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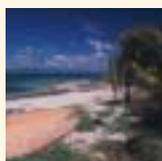
May 2001



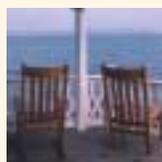
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## Drawing the line on offshore drilling

Naturalist John Muir was awed by the "grand savage harmony" of America's rugged Pacific Coast. If the oil industry has its way, Muir's "eternal wilderness" and other U.S. coastal areas could be disfigured by dozens of new oil platforms, imperiling beaches and wildlife.

Despite widespread opposition, powerful forces in the Bush administration and Congress want to lift the annual moratorium on new offshore oil leases and overturn President Clinton's executive order calling for a national network of marine protected areas. The oil drilling moratorium, which has protected the nation's coasts for nearly 20 years, will end in October unless renewed by Congress.

Working with state legislatures, shoreline communities and conservation groups, Environmental Defense is leading a campaign to protect our coasts. "Offshore drilling has profound implications for coastal communities," says our marine advocate Richard Charter. "We're being asked to sacrifice some of America's most treasured resources for marginal energy gains that could be achieved easily through efficiency measures." Many sensitive areas are at risk, including Alaska's fishery-rich Bristol Bay, Florida's panhandle and North Carolina's Outer Banks. Off California, the majestic Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary lies within the oil spill foot-

print of five proposed oil platforms.

To get the word out, Charter has organized many communities to pass resolutions against expanded drilling. Our email Action Network members recently sent over 10,000 faxes to the Interior Department opposing its aggressive plan for offshore oil and gas exploration.

Our scientist Dr. Rod Fujita has been appointed to a federal committee advising the government on creating a nationwide system of marine reserves. Anticipating the threat from offshore drilling, we have been working intensively with fishermen and other stakeholders to design and win approval for these marine reserves. We've already succeeded in Florida's Dry Tortugas and are close to victory in improving protection for the Channel Islands. "These reserves will help revive damaged fish stocks and shield fragile ecosystems from chronic pollution associated with offshore drilling," says Fujita.



Sometimes, industry safety measures aren't enough. This year, the world's largest oil rig sank off Brazil.



*An  
encounter  
by the  
river*

Early one recent morning, I was rowing on Connecticut's Norwalk River not far from my home. As I glided past an asphalt factory in the pre-dawn mist, the sight of a great blue heron wading along the shore was an unexpected gift.

Thanks to the Clean Water Act, we've made great progress reducing industrial waste dumped into waterways. Once-moribund rivers are again capable of sustaining life. But many rivers are still far from healthy. More than half our coastal rivers and bays are polluted with nitrogen from farm

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*Buffer zones can  
protect our waters.*

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runoff, municipal effluent and power plant and auto emissions.

Nitrogen chokes off oxygen and creates "dead zones" in coastal waters. Because there are so many hard-to-trace sources, the problem has eluded control. Yet simple buffer zones along the water's edge, like the mile of restored stream banks near where I row, can help shield our rivers.

When Congress debates the farm bill this summer, it should expand incentives to create buffers, restore wetlands and reduce pesticide use. As individuals, we can cut back on lawn fertilizers and buy cleaner cars that emit fewer nitrogen oxides. If we help nature, nature—like my river-side heron—will help itself.

—Fred Krupp



Chuck Mason/International Stock

The science is clear: Nitrogen runoff from Midwestern farms is the main cause of a massive "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico.

## Restoring life to the 'dead zone'

### HOW A SOUND FARM POLICY COULD SAVE OUR OCEANS

It sounds like something out of a zombie movie, but the spreading "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico is real. Extending from the mouth of the Mississippi River, the zone is almost barren of marine life. This void, an area the size of New Jersey, is caused largely by nutrients, primarily nitrogen, washing down from farms in the Midwest.

The greatest threat to our coastal waters today is nutrient pollution from diffuse "non-point" sources such as agricultural and urban runoff and airborne nitrogen pollution that settles on land and water.

In the Gulf of Mexico, nitrogen from the Mississippi causes algae blooms and red and brown tides, which block sunlight and devastate the marine ecosystem. When the algae dies, decomposition uses up available oxygen. Seagrass communities are destroyed. Bottom feeders like red snapper, red and black drum, croaker, sting rays and some sharks can't find food. Worms, clams, starfish and crabs disappear.

"The fish swim out of the area, but the others can't escape," says our Oceans program director Dr. Bob Howarth.

Howarth has been studying nutrient pollution in coastal waters for 15 years and leads an international coalition of 250 scientists researching the problem. This work led to a federal assessment of what causes the dead zone, and a National Academy of Sciences committee chaired by Howarth last summer endorsed the assessment.

An Environmental Defense recommendation for prompt government action helped bring about a multi-state agreement to reduce nutrient pollution of the Mississippi 30% by 2015. This would reduce the dead zone to one-third its present size.

"This goal can be achieved voluntarily by farmers with little or no loss of crop productivity if the federal government comes through with appropriate encouragement and incentives," said Howarth.

**WILL WASHINGTON LISTEN?**  
Environmental Defense sees the upcoming reauthorization of the federal farm bill as a chance to restore the gulf and other degraded coastal waters around the nation. Direct support for

farmers increased from \$9 billion in the early 1990s to \$32 billion in 2000. Yet only about \$2 billion went to conservation programs like restoring and protecting wetlands that soak up nitrogen or planting winter cover crops to keep nitrogen in the soil. As debate on the massive farm bill began, we helped orchestrate a letter from 25 senators to the Budget Committee urging more funds for conservation.

Our recent report, *Losing ground: Failing to meet farmer demand for conservation assistance*, found that most farmers who seek federal help to improve

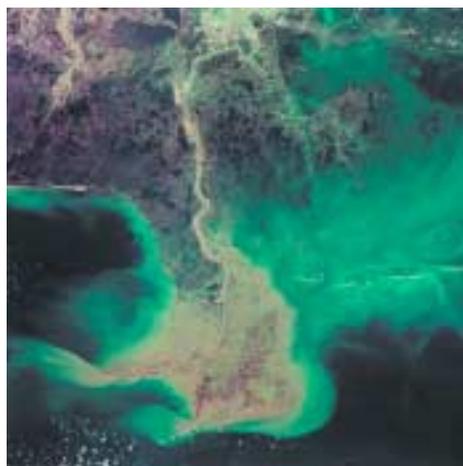
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*Reducing runoff from farms will shrink the dead zone.*

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water quality, combat sprawl or protect wildlife are rejected for lack of funds. The report found that 2,700 farmers hoping to restore 560,000 acres of lost wetlands were turned down. Much of this acreage would have filtered nitrogen in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Ohio—the major sources of the dead zone.

“Many farmers know their practices contribute to the dead zone and want to do something about it,” said our attorney Scott Faber. “Yet the government continues to favor methods that make the problem worse. We believe Congress will want to correct this in the new farm bill.”



Nitrogen-saturated sediment clogs the Mississippi delta.



John Rae

Where it all began: Attorney Tim Searchinger (left) and Army Corps economist Donald Sweeney walk along the Mississippi, where they exposed major Corps abuses.

## Army Corps suspends Mississippi project

The Army Corps of Engineers has suspended its eight-year, \$60 million study of Mississippi River construction projects in response to an unfavorable report by the National Academy of Sciences that Environmental Defense helped trigger.

The Academy's report points to serious flaws in the Corps' economic and environmental analyses and urges the Corps to consider less damaging ways of easing barge traffic. It comes shortly after an even tougher report by the Army Inspector General, who found that senior Corps officers had manipulated the study to justify massive lock expansions and that the agency has a chronic bias favoring large-scale construction.

In response to these revelations, President Bush's budget blueprint pledges to “redirect funds away from ongoing [Corps] projects that are not economically justified or are environmentally damaging.” The budget also states the administration will consider independent review of Corps projects, a solution we have long advocated.

The Corps of Engineers remains defiant. In recent testimony

before Congress, Corps Commander General Robert Flowers rejected the case for reform and disagreed with the findings of the Army Inspector General.

Environmental Defense has worked to reform the Army Corps since our earliest days. We achieved a breakthrough last year when Donald Sweeney, chief economist on the Mississippi study, revealed multiple irregularities to our attorney Tim Searchinger. We helped Sweeney detail the abuses to government investigators and the press and, shortly thereafter, Army Secretary Louis Caldera requested the Academy of Sciences review.

“Our next step is to prepare for Congressional hearings this summer to reform the Corps,” said Searchinger. Already, bipartisan legislation has been introduced in Congress. It calls for independent review of Corps projects and directs the agency to replace the wildlife habitat it has destroyed. Presidents of both parties have tried to rein in the Corps but members of Congress have defended the pork-barrel projects that bring money and jobs to their districts.

## On a quest to enlist fishermen

Peter Benchley's blockbuster novel *Jaws* delighted and terrified beachgoers. Now the author and former presidential speechwriter has teamed up with Environmental Defense to promote marine conservation.

Last month, we co-sponsored presentations by Benchley at the International Game Fishing Association's World Fishing Museum and the Palm Beach Fishing Foundation in Florida. The talks, "Vanishing giants: Can they be saved?" were eloquent pleas to recreational fishermen to consider new management initiatives to help restore balance to the oceans. Support of recreational fishermen is critical to our efforts to end overfishing of species such as flounder, red snapper and grouper. Partly because of *Jaws*, there has been a surge of interest in sharks. Their reputation as fearsome predators has changed. Humans are far more likely to be killed by a bee than by a shark. In contrast, we kill more than 30 million sharks a year.

Benchley called for marine protected areas to allow overfished species to recover. "We have to go beyond traditional forms of management," agreed Tom Twyford, executive director of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club, one of the nation's most venerable fishing organizations. "Marine reserves are an important tool to help save what's left."



Benchley to anglers: The support of sport fishermen is vital for marine conservation.



Biking to work is good for the soul—and for the planet as well.

## Putting the brakes on gridlock in Massachusetts

Since more than 70 percent of Massachusetts residents drive to work alone in their cars, it shouldn't come as a surprise that Boston has the fifth worst traffic congestion in the nation. But that may be about to change.

The state is considering a "commuter choice" bill we helped draft. The bill would give employers a 30% tax credit toward paying employees' mass transit costs, instituting vanpool programs or paying workers not to use parking spaces. The bill is similar to legislation drafted by us and adopted in Maryland last year. Already, more than 50 companies in Maryland have taken advantage of that law.

Our Boston office is

generating support for the bill. The Artery Business Committee, representing some of Boston's largest financial and medical institutions, has come out in support, as has the state Nurses' Association, which notes that the law would alleviate smog-related health conditions like asthma.

"This law will go a long way toward improving air quality and reducing lost worker productivity," says our research associate Vilan Hung.

"Our goal is to establish commuter choice as a standard employee benefit across the country," adds our transportation director Michael Replogle.

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# Cuba: A window opens

MAJOR PROGRAM UNDERWAY TO SAVE UNPARALLELED ECOSYSTEMS

Nourished by the waters of the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, Cuba is a biological crown jewel. Untouched by mass tourism, its coastal areas harbor vast riches. But now the race is on to develop Cuba. Hotels are sprouting on pristine beaches and tourism is expected to double within five years. The time to establish solid environmental management is now.

Since 1995, we've worked with Cuba's leading environmental agencies to build a framework for coastal conservation. The effort culminated last December when 450 scientists from 25 countries gathered in Havana to hear presentations from Environmental Defense and others at the Cuban Marine Science Congress.

Our efforts center on Cuba's magnificent shoreline and its extensive coral reefs. With its 4,200 islets and keys, Cuba is home to massive coral reef tracts. Coral reefs contain one-quarter of all marine species, many of which may have medical benefits. Reefs have been around for 225 million years, but if the present rate of destruction continues, 70 percent of the world's reefs could be dead within 40 years. Sedimentation, eutrophication from sewage and bleaching from global warming are the main



Jim Coouris

Three of Cuba's coral reef tracts equal or exceed the Florida Keys in length.



John Bolivar

We are helping design marine reserves that could encompass hundreds of square miles.

culprits. In the Philippines, reefs are dynamited for their fish.

Cuba's reefs, on the other hand, are relatively untouched. Our scientist Dr. Ken Lindeman has been helping design marine reserves. Our goal is to improve habitat protection around coral reefs and reduce overfishing before it is too late.

## U.S. FISHING WOULD BENEFIT

Prevailing ocean currents carry fish larvae from Cuba to Southeastern U.S. waters, so efforts in Cuba could aid overstressed U.S. fisheries like snapper, grouper and lobster. "Protecting Cuba's marine resources helps the entire region," says Lindeman, who is co-editing a major book, *Ecology of Marine Fishes of Cuba*, to be published by Smithsonian Press.

Cuban scientists are highly skilled but have limited tools to design large reserves. Even if they had the necessary boats, research organizations lack everything from fuel to modern computers to process data. A top scientist earns \$18 a month.

Despite these problems, Cuba has a strong foundation for resource conservation in its new Law of the

Environment, and Cuban officials have requested our help in guiding the law into practice. Our attorney Dan Whittle is researching rules and management plans that will protect marine reserves, and we are exploring conservation user fees to help fund environmental protection. "The trick is to manage reserves successfully while allowing sustainable development," said Whittle. We are also helping cash-strapped universities build environmental education programs.

Cuba's late start in tourism may be a blessing. "This is an opportunity to avoid the problems that many countries, including the United States, have had in developing their coastal areas," said Lindeman.



Jose Goita/GP

Cuba's easy coexistence with the sea may soon be ending.

## Affordable comfort

Saving energy often saves money. And it helps protect the environment. The trick is to make your home as energy-efficient as possible without sacrificing comfort. For a full listing of organizations providing useful information, visit our web site at [www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10538](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10538) or contact these groups directly:

The Alliance to Save Energy promotes the clean use of energy worldwide. 1200 18th Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036; 202-857-0666.

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy publishes consumer guides to top-rated appliances. 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036; 202-429-8873.

Center for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology offers information on energy efficiency. 1612 K Street NW, Suite 202, Washington, DC 20006; 202-293-2898.

The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse provides practical tips for energy savings in homes, businesses, schools and transportation. P.O. Box 3048, Merrifield, VA 22116; 800-363-3732.

## Mentioned in the article

Energy Star measures and labels the energy efficiency of products ranging from air-conditioners and refrigerators to computers. U.S. EPA 6202J, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004; 888-STAR-YES (888-782-7937).



Tim Connor

Sea breezes are free, but only a relative few enjoy them. Americans spend \$11 billion a year on air-conditioning.

## Cool ideas

### HOW TO BEAT THE HEAT WITHOUT BLOWING YOUR BUDGET

Before air-conditioning began to spread after World War II, Americans took the natural approach to cooling off. Office buildings kept their windows open and homes were built with wide porches where families could while away a hot summer evening. If all else failed, people got wet—by diving into a swimming hole or (in the big city) opening a fire hydrant.

Air-conditioning offers instant relief, but at high cost to consumers and the environment. Cooling the air in the average American home consumes 2,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity and costs \$1,350 a year. In generating the needed power, electric plants emit 100 million tons a year of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide.

Is it any wonder that California officials are dreading this summer's heat waves?

Keeping cool doesn't need to take such a huge bite of your energy dollar. Switching to a more efficient air-conditioner can reduce cooling bills 20 to 50%. If your AC is more than eight years old, it's a good candidate for replacement. Before you buy, check energy-efficiency ratings. Many older ACs have a rating of only 6 or 7, while the national minimum is now 10, and the Energy Star label (*see box*) signifies a rating of 12 or higher.

Keep your AC filters and coils clean and seal leaky ducts, which can let 30% of the cool air escape. Install a programmable thermostat, which will turn your AC off while you're away and turn it back on before you return. At night, run your unit in fan-only mode for substantial savings. But don't use bath and kitchen exhaust fans when the air-conditioning is on; this will only suck chilled air out of your home.

*This guest article is one of a series by the editors of E/The Environmental Magazine (for subscription information: 800-967-6572 or [www.emagazine.com](http://www.emagazine.com)). Opinions are the author's and not necessarily those of Environmental Defense staff.*

Dehumidifiers will also force your AC to work harder.

A University of Michigan study estimates the average family could reduce home energy bills 65% by maximizing efficiency. Strategically planted deciduous trees provide shade in summer and let in light in winter. Shading your AC's intake lets the unit work less by drawing cooler air. New homes can incorporate a passive solar design with protruding eaves to keep out the high summer sun.



Tom and Dee Ann McCarthy/Unicorn

Get the best from your box. AC needn't be wasteful and expensive.

Air-conditioning works best in well-insulated homes. The average home loses up to 30% of its cool air through the windows. When you remodel, choose double-glazed windows with "low-E" coatings that help keep summer heat out.

**By Jim Motavalli**

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## IN BRIEF

### URGENT ACTION REQUIRED TO CURB ARSENIC IN DRINKING WATER

When our Washington, DC, office learned the Bush administration was undoing strict new standards for arsenic in drinking water, it became clear to our lobbyist Elizabeth Thompson that the White House was delivering a gift to the mining industry at the expense of the health of millions of Americans.

EPA had recently tightened arsenic standards to 10 parts per billion (ppb). The previous standard of 50 ppb, which dates to 1942, had become dangerously outdated as mining and smelting industries proliferated. Arsenic is among the most poisonous of substances. The National Academy of Sciences has determined that its presence in tap water causes bladder and lung cancer and may cause kidney and liver cancer and birth defects. It is particularly harmful to children. The Academy warned that the old standards "could easily" result in a cancer risk of one in 100, which is 10,000 times higher than that allowed for carcinogens in food.

Environmental Defense began assembling a coalition in Congress to put pressure on the administration to reverse its action. We are urging moderate Republican representatives to back a bill introduced by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA). The bill, which re-establishes strict arsenic standards, needs Republican support to pass. "We're well positioned," said Thompson. "We've long been working with moderates on both sides of the aisle.

"This bill sends a powerful message," Thompson adds. "If we can't fight the administration on arsenic, than what can we do for the environment?"



Wolfgang Kaehler/Corbis

One of three Americans is vulnerable to arsenic poisoning.

### NEW BIOTECH RULES IN PLACE

In the waning days of the Clinton administration, EPA issued final rules governing the regulation of genetically modified crops. The rules, which mirror the recommendations of a National Academy of Sciences report, take a tough line on how the agency must regulate gene-altered crops that produce their own pesticides, such as Bt corn. "EPA has implemented the rules since 1994, but now they finally have teeth," says our scientist Dr. Becky Goldberg, the only environmentalist on the Academy panel that wrote the report.

Although the Bush administration hasn't indicated whether it will uphold the rules, they arrive at a crucial time. Traces of StarLink, a biotech corn that caused a nationwide recall of food last year, continue to crop up on supermarket shelves. Recent cases of allergies from the corn highlight the need for solid regulations that protect consumers.

## A red wolf victory

North Carolina's endangered red wolves received good news when the U.S. Supreme Court turned down a constitutional challenge to the Endangered Species Act. A group of landowners, aided by a conservative think tank, had sought the right to kill red wolves that wandered onto their property from the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, where they had been reintroduced. The landowners contended the federal government had no right to regulate killing the wolves because it would not affect interstate commerce. We helped persuade an appellate court to uphold wolf protection last year.

The Supreme Court declined to hear the case. Coincidentally, the landowners had retained the same lawyer whom President Bush has since nominated to be solicitor general.

Our wildlife director Michael Bean says the wolf decision will help rebuff future Commerce Clause challenges to endangered species. Already, we are filing an amicus brief in a similar case in Texas. That case involves landowners whose pumping of groundwater from the Edwards Aquifer threatens five rare species.



Erwin & Peggy Bauer/Tom Stack

Free to roam.



Thomas Kitchin/Tom Stack

The Clean Air Act "unambiguously bars cost considerations" from the standard-setting process, wrote Justice Antonin Scalia, "and thus ends the matter for us."

## Supreme Court reaffirms Clean Air Act

In a major victory, the Supreme Court unanimously swept aside two broad attacks on the Clean Air Act. The court upheld the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set clean air standards and ruled that the public's health, not cost, must remain the focus of government policy.

"This momentous decision will protect millions of Americans from illnesses and dampen industry efforts to weaken environmental laws," says our attorney Vickie Patton. Environmental Defense led a coalition of environmental organizations in defending the standards, filing two briefs before the Supreme Court.

The case followed EPA's decision to set tougher soot and ozone pollution standards for cities. The American Trucking Association claimed in lower court last year that EPA had overstepped its powers.

The truckers also wanted EPA to take costs into account when setting standards. The Supreme Court soundly rebuffed those claims. Says Patton, "A cloud has been lifted."

### FORWARD ON DIESEL

Environmentalists breathed a sigh of relief when EPA administrator Christie Todd Whitman announced the Bush administration would implement a groundbreaking program to slash air pollution from diesel trucks and buses. Environmental Defense had fought hard to support the new rules.

But President Bush reneged on his campaign pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and announced his intention to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol. "This setback could slow international action on climate change for many years," warns our executive director Fred Krupp.



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## Keeping a watchful eye on Texas water

With Texas's population expected to double by 2050, water is becoming a precious resource in this semi-arid state. To meet increased demand, 16 regions are developing water proposals for incorporation into a statewide plan, to be presented to the legislature next January.

Unfortunately, not every region has presented plans with the environment—or even sound economics—in mind. Proposed projects include billions of dollars' worth of dams, reservoirs and ring dikes. “These projects are slated to divert water from rivers and reduce the water flowing into bays and estuaries, where the life cycle for many species begins,” says Mark MacLeod of our Austin office. Affected wildlife could include declining warblers and other migrating birds as well as mussels and plants.

Environmentally safe alternatives exist. What's more, these alternatives, which include water conservation and progressive pricing, are more cost-effective. Together with other conservation organizations, Environmental Defense is promoting these better ideas in each region and making sure the final state plan takes the environment into consideration.

“If we can make sure some of these bad projects don't get built,” said MacLeod, “that will accomplish a lot.”



Kathy Adams Clark/KAC Productions

Threatened by unnecessary and unsound water projects?



Jerry Fraser

Hauling in red snapper, a fish decimated by the shrimp industry.

## Shrimp industry to be monitored

We recently helped put in place a federal fishing permit to govern shrimp trawling in Gulf of Mexico waters. Under the permit system, fishery managers can gather data to manage the negative impacts of trawling, which include overfishing and the accidental catch of fish and sea turtles.

Shrimp is the most valuable U.S. fishery, worth \$500 million at the dock. But the industry is in trouble, beset by overfishing and overcapitalization. In the gulf, shrimp nets regularly snag endangered Kemp's ridley turtles. During the last two years, some 200 Kemp's ridleys have been found stranded—most dead—in Texas alone. Although “turtle excluder devices” help turtles escape

from shrimp nets, scientists believe the turtles die of stress when they are repeatedly captured and released.

Unwanted “bycatch” is another problem. The 10,000 Gulf shrimp boats accidentally kill and waste as many tons of red snapper as the commercial red snapper industry lands.

Environmental Defense believes that if we can reduce the amount of trawling, we will reduce bycatch and turtle deaths while improving shrimpers' returns. Using the new permit system, we will work with the federal government to obtain data and study the fishery's science and economics.

“Eventually, we hope to have a shrimp fishery that is sustainable and profitable,” says our biologist Pam Baker.

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## Somewhere, a leaking pipeline

Vast enough to circle the globe 75 times, America's pipeline infrastructure carries a witch's brew of hydrocarbons. In the last decade, liquid-bearing pipelines leaked an average of 6.3 million gallons a year—half an Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Major pipeline accidents happen four times a week and fatalities, sadly, are not uncommon. When a gasoline pipeline in Bellingham, WA, ruptured in 1999, the resulting firestorm incinerated everything along a 1.5-mile stretch of creek and everything within 200 feet of it, including a teenager and two ten-year-old boys. A natural-gas pipeline explosion in New Mexico last August killed 12 people at a nearby campground.

Environmental Defense is a founding member of the National Pipeline Reform Coalition, which is pushing Congress to strengthen the pipeline safety law. "The industry has been under-regulated for far too long," says our engineer Lois Epstein. The federal Office of Pipeline Safety has failed to implement 22 legislative mandates. Jim Hall, the outgoing chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said he'd give the office "a big fat F." A strong bill to improve pipeline safety, crafted with Environmental Defense help, has now been introduced in the House.



With President Bush calling for more pipelines, strong laws are needed to prevent disasters like the Bellingham fire.



Serving notice to Detroit: Clean cars are here to stay.

## "If you build them, we'll buy them," say clean car buffs

"Build cleaner cars!" That's the message our Clean Car Campaign delivered loud and clear to the Big Three U.S. automakers at the Detroit Auto Show this winter. To reinforce our point, we dropped off seven mailbags containing over 150,000 pledges we'd collected from consumers declaring their desire for cleaner vehicle choices.

Outside the convention hall, a phalanx of Toyota Prius and Honda Insight gasoline-electric hybrid vehicles (carrying placards saying "Big 3, notice me!") reminded visitors that energy-efficient cars are here to stay. "Who wouldn't want a car like

this?" exclaimed Prius convert Beth Becker. "People get in and say, 'Wow, so much space.'"

The 50-mpg, four-door Prius is setting the pace for cleaner cars. "People are on waiting lists for four months to buy these cars," says Dean Menke, an engineer with our Pollution Prevention Alliance. "The Prius is not just a fad."

It appears Detroit may finally be waking up. When we began our Clean Car Campaign two years ago, U.S. automakers were not interested in producing gas-electric hybrids. Now Ford, GM and DaimlerChrysler all plan to market a hybrid by 2004.

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Benchley to anglers: The support of sport fishermen is vital for marine conservation.



David Liebman

A keystone species: Gopher tortoises' burrows may shelter up to 360 other species, large and small.

## Slow but steady: The gopher tortoise is still in the race

Longleaf pine forests once formed a green swath stretching from Virginia to Florida and along the Gulf Coast to East Texas. But only remnants are left of these sun-dappled forests that adapted to them over millions of years.

The tortoise, a threatened species, is the centerpiece of an innovative habitat conservation plan we helped design for Mobile, AL, protecting the creatures while addressing the needs of property owners. Landowners near Mobile had been unable to get permits to build on their lots because of the presence of tortoises. And the tortoises, which live

up to 70 years, were isolated from one another on small lots and couldn't reproduce.

Working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mobile County, we created a "conservation bank" from which landowners can buy credits for tortoises living on their land. The money is used to safely relocate the tortoises and to restore and manage their new habitat, 220 acres of longleaf pine forest set aside by Mobile's Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners.

"We hope this plan serves as a model for offering other endangered species a secure future on private land," said our economist Robert Bonnie.

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Contact the editor at 800-242-3251, by fax at 212-616-1489, or by email at [editor@environmentaldefense.org](mailto:editor@environmentaldefense.org).

Member services: 800-684-3322 or [members@environmentaldefense.org](mailto:members@environmentaldefense.org)

**Environmental Defense Offices**  
New York, NY • Washington, DC • Oakland, CA  
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*Project Offices:* Boston, MA • Los Angeles, CA

**Online at [www.environmentaldefense.org](http://www.environmentaldefense.org)**

## A giant project examined

Grand visions of urban redevelopment often overlook the people whose lives they disrupt. When Staples Center, a city-subsidized entertainment complex, sprouted in downtown Los Angeles in 1994, low-income Latino residents around the site were the losers. Their compensation packages for moving out often proved inadequate. And those left behind had to cope with constant noise and traffic.

Now developers are proposing a massive expansion of the Staples Center. The expansion envisions two huge hotels, a 7,000-seat theater, luxury housing, offices, malls and 5,300 parking spaces. This time, the neighborhood is getting involved. The Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice comprises some 20 organizations including the Los Angeles office of Environmental Defense. We are the only national organization and the sole environmental representative in the coalition.

We recently pointed out that the development plan fails to address energy, solid waste, transportation and air and water quality problems adequately. The developers have agreed to negotiate solutions to our environmental concerns.

“When public funds are used, public concerns about the environment need to be taken into account,” said our attorney Jerilyn Mendoza.



Richard Cummings/Viesti Collection

The planned expansion would replace six city blocks.



Ron Sanford/International Stock

Salmon need more free-flowing water to survive.

## Water market will help salmon

The federal government has completed its long-awaited plan to help endangered Columbia Basin salmon, calling it the biggest ecosystem restoration project since the northern spotted owl. The plan provides strict guidelines for increasing the flow of fresh water in streams and it allocates \$40 million to launch a water “market” developed by Environmental Defense.

Salmon and steelhead trout in the Columbia basin are threatened by inadequate stream flows caused largely by diversions of water for agriculture and storage for hydroelectricity. Under the plan, an organization will be established to buy or lease water to augment river flows for the salmon. “The group

will act as the water entrepreneur representing the salmon,” explains our economist Dr. Zach Willey. Through crop rotation and other conservation practices, farmers can free up large amounts of water for fish and profit in the process. Working with other environmental groups and government agencies, Environmental Defense is helping set up a framework for handling the transactions.

“This is the culmination of years of work,” Willey adds. Several farm groups in Washington, Oregon and Idaho have expressed interest in the program. Our next step is to expand the program to include incentives to reduce water pollution, another major threat to salmon.

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