Environment Maine campaigns for Acadia

Thousands join our call to protect Acadia

This past summer, Environment Maine launched a campaign to protect Acadia National Park from development. Our national parks are hailed as “America’s best idea,” and Acadia is living proof. From the breathtaking views atop Cadillac Mountain, to incredible hiking trails like the Beehive, Acadia is one of Maine’s most special places.

But Acadia faces a big threat: Nearly 1,000 acres of land within Acadia are privately owned and could be developed. When owners want to sell this land to the park, they can’t, because the park doesn’t have the resources to purchase it. That’s not right—every acre of Acadia should be protected.

New opportunities to protect the park

Earlier this year, the Obama administration launched its America’s Great Outdoors Initiative to consider better preserving America’s iconic natural places. As they decide what path to take this fall, we’re pressing the administration to devote more resources to protect Acadia.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ensure that Acadia gets the resources it needs. The U.S. House passed a bill in July that dedicates funding from a federal program that uses offshore drilling revenue to preserve land in Acadia and elsewhere. Unfortunately, the bill stalled in the Senate—thanks to Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, who have yet to support it—but we are pressing for the Senate to vote on it this fall.

Action for Acadia

This summer, our staff spoke with more than 17,000 Mainers, mobilizing them to speak out and help protect the park. The response was phenomenal—clearly, Mainers want to protect Acadia. We also focused media attention on the issue in order to help convince both the Obama administration and Congress to protect Acadia. Environment Maine members even helped welcome President Obama and the first family to the park when they visited in July, sending them a card with well wishes and urging the president to help protect the park from development.

We’ve made a lot of progress this summer. Environment Maine is committed to continuing to prioritize building the political support to protect Acadia.
Recent action

400,000 strong against new offshore drilling

In the wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster, Environment Maine and our allies across the country rallied more than 400,000 people to speak out against expanded offshore drilling.

The impact of America's dependence on oil became tragically apparent when BP's Deepwater Horizon drill rig exploded in April, gushing more than 120 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. The spill devastated wildlife, coastal marshes, and the people who depend on the Gulf for their livelihoods—and the aftershocks will be felt for years.

Environment Maine believes that the surest ways to prevent a catastrophe like this from happening again are to better regulate existing drilling and to ban drilling in new areas.

Maine's senators vote to weaken Clean Air Act

As oil flowed into the Gulf of Mexico in June, U.S. Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins voted for a resolution to increase America's dependence on oil and block critical Clean Air Act rules. Environment Maine was disappointed by their votes, especially because both senators have long been supportive of the Clean Air Act. Fortunately, the U.S. Senate ultimately defeated the measure.

Environment Maine's analysis shows that by 2016, the resolution would have increased the state's dependence on oil by at least 2 million gallons and cost Mainers $6 million at the gas pump.

Environment Maine tried to persuade Sens. Snowe and Collins to vote against the oil industry-sponsored resolution. After they supported this rollback, we launched a TV ad to hold them accountable for voting against the Clean Air Act.

Senators Collins & Snowe: Maine needs clean energy leadership. Don’t let us down.

Paid for by Environment Maine

Watch Environment Maine's ad on youtube.com/user/EnvironmentMaine
The United States just suffered the greatest environmental disaster in our history. At least 120 million gallons of oil poured into the Gulf after BP’s Deepwater Horizon drill rig exploded on April 20. This amount of oil is the equivalent of more than 10 spills the size of the Exxon Valdez spill. Oil contaminated 580 miles of coastline from Texas to Florida, and the spill has already proven catastrophic for local wildlife—from oil-soaked pelicans, to dolphins choking on fumes, to the sea turtles that live in the Gulf’s warm waters. It will also be catastrophic for shrimpers, fishermen, and the men and women who work in the Gulf’s $20 billion tourism industry—all of whom now face a difficult and uncertain future. It may take decades for the ecology and the economy of the Gulf Coast to recover.

As we begin the long process of cleaning up the spill, compensating those affected, and rebuilding the Gulf Coast, we must ensure that a crisis of this magnitude never happens again. We have known for decades that America’s dependence on oil is environmentally and economically unsustainable. Beyond the threat of catastrophe, our addiction to oil pollutes our air, endangers our climate, enriches our enemies, and robs our economy of billions of dollars every day.

**We can get off oil permanently**

Environment Maine is joining our national federation, Environment America, to launch a major new program to free America from our dependence on oil. We want American-made electric cars instead of more air pollution, walkable communities and public transit instead of price shocks at the pump, and clean electricity instead of oil spills. The result will be more jobs, less pollution, improved public health, and thousands of dollars in savings for Maine families.

Environment Maine will work to bring together a coalition of environmental groups, public health organizations, consumer advocates and national security groups to build a sustained campaign to end Maine’s addiction to oil. And our national federation will similarly work around the country. Even with all this support, getting off oil will be no simple task. There is no easy solution, no silver-bullet legislation. It will require a sustained commitment from supporters and activists to change policy at every level of government—from the local zoning board to the President of the United States.

This year, we’ve worked to ensure that any climate or energy bill considered by Congress include strong policies to reduce oil dependence. Unfortunately, such legislation continues to be stalled in the Senate, but we will push ahead both in Augusta and Washington, D.C. For instance, Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon recently proposed visionary legislation that could reduce our oil consumption by more than 40 percent by 2030 through increased fuel efficiency, support for electric vehicles, and requirements and standards to ensure our tax dollars support public transit and smart growth instead of highways and sprawl. Environment Maine and our national federation strongly support the bill. Visit our website to write to express your support for ending America’s addiction to oil.

**Next step on clean cars**

The BP oil catastrophe in the Gulf demonstrated in heartbreaking terms why we need to move away from oil as quickly as possible. That’s why Environment Maine is working to set aggressive new standards requiring cars and trucks to go farther on a gallon of gas.

In May, President Obama announced historic new clean car standards, which Environment Maine and our national federation helped secure. These new rules are expected to cut gasoline consumption by more than 11 billion gallons per year in 2016, nearly as much as all the vehicles in Texas use annually. This is a great start, but not nearly enough—and the standards are slated to expire in 2016.

The disaster in the Gulf demands that we go further after the current standards expire, so Environment Maine is calling for stronger rules requiring the average car and light truck to travel 60 miles on a gallon of gas by 2025. We know that car companies have the technological know-how to make it happen, so we’re working to convince Maine’s next governor and the Obama administration to make this goal a reality. As our campaign kicks off, we’ll collect thousands of public comments and mobilize support from leaders within the national security community.
Maine takes initial steps to phase out BPA

The Maine Board of Environmental Protection is considering a new rule to phase out the use of toxic Bisphenol-A (BPA) in reusable food and drink containers, such as baby bottles and sippy cups. It’s a good first step, but it doesn’t go far enough, given that BPA is in a host of other products used by children.

BPA is a hormone-disrupting chemical linked to developmental problems, reproductive problems, heart disease and cancer. It is used in plastic food containers and most cans of food, and it can leach from these containers into the food they contain.

Environment Maine is urging the Board to ban BPA altogether in food containers marketed or intended for use by children under three. This longer list of products includes items such as formula cans, baby jar lids, and plastic baby food containers. Unfortunately, the current proposal wouldn’t phase out these uses of BPA.