

National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

Quarterly Impact Report: April - Sept. 2025

Overview

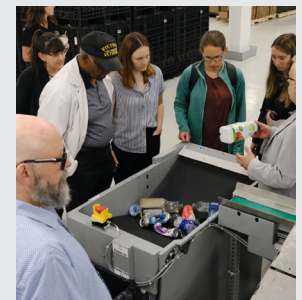
As state legislative sessions wrapped up, NCEL's summer and early fall were marked by robust engagement with state legislators through impactful events, interactive learning, and new resources on trending policy solutions. From hosting our largest-ever [National Forum](#) in August to timely policy resources, immersive learning experiences, and regional convenings, NCEL empowered lawmakers to lead amid federal retreat on the environment while building momentum for the 2026 legislative sessions.

Events

NCEL 2025 National Forum: In early August, NCEL hosted its largest [National Forum](#) to date, bringing together more than 170 legislators from 40 states and territories to Boston, Massachusetts. As federal environmental protections face ongoing challenges, state leaders came together at the Forum to exchange ideas and learn from one another about environmental issues and their intersection with economic resilience, housing, insurance, and more. Attendees ranged from newly elected legislators to long-serving lawmakers serving in leadership positions, united by a shared commitment to state leadership on the environment. During the Forum's opening day, [NCEL awarded six legislators](#) for their outstanding contributions to environmental policy in their states, spotlighting the power of state-led action in shaping a sustainable future.

Midwest Transmission Convening: From June 12–14, NCEL convened a bipartisan group of 24 legislators and six legislative staff from six Midwestern states in Minnesota for a regional event focused on energy transmission. Part of [NCEL's Building the Grid of the Future](#) series, the convening featured expert-led sessions, interactive workshops, and policy discussions on strengthening grid reliability, accelerating transmission development, and advancing renewable energy across the Midwest.

Federal Response Webinar Series: Over the summer, NCEL hosted a federal response webinar series — covering offshore wind policy shifts, Endangered Species Act rollbacks, PFAS regulation changes, and climate impacts of the reconciliation bill — equipping state lawmakers with tools to lead in the face of evolving federal actions. NCEL also launched a new Federal Response newsletter, "State of Affairs," to keep legislators informed on key federal environmental developments.



The photos above were taken during events in the second and third quarter of 2025.



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Zero Waste Immersive Learning in New York City and Montreal: This summer, the Environmental Health team hosted two experiential learning events focused on zero-waste solutions. In June, legislators from seven states gathered in Montreal for the [Ocean Plastics Leadership Network \(OPLN\) CIRCLE Expeditionary Summit](#), where they toured recycling sites and learned about extended producer responsibility (EPR) and deposit return systems (DRS). In July, staff hosted a New York City Recycling Facilities Tour where legislators learned more about recycling operations and gained first-hand insights from industry experts.

Policy Movement

Session Recap: NCEL released its annual [Session Recap](#) in September, highlighting trending environmental issues and high-traction policy areas, with a focus on how states are leading amid federal retreat on the environment.

Bill Tracking: NCEL has tracked [3,000 bills](#) across all 50 states and 43 key issue areas during the 2025 state legislative sessions.

Policy Updates: NCEL staff published policy updates covering state solutions on a range of environmental issues during the 2025 sessions, including: [sustainable data center growth](#), modernizing wildlife conservation ([CO](#), [MD](#), [NJ](#), [NM](#), [VT](#)), [agrivoltaics](#), [outdoor access](#), [climate resilience](#), [offshore wind](#), [PFAS protections](#), [Washington's new EPR program for plastics](#), and [Hawaii's nation-leading "green fee."](#)

Resources

2025–2029 Strategic Plan: NCEL's newly released Strategic Plan outlines five strategies we will advance in the coming years to maximize our organizational impact and empower state legislators as environmental champions. [Explore the plan.](#)

State/Tribal Environmental Policy Toolkit: Developed in partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), this [toolkit](#) provides a foundation for working with Tribal Nations and includes short case studies, policy options, and examples of good relationship building.

Bipartisan Climate Solutions Briefing Book: This [resource](#) explores a pool of successful bipartisan climate and clean energy policies in states across the country and beyond for state legislators to reference as they look forward to the next legislative sessions.

New Policy Options: [Building Decarbonization Policy Options](#), [Wildlife Trafficking Policy Options](#), and [Wildlife Corridor and Crossings Policy Options](#).

New Fact Sheets and Other Resources: [Building Decarbonization Fact Sheet](#), [Urban Biodiversity Fact Sheet](#), [Data Centers Issue Brief](#), and [Lessons Learned in Crafting Endangered Species Policy](#).

Partnerships

Smithsonian Ocean Biodiversity Summit: In April, NCEL CEO Dylan McDowell and Ocean Program Manager Alissa Weinman attended this summit hosted by the Lenfest Ocean Program to strategize on the next steps of the National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy with non-profit, academic, and Tribal leaders.

Capitol Hill Ocean Week: In June, Ocean Program Manager Alissa Weinman served on an advisory panel at Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) to uplift state ocean policy opportunities amidst federal changes.

Nature and Health Fellowship: On September 2, [Colleen Gogglin](#) started full-time as NCEL's Nature and Health Fellow as part of a partnership with the Nature and Health Alliance. Colleen will lead on educating lawmakers about how the outdoors can support efforts to increase health and wellbeing, recreation access, equity, and community development.

Participation in Partner Conferences: From April through September, NCEL staff have been attending and presenting at various environmental conferences, including those hosted by the Center for the New Energy Economy, Conservative Energy Network, and Future Caucus.



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