WE CAN
WE MUST
WE WILL
Earthjustice is the premier nonprofit public interest environmental law organization. We wield the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people’s health, preserve magnificent places and wildlife, advance clean energy and combat climate change. We are here because the earth needs a good lawyer.
In a year that scientists predict could be the hottest in recorded history, Americans are alive to the threats of climate change. Awareness is growing of all the harms associated with our continued dependence on fossil fuels, from life-threatening air pollution to explosive oil trains to extreme weather. A powerful climate movement is building, of community leaders and health workers, conservationists and parents, spiritual leaders and so many others, all coming together to build a sustainable future powered by clean energy. To this movement Earthjustice brings the power of the law, as we fight to end bailouts for dirty energy and drive clean energy solutions that also deliver sweeping health benefits in the form of clean air and water.

Fundamentally, we are determined to make our communities healthy and resilient, and to protect the natural world that sustains us. As you will read in the pages of this annual report, we made landmark progress for people and the planet this year. And during the production of this report we received news of yet another tremendous victory—a court decision upholding the protection of roadless lands in Alaska’s Tongass National Forest, our nation’s largest and wildest national forest. Thanks to the tireless dedication of our attorneys, who have been fighting to protect these lands for more than 20 years, the forest’s remaining wild and undeveloped areas are protected from logging and road-building. This victory exemplifies the effective, long-term litigation campaigns that we are committed to waging and winning.

Our supporters make this work possible, and your commitment this year allowed us to keep fighting successfully on so many fronts. As part of the Earthjustice team, you kept up the fight to block drilling in the Arctic Ocean, halted efforts to transform the West Coast into a transport hub for coal and oil trains, and won stronger protections for wolves in Wyoming and Idaho. You won important rulings that will better protect firefighters and families from hazardous flame-retardant chemicals, and secured another victory in the fight against mountaintop removal coal mining. And with your support, we have spurred reforms that could enable states like New York, Hawai‘i, California and Maryland to make a transformational shift to clean energy.

We have the capacity—and the commitment—to make this world a better place by investing in clean energy, healthy communities, and a vibrant, healthy natural world.

Together, we can do this. We must do this. We will do this.

Thank you for your partnership and your passion.
THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP: VICTORIES

Thanks to the united efforts of our supporters, staff, partners and clients, Earthjustice made remarkable progress on many fronts this fiscal year (July 2014–June 2015). The highlights presented here are just a sampling of the many court wins and legal advances we achieved; to learn more, please visit www.earthjustice.org/victories. None of them would be possible without you.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO CLEAN ENERGY
In Maryland, a state with a penchant for coal, we went “all in” to champion clean energy. Our efforts paid off when state regulators adopted our proposals to require aggressive utility investment in energy efficiency, making Maryland one of the top five leaders on energy savings in the nation. Crucially, the state committed to making energy efficiency programs more broadly accessible to renters and limited-income customers, meaning that many more people can reap the benefits of energy efficiency. Thanks to community solar legislation that we helped pass this year, Maryland is also on track to make solar energy more broadly accessible.

PRESERVING RED ROCK COUNTRY
Utah’s famed red rock country is a scenic and recreational wonderland, with abundant wildlife, historic landmarks and archaeological treasures. A May 2015 court decision in our favor directed the federal government to move quickly to consider strengthening environmental protections for this magnificent landscape from the harm caused by destructive off-road vehicle use.

HASTENING THE DECLINE OF COAL
Coal-fired power plants are the nation’s biggest polluters, driving climate change and causing serious health problems. Earthjustice works to kick our country’s dangerous coal habit by establishing and enforcing limits on coal plant pollution, and ensuring that industry pays the costs—which allows clean energy to outcompete coal. By making the case to utility regulators that coal plants are not the best economic choice for ratepayers, we secured announcements or binding commitments to stop burning coal at 26 power plants throughout the country—five in this past fiscal year alone—directly reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 74,815,125 tons annually. More broadly, our work to secure more stringent air, water and waste regulations has been instrumental in driving decisions to retire more than 200 coal plants across the country, saving tens of thousands of lives.

RESTORING MAUI’S FOUR GREAT WATERS
In October 2014, citizen activism and the power of the law restored millions of gallons of daily flow to Maui’s native streams known as “the four Great Waters” for the first time in 150 years. Earthjustice, in partnership with community and conservation groups, has fought for decades to restore Hawaiian stream flows that were diverted for private use despite their importance to local communities, Native Hawaiian culture and a healthy environment. Our cases established a renowned and leading-edge precedent that water is a public trust.

A WIN FOR WHALES
In March 2015, Earthjustice won a federal court ruling that prompted the Navy to put vast swaths of important Pacific Ocean habitat near California and Hawaii’s off-limits to weapons and sonar testing that can harm whales, dolphins and many other marine mammals.

FIGHTING TO STOP OIL TRAINS
In a February 2015 decision in our favor, an official in Washington State blocked construction of a crude oil rail facility near Anacortes, on the shores of the Salish Sea. The facility would bring hundreds of train cars loaded with explosive Bakken crude through the region each week, traveling along sensitive waterways and threatening communities—like Seattle and Mt. Vernon—through which they pass. The project must now undergo a full review of the risks to the environment and public health.

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MAUI stream advocate Hōkūao Pellegrino and his daughter celebrate water’s return to the Wailuku River

Humpback whale

Red rock country in Canyonlands National Park, Utah
“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.” —John Muir

Wild nature is important to people for so many reasons. It provides a refuge from our bustling cities and busy lives. It’s a source of wonder and spiritual sustenance, and is critically important to indigenous cultures and practices. It provides us with clean air and water. It’s where many of us go to relax, play, observe and spend time with our families. And beyond its importance to humans, nature has an intrinsic value that deserves our respect. We’ve lost far too much of our irreplaceable wild world already, but much of great value remains—and together, we can and we must protect it. As the legal champion for wildlands, wildlife and oceans, Earthjustice has been fighting for 44 years to protect the lifeblood that sustains us all and which will enable future generations to thrive. We’re not about to back down now.

IN DEFENSE OF WOLVES

Wolves in the lower 48 states were nearly eradicated due to human intolerance. Our persecution of wolves destroyed the balance of predator and prey, and the effects rippled out through entire ecosystems. The Mexican gray wolf, for example—the “lobo” that once roamed the American Southwest—was exterminated from the wild. Since the reintroduction of captive Mexican gray wolves to the wild, the U.S. population has grown to just over 100, but the species remains the most endangered mammal in North America.

Earthjustice litigation has been instrumental in protecting wolves for more than two decades, helping populations rebound in key regions. But wolves are again under attack on multiple fronts—including threats to remove federal protections from wolves across most of the country. In the past year, Earthjustice won two key victories for wolves, reinstating protections for them in Wyoming and halting a wolf extermination program in Idaho. We also filed two lawsuits challenging the government’s inadequate efforts to bring the Mexican gray wolf back from the brink of extinction.

ALL LOBOS ALIVE TODAY DESCEND FROM JUST SEVEN WOLVES

Mexican gray wolf
THE FIGHT FOR THE ARCTIC

One of the earth’s last great wild places, the Arctic Ocean is literally the last place on earth we should be drilling for oil and gas. Its rich ecosystem is home to wildlife like whales, walruses, seals and migratory birds, and is the foundation of the region’s indigenous cultures. Any spill in these remote, rugged seas would be next to impossible to clean up—and the government estimates a 75 percent chance of one or more big spills if the oil and gas leases there are developed. And burning Arctic oil and gas would fan the flames of climate change, which already is warming the region twice as fast as the rest of the world. There’s no way around it: drilling spells disaster for the irreplaceable Arctic—and for the rest of the world.

Earthjustice has won several important legal victories stopping unwise drilling and forcing the government to reconsider. In September 2015, during production of this report, Shell announced it will forego Arctic Ocean drilling for now. Shortly thereafter, the administration canceled two upcoming lease sales and refused to extend the time period of existing leases—both huge wins for the region. But the threat to this fragile region remains severe. We continue to fight in court on many fronts and will now redouble our efforts to convince the administration to take oil and gas drilling off the table in the Arctic Ocean, permanently, and protect this special place.

PERSPECTIVE:

TED ZUKOSKI
Earthjustice attorney

“The judge’s decision means the government can no longer turn a blind eye to the significant climate costs of its actions. This ruling is a win for forests, a win for our climate—and a win for all of us.”

In September 2014, a federal judge overturned a government decision allowing a coal company to mine 10 million tons of coal in Colorado’s wild and beautiful Sunspot Roadless Area. The decision finalized an earlier ruling affirming that the government violated the law when it failed to account for the climate change impacts of burning the coal.
How will we power our future? We can’t mine, drill and frack our way to a livable climate. The good news is that we have innovation on our side.

All across the country, change is happening remarkably fast: The cost to install solar panels on a home or business has dropped more than 50 percent just since 2009, and procuring wind power is now cheaper than building new gas plants. Earthjustice is challenging standard assumptions that favor fossil fuels and forcing a fair accounting of the economic, health, environmental and equity benefits that clean energy provides. The biggest barriers we face are no longer technological or economic, but political and regulatory. The energy solutions we need are ready and available—now it’s Earthjustice’s job to bring that powerful truth to bear in the courts and utility commissions.

Across the country, people are fighting back against the dramatic surge in trains funneling coal and oil to ports along the west and east coasts. The boom brings with it not only more railway traffic but also proposals to expand refineries and build new shipping terminals. These plans threaten the health, safety and environment of communities along rail lines and will lock the world into even greater dependence on fossil fuels. But more and more, people are coming together to say no—that’s not the vision we have for our communities and our planet.

Partnering with communities, conservation groups and tribes, Earthjustice is demanding more thorough safety and environmental reviews for these projects in California, the Northwest and New York. Nationally, we helped build pressure for federal standards that we are now trying to strengthen in the courts.

Over the past year, our legal work has:

- Blocked construction of a refinery oil train facility in Washington state (see “Fighting to Stop Oil Trains,” page 6)
- Halted the expansion of an oil train facility in Albany, New York, designed to handle dirty tar sands oil
- Defended Oregon’s permit denial for a coal terminal expansion at the Port of Morrow on the Columbia River
A clean energy revolution is sweeping the country. In its vanguard are states like Hawai‘i, California and New York that are seeking to reinvent the utility business. Earthjustice is fighting in these and other states for reforms that make a new utility business model possible, and to prevent power companies from using their influence to delay a genuine transition to clean power. In states where utilities are making every effort to kill the economics of renewable energy and block investment in energy efficiency, we’re going to court to champion clean power as the best alternative for ratepayers.

Over the past year, we negotiated settlements in New York utility proceedings that require investments in microgrids, community solar projects and other resources that advance the state’s efforts to remake the utility business model. In California, we helped create a new market and roadmap for expanding demand response, the practice of reducing energy use in homes and businesses to meet grid needs. We kept Kentucky on track to increase investment in energy efficiency and defeated utility roadblocks to installation of rooftop solar in Indiana and New Mexico.

“Every state in the country has a role to play in creating the new clean energy economy that can fend off a climate crisis. With the Clean Power Plan, the states now have their playbook. We are compelling early, aggressive performance by the states so that we meet and exceed the plan’s goals.”

Earthjustice is defending the Clean Power Plan, which was announced by the administration in August, against attack and laying the groundwork for its successful implementation in the states.

CREATING PATHWAYS FOR CLEAN POWER

“A clean energy revolution is sweeping the country. In its vanguard are states like Hawai‘i, California and New York that are seeking to reinvent the utility business. Earthjustice is fighting in these and other states for reforms that make a new utility business model possible, and to prevent power companies from using their influence to delay a genuine transition to clean power.”

Earthjustice attorney Isaac Moriwake

Our ongoing work in Hawai‘i is setting the stage for powering the state with 100 percent renewable energy—a mandate passed into law this year, thanks to work over many years by Earthjustice and our partners.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS IN NEW YORK UTILITY PROCEEDINGS THAT REQUIRE INVESTMENTS IN MICROGRIDS, COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECTS AND OTHER RESOURCES THAT ADVANCE THE STATE’S EFFORTS TO REMAKE THE UTILITY BUSINESS MODEL.
PROTECTING FARMWORKERS FROM PESTICIDE POISONING

The United States employs nearly 2.5 million farmworkers, including hundreds of thousands of children, to grow and harvest the food we put on our tables. These workers perform physically demanding labor and are among the least protected from hazards on the job. They suffer 10,000 to 20,000 reported pesticide poisonings every year, and their exposure to pesticides puts them at higher risk for long-term, chronic health effects like cancer, asthma and birth defects. Farmworkers often live near treated fields, where pesticides can drift into their homes.

After more than a decade of delays, the EPA finally announced stronger rules protecting farmworkers and their families from pesticides. Earthjustice and a coalition of partners worked in Congress, at the EPA and in the White House to help make this happen. With partner organizations like Lideres Campesinas, we shared the stories of individuals from California to Florida who live with the reality of pesticide exposure every day. Together we organized a May 2015 meeting between EPA head Gina McCarthy and farmworkers directly impacted by pesticides, and in June we organized a farmworker fly-in to Washington, D.C., where agricultural workers from around the country met with Administrator McCarthy, their congressional representatives, White House staff and officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These and other efforts brought decision-makers face to face with people whose real-life experiences are most keenly affected by this critical policy issue.

Our nation has made great strides in cleaning up air and water pollution, thanks to our bedrock environmental laws. However, more than 138 million people—nearly 44 percent of our population—live in regions where pollution levels often make the air too dangerous to breathe. Earthjustice has long been a leader in the fight for strong national pollution standards to protect human health and the environment. We can and we must continue to close the health gap for those who live in polluted urban areas or near industrial plants, highways, mines and other major sources of pollution. To that end, we’re partnering with some of the most affected communities, both urban and rural, to make sure the rules are enforced where they’re needed most.
FIGHTING FOR CLEAN AIR

The 1970 Clean Air Act has saved hundreds of thousands of lives and dramatically improved our air quality. Many of these gains were the result of tenacious legal advocacy by Earthjustice, in alliance with a broad coalition of public health, community and environmental groups. Case by case, we’ve forced the government to strengthen air quality protections against harmful pollutants like particulate matter and ozone that can aggravate respiratory illnesses and heart disease. For example, our litigation forced the EPA to set strong new standards for soot pollution that will annually prevent as many as 15,000 premature deaths and reduce health costs by $118 billion.

But much more remains to be done: More than four in ten Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of pollution. Over the past year, we made significant gains. In November 2014, the EPA—prompted by an Earthjustice court victory—proposed to strengthen the standards for ozone (smog) pollution. But scientists and public health experts agree that more aggressive pollution cuts are needed to protect people, so we’re pressing for stronger standards.

This past March, we coordinated meetings of concerned individuals from around the country to tell the EPA and White House staff about their personal experiences with air pollution and the need for a stronger standard. In addition to this work, in the past year we secured a court-ordered deadline for the EPA to identify areas across the nation that fail to meet new national standards for sulfur dioxide pollution, challenged regulations that would relax state enforcement of national ozone standards, and pushed for tighter air pollution controls on refineries. These and many other cases aim to fulfill the Clean Air Act’s 45-year-old promise to protect the public health and welfare of all communities from the adverse effects of air pollution.

“CHILDREN DIE OF ASTHMA. I’M A PARENT. I CAN’T IMAGINE LOSING YOUR CHILD TO ASTHMA. I CAN’T IMAGINE LOSING YOUR CHILD AT ALL, BUT LOSING A CHILD UNNECESSARILY BECAUSE WE CAN’T BE BOtherED TO CLEAN UP POLLUTION? THAT’S JUST INCREDIBLE TO ME.”

Earthjustice attorney Jim Pew has been fighting for clean air for more than 20 years and currently helps to defend the EPA’s Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.

PERSPECTIVE: ADRIAN MARTINEZ

Earthjustice attorney

“The estimated 18 million people who call this region home deserve to breathe clean air, and it starts with the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which collectively pollute more than any fixed source of air pollution in the region.”

Earthjustice’s Los Angeles office, officially established in 2015, is partnering with health, community and environmental groups in the region to dramatically increase clean energy and reduce pollution at the ports. We’re also fighting for stronger protections against soot and smog pollution in Southern California, as well as improved air quality for communities near roads and freeways.

APPALACHIA

In October 2014, the D.C. District Court rejected all remaining industry challenges to the EPA’s historic veto of the Spruce No. 1 Mine, clearing the path for the agency to stop mountaintop removal mining in its tracks. “Today’s court victory is a win for all Americans who believe our children deserve clean water and healthy lives without facing threats like cancer, birth defects and early death associated with mountaintop removal coal mining,” said Earthjustice attorney Emma Churse, who represented several Appalachian groups and continues to defend the veto on appeal.

COLOMBIA

In a victory for the people and environment of Colombia, President Juan Manuel Santos called for a halt to aerial spraying of the herbicide glyphosate on coca fields in May 2015. Since the 1990s, Colombia has sprayed tremendous quantities of glyphosate broadly over rural areas in an unsuccessful attempt to wipe out the illegal drug trade. Glyphosate has been linked to an array of health problems, including cancer. This welcome news comes after 15 years of concerted advocacy by Earthjustice’s International Program in collaboration with our partners at the Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA).

CALIFORNIA

Representing the California Professional Firefighters and other groups, Earthjustice helped secure and then successfully defend California’s new rules governing furniture flammability, which will better protect firefighters and families nationwide from the hazards of fires without using toxic flame-retardant chemicals. The rules were upheld by the courts in August 2014. “Flame-retardants added to furniture foam provide little, if any, additional fire protection, but they do contribute to the toxic haze released in a fire. These inhalants are the major causes of fire deaths and injuries, and have been linked to higher cancer rates among firefighters,” said Earthjustice attorney Eve Gartner.

UPDATES

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The commitment and passion of our donors made the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 (FY15) strong for Earthjustice. A $3 million increase in contributed support coupled with temporarily restricted revenue from the prior year fueled over $6 million in additional program investments this year.

This was the final year of a three-year strategic plan and reflected the first full year of our new program leadership structure, with vice presidents of litigation in each program area: Climate and Energy; Lands, Wildlife and Oceans; and Healthy Communities. Expenses also reflected additional staff growth in our clean energy, oceans and health programs, as well as the expansion of our California program to include a Los Angeles office with dedicated staff working on a range of issues.

Another noteworthy change to our financials since last year is an increase in our donated services from $3.9M to $6M, which reflects additional donated advertising and legal services. While not nearly as strong as last year, we saw a positive return on our investments during FY15, resulting in gains, interest and dividends totaling $1.1M, down from last year’s $5.6M. Our overall support base grew significantly as well, increasing from approximately 73,000 donors to over 82,000 at fiscal year-end.

We are honored that Charity Navigator has awarded Earthjustice its 4-star rating—the highest possible—for the seventh consecutive year. Earthjustice is also an accredited member of the Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance, meeting all 20 of its standards for charity accountability and transparency.

Our success depends on the trust and partnership of the individuals and foundations who support the crucial work that we do. Your support continues to be a source of inspiration to all of us. Thank you.
In addition to the hundreds of clients choose cases strategically, rather than based on a client's ability to pay. In addition to the hundreds of clients listed here that we formally represent, there are scores of others with whom we partner, co-counsel and ally to achieve our goals.

“Port communities that are exploited by the goods–movement industry do not have the resources to fight for justice on their own. Our experience has left us with an understanding that the leadership and protection we need is not to be found among government agencies or elected officials. Earthjustice provides that leadership for us through the advocacy of Adrian Martínez, who always brings intelligence, expertise and credibility to the table. We are forever grateful.”

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Earthjustice Legislative Representative Jessica Ennis (second from left) with solar supporter and Maryland state delegate Luke Clippinger (right)
Thanks to the commitment and generosity of our supporters, Earthjustice is the leader in using the power of the law to protect the right of all people to a healthy environment. Support from individuals and foundations is the lifeblood of our work. You help us take on the most important challenges of our time—and stick with them until we win.

Thank you.