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HEALTH

Clean air mom

“I’m not an environmental activist,” says Roxana Soto, “but when I learned that lawmakers were trying to undo clean air regulations, I had to speak out.” Like seven million other American children, Soto’s five-year-old daughter suffers from asthma. Her condition is aggravated by poor air quality. During one recent spell, she couldn’t sleep through the night for six weeks.

“It scares me that lobbyists have the power to change laws,” Soto says. “But I’m not going to be intimidated. Being a parent has changed my perspective.”

To fight back, Soto, an Emmy Award-winning journalist, joined the Moms Clean Air Force and is lending her voice to the chorus for clean air. Her blog, spanishbaby.com, has been called a “must read” by *Parenting* magazine.

In 2011, nontraditional allies like Soto helped defeat anti-environmental legislation in Congress. “Clean air is a basic human right,” she says. “One person may not make a difference, but together we can.” ■

WHY WE WORK ON HEALTH

“Pollution and toxic chemicals take a heavy toll on public health, particularly on children. We have an opportunity to ensure the safety of chemicals and cut smokestack pollution.”



Andrew Maguire
VP Health

HEALTH GOALS

- Cut air pollution from coal plants 75%
- Reform U.S. toxic chemicals policy to reduce exposure to harmful substances
- Accelerate innovation through corporate partnerships



Defending the right to breathe clean air

Over the past four decades, the Clean Air Act has saved millions of lives. But in 2011, this bedrock law came under attack in the courts and on Capitol Hill, and EDF mobilized new allies to come to its defense.

The Clean Air Act is widely considered one of the most effective environmental laws ever passed, providing \$30 in health benefits for every dollar invested in pollution controls. Yet some Washington politicians made it their mission in 2011 to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from enforcing the law—and tried to cut \$3 billion from the agency’s budget.

“The anti-environment onslaught on Capitol Hill is the worst I’ve seen in my more than 25 years at EDF,” says our president, Fred Krupp.

Working with the Senate in April, EDF and others were able to eliminate the most draconian cuts in the House budget, but coal lobbyists and their political allies continued their attempts to undermine EPA’s authority. They added more than 170 anti-environmental riders to House bills.

We responded by providing analysis and expert testimony on the Hill, challenging opponents directly in court and enlisting corporate support for the Clean Air Act. Our efforts got a big boost from EDF’s Strategic Partners and our sister organization, the Environmental Defense Action Fund. Non-tax-deductible gifts to the Action Fund let us mount ad campaigns targeting key legislators.

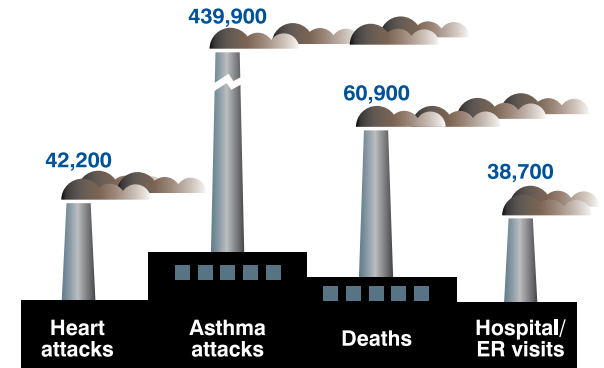
Lobbyists for one of America’s biggest polluters, American Electric Power, circulated their own

draft bill in Congress last spring, which would have scuttled EPA rules requiring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions of soot, sulfur dioxide and mercury. Within days, EDF’s legal team issued an analysis that showed the bill would cause an estimated 34,000 deaths in its first two years alone. Our analysis was disseminated broadly on Capitol Hill, where even coal-friendly legislators scrambled to distance themselves from the bill. As a result, it was never introduced.

In defense of the Clean Air Act, we also helped launch a group of influential bloggers, calling themselves the Moms Clean Air Force, to engage more people in the struggle. Their online activism helped generate more than 100,000 messages to Congress urging legislators not to let polluters undercut air quality.

“Knowing that some companies put their profits ahead of kids is absolutely infuriating,” says Karen Francis, a Moms Clean Air Force blogger who is also a military spouse. “What do we do about it? We make sure EPA’s ability to safeguard the air we breathe isn’t gutted.”

The fight for the Clean Air Act and a strong EPA isn’t over. But Vickie Patton, EDF’s general counsel, is confident in the future. “Our children’s health is at stake,” she says. “It’s that simple.”



THE PRICE OF COAL

Dirty air imposes steep costs on human health. Coal-fired power plants are the largest source of sulfur dioxide and particulate pollution in the air. (Graph shows the estimated number of Americans affected each year.)

“There’s no more powerful force for children’s health than moms united. Hats off to EDF for launching the Moms Clean Air Force.”

Dr. Harvey Karp, pediatrician and author of *The Happiest Toddler on the Block*



In New York City, 300,000 kids have been diagnosed with asthma. The phaseout of dirty fuels in city buildings will enable kids to breathe easier—and save \$733 million in annual health care costs.

Clearing the air in New York City

Working with EDF, Mayor Bloomberg announced new rules to phase out dirty heating oil from the city's buildings.

In Harlem, one in four children has asthma. That's double the rate of the city as a whole, and four times the national average. Although asthma attacks have multiple causes, air pollution from low-grade No. 6 and No. 4 heating oil is one trigger. Just 1% of New York City buildings burn these fuels, but they put more particulate matter, or soot, into the air than all the city's cars and trucks combined.

When EDF learned that Con Edison was laying a gas pipe to enable Columbia University to convert 70 buildings in Harlem from dirty oil to natural gas, we encouraged other buildings to convert as well. We reached out to nearby landlords and, as a result, another 64 buildings could shift to the cleaner, more economical fuel. That would remove 25,000 pounds of soot pollution from the city's air annually.

The Harlem project is an outgrowth of our campaign to clean up New York City's heating oil.

Three years ago, EDF staff pinpointed 9,500 city buildings that burn No. 4 oil or the even dirtier No. 6 oil, which is basically unrefined sludge. We used that data to build an interactive online map showing these buildings' locations, block by block (edf.org/dirtybuildings).

"When we learned that our building was on EDF's dirty building list, we decided it made good business sense to convert to natural gas and stop polluting the air we all breathe," says Jerry Cohen, a co-op board member on the Upper West Side.

Our campaign to clean up heating oil also caught the attention of Mayor Michael Bloomberg. In 2011, after working closely with EDF and our allies, the administration announced new rules that will phase out No. 6 oil by 2015 and No. 4 oil by 2030. The impact of that decision on illnesses such as asthma and heart disease could be "second only to our achievements in reducing the city's smoking rates," said Thomas Farley, the city's health commissioner.

We've also worked with the mayor's office to develop financing options that will help building owners convert to cleaner fuels more quickly. "The clean air renaissance in Harlem is underway," says EDF attorney Isabelle Silverman.

"Environmental Defense Fund has been a critical partner and resource in our efforts to make New York a truly sustainable 21st century city."

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor of New York City



Protecting families from toxic chemicals

New research reveals that some health problems linked to chemical exposure can be carried forward to future generations.

For example, the biocide tributyltin found in some paints and plastics can cause a cell predestined to become a bone cell to become a fat cell instead, increasing the risk of obesity and diabetes. Long after the initial chemical exposure, animal studies suggest, parents can transfer such disorders to their offspring.

The good news? EDF spurred a high-level dialogue with the chemical industry that could yield a bipartisan agreement on reforming the flawed Toxic Substances Control Act—the main law on the safety of chemicals. Of 85,000 chemicals available for commercial use, EPA has required testing of only about 2%. Our prodding has already pushed EPA to upgrade its chemical reporting practices.

Taking a stand for science and tough regulation in the shale gas industry

A technique called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has opened up vast deposits of shale gas. In 2001, shale provided 2% of U.S. natural gas; now it accounts for about 30%, and total reserves have risen dramatically. The expanded supply offers a great environmental benefit, since natural gas burns more cleanly than coal. But it has also created a host of new environmental challenges, while industry secrecy has spurred public mistrust.

EDF is leading the effort to make sure natural gas reduces our carbon footprint, while minimizing the impact on people and the environment.

In 2011, Energy Secretary Steven Chu appointed EDF president Fred Krupp to a seven-member panel charged with recommending new standards for the industry. The group's first report called for more oversight, strong regulation of air and water pollution and disclosure of fracking chemicals.

The next step is to get these recommendations implemented. We helped lead a coalition of groups that sued EPA, forcing it to propose rules to cut air



pollution from oil and gas production. We then worked to pass a groundbreaking Texas law mandating full disclosure of fracking chemicals. And we're now working with industry leaders on rules for safe well construction and operation.

"If implemented," Krupp says, "our committee's recommendations will create a new level of transparency and oversight in the natural gas industry."

45,000 fracked shale gas wells are active in the U.S. today, triple the number in 2005