built and mobilized grassroots support, ran a digital education campaign, and drove public comments, especially from communities most impacted by air pollution, to CARB meetings every time ACF was on the agenda.



I'm grateful for the ongoing work of California Environmental Voters. We're all in this room because the climate crisis is the defining issue of our time."

– Speaker Robert Rivas,
California State Assembly



U.S. Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove and California Environmental Voters holding a climate roundtable with activists in Los Angeles County.



MARYLAND

Maryland's Clean Energy Progress



RAISING THE BAR FOR OFFSHORE WIND

Maryland passed the Promoting Offshore Wind Energy Resources (POWER) Act, which more-than-quadrupled the state target for offshore wind energy production from 2 GW to a goal of 8.5 GW by 2031. The POWER Act addresses transmission needs, sets strong labor standards, and proposes a new, more equitable way to fund offshore wind through a power purchase agreement with the state, rather than being paid for by ratepayers.



CEMENTING COMMUNITY SOLAR

Maryland made its Community Solar pilot program permanent through new legislation that also added key equity provisions to make solar accessible to low- to moderate-income households through consolidated billing.



MAKING TRANSPORTATION CLEANER AND MORE EQUITABLE

Maryland passed and signed the Transportation Equity Act into law, which requires equity and justice analyses for transit decisions. The bill was first passed in 2022 and vetoed by then-Governor Larry Hogan. Maryland also joined several other states in adopting Advanced Clean Trucks and Advanced Clean Cars II standards by law and executive order respectively, and allocated \$3 million in the state budget for electric school buses.

Morena Zelaya, Chispa Maryland Organizing manager, speaking at a Clean Buses for Healthy Niños rally.



Maryland State Senator Katie Fry Hester speaking at a rally hosted by MDLCV in support of the POWER Act.

The CVM Difference

MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS AND CHISPA MARYLAND

Maryland LCV (MDLCV) has established itself as a leader in the state environmental community through robust legislative advocacy, and in 2023, helped first-year Governor Wes Moore champion critical climate wins. MDLCV was the only environmental group invited by the administration to participate in both an event announcing Maryland's adoption of Clean Cars II standards and a round table unveiling an initiative to create a state climate roadmap.

MDLCV's success is due to effective public outreach and mobilization, lawmaker education and engagement, and partnership development. MDLCV campaigns resulted in over 5,000 messages to decision-makers, more than 200 lobby meetings, and nearly 2,000 event attendees, all demanding equitable climate action. As chair of the Citizens' Campaign for the Environment – made up of nearly 50 organizations – MDLCV helped host the coalition's annual opening day legislative reception and legislative summit. During the legislative session, MDLCV held a weekly "Friday Digest" webinar featuring lawmakers, agency staff and experts. MDLCV is also building relationships with the Legislative Black Caucus, Latino Caucus, and Asian-American Pacific Islander Caucus, and hosted an environmental and climate justice legislative reception to promote environmental justice policy. Chispa Maryland and MDLCV have been the driving force behind the state's adoption of electric school buses through the Clean Buses for Healthy Niños campaign. After winning an electric school bus requirement in the 2022 Climate Solutions Now Act, Chispa Maryland and MDLCV secured \$3 million in the 2023 budget to help fund it.

Lastly, MDLCV spearheaded a coalition to make the state's community solar program permanent, bringing together low-income customers, seniors, solar industry representatives, and environmental groups. MDLCV also successfully advocated for legislation to create a task force to research state incentives for solar projects, which will also include recommendations for the state on solar siting.



2023 was a transformative year for Maryland's environment, showcasing the power of collaborative advocacy and strong leadership. With the passage of landmark legislation that increased our offshore wind energy targets and established a permanent Community Solar program, Maryland is on the path towards a clean and equitable energy future. We are enormously grateful to our legislative champions and to Governor Moore for helping move Maryland toward 100% clean energy and making progress on environmental justice."

– **Kim Coble, Executive Director, Maryland LCV**



MAINE

Maine's Clean Energy Progress



RESPONSIBLY DEVELOPING OFFSHORE WIND

Maine passed legislation to responsibly install 3 GW of offshore wind by 2040 – the state's first offshore wind procurement goal – and build a world-class offshore wind port. The law includes strong labor standards and centers both equity and environmental protection by incentivizing development outside of important lobster fisheries, and setting requirements for stakeholder engagement, community benefits and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The state also released Maine's Offshore Wind Roadmap, a stakeholder-driven comprehensive plan detailing strategies to fully realize the benefits of offshore wind.



REFORMING RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY SOLAR

Maine reformed its Net Energy Billing program, which enables customers to offset their electricity bills with the solar power they generate. The legislation removed costly tariffs, created a program to help solar customers take advantage of federal funds, and directed state regulators to examine ratepayer costs and benefits instead of relying on utility calculations.



ALLOWING LOCAL CLEAN HEAT

Maine blocked a bill that would have prevented localities from passing ordinances to reduce reliance on fossil fuels by phasing out gas in new buildings and encouraging the use of more efficient, clean electric heating.

The CVM Difference

MAINE CONSERVATION VOTERS

Maine Conservation Voters (MCV) and their sister organization, Maine Conservation Alliance (MCA), are leaders in the state's environmental movement, especially in offshore wind advocacy. For two decades, MCA has spearheaded Maine's Environmental Priorities Coalition to create and advance a shared policy agenda. MCV helped form New England for Offshore Wind (NE4OSW) and participates on the steering committee for the coalition. NE4OSW is a Conservation Voters Movement-led initiative that promotes responsible offshore wind development in the region and calls for collaboration between states.

To secure Maine's first statutory offshore wind goal, MCV played a critical role building and leveraging partnerships with environmental groups, labor unions, fisheries and the governor's office. MCV co-chairs the state's Offshore Wind Port Advisory Group and served on the advisory committee that created the first Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap, which was released this year. Over almost a year of collaboration, MCV helped develop the offshore wind legislation with partners to ensure strong provisions for both environmental protection and labor standards, and participated in key negotiations to get it across the finish line. This work was vital after Governor Janet Mills vetoed one of two original offshore wind bills. MCV quickly helped pull stakeholders together to compromise on new legislation that was signed into law. MCV's advocacy included a sustained communications campaign, educational legislator briefings, giving testimony and turning out supporters to hearings and lobby days, driving over 1,000 constituent messages to lawmakers.



Offshore wind is the single biggest lever we can pull to address the climate crisis, meet Maine's energy needs, and grow our economy simultaneously. When the federal investments from the affordable clean energy plan and our recent offshore wind legislation are both fully implemented, Maine will set a national example for how to responsibly develop new, affordable energy sources, grow good-paying jobs for our workers, and do so without compromising Maine values."

– Kathleen Meil, Senior Director of Policy & Partnerships,
Maine Conservation Voters



Advocates in front of the State House at Maine Conservation Voters' 2023 Conservation Lobby Day.



MICHIGAN

Michigan's Clean Energy Progress



100% CLEAN ENERGY BY 2040

Michigan passed legislation to achieve 100% clean energy and committed to one of the fastest timelines in the nation by setting interim goals of reaching 50% renewable energy by 2030 and 60% by 2035.



INVESTING IN CLIMATE

The 2024 state budget process secured more than \$1 billion in climate and environmental funding. These investments will clean up the electric grid, electrify vehicles, increase public transit, repair and decarbonize homes and businesses, support environmental justice and just transition initiatives, and protect Michigan's land and water.



ACCELERATING CLEAN ENERGY

Michigan increased the cap on enrollment in utility residential rooftop solar programs from 1% to 10%, reformed clean energy siting, and gave local governments the ability to set consistent and preferable direct payments instead of taxes on utility-scale solar projects within their jurisdiction.



CENTERING ENERGY JUSTICE

Michigan made its energy assistance program permanent, prioritized and defined environmental justice criteria within the utility plan review process, and dedicated at least 25% of electric and 35% of gas weatherization and energy efficiency programs to low-income communities.



RAISING THE BAR FOR LABOR STANDARDS

Michigan established the strongest labor standards of any climate package in the country, with prevailing wage and project labor agreement standards required for clean energy workers, and created a new Office of Worker & Community Transition.



PUSHING UTILITIES FORWARD

Both of Michigan's major electric utilities agreed to invest in significant new renewables, energy efficiency and storage, and accelerate coal plant retirements, including closing a plant that is the nation's third largest source of carbon pollution. The utility settlements also contained measures to support low-income customers and improve public outreach and engagement, especially in low-income and overburdened communities.

The CVM Difference

MICHIGAN LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

In 2022, Michigan voters reelected Governor Gretchen Whitmer and elected the first pro-conservation majority to the state legislature in 40 years. Michigan LCV (MLCV) seized the opportunity to build upon Governor Whitmer's MI Healthy Climate Plan, and played a lead role in getting the 100% clean energy legislation introduced and passed in 2023. The bill sponsors in each chamber consulted MLCV while drafting and moving the legislation, and MLCV recruited co-sponsors and worked directly with lawmakers and stakeholder partners on the bills' introduction. MLCV and coalition partners created a sustained drumbeat of public demand for action and ensured the issue maintained high visibility with the public and lawmakers. Through their Climate Champions program, MLCV knocked on over 88,000 doors, made more than 1 million phone calls to constituents, drove over 6,000 public messages and calls to legislators, ran TV and streaming ads in 22 districts with 7 million impressions, held multiple events, and mobilized volunteers to attend over 32 coffee hours held by lawmakers. MLCV also helped organize a youth-focused Rally for our Future Day of Action at the Capitol with over 30 partner organizations.

MLCV began the year with extensive legislative and public utility accountability work, including a months-long paid ad campaign and advocacy around utility plan hearings that drove over 4,500 public comments in support of closing coal-fired power plants sooner and deploying clean energy more quickly.



The Clean Energy & Jobs Act puts Michigan on a path for some of the fastest buildout in the nation of renewable energy, like wind and solar – accelerating the cleanup of our air and protecting our Great Lakes and drinking water. Michigan is now at the center of the nation's transition to clean energy that will lower energy costs for families and small businesses, create good-paying, union jobs and tackle the climate crisis."

– Lisa Wozniak, Executive Director,
Michigan League of Conservation Voters



Michael King, Michigan LCV organizer and Grand Valley State University student, speaking at the Climate Rally For Our Future on the state Capitol steps.



MINNESOTA

Minnesota's Clean Energy Progress



100% CLEAN ENERGY BY 2040

Minnesota committed to 100% clean energy in legislation that included important workforce development provisions, prevailing wage requirements, steps to increase diversity of workforce and vendors, streamlined processes for renewable energy siting, and funding for clean energy and energy efficiency initiatives.



PROTECTING FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

Minnesota's omnibus energy and environment package set stricter conditions for polluting facilities in environmental justice communities and created a cumulative impacts analysis to evaluate existing pollution.



IMPROVING CLEAN ENERGY STANDARDS

Minnesota updated and improved its definitions of clean and renewable energy, notably removing the erroneous renewable designation from the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center waste-to-energy facility in downtown Minneapolis.



INVESTING IN CLIMATE

Minnesota passed a historic \$2 billion climate budget that established the strongest protections against "forever chemicals" in the country, addressed environmental justice concerns, and included bold decarbonization initiatives. The bill also established a green bank to finance green energy projects, and allocated funding for protecting and restoring natural resources and ecosystems.

Conservation Minnesota staff advocating for 100% clean energy at the state Capitol.



Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and legislative champions at the signing of the 100% Clean Energy bill.

The CVM Difference

CONSERVATION MINNESOTA

Over the past decade, Conservation Minnesota built the state's largest environmental advocacy network, engaging the public to enact state and local climate and clean energy policy. For years, Conservation Minnesota and partner Conservation Minnesota Voter Center have educated lawmakers and candidates about climate solutions while running robust campaigns to build support for climate legislation and inform constituents about the voting record of their elected leaders through creating conservation voter guides.

Conservation Minnesota and CM Voter Center ensured that clean energy was at the top of the 2023 policy agenda for lawmakers by launching a variety of public engagement tactics as soon as the legislative session began. Conservation Minnesota also played a key role in crafting the 100% bill and keeping the pressure on potential swing votes and hold-out senators. Through an extensive communications and digital strategy targeting critical districts, CM Voter Center reached over 1.2 million Minnesotans and generated over 3,000 calls and emails to lawmakers. For most of the month leading up to the vote, CM Voter Center was the highest spending advocacy group in the state. This work was critical to counter massive spending by the state of North Dakota and out-of-state coal companies to slow down Minnesota's climate agenda. As a result of these efforts, the 100% law was signed into law just 35 days after the start of the legislative session. To support the state's climate champions, Conservation Minnesota and CM Voter Center launched a robust, multi-channel positive accountability campaign within hours of the final vote to pass the 100% bill, celebrating the leadership of key legislators and Governor Walz for acting boldly and swiftly on climate.



The clean energy victories secured during Minnesota's 2023 legislative session illustrate that winning requires a climate majority. While the passage of the 100% Clean Energy bill was a culmination of tireless work, it only became possible when the majority of legislators supported these ideals. Passing 100% Clean Energy and other climate and clean energy policies makes Minnesota's commitment to addressing the climate crisis one of the strongest in the country."

– Paul Austin, Executive Director, Conservation Minnesota



NEW YORK

New York's Clean Energy Progress



ALL-ELECTRIC BUILDINGS

In the FY2024 budget, New York became the first state to enact an all-electric heating and appliance mandate for new buildings – residential buildings by 2026 and many commercial buildings by 2029. This is a big win for climate because New York uses more heating oil than any other state in the nation, and buildings are one of the leading sources of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.



GOING ALL IN ON CLEAN ENERGY

New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced plans to build 6.4 GW of new clean energy, putting New York on track to surpass its goal to reach 70% clean energy by 2030 and instead achieve 79%. The announcement was the nation's largest-ever state investment in renewables and included three new offshore wind and 22 on-land clean energy projects, which will create over 8,000 jobs and generate enough electricity to power 2.6 million homes.



CLEANING UP STATE FACILITIES

The state allocated \$30 million to replace two fossil-fuel-powered cooling systems at the University at Albany with a thermal energy system and directed the New York Power Authority – the largest state public utility in the country – to develop decarbonization action plans for 15 of the highest-emitting state facilities.



INVESTING IN CLIMATE

The New York state budget established the framework for a cap-and-invest program that designates one-third of the proceeds to protecting affordability for ratepayers. The budget also allocated \$400 million for the Environmental Protection Fund, \$200 million for energy bill assistance, and \$200 million for the EmPower Plus program, which helps low-income households with weatherization, energy efficiency and other cost-saving upgrades. Additionally, New York received nearly \$24 million in federal funding for grid upgrades and climate resilience.

The CVM Difference

NEW YORK LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) helped form UpgradeNY this year, a coalition of unions, climate justice advocates, building industry representatives and environmental groups that was instrumental in urging the state to take important steps to decarbonize state-owned facilities and buildings. To secure the all-electric mandate for new buildings, NYLCV ran an advocacy campaign for over four months consisting of three lobby days, mobilizing members to testify at two public hearings, educational events to inform legislators and stakeholders about zero-emission building technologies, and a series of digital ads that drove over 350 messages to the governor and key decision makers.

NYLCV engages in all arenas to leverage support for clean energy development and push the state to accelerate the build out of clean energy. Governor Hochul recognized NYLCV's leadership at the event announcing New York's new clean energy investments and invited the organization to speak. In support of the newly awarded clean energy projects, NYLCV engaged with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority – an institution to finance and promote energy efficiency and renewable energy – they drove public comments with partners to the Public Service Commission, and put pressure on Governor Hochul to act on her clean energy commitments.

NYLCV has focused substantial efforts on championing offshore wind and combating misinformation. This strategy has included multimedia ad campaigns, public education tactics such as canvassing in coastal communities, distributing yard and window signs for local residents, and hosting a "What's Brewin' Offshore" happy hour series that facilitated public events with experts and clean energy developers, earned media, and collaboration with the Wind Works Long Island coalition.



We were thrilled to see a number of environmental victories in 2023, including mandating zero emissions in new construction, new investments in large-scale offshore wind projects, taking initial steps to decarbonize state-owned buildings, and making important progress toward getting some of the most effective and cost-efficient policies to reduce climate pollution on the books."

– Julie Tighe, President,
New York League of Conservation Voters



NYLCV President Julie Tighe speaking at Governor Kathy Hochul's event announcing 6.4 GW of new clean energy.



OREGON

Oregon's Clean Energy Progress



DECARBONIZING BUILDINGS

Oregon passed a suite of policies to reduce climate pollution from buildings with incentives and assistance for home and business owners to access weatherization and other efficiency improvements. The state set a goal to install 500,000 new heat pumps by 2030, established a building performance standard for large commercial buildings, and strengthened building codes for new construction.



ACCELERATING CLEAN ENERGY

Oregon's climate package directed the state to develop a comprehensive energy strategy to achieve its goal of 100% clean energy by 2040. Other legislation improved clean energy siting, increased access to rooftop solar and electric trucks, and allocated more funding for local clean energy initiatives.



PROMOTING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Oregon invested in climate and energy resilience measures, such as setting up disaster resource hubs for vulnerable populations, and supporting natural climate solutions, green space protections and smart land-use practices.



ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The major bill packages in Oregon incorporated important equity and justice provisions. The state expanded environmental justice and youth representation on the Climate Action Commission, created a program to provide technical assistance and resources to help Tribal, rural and environmental justice communities access state and federal grants, and earmarked state climate funding for underserved communities.



INVESTING IN CLIMATE

Oregon's historic climate legislation also included a \$90 million climate budget, setting the state up to take advantage of the federal funding available through the Inflation Reduction Act.

The CVM Difference

OREGON LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

Oregon LCV (OLCV) is a founding member and serves on the steering committee of the Building Resilience coalition, which advocated for the key climate policies that became part of two major omnibus bill packages passed this year. The coalition ran a broad “Climate Can’t Wait” campaign, consisting of robust earned and paid media, ads, wide public engagement that garnered thousands of constituent emails to lawmakers, and events including virtual and in-person lobby days, and three tele-town halls that had together nearly 500 attendees. The coalition successfully built and mobilized power to pass the most comprehensive climate action legislative package in Oregon history by creating new partnerships and centering the messaging and leadership of impacted communities. OLCV also organized around the legislature’s Budget Roadshow public hearings, turning out Oregonians to testify in support of a strong climate budget that maximized federal funding opportunities, especially investments in the resilient buildings package.

When 10 Oregon Senate Republicans staged a six-week walkout – the longest in state history and the second-longest in U.S. history – to avoid voting on important legislation, OLCV supported accountability efforts demanding the senators return to their duty. This included holding rallies, placing letters to the editor from constituents, sending action alerts in targeted districts, and collaborating with allies on a Stop the Sabotage press event.



Climate change is a public health, environmental justice, transportation, and economic issue – it’s the biggest crisis of our time and I’m proud to work with Oregon LCV in making climate change a priority every session.”

– Representative Khanh Pham,
Oregon State Legislature



Oregon Building Resilience coalition advocating for the climate package.



VERMONT

Vermont's Clean Energy Progress



CREATING A CLEAN HEAT STANDARD

Vermont passed the Affordable Heat Act to develop a comprehensive performance standard that addresses one of the state's most polluting sectors – heating homes and buildings. The first-of-its-kind legislation includes measures to prioritize low- to middle-income households and requires fossil fuel heating suppliers to offer incentives and assistance to help customers switch to clean heating options.



INCREASING THE RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARD

Vermont established a new state task force to examine ways to modernize their renewable energy standard to deliver far more new, in-state clean energy on a quicker timeline. This working group will draft and propose legislation for the 2024 legislative session.



ELECTRIFYING VEHICLES

At the end of 2022, Vermont became the first state to adopt California's Advanced Clean Cars II rule, requiring 100% of new car sales to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035, and adopted the Advanced Clean Trucks standards to increase sales of electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. In 2023, the state extended a transportation and heating electrification pilot program and added a provision allowing the Burlington municipal electric utility to set up incentives for city residents who use the most gasoline to transition to electric vehicles. This is the first legislative action in the country specifically addressing gasoline "superusers."

Activists calling on the Vermont Legislature to pass the Affordable Heat Act.



Students from Montpelier and Burlington outside of the Vermont State House advocating in support of the Affordable Heat Act.

The CVM Difference

VERMONT CONSERVATION VOTERS

Vermont Conservation Voters (VCV) and their affiliated organization, the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) are important players in the state's advocacy arena and have spent years helping shape an equitable environmental agenda in Vermont. In 2021, VNRC was appointed to the Vermont Climate Council to help write the state's first legally required climate action plan and now plays a key role in guiding its implementation. In this position, VNRC successfully pushed for expanded, diverse and compensated membership on the Council and its five subcommittees and worked to incorporate the guiding principles of the Just Transitions Subcommittee. Many important policy solutions enacted in 2023 came from the recommendations identified in the Vermont Climate Action Plan. This year, VNRC was also selected to join the newly created working group to update Vermont's renewable energy standard.

Along with partners in the Act on Climate VT coalition, VCV has built strong relationships with the legislative Climate Solutions Caucus to develop, elevate and advance shared priorities. In 2023, VCV supported a mix of communications, public engagement, and education tactics. These included organizing campaign events and webinars to deepen public and policy maker understanding of the issues and opportunities; placing dozens of op-eds, editorials and print ads in high-traffic news publications; running an extensive digital ad campaign in target districts; connecting legislators with constituents at lobby days and in small group meetings with community leaders representing diverse interests; and by generating hundreds of messages to lawmakers.

The Affordable Heat Act faced unprecedented opposition, but VCV rose to the challenge and ran a sustained multi-pronged campaign to win and maintain supermajority support in the Legislature against extreme misinformation and fear mongering. This was vital because, despite Governor Phil Scott's veto, VCV and allies were able to secure a successful veto-override by the Legislature.



As the world warms, Vermont is making important progress to address disproportionate energy burdens and do our part to combat the intensifying climate crisis. In partnership with Vermont Conservation Voters and others, we successfully advanced a first-in-the-nation Clean Heat Standard that will be informed by essential analysis and input to ensure it delivers results for all Vermonters. This standard will require fossil fuel heating companies to help their customers access cleaner, healthier solutions and save money, all while cutting carbon pollution in line with what the science says is essential."

– Assistant Majority Leader Kathleen James, Vermont House of Representatives

More State Progress

ALABAMA

Conservation Alabama is building the groundwork to create the conditions for effective advocacy on issues where there has been limited momentum in the past. The organization has undertaken extensive outreach efforts to develop partnerships and working relationships with organizations, communities and institutions across the state, representing a wide range of constituencies and issues, including education, faith, real estate, business, conservation, and justice.

Through this leadership, Conservation AL joined with allies to draft a multi-year renewable energy policy agenda for the Alabama Public Service Commission (PSC) and the state Legislature. Conservation AL also brought together partners and impacted residents to successfully defeat a reckless proposed hydropower project that would have flooded the towns of Steele and Gallant and displaced homeowners and landowners in the two rural, low-income communities, known for generations as the producers of the state's best tomatoes. Additionally, the hydropower project would have used more energy than it generated.

Looking forward, Conservation AL has begun the process to develop a state-wide public education and accountability campaign focused on the PSC to address the extreme utility bill costs and energy burden borne by Alabamans.



Voters in Alabama have had it with our utilities proposing bad ideas like seizing land and drowning two entire towns to construct an irresponsible hydropower project rather than unleash the expansive benefits of solar power, and our elected officials are starting to listen. Our Public Service Commission was run out of town with their tails between their legs this summer, and we're just getting started."

– Bradley Davidson, Executive Director,
Conservation Alabama

ALASKA

Alaskans elected two new clean energy champions to the board of the state's largest utility, Chugach Electric Association, with record-breaking voter turnout. The Alaska Center endorsed the winning candidates who ran on renewable energy solutions and led broad voter engagement efforts, including paid canvasses that knocked on over 1,000 doors, volunteer phone banks, and a mail campaign that reached all 10,000 voters twice. The Alaska Center also ran an earned-media program of weekly op-eds, LTEs and news articles. Both candidates continue to work with The Alaska Center to promote clean energy and environmental justice policy priorities, such as establishing a renewable portfolio standard and advocating for Tribal rights.

Continuing to push for progress in the Legislature, The Alaska Center worked with partners at the Alaska Climate Alliance to educate the public and gather grassroots support to pass legislation extending the Renewable Energy Fund – a popular program that provides funding for renewable energy projects and was set to expire this year. This program decreases the amount of diesel used for heating and electricity, bringing down both harmful climate emissions and the cost of electricity for Alaskans.

In addition, The Alaska Center successfully got a bill to permit community solar projects in Alaska introduced for the first time. This was the result of 18 months of building and leveraging broad support for community solar, including procuring letters of endorsement and op-eds from community leaders and stakeholders, establishing a novel partnership with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) union to incorporate labor standards in an environmental bill, engaging business partners, and educating and building relationships with lawmakers. The Alaska Center worked with partners to draft the bill, which contained important provisions for local job growth and requirements for a focus on low-to middle-income communities. The organization will continue to advocate for community solar in 2024.



Alaskan clean energy advocates have made tremendous strides in 2023. The Alaska Center is proud to have played a key role in the coalitions that are advancing real clean energy solutions for our state."

– Chantal de Alcuaz, Co-Executive Director,
The Alaska Center

ARIZONA

Chispa Arizona leads extensive grassroots organizing, power building and mobilization efforts, especially among Latino communities. This year, the organization seized the opportunity to help build first-year Governor Katie Hobbs into a clean air champion. Through successful advocacy, Chispa AZ secured more than \$55 million in climate justice investments in the state budget and important vetoes of anti-clean energy legislation, including a bill that would have imposed new hurdles on clean energy development. Arizona also passed legislation making it easier to build electricity storage, local solar, and transmission projects. In support of their priorities, Chispa AZ joined local organizations led by communities of color to establish an Arizona Environmental Justice Coalition and co-hosted a march for clean air at the Capitol.

Additionally, Chispa AZ educated state and local decision-makers about Inflation Reduction Act funding and worked with their membership and supporters to provide firsthand testimony about its benefits and create moments for the governor to promote federal grant opportunities. As part of their Clean Buses for Healthy Niños campaign, Chispa AZ advocates for electric school buses, including in the Isaac School District in Phoenix, which won \$2.4 million in federal funding this year to replace all of their diesel-powered school buses with clean, electric buses.

A major focus of Chispa AZ is to increase accountability of utility regulation and facilitate public engagement to empower Arizonans to have a say in their energy. This year, Chispa AZ organized around the state's largest utility's rate increase request, putting on phone banks, circulating a petition that gathered over 350 signatures, and driving public comment. To ensure community members are comfortable testifying, Chispa AZ holds trainings in Spanish and English to coach people and allow them to practice their comments. These efforts resulted in over two hours of public testimony at the last hearing.



This year, Chispa Arizona made strides in exemplifying what it means to put people and our right to clean air and clean energy first. We informed our members about unfair rate increases by a corporate polluter and turned folks out to meetings at the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) to provide public comment. The ACC is the state agency that regulates public utilities and it is among the least accessible governmental entities in our state. Therefore, it was powerful to get media coverage and increased overall awareness of the importance of clean energy."

– Vania Guevara, Advocacy Deputy Director,
Chispa Arizona

COLORADO

Colorado was the first state to codify short- and long-term emissions reductions goals in 2019, and this year, the state updated its standards to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and set stronger interim targets. Colorado also passed extensive measures to hold utilities accountable for investing in volatile gas systems and protect ratepayers against price spikes that have traditionally been passed on to consumers. The bill incentivizes more cost-efficient energy production, requires utilities to file "gas price risk management plans," and prohibits utilities from lobbying or running public relations and ad campaigns to influence local, state and federal legislation or ballot measures. In addition, Colorado strengthened the process for public air quality complaints, increased enforcement of permits for oil and gas projects due to complaints, and began rulemaking to further reduce the public health impacts of the oil and gas industry.

Conservation Colorado leverages their role as a trusted environmental voice to advance climate action and runs a variety of tactics to engage Coloradans. Through a robust digital and communications strategy and statewide organizing, Conservation Colorado builds and amplifies public support for clean air and water. The organization also helps convene a broad array of partners to work together in coalitions; for instance, this year, they brought together over 20 climate, housing affordability, and community development groups in support of land use reform to address the twin crises of climate and housing affordability.

Protégete, Conservation Colorado's Latine-focused leadership program, continues to elevate community priorities through leadership development, education, organizing, and advocacy. This includes the creation and release of an annual Latino Policy Agenda with partners, and co-hosting a Latino/a Advocacy Day at the Capitol. This year was the 17th annual and largest-ever Latino/a Advocacy Day, which turned out over 300 Latine members and supporters to connect, learn, and advocate together for environmental justice policies.



This year, Conservation Colorado worked closely with me and my colleagues at the state Capitol to deliver wins for our air and water, a livable climate, and communities who are on the front lines of climate impacts."

– Representative Jenny Wilford,
Colorado House of Representatives

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut strengthened its 15-year old environmental justice law, which now allows state regulators to deny or restrict permits for polluting facilities based on the risks to environmental justice communities. The state will create guidelines for how to measure cumulative environmental and public health impacts, which must be incorporated into permit applications. Companies behind proposed polluting projects have previously been obligated to write a plan for facilitating meaningful public participation in the regulatory process. The new legislation sets accountability measures, requiring these companies to submit a report showing their public engagement efforts, recording all public comments, their responses to questions and concerns, and a video of the mandated public hearing.

Connecticut LCV (CTLCV) advocated with partners for this priority bill in their role on the steering committee of the newly formed CT Coalition For Climate Action, which is composed of environmental advocates, health experts, labor, and environmental justice representatives. In addition, CTLCV helped organize a climate action week that included coordinated social media campaigns and grassroots outreach tactics and ran an extended patch-through call program.

CTLCV also supported a successful bill this session directing the state to establish a carbon budget that will set a cap on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions permitted from the transportation sector. CTLCV built a working relationship with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and has maintained pressure on state agencies to continue to make progress on Connecticut's climate goals by developing and implementing robust plans and regulations. This year, the state applied for – and received – \$3 million in federal Inflation Reduction Act funding for creating a climate roadmap with interim targets and timelines to actualize Connecticut's 100% clean energy by 2040 commitment, which was passed in 2022 after strong advocacy by CTLCV.



Connecticut LCV has been – and continues to be – an invaluable partner with me and other environmentalists in the Connecticut General Assembly. They have been integral to our passing legislation on clean energy, zero carbon emissions goals and practice, and a host of other significant initiatives. I rely constantly on their expertise and their ability to bring folks together for meaningful change. They just don't give up, and our young people need these fighters in their corner."

– Vice Chair Christine Palm,
Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee Committee

GEORGIA

Fourteen school districts in Georgia got their first electric school buses this year due to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Clean School Bus Program. Georgia Conservation Voters (GCV) has grown and led a coalition of over 30 organizations that built power around passing the historic federal legislation and ensuring that Georgians quickly feel benefits in their communities. GCV and partners identified and campaigned for priority areas for investment and educated decision-makers about the opportunities. The coalition organized together across the state, advocating for electric school buses, conducting initial outreach to school districts and hosting informational events, and connecting school district officials with grant writing resources and support. This work successfully secured \$50 million for electric school buses in Georgia. After the grant was announced, GCV joined allies to host a celebration event with the school board and local leaders in Clayton County outside of Atlanta who received funding for 25 electric school buses. Additionally, due to the IRA, Georgia has the second highest number of new clean energy projects in the nation, which have spurred more than \$18.83 billion in investment and supported over 16,600 jobs.

At the Georgia Legislature, GCV successfully blocked two anti-solar bills and continued to make critical progress toward bipartisan support for climate and clean energy policies. This included securing bill sponsors and teaming up with the chairman of the House Tourism and Economic Development Committee, Ron Stephens, to form a subcommittee on the environment for next year. Chairman Stephens agreed to use the space to make policy recommendations and facilitate lawmaker education, including field trips to learn more about climate solutions. At the Capitol, GCV coordinated with partners to host a Conservation Day, Environmental Justice Day, and Environmental Caucus Open House, organized lobby days and drove messages to legislators.



Our Georgia Conservation Voters team was on the ground every step of the way this legislative session, pushing back on anti-clean energy legislation and leading the way with bills that can advance our climate agenda. We were proud to train and recruit volunteers who showed up at the Capitol this year to support our newly-elected legislators and push them to champion pro-climate and pro-environmental justice policies effectively."

**– Mia Delamar, Senior Organizer,
Georgia Conservation Voters**

IDAHO

Conservation Voters for Idaho (CVI) led the charge to win the first Boise zoning code update in 60 years. Boise's new Modern Zoning Code sets valuable guidance for city planning and includes critical environmental provisions, such as green space protection, electric vehicle, pedestrian and bike infrastructure, water management and energy efficiency. CVI's robust public outreach campaign knocked 2,260 doors, submitted 283 written comments, provided expert testimony, drove nearly 100 public testimonies, organized a sign-on letter with nine prominent organizations, and sponsored a three-day comedy show. Through their advocacy, CVI garnered unanimous and bipartisan support for the zoning code, which was critical to prevent preemption by the state Legislature. CVI also ensured the zoning code update was not watered down, and even pushed Boise City Council to add last-minute amendments strengthening key provisions.

With support from CVI, Idaho Power launched the Clean Energy Your Way program to build new renewable energy infrastructure, and broke ground on a 200 MW solar array. CVI advances local-level clean energy commitments, and The Clean Energy Your Way program will help cities and counties achieve their goals, as well as provide access to clean energy for businesses and households.

CVI led a four-year effort to gain a pro-bike and pro-pedestrian majority on the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Commission. This year, ACHD – Idaho's only countywide highway district – passed significant policies to reduce transportation emissions by increasing multimodal transportation options. At the state Legislature, CVI protected the ACHD from attacks by far-right lawmakers seeking to undermine the Commission's authority and cut funding for cleaner and safer transportation solutions. Additionally, CVI helped stop multiple harmful bills that would have eliminated state energy efficiency codes, removed urban tree canopies in favor of billboards, and blocked local climate action.



Whether it's in the halls of our Statehouse or out in the communities, Conservation Voters for Idaho is constantly advocating for our shared goal of improving Idaho's air, water, energy, and open spaces. Over the past years we have invested historic amounts into clean water, conservation, and outdoor recreation and the CVI team was with us every step of the way."

– Idaho Governor Brad Little

ILLINOIS

Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) continued to protect the state's landmark climate law, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) from attempts to undermine it by securing key vetoes from Governor J. B. Pritzker, who championed the bill and is a strong environmental ally. Governor Pritzker also vetoed legislation that would have given one of the state's private utilities a monopoly on building transmission lines. In addition, Illinois passed an energy siting reform law to support the advancement of wind and solar power. IEC collaborated with the wind power industry and affiliated partners to help draft the bill, ran public education and support campaigns that drove 6,332 Illinoisans to take action, and created a video uplifting the story of a family farm directly benefited by the legislation.

In Chicago, IEC and partner organizations launched the Clean and Affordable Buildings Campaign to push the city to act on its climate commitments and enact emissions reduction solutions for the buildings sector. Chicago published a building decarbonization strategy with 26 policy recommendations to move the city forward on its goal to make all municipal facilities carbon-free by 2025 and all other buildings in the city carbon-free by 2040. With allies, IEC held a Clean Buildings Rally, briefed freshman members of the city council about building electrification, and mobilized Chicago residents in support of clean buildings. The city is releasing a draft ordinance informed by the building decarbonization strategy to electrify all new construction, and IEC will work with the city to help drive stakeholder engagement and public input in the new year.

Lastly, IEC was selected to serve on Mayor-Elect Brandon Johnson's transition subcommittee on environmental justice to help develop the 2023 Chicago Mayoral Transition Report, which outlines a policy vision for the next four years. IEC coordinated with partners to submit policy memos and successfully incorporated the majority of their recommendations into the report.



On the heels of passing the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act – nation-leading equitable clean energy legislation – and a new law preventing local bans on wind and solar projects across the state, we're embarking on the next chapter of climate leadership in Illinois. The Illinois Environmental Council is now working to pass clean and affordable building policies within Chicago's City Council and clean and equitable transportation policy within the Illinois General Assembly, among our many clean energy priorities in 2024."

– Jen Walling, Executive Director, Illinois Environmental Council

MASSACHUSETTS

First-year Governor Maura Healey cemented herself as a climate leader with support from the Environmental League of Massachusetts (ELM), who served on the administration's transition committees. On her first day, Governor Healey established a cabinet-level climate office that released its inaugural report in the fall. Massachusetts also published the ResilientMass Plan, outlining climate adaptation strategies and creating an Office of Climate Science. In addition, the governor appointed an undersecretary of environmental justice, set up a green bank, highlighted climate technology as a key opportunity in her Economic Development Plan, and dedicated \$50 million for decarbonization retrofits in low- to moderate-income households. ELM and the Zero Carbon Renovation Fund coalition ran media campaigns and held public events to promote clean buildings investments.

ELM has spearheaded the Green Budget Coalition for over a decade and has grown broad bipartisan support for climate funding. This year, ELM successfully expanded the coalition's scope of priorities and secured historic investments in clean energy, environmental justice and climate preparedness.

In the transportation sector, ELM focused on accountability through their NetZeroMA website and legislative advocacy with the Zero-Emission Vehicles Coalition. ELM pushed for equitable implementation of updates to Massachusetts' MOR-EV incentive program, which will make electric vehicles more accessible. ELM also supports Environmental Justice Legislative Table partners, calling for state Energy Facilities Siting Board reform to ensure that impacted communities are included in decision making. ELM elevated the issue to the administration, and Governor Healey created a new clean energy siting commission.

Lastly, ELM convenes over 100 organizations in the New England for Offshore Wind coalition, which advocates for responsible advancement of offshore wind through regional collaboration. In 2023, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut announced a multi-state agreement to coordinate on offshore wind procurement – the first of its kind in the country – which will drive offshore wind development and lower costs for developers which in turn, will lower costs for customers.



The New England offshore wind sector is at an inflection point – a critical time when industry, policy makers and communities can come together to solve for the best outcome on climate change. When done right, we will overcome the challenges of growing offshore wind by keeping our priorities in sight to realize a stronger, equitable regional economy, affordable energy and better public health."

– Amy Boyd Rabin, Vice President of Policy, Environmental League of Massachusetts

MONTANA

Montana Conservation Voters (MCV) successfully blocked bills to undermine or eliminate the right to a “clean and healthful environment” in the state constitution. This specific right was the source of a lot of attention in 2023 – and protecting it was critical – as it was a district court’s justification for declaring an existing law preventing state regulators from considering climate impacts in energy permitting unconstitutional. In a landmark case, a district judge ruled in favor of 16 youth plaintiffs who sued the state for endangering Montanans by prioritizing fossil fuel development over public health and environmental conservation. This decision may allow other anti-environment state policies to be challenged in the future.

During the legislative session, MCV Education Fund (MCVEF) convenes the Conservation Working Group, a diverse group of conservation organizations that lead advocacy and public outreach to protect clean air, water and land against pro-polluter interests. For the last three years, MCVEF and coalition partners have run the Montana Pushback campaign to defend against attacks on the environment, and this year, MCVEF launched a public education campaign about the importance of the state constitution and safeguarding the right to a clean environment. As part of this effort, MCVEF produced and spread an informational video, put up billboards, and ran digital ads including “homepage takeovers” of state news websites.



During the 2023 legislative session, Montana Conservation Voters was a leader in protecting our constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment, which was the lynchpin in the ‘Held v. Montana’ climate trial. We know that anti-conservation politicians will continue to try to undermine our rights, so it is important that we stay vigilant and protect the Montana Constitution.”

– Sally Ericsson, Board Member, Montana Conservation Voters

NEBRASKA

For over eight years, Nebraska Conservation Voters (NCV) has led a strategic campaign that won decarbonization commitments from all three of the state's major utilities. This year, one of these utilities, the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD), pledged to build 1,500 MW of new clean energy and started construction on Nebraska's first utility-scale solar project. OPPD's largest upcoming project will produce more power than all currently-operating solar in the entire regional power grid. In support of solar development, NCV held consistent meetings with the OPPD Board, drove attendance to board meetings and generated calls, emails and in-person comments.

NCV drives progress through engaging in utility planning processes. Nebraska's largest utility, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) passed a strong plan this year, centered on its decarbonization goal with investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electric vehicles. NCV mobilized their base to defend NPPD's decarbonization commitment from attempts to remove it from the final plan, and successfully push back on opposition to clean energy development.

At the urging of NCV, Omaha hired a consultant and utilized a \$1 million federal climate pollution reduction grant to begin drafting the city's inaugural climate action plan. Additionally, NCV and partners built and activated support for solar power in Cass County, which has over 800 MW of proposed solar generation and storage projects, to ensure the county approved favorable zoning regulations. This advocacy was critical because the board of commissioners was considering zoning that would have prevented solar development.

Lastly, NCV stopped attacks on clean energy in the state legislature by driving constituent testimony and calls to key Senate committee members, organizing strategic stakeholders in opposition, and running an earned media campaign about the benefits of renewables.



Nebraska has shown that support for 100% clean energy has broad support across the country. Now we need to build the infrastructure to successfully transition away from harmful fossil fuels. This year, Nebraska's public utilities and local county officials committed to over a gigawatt of new clean energy - we need to keep the momentum going to secure a safe and healthy future for all."

– Chelsea Johnson, Deputy Director,
Nebraska Conservation Voters

NEVADA

Nevada Conservation League (NCL) successfully led ongoing efforts to push back on the pro-gas agenda. In 2023, NCL launched an emergency campaign against a bill to invest in large-scale gas infrastructure. Before the bill was heard in committee, NCL quickly organized communications outreach to their members and the public, driving over 120 comments within a couple of days and creating an uproar that gained important media attention and coverage, resulting in the legislation failing the same week.

In addition, Nevada passed legislation creating a new oversight process for gas utilities and strengthening the process for electric utilities. All energy providers are now required to file three-year plans for review and approval, which provides an opportunity for Nevadans to give input. These proposals must also detail cost impacts for ratepayers and mitigation plans for pollution in low-income communities and underserved communities.

Nevada passed a law to increase electric and hybrid vehicles in state fleets and create an incentive program utilizing federal funding to lower the cost of electric medium- to heavy-duty trucks and buses. NCL helped build a broad coalition of support to win and leverage the backing of trucking and auto dealer associations, and effectively negotiate with traditional opponents. NCL also helped secure \$1 million for the Nevada Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) to lower financial barriers to clean energy and energy efficiency projects. This was critical because the NCEF has no ongoing state support and it positions Nevada to access federal funding opportunities from the Inflation Reduction Act. NCL's legislative advocacy included virtual and in-person events that had over 200 attendees and engaged dozens of lawmakers.

Lastly, after three years of NCL's advocacy for a climate action plan in Clark County – the 11th most populous county in the nation – the County Commission unanimously adopted the All-In Community Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.



NEVADA CONSERVATION LEAGUE



The climate crisis induces extreme weather events across the country and Nevada is on the frontline. These disastrous events are signals from our earth that we must do more to protect it. We need to remind our decision-makers what's at stake — a cleaner, healthier, more equitable future. Our elected officials need to hear directly from Nevadans about why we must advance clean transportation solutions and defend Nevada against legislation to prolong the use of fossil fuels. We know a win for our environment is a win for all communities."

– **Christi Cabrera-Georgeson, Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League**

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed an executive order accelerating his timeline for achieving 100% clean energy from 2050 to 2035. This was largely influenced by New Jersey LCV's accountability efforts to ensure Governor Murphy remained at the forefront of national climate leadership, along with the organization's work to introduce 100% clean energy legislation for the first time. In addition to the 100% clean energy directive, Governor Murphy announced Advanced Clean Cars II standards, new incentives and planning for building electrification, and strategies to begin phasing out the use of methane gas.

New Jersey LCV worked with bill sponsors and maintained pressure on lawmakers to promote 100% clean energy and keep the legislation strong and moving. The organization is a founding member of the Clean Energy Action Now coalition and mobilized allies around the bill. To grow and demonstrate public support, New Jersey LCV launched an extensive communications campaign with digital ads, social media outreach and a press conference with partners, and coordinated a mobile organizing push to amplify the importance of an equitable energy transition and keep the issue visible to decision-makers. As part of these efforts, New Jersey LCV arranged dozens of lobby meetings and generated 1,420 constituent calls and emails to lawmakers. With their partners in the New Jersey Progressive Equitable Energy Coalition, New Jersey LCV successfully advocated for the removal of trash incineration from the definition of clean energy in the draft legislation, an important win for environmental justice.

Other legislative wins this year include a low-carbon concrete law to incentivize the use of more climate-friendly building materials, funding for electric school buses and the state's energy assistance program, and legislation to ensure clean energy projects can receive federal tax credits.



New Jersey LCV is excited to work with environmental champions to realize a vision for New Jersey that prioritizes clean energy, open space protection, clean air and water, and justice for communities of color that have been left behind. We're doubling down to pass nation-leading 100% clean energy by 2035 legislation and advancing on offshore wind to create good local union jobs and improve public health."

**– Ed Potosnak, Executive Director,
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters**

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico adopted Advanced Clean Cars II, Advanced Clean Trucks, and the heavy-duty omnibus rules after Conservation Voters New Mexico (CVNM) and allies secured the rulemaking and defended it from fossil fuel-backed attacks. The organization mobilized community members and leaders to contact decision makers and comment at every hearing, placed op-eds to combat misinformation, and ran bilingual advocacy campaigns.

With the Power4NM coalition, CVNM successfully called for a full-time state economic and environmental justice position in the budget and \$13 million for just transition programs. CVNM substantially ramped up messaging and legislator accountability efforts to amplify public demand for climate action. Nearly 100 New Mexicans marched on the Capitol at the Climate Justice Advocacy Day and 800 participated in seven CVNM tele-town halls with lawmakers. CVNM also partnered with a local artist on an installation depicting a graveyard of extinct beloved state species and “the last green chile” to highlight the threat of the climate crisis to New Mexico.

CVNM has maintained pressure on Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to act on her climate commitment. This year, Governor Lujan Grisham established the New Mexico Climate Investment Center (NMCIC) to finance climate pollution-reduction measures in homes and businesses. The NMCIC will prioritize projects that directly benefit low-income, disadvantaged and Tribal communities, and minimize impacts of the energy transition on workers and communities. Due to their leadership, CVNM was invited to attend the press conference and comment in the governor’s press release.



President Biden’s \$55 million investment to create 250 jobs in rural New Mexico is confirmation that one of the top oil and gas producing states can lead the transition to clean energy, using the tens of millions of dollars already received under the Inflation Reduction Act and the commitments of \$3 billion through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. We have a lot of work ahead of us and federal funding is key to implementing robust climate and energy action right here in New Mexico.”

– **Samantha Kao, Climate & Energy Director, Conservation Voters New Mexico**

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina LCV and NCLCV Foundation lead ongoing utility accountability efforts focused on the state's primary electricity provider, Duke Energy. NCLCVF and the Fossil Free NC coalition gave a failing grade to Duke's latest Carbon Plan – which outlines how the utility will reduce emissions – based on the coalition's 12 principles to guide energy planning and center justice. Duke's plan was especially lacking meaningful involvement of environmental justice communities, and due to NCLCVF and partners' urging, the state Utility Commission ordered Duke to improve their environmental justice stakeholder engagement. NCLCV and NCLCVF continue efforts to expose Duke's lack of transparency and failure to adequately involve frontline communities, and put pressure on the NCUC to hold the utility accountable.

NCLCVF's PowerUp grassroots organizing campaign empowers environmental justice communities to have a voice in energy policy decisions. PowerUp turned out nearly 100 activists to rate case hearings and held community education events with allies and local elected officials in seven counties. NCLCVF ran a statewide digital media push against historic Duke rate hikes and collaborated on an energy justice strategy with the NC Clean Energy Working Group.

At the state Legislature, NCLCV utilized their strong working partnership with Conservatives for Clean Energy to help develop the first energy market reform study bill ever introduced in North Carolina and recruit both Republican and Democrat bill co-sponsors. NCLCV will continue to advocate for legislative reforms to lessen Duke's monopoly on the electricity market.

Lastly, at the prompting of NCLCVF, the state applied for a federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) under the Inflation Reduction Act and received \$3 million in funding, and Charlotte and the Raleigh-Durham Triangle each received an additional \$1 million. NCLCVF is working directly with the regional grant administrators in The Triangle to help design their CPRG program and center the needs of low-income communities.



Thanks to the Affordable Clean Energy Plan, North Carolina's residents and communities are slowly gaining access to unprecedented opportunities to improve their lives and lower their energy bills. Despite legislative challenges, we are seeing major successes on the ground – where they matter the most. NCLCV has been hard at work employing creative solutions to advance environmental protections and strengthening our communities against the threat of the climate crisis."

– Michelle "Meech" Carter, Clean Energy Campaigns Director,
North Carolina League of Conservation Voters

OHIO

Ohio approved two new utility-scale solar projects with the potential to power over 50,000 homes. One of the projects will also remediate a former surface mining site and will have potential for livestock grazing once completed. The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) joined in both legal proceedings where they successfully advocated for directing benefits to local communities, factoring climate and environmental impacts into planning, and using land responsibly, including requiring soil quality management. OEC utilized its deep legal expertise to participate in negotiations, submit expert testimony on the benefits of renewable energy, and join the settlement agreement. In addition to their legal engagement, OEC also met with community members living near the planned projects to answer questions and build support for solar.

OEC joined partners to host a press conference in the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's (PUCO) lobby, demanding a long-overdue audit of coal plants that the Legislature bailed out in a 2019 bill – HB 6 – which was the center of a federal bribery corruption scandal resulting in the former Ohio Speaker of the House being sentenced to 20 years in prison. The cost of the bailout was pushed onto energy customers and the PUCO had failed to conduct the required audit to determine if Ohio ratepayers were being overcharged for four years. Two days after the event, the PUCO announced a comment period for the public to provide feedback on the audits. OEC and allies filed robust testimony and now the organization is participating as a legal intervening party in the case, after securing a hearing to ensure a more detailed review of audit findings. This work is part of OEC's ongoing HB 6 accountability efforts.

Lastly, OEC prevented the state from diverting funding for safely capping oil and gas wells to ensure clean-up efforts continue for Ohio's nearly 20,000 abandoned wells, many of which are located in low-income communities.



In 2023, Ohio Environmental Council worked hard with its members and partners to hold polluters and corrupt utilities accountable and fight for equitable energy solutions that benefit all Ohioans. This year we saw major victories in the approval of multiple large scale solar projects, creating jobs and clean reliable power that is responsibly developed in line with local community needs. We look forward to continuing to partner with Ohio's greatest asset – its people – in the years to come to decarbonize Ohio and help it thrive."

– Nolan Rutschilling, Managing Director of Energy Policy, Ohio Environmental Council

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro appealed a Commonwealth court ruling to block the state's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative – a cooperative multi-state program to cap and reduce carbon emissions from the power sector. Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania (CVPA) ran a targeted digital and tv ad campaign in seven districts and large geofenced areas to secure the governor's appeal.

For the first time in nearly 20 years, Pennsylvania updated its environmental justice policy to expand community participation in the permitting process for polluting facilities, encourage state agencies to prioritize environmental justice communities in regulation and grant distribution, and allow higher fines for violations in these communities. The state also created a new tool to identify environmental justice areas and provide public health data. CVPA successfully pushed for an extended comment period and spent two months engaging environmental justice communities to give input and collecting comments in support.

The Pennsylvania House passed a resolution calling for a study of the fees that fossil fuel extraction companies pay to the state. As the second-largest methane gas producing state in the country, it is notable that Pennsylvania is the only major oil and gas producing state that does not collect a volume-based severance tax on the extraction of resources that will be used out-of-state. Instead, Pennsylvania charges an annual fee per extraction site. The audit will examine how much potential revenue Pennsylvania has lost without a severance tax and compare against other oil and gas-producing states. The findings will help push for polluters to pay their fair share and provide Pennsylvania with more funding for environmental protection and climate mitigation efforts. CVPA supported a freshman pro-environment legislator through the process to develop and introduce the resolution, advocated for its passage, and once the study findings are released, will work to ensure lost revenue is recouped and reinvested into the communities most impacted by oil and gas pollution.



Conservation Voters of PA has been a critical partner in developing the Solar 4 Schools legislation and in passing it through the Pennsylvania State House. The input, guidance, and eagerness to meet with stakeholders and lawmakers to get a good piece of legislation across the line, has been particularly amazing. I'm grateful to CVPA for being such an integral part of passing landmark legislation for our Commonwealth."

– Representative Elizabeth Fiedler, Pennsylvania State House

SOUTH CAROLINA

Conservation Voters of South Carolina Education Fund (CVSCEF) secured hearings for customers to give input on all three of the state's major electric utility plans for the first time in over a decade. The utility planning process previously occurred largely without public input, but CVSCEF and partners submitted dozens of comments to the state Public Service Commission (PSC) demanding a fair ratepayer engagement process, resulting in a major win for accountability and transparency. This included successfully pressing the PSC to hold the first-ever Integrated Resource Plan public hearing for the state-owned and most carbon-intensive utility. The earliest of these utility hearings was held in the fall with CVSCEF and allies driving public testimony.

This work is a part of a ten-year robust utility regulation reform campaign, UPowerSC, spearheaded by CVSCEF that facilitated broad community outreach and education. In addition, on the heels of major utility bill increases, the organization launched an aggressive push to highlight the connection between overreliance on fossil fuels and soaring energy prices, especially underscoring the increased cost and risks of natural gas. CVSCEF conducted an extensive public awareness effort, including holding educational briefings and bringing experts to present to PSC Commissioners on energy costs.

Conservation Voters of South Carolina (CVSC) leads efforts to advance clean energy at the state legislature. This year, CVSC worked with lawmakers to help draft and introduce bills addressing utility accountability, energy market reform, ratepayer protections, and clean energy development. With the SC Energy Justice Coalition, CVSC created strategies to reach 80% clean electricity by 2035, including important justice provisions and provided them to legislative leaders, resulting in one of the most comprehensive clean energy bills ever introduced in South Carolina. CVSC engaged in intense policy negotiations, and their legislation was critical for shaping these discussions. CVSC's recommendations will be incorporated into viable policy to be introduced in 2024.



CVSC brings policy to the people – and people to policy. CVSC is a conduit between community voices and state decision makers and to shape energy policy to ensure all people in South Carolina benefit in a just transition to clean energy.”

– John Tynan, President, Conservation Voters of South Carolina

VIRGINIA

After eight years of offshore wind advocacy from Virginia LCV and partners, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) approved the nation's largest offshore wind project – Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind. This major milestone is the second-to-last approval needed before construction can begin. When completed, up to 176 turbines off the coast of Virginia Beach will generate enough electricity to power nearly 1 million homes. BOEM's approval includes plans to minimize environmental impacts and measures to support the fishing industry. VALCV worked with allies to secure support for offshore wind from decision-makers, including the coastal congressional and state delegations, held numerous events, and earned press coverage to gain attention and educate the public about the opportunities for offshore wind in Virginia. Additionally, VALCV has run a sustained defense campaign to protect the 2020 Virginia Clean Economy Act – the state's 100% clean energy law, which contains important provisions promoting offshore wind – against repeated attacks in the General Assembly.

This year, every bill VALCV opposed in the Virginia Legislature was successfully defeated in committee. They blocked legislation to repeal clean cars standards, pull Virginia out of participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, include nuclear power in the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard, and prohibit localities from setting bans on gas in new buildings. The organization's legislative defense included strategic communications, grassroots and grassroots organizing, direct lawmaker outreach, and multiple visibility events which attracted media attention and helped drive a narrative of public support for climate action and opposition to climate rollbacks. This work generated nearly 3,000 constituent messages to lawmakers – especially targeting key Senate committee members – turned out 200 people to events and rallies, and coordinated over 300 lobby meetings. VALCV's effective, multi-year efforts have been critical to holding the line on key environmental laws and programs and blocking pro-polluter policies.



Thanks to strong external pressure and our political savvy at the General Assembly, not a single bill that Virginia LCV opposed made it to Governor Youngkin's desk this year – a testament to the dedication of our champions in the Senate committed to keeping Virginia on the course to climate action and a clean energy future."

– Lee Francis, Deputy Director, Virginia League of Conservation Voters

WASHINGTON

Washington Conservation Action (WCA) has a 50-year legacy of winning foundational environmental policies and holding the state accountable for carrying them out. WCA has built a powerful environmental advocacy community and convenes the Washington Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC), which celebrated its 20-year anniversary in 2023. The EPC successfully pushed for \$1 billion in revenue from the 2021 Climate Commitment Act (CCA) – the country's strongest cap-and-invest law – to be allocated for environmental programs. This was the first year CCA dollars were used, and the EPC ensured the funding, which was generated by polluters, served its intended purpose. One of these key investments was dedicating over \$26 million to administer the state's comprehensive environmental justice legislation, the HEAL Act. WCA continues to drive equitable implementation of the CCA, including advocating for strong action to improve air quality and reduce environmental health disparities in overburdened communities.

WCA leads strong campaigns to fight back against the fossil fuel industry. This year, they conducted a strategic, multi-platform initiative to counter oil-backed misinformation targeting the CCA. WCA launched a petition that collected 720 signatures and gathered community letters calling on state regulators to enforce accountability and transparency measures. The organization also authored and placed several news articles and ran a social media push to expose the oil industry's deception tactics and threats to rollback Washington's progress for public health and a clean energy economy.

In the Legislature, WCA and partners secured an update to the Growth Management Act after a multi-year effort to add climate resiliency and pollution reduction considerations into the state's landmark land use and development law for the first time. Other legislative wins include improving clean energy permitting and funding cumulative impact assessments of projects, and protecting low-income utility customers from water and power shut offs during extreme heat events.



We can't wait for future generations to solve today's challenges because communities across Washington don't have the luxury of waiting for the kind of bold environmental progress we need right now. With billions of dollars from the Climate Commitment Act, our state can now address the challenges of today and tomorrow. The use of these CCA funds to reduce pollution, improve our public health, and invest in vulnerable communities and Tribal Nations reflects more than a decade of work and we are thrilled to start seeing the results."

– Alyssa Macy, CEO, Washington Conservation Action
(Citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon)

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers established the Green Ribbon Commission on Clean Energy and Environmental Innovation to develop a state green bank, and WCV successfully recommended three environmental justice advocates to be appointed to the commission. Due to WCV's environmental leadership, they were also invited to join the governor's delegation to the U.S. Climate Alliance Natural and Working Lands meeting.

WCV was one of the main groups actively pushing back against anti-climate attacks in the state legislature and secured the governor's veto of three bills to prohibit local governments and state agencies from advancing 100% electric appliances and vehicles. WCV raised these issues in the media and was featured in a Wisconsin Public Radio story. At their annual Conservation Lobby Day, WCV turned out over 200 activists with Governor Evers as the keynote speaker. The organization also helped form the new Clean Economy Coalition of Wisconsin.

WCV runs an initiative to enact local 100% clean energy goals and, this year, launched a new 100% campaign in Stevens Point. In addition, Green Bay adopted the city's first clean energy plan to actualize their commitment to 100% clean energy and carbon neutrality by 2050 – won by WCV and allies in 2021. For over five years, WCV has worked in coordination with local groups to build support and organize Green Bay residents and businesses behind clean energy. To celebrate progress on multiple local climate implementation plans, WCV partnered with the Wisconsin Blue-Green Alliance to hold a press conference and roundtable featuring Governor Evers and four mayors who especially underscored the opportunities of federal funding to help cities achieve their climate goals.

Lastly, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission rejected a proposal from Madison Gas and Electric to undermine net-metering and reduce access to residential solar. WCV and allies generated public comments to the PSC opposing the utility proposal.



There's so much to be excited about right now in Wisconsin when you look at what we are doing on clean energy and climate. I think the most exciting thing is the partnerships that are being made. We are seeing people from all different communities, all different economies, and all different perspectives coming together and saying, this is a great opportunity for us to move Wisconsin into a cleaner, more just future and we're all a part of it."

– Jennifer Giegerich, Government Affairs Director, Wisconsin Conservation Voters