

National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

2021 Annual Report



NCEL

National Caucus of
Environmental Legislators

A Message From NCEL's President

I am always inspired and amazed at the great work state legislators do to protect and conserve our environment. Through another year of climate-related emergencies, disrupted (and many times disruptive) legislative sessions, political unrest, and more, state legislators have continued to rise to the challenges and NCEL's commitment to assisting and empowering state legislators on environmental issues has remained steady. NCEL continues to grow our ability to help legislators advance impactful environmental policies. We remain the premier organization dedicated to building connections between state legislators and positive work for the environment.

In these critical times for our climate and environment, each state legislative success signifies a milestone or launching pad for future progress. State legislators who work with NCEL are true leaders on ocean protection, wildlife conservation, climate solutions, environmental justice, and many more issues. Through NCEL's ability to connect state leaders, provide forums for cutting-edge legislator collaboration, and develop key informational resources, we together have brought change in 2021.

As we head into another year, I look forward to the accomplishments ahead for state legislators and the continued growth of the NCEL network. Thank you for your continued hard work and support, onward!



Beth Kerttula
NCEL President
Former Alaska House Minority Leader
Former Director, National Ocean Council

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Each state legislative success signifies a milestone or launching pad for future progress.

NCEL's Board of Directors

The Honorable Chris Lee
State Senator, Hawaii
Vice President

The Honorable Brian Kavanagh
State Senator, New York
Secretary

J.R. Tolbert
VP State Policy, Advanced Energy Economy
Treasurer

The Honorable Debra Lekanoff
State Representative, Washington

The Honorable Jackie Dingfelder
Former State Senator, Oregon

The Honorable Brenda Gilmore
State Senator, Tennessee

The Honorable Pricey Harrison
State Representative, North Carolina

The Honorable Stephanie Howse
Cleveland City Council Member

The Honorable Nan Orrock
State Senator, Georgia

The Honorable Chris Rabb
State Representative, Pennsylvania

The Honorable Alex Valdez
State Representative, Colorado

John R. Seydel
Director of Sustainability, City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Resilience



Jeff Mauk
Executive Director

A Message From the Executive Director



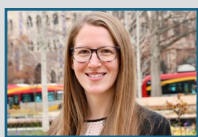
NCEL is ready to meet the moment and help state legislators as they continue to champion environmental legislation.

As state legislators pursued monumental environmental policy throughout the year, NCEL continued to grow and adapt to meet the needs of our members. Over the past year, NCEL expanded to 14 full-time staff. Larger program teams deepened the work and services we can provide to legislators through frequent briefings and new working groups. Our larger communications team organized three novel press events and launched a new website with an interactive bill tracking map and searchable policy library. Additional staff capacity also led to new opportunities for the Caucus, such as organizing our first delegation to COP26 in Glasgow and hosting a series of policy strategy sessions in December.

We know that a healthy environment for all is not possible without a commitment to anti-racism and justice. Throughout the year, NCEL has strengthened our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through internal education, training, and system changes. We are also working on building this knowledge into how we work with legislators and policy areas. We're excited to continue this work throughout the new year and share our progress.

As we head into a new year of a constantly changing world, NCEL is ready to meet the moment and help state legislators as they continue to champion environmental legislation. Thank you for your continued support!

NCEL Team



Taylor Anderson
Communications Manager



Kate Burgess
Conservation Coordinator



Suria Gopal Crabtree
Development Fellow



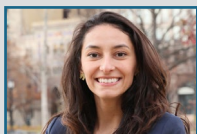
Ava Gallo
Climate & Energy Coordinator



Gabrielle Houston
Project Manager, Zero
Waste & Circular Economy



Justin Gulino
Conservation Wildlife Fellow



Ava Ibanez
Project Manager, Ocean Policy



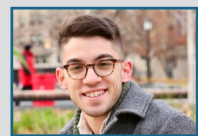
Ashley Kellner
Operations Manager



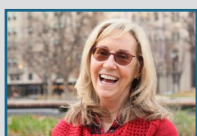
Dylan Macy
Digital Coordinator



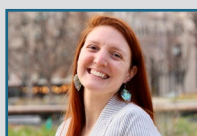
Dylan McDowell
Deputy Director



Salvatore Messina
Development Officer



Ruth Musgraves
Senior Conservation Advisor



Clara Summers
Climate and Energy Manager



Angela Yuan
Project Manager, Sustainable
Agriculture and Water

About NCEL

Mission

The National Caucus of Environmental Legislators empowers a nonpartisan network of legislative champions to protect, conserve, and improve the natural and human environment.

Vision

State leadership advances a clean and healthy environment for all.

States matter because action happens in the states.

States are often referred to as the laboratories of democracy. Many of America's landmark federal laws originated as, or were inspired by, state policies. Empowering state legislators can ensure groundbreaking environmental policies not just for states, but also the nation, making NCEL's mission crucial.

How We Work



Research

Provide facts, resources, and connect legislators with scientific research on current environmental issues.



Educate

Connect legislators to leading experts and their legislative colleagues to stay informed about environmental issues.



Convene

Founded by and for state legislators, we bring together legislators within states, regions, & across the country.



Empower

Foster collaboration across state lines to promote multi-state learning and action.

Our Values



Everyone Should Benefit



Opportunity



States Matter



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Nonpartisanship

NCEL's New Website

This past year was a momentous year of growth for the organization with expanded staff, membership, and informational offerings. As a result, we needed a new and dynamic site that could better support our network and showcase state policy work happening across the country.

New and Improved Issue Pages

You can search for issues by categories, find related issues, and easily view all issues in one location. Each issue page is complete with facts, current legislation, related resources, and related news. View the new Issue Pages: ncelenviro.org/issues

Highlighting Our Impact

Dive deeper into NCEL's work by viewing our [Impact page](#). The [Legislative Session Analysis](#) page highlights successful legislation from states following each session.

Sign up for NCEL's First Reading newsletter

NCEL's First Reading newsletter is open to anyone who wants to stay up to date on what's happening across state legislatures. It will feature caucus and policy updates, legislator spotlights, upcoming NCEL events, and more. Sign up for the First Reading newsletter: ncelenviro.org/#stay-in-the-know

New Look, New Domain:

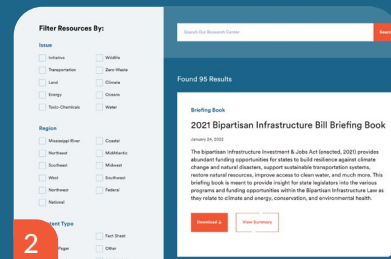
With the redesigned website, we are also updating our website URL from ncel.net to ncelenviro.org. View our new email addresses: ncelenviro.org/team

Explore Our New Policy Library!



Interactive Bill Tracking Map

This map will be updated on a weekly basis during legislative sessions. Use it to look through bills pending in each state across issues areas.



Searchable Resource Center

Find all factsheets, policy options, one-pagers, and NCEL infographics. The resource center is searchable and includes filters by issue, content type, and region.



In Depth Glossary

Gain a deeper understanding of environmental issues and terms through our glossary page.

2021 Issue Spotlights



Climate & Energy

NCEL continued to work with legislators on climate issues and ways to advance a just energy transition. NCEL organized legislators to encourage the PJM Interconnection to support state clean energy goals in their capacity market rules. After a letter sent from legislators and NCEL-hosted virtual roundtables with PJM executives, PJM revised their rule, now allowing for more participation of state-supported clean energy resources. NCEL hosted a total of 21 online events focused on an extensive range of climate and energy issues, including a panel at New York Climate Week about how states are leading on climate action.



Oceans

Throughout the year, NCEL expanded our work with coastal legislators and announced the formation of our Coastal Working Group. The group has members from 18 coastal states and has hosted presentations from members of Congress, heads of federal agencies, and more. Legislators are working on a range of coastal-related policies, including offshore energy transition, coastal resilience, and marine wildlife protection.



Conservation

In March, NCEL organized a press event for legislators around their work to address and prevent wildlife diseases and future pandemics. Throughout the year staff hosted multiple briefings on the Green Amendment and organized a Green Amendment working group. This group included New York, which became the third state to pass the constitutional amendment and shared lessons learned during the December policy strategy session. Legislators continued to champion wildlife corridor, pollinator, and carnivore protection legislation and led in the growing movement to protect 30% of land and water by 2030.



Environmental Health

States continue to innovate in reducing single-use plastics and in the transition to a circular economy. At the beginning of the year, NCEL members launched a multi-state network of legislators from nine states committed to working together to advance extended producer responsibility for packaging. The network continued to grow throughout the year and Maine and Oregon became the first two states to pass EPR bills. The year also saw a growth in cumulative impact legislation as legislators look for ways to protect the health of environmental justice communities.

One Big Thing

In December, NCEL brought together 24 legislators from 17 states for a day of policy strategy sessions in DC. Legislators attended extensive sessions related to Zero Waste, Green Amendment, and Offshore Wind policy approaches. The sessions brought together experts and legislators to discuss policy options, lessons learned, and successes from across the country. Legislators were also joined by White House National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy to learn more about how states and the federal government can work together, and by former New Mexico State Representative and current congressional member Rep. Melanie Stansbury to further emphasize the importance of state/federal action on climate.

5



2021 Highlights

NCEL Network



145+
Media Hits

4

**nationwide
sign-on
letters** with **640+**
total signatories



10

**Issue-
Based
Working
Groups**



150+
**Working
Group
Members**

Bills Passed

Climate & Energy



- **12 states** and DC passed bills to expand **low-carbon transportation**
- **4 states** passed bills to set **emission reduction targets**
- **3 states** passed bills to transition to **100% clean energy**
- **6 states** passed legislation to improve **coastal resilience**



Conservation

- **5 states** passed legislation to **protect pollinators** from toxic pesticides
- **5 states** passed legislation to improve wildlife **habitat connectivity**
- **11 states** passed bills and resolutions to increase **outdoor engagement**

NCEL Events

At **COP26...**

6 events

organized by NCEL.



3

major press events
organized with
participation from
over **12 states**.



73

**virtual
events**
hosted in total.



190 legislators from **39
states** attended NCEL's
annual **National Forum**.



Environmental Health

- **12 states and DC** passed bills to **reduce plastic pollution**
- **3 states** passed legislation to address the **cumulative impacts** of pollution
- **3 states** passed legislation to limit the use of **PFAS forever chemicals**

To help increase our impact visit:
ncelenviro.org/donate



NCEL at COP26

In November, the eyes of the world were on world leaders in Glasgow for COP26. [Leading up to the conference, state legislators came together](#) calling for the federal government to make stronger climate commitments to achieve full decarbonization and limit warming to 1.5 degrees. While some disagree on the effectiveness of this year's outcomes, the agreements made progress, keeping a cap of 1.5 degrees warming within reach if strong action is taken at COP27 next year.

States Play a Crucial Role in Upholding COP26 Commitments

A renewed presence from the federal government at COP26 was welcomed, but the most exciting advancements of US climate policy highlighted at COP26 came from subnational progress. US states can work from the ground up to follow through on these commitments by passing bold, equitable, and enforceable climate legislation.

For years, states have been the leaders on US climate action, passing ambitious bills that move the country forward and can serve as a road map. The message from states is clear -- they are moving forward on climate action with or without the federal government.

NCEL Sends Delegation to COP26

For the first time, NCEL brought a delegation of legislators to COP where lawmakers highlighted state climate action on the international stage.

In Glasgow, the NCEL delegation participated in six events covering topics including ocean climate policy, environmental justice, carbon pricing, and local climate solutions.

NCEL's COP Delegation



A Call to Action: Legislators Voice Support For Federal Climate Commitments at COP26

We have a moral responsibility to take bold climate action now

Steps in Colorado to combat climate change can serve as a roadmap for federal action

BRUNNA TITONE



Prior to COP26, **537 state legislators from 47 states** and territories sent a letter requesting that the federal government make a commitment to full decarbonization by 2050 at COP26.

This was followed by **op-eds in 15 states** urging strong federal action.

Looking Ahead to COP27

COP27 will be a defining moment for countries around the world to make commitments to decarbonize and hold warming to 1.5 degrees. NCEL looks forward to bringing another delegation of state legislators to continue the emphasis on the commitment and action from states.

2021 National Forum

190+ State Legislators from 39 States Convene to Discuss Environmental Policies

On July 29 and 30, 191 state legislators from 39 states gathered virtually for NCEL's 2021 National Forum. The event provides state lawmakers the opportunity to collaborate on policy solutions related to climate, energy, conservation, and environmental health.

This year's Forum focused on how states can recover from the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring a healthier environment for all. This includes addressing the growing threat of global pandemics, building environmental justice and cumulative impacts into environmental policies, and looking at wildlife protections and nature-based climate solutions.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan provided a keynote address emphasizing the value of state and federal partnerships and the value of state legislators in the pursuit of sound environmental protections. Administrator Regan drew on his recent trips around the country where he's met with community stakeholders facing climate change and environmental degradation. He reaffirmed the EPA's commitment to incorporating environmental justice into all its policies, working closely with the states, and addressing climate change.

Other sessions at the 2021 National Forum focused on improving water infrastructure, restoring healthy ecosystems, transitioning to a low-carbon transportation future, and more.

2021 NCEL Annual Award Winners

Environmental Achievement Award



CO

Dominique Jackson
Colorado State Representative



MN

David Senjem
Minnesota State Senator



WA

Joe Fitzgibbon
Washington State Representative



WA

Reuven Carlyle
Washington State Senator

Rising Environmental Leader Award



GA

Sheikh Rahman
Georgia State Senator



MD

Sara Love
Maryland State Delegate



MN

Kaohly Her
Minnesota State Representative



NV

Howard Watts
Nevada State Assemblymember

Environmental Activism Award



NH

Renny Cushing
New Hampshire
State Representative

NCEL created the Renny Cushing Environmental Activism Award to recognize leaders who persevere against the odds in the fight for the environment, equity, and justice. The award was presented to New Hampshire State Representative Renny Cushing for his lifetime of environmental advocacy.

2021 Financials

NCEL's 2021 Revenue:

\$1,539,759

Grants \$1,490,633
Event Sponsorship \$28,290
Individual Contributions: \$20,835



74% of our expenses went directly to informing, convening, and collaborating with state legislators.

Climate and Energy \$403,033
Conservation \$378,801
Environmental Health \$338,885
Annual Forum \$8,417
Program Expenses \$1,129,137
General and Administrative \$268,919
Fundraising \$129,924

NCEL's 2021 Expenses:

\$1,527,979

Supporting NCEL's Work

Each year, an increasing number of environmental legislators and advocates are choosing to support NCEL's work with tax-deductible donations. Donations are crucial in ensuring NCEL's systems and staff capacity can continuously grow at pace with the increasing number of legislator requests for assistance we receive each session on an ever-widening range of policy topics.

While recurring monthly donations starting at \$15 a month provide us with the ultimate flexibility in project planning, donations of any size and frequency are greatly appreciated. If you would like to make a donation or receive more information, please visit ncelenviro.org/donate or contact Salvatore Messina at salvatore@ncelenviro.org.



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