

SPOTLIGHT ON LEGISLATIVE ACTION

“Strong climate legislation done right will create jobs, not lose them. Making that case will help us win union support.”

Eugene Keilin

EDF Strategic Partner and financial advisor to labor unions and employee groups



GETTING THE RULES RIGHT

1969

EDF helps pass the National Environmental Policy Act, establishing new provisions to protect the environment and creating the Council on Environmental Quality.

1974

Our study of Mississippi River water leads to passage of the Safe Drinking Water Act, setting the first comprehensive national health standards for water.



1986

Proposition 65, a landmark consumer information law drafted by EDF, passes in California and leads many manufacturers to remove toxic ingredients from products nationwide.

1990

The Clean Air Act incorporates our incentive-based program to cut acid rain that was harming lakes and forests. The law reduces sulfur dioxide pollution faster than expected, at a fraction of the predicted cost.



WHY WE WORK ON LEGISLATION

“We can’t match the lobbyists dollar for dollar, but high-profile advocacy can cut through their arguments. At the end of the day, strong environmental law depends on votes cast by lawmakers.”

Wendy Solmssen Sommer
VP Environmental Defense Action Fund



Arnold
Schwarzenegger
(R-CA)



Jon Huntsman, Jr.
(R-UT)



Brian Schweitzer
(D-MT)

GOVERNORS TO CONGRESS:
“Do something on climate!” For the first time, a diverse group of governors appeared in a nonprofit group’s TV ad on global warming.

▶ ONLINE: See more of our hard-hitting ads urging Congress to act on global warming at edf.org/climate08

ACTION FUND: MAKING OUR VOICE HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL

Major opponents of global warming legislation spend \$1 million a day lobbying on Capitol Hill. But the environment is making itself heard too.

EDF has long been a powerful voice in Washington, and when the need began to exceed the \$1 million annual cap on our lobbying established by tax law, we created a sister group, the Environmental Defense Action Fund, which is free of spending limits. This has enabled us to ratchet up our legislative efforts, particularly on climate, and to advocate strong environmental laws even as the stakes increase.

Non-tax-deductible gifts to the Action Fund allow us to target key legislators and mount ad campaigns that mention legislation directly. In California, for example, our pivotal

intervention helped win the first state-wide cap on global warming pollution. We played a key role in drafting the bill and were one of two environmental cosponsors, along with NRDC.

To deliver our message more forcefully, we have assembled a network of influential supporters, the EDF Strategic Partners. These allies—including local and national civic and religious leaders, economists and CEOs—contact legislators personally and explain our solutions.

Now, with Congress beginning to debate climate legislation in earnest, our Strategic Partners have quickly gained a high profile, helping to bring 30 U.S. senators and representatives to hear our views on the need for a nationwide carbon cap. We also placed

TV ads in 28 states to help sway wavering legislators. Our message: climate action will be a stimulus for jobs and economic growth.

“Strategic Partners helped us reach labor unions and other key groups,” says our climate expert Melissa Carey.

Our Strategic Partners have been active on other fronts as well. We brought 50 farmers and ranchers to Washington to urge increased conservation funding in the Farm Bill. Our efforts paid off in 2008 when we helped secure new funding to restore wetlands, preserve habitat and curb agricultural runoff. We also succeeded in getting environmental advocates appointed to fishery management councils across the country.

“The goal is for Strategic Partners to become a consistent presence in the lives of decision makers,” says Wendy Sommer, the program’s director.

2002

North Carolina passes its Clean Smokestacks Act, modeled after our plan to require coal-fired power plants to cut smog-causing emissions 75%.



2004

We help win clean-car legislation in Connecticut and New Jersey to reduce global warming pollution from vehicles.

2006

Our efforts strengthen the Magnuson-Stevens law to help end overfishing. The same year, we help draft and pass California’s cap on global warming pollution.

2008

Our broad left-right coalition secures \$4 billion in the Farm Bill to help farmers, ranchers and foresters improve conservation on their land.

