

# National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

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## 2018 Annual Report





# A Message From NCEL President

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Dear Friend,

States legislators across the country are changemakers who have continued to implement innovative and landmark environmental policies needed to propel our country forward. States are the focus for protecting public health and the environment. Over the past year, we’ve seen an increase in these landmark environmental policies coming out of state legislatures. As the federal government continues to step back from their role of environmental protection, states have proven time and time again they’re ready to step up.

In Delaware, New Jersey, and California, state legislators blocked federal attempts to open up coasts to offshore drilling. Across the country, states responded to attacks on clean energy by advancing meaningful climate policies.

We are constantly learning more about the benefits of outdoor engagement and healthy ecosystems, which is why more states are prioritizing protecting public lands and biodiversity. More and more states are adopting policies to protect wildlife, from pollinators to exotic endangered species.

My colleagues across the country are not backing away from protecting public health by taking action on improving and expanding access to clean water, toxic chemicals, and reducing plastic pollution. With the huge momentum, we gained this past year, I’m excited to see all the work that we can accomplish together in the coming year.

Thank you for your hard work and support!



*Pricey Harrison*

Pricey Harisson  
State Representative, North Carolina  
NCEL President

# A Message from the Executive Director

We, the staff of NCEL, are privileged to serve those environmental champions who represent their constituents in states across the country. State legislators are able to be more responsive, and have the greatest potential to make a strong impact in improving environmental quality in people’s everyday lives.

NCEL experienced a year of growth during 2018 that has prepared us for maximum impact in 2019. Our staff grew from five full time employees to seven, and we continue to build out leadership opporunitites across the Caucus. This has led to exponential growth in our ability to serve legislators. By connecting legislators to their peers, organizing them at national and regional meetings, and providing them with draft language, messaging, research, and other personalized assistance, we empower our members to be stronger leaders on the issues that matter most.

We are excited to see how state legislators can continue to raise the bar on environmental action during 2019. Thank you for your continued support!



*Jeff Mauk*

Jeff Mauk  
Executive Director

## NCEL TEAM



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# Climate & Energy

## Overview

In the face of continuing federal rollbacks of climate and energy policies, states are taking the bold climate action and leadership that is needed. NCEL participants are focused on policies that reduce carbon emissions, block new offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration, and leading the transition to renewable energy.

## Carbon Pricing

In January 2018, NCEL announced the Carbon Costs Coalition, a group of 10 states committed to market driven solutions to carbon emissions. Throughout the 2018 session, the idea of carbon pricing gained momentum as over 1 in 5 states across the nation considered legislation on carbon pricing.

## Offshore Drilling

After the federal government's announcement to expand offshore drilling, NCEL members initiated a sign-on letter circulated in opposition. This letter gathered 227 signatures from 17 coastal states. As a result, NCEL has established a project specifically to address offshore drilling.

## Transitioning to 100% Renewable Energy

In 2015, Hawai'i became the first state to pass a law setting their renewable energy goal at 100% by 2045. The costs of renewables are decreasing rapidly and in some areas is already competitive with fossil fuels. With the declines in costs, the idea of going 100% renewable is gaining momentum throughout the country as a number of cities making the pledge rapidly increasing.



### Carbon Pricing

- Announced the Carbon Costs Coalition  
[carboncostscoalition.org](http://carboncostscoalition.org)
- More than 1-in-5 states introduced carbon pricing legislation
- 70+ legislators attended carbon pricing breakout at National Forum



### Offshore Drilling

- 225+ legislators signed a letter opposing offshore drilling as a threat to their environment & economies
- At NCEL's National Forum 50 legislators from 14 states committed to taking action against offshore drilling.
- In 2018, five states passed bills opposing offshore drilling.



### 100% RPS

- At least nine states considered 100% renewable energy legislation in 2018.
- This number is expected to grow in 2019.
- California passed a 100% clean energy bill.

*"NCEL has been immensely influential in all of the environmental legislation I have passed as a senator. Fellow legislators, NCEL staff, and presentations at the national issues forum have provided many ideas and models for legislation. It has provided an education on many issues less familiar to me, and an opportunity for collaboration with legislators from across the country and within my state. I don't think any of my bills would have been possible without NCEL."*

**Senator David Watters, New Hampshire**



# Conservation

## Overview

Wildlife, habitat, and natural landscapes everywhere are increasingly threatened by human activity and climate change. NCEL equips legislators with resources and knowledge to advance effective policies that conserve these vital resources.

## Wildlife Trafficking

In 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service instituted a ban on ivory trade across state lines. However, it is up to states to regulate trade within their borders. In 2018, 13 states introduced legislation to ban the sale of products made from ivory and other products from endangered species.

## Corridors and Crossings

Wildlife corridors and crossings are a vital and cost effective way to maintain resilient landscapes for fish and wildlife, protect watersheds, and provide outdoor recreation. Crossings can be highway and road overpasses, underpasses, or culverts, which provide a safe crossing for animals and recreation. Corridors are large areas of undeveloped habitat that connect isolated habitat and allow for ecosystem connectivity for plants and animals.

## Pollinators

Pollinators are responsible for the pollination of at least one-third of crops worldwide and are an essential part of wild and domestic plant health. Loss of habitat, pesticides, and disease are decimating pollinators: Monarch butterflies have decreased over 80%, and at least one-third of honeybees died in 2017. States are stepping up to provide native flowering plants, habitat, and to restrict pesticides that harm pollinators.



## Wildlife Trafficking

- Nine states have enacted wildlife trafficking bans.
- New Hampshire and Illinois enacted wildlife trafficking bans in 2018.
- At least four states have committed to advancing bills during 2019.



## Corridors & Crossings

- California is building one of the worlds largest wildlife crossing.
- New Mexico enacted four wildlife corridors/crossings memorials and will advance a 2019 bill.
- New Hampshire will introduce a bill to further corridors and crossings in the state.
- At least seven states will be advancing legislation in 2019.



## Pollinators

- 130 legislators signed a letter opposing harmful pollinator provisions in the House Farm Bill.
- Minnesota and New Mexico enacted legislation to encourage or provide pollinator habitat.
- Maryland and Connecticut restricted application of pesticides that harm pollinators.
- Four states enacted pollinator legislation in 2018.

*“NCEL provides a platform for sharing legislative ideas and successes on environmental issues. This year, we will be initiating an Outdoors Caucus to bridge partisan barriers and bring together legislators who care about the environment from a different perspective. NCEL has broadened my understanding of environmental issues from farmland soils to animal protection. It provides me with new ideas for legislation and assistance in preparing legislation over time.”*

**Representative Robyn Gabel, Illinois**



# Environmental Health

## Overview

Tens of thousands of chemicals that are untested or known to be toxic to human health have been added to consumer products, including furniture, electronics, and even children’s products and toys. In addition to working to remove toxic chemicals, NCEL organizes legislators to protect clean water and address plastic pollution.

## Plastics

The effects of plastic pollution are far-reaching and are affecting marine and freshwater ecosystems. In addition, plastics are derived from fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas and therefore contribute to carbon emissions. By reducing our use of plastics, we will not only reduce pollution, but we will also lower carbon emissions associated with the extraction and production of plastics.

## Mississippi River Legislative Caucus

The Mississippi River Legislative Caucus (MRLC) assists legislators representing river districts and their colleagues who are committed to a thriving, healthy Mississippi River. The goal is to build the capacity of legislators in river districts to more effectively address river health and water quality issues and to create a forum for collaboration on growing communities and local economies.

## Chemical Policy

NCEL continues to organize legislators around chemical policy issues. This includes issues such as lead contamination, flame retardants, and PFAS. Throughout 2018, NCEL brought together legislators around issues such as Fire Prevention Week, Leading Poisoning Prevention Week.



### Plastics

- California enacted the country's first straws only upon request law
- NJ considered the most comprehensive plastic pollution reduction bill in the country
- 13 states considered plastics legislation



### MRLC

- Announced a commitment to studying plastic pollution along the MS River Corridor
- Established a steering committee to create a long-term strategy
- 21 legislators attended the annual MRLC meeting - the largest group to date!



### Chemical Policy

- Legislators organized around fire prevention week to raise awareness of the harms of toxic flame retardants
- Legislators organized around lead poisoning week. This year Delaware passed the nation’s first ban on outdoor lead-based paint.

*“NCEL conferences are one of my favorites because we always talk about actual solutions I can take back to my district. Other conferences I go to we mostly sit around and admire the problem.”*

**Representative Fue Lee, Minnesota**



# NCEL In The News

In 2018, NCEL had 83 media mentions and was featured in some of the following outlets:



# NCEL By The Numbers

**1,200+**  
NCEL participants

**7**  
full-time employees

**3**  
Senior Advisors

**83**  
news mentions including 6 op-eds



**22**  
states visited

**180**  
individual meetings with legislators

**3**  
forums hosted

**135**  
attendees at the National Legislative Forum



State Legislators From Across the Country Convene  
for Bold Action on the Environment

In July 2018, 135 state legislators from 37 states convened for the 2018 National Forum organized by the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. The event provides state lawmakers the opportunity to collaborate on policy solutions on issues related to climate, energy, conservation, and environmental health.

The forum agenda included a discussion of single-use plastic pollution and featured a keynote address from actor, filmmaker, and UN Environment Program Goodwill Ambassador Adrian Grenier.

Mr. Grenier spoke about the need for a culture shift on attitudes toward plastic pollution. “We need to make connections between our everyday life and the environment. Once we do that, we won’t just throw away plastic thinking it will disappear,” he said.

Other session topics included climate adaptation and mitigation, wildlife and landscape conservation, eliminating toxins in consumer products and drinking water, and more. NCEL Executive Director Jeff Mauk believes that states are better positioned than ever before to take action on environmental issues.



Visit [ncel.net/forum](http://ncel.net/forum) for a full recap, short video, and photos from this year’s National Forum.



What Our Members Have To Say

The NCEL National Issues Forum continues to be one of my favorite events of the year because it is always a perfect mix of novel legislative ideas ready for implementation and networking with other legislators and professionals who care deeply about our environment.

*Asm. Steve Yeager, Nevada*

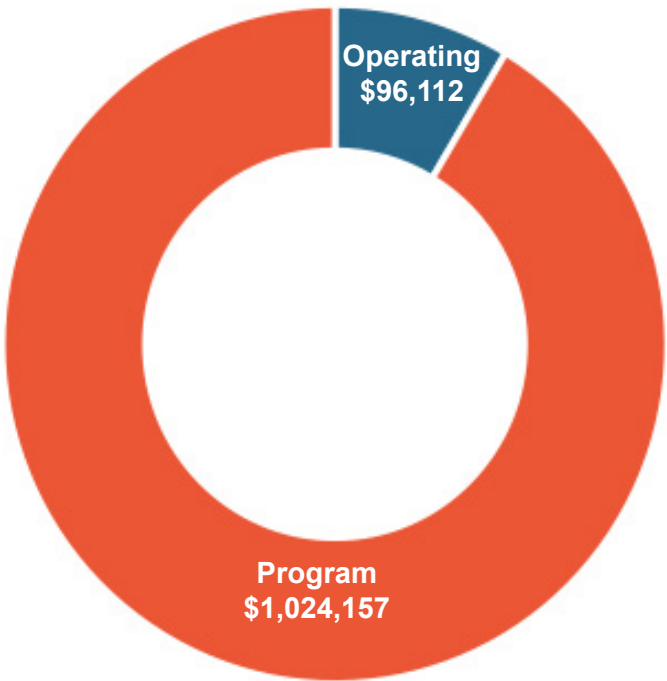
I try never to miss NCEL as it is one of the most important conferences I attend every year. It is very helpful for me to hear what legislators are doing in other states, and to learn about issues that might help my state. Every year, I come home with new ideas for legislation and an increased urgency to protect our environment.

*Rep. Robert Wittenberg, Michigan*

Outstanding event in every respect. Well run, great topics and presenters, and inspiring to meet so many legislators from across the country and both parties who understand environmental issues and are doing something about them.

*Del. Dan Morhaim, Maryland*

NCEL’s 2018 Expenses:



Empowering Environmental Champions

For more information on donating to NCEL visit [ncel.net/donate](http://ncel.net/donate)

To learn about more ways to support NCEL, contact Jeff Mauk at 202-744-1006 or via email: [jmauk@ncel.net](mailto:jmauk@ncel.net).

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.....AND MANY OTHERS!





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