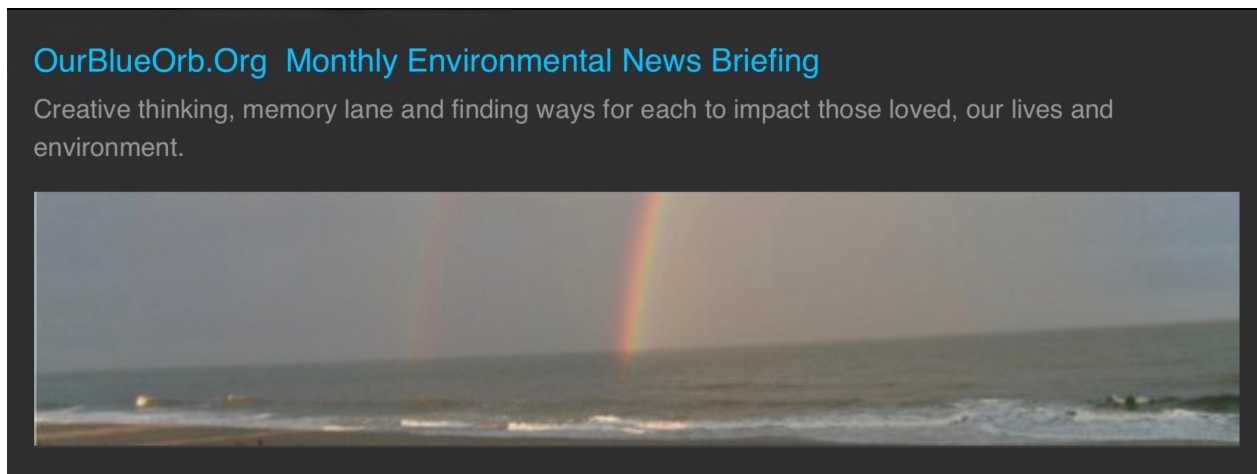


OurBlueOrb.Org Monthly Environmental News Briefing October 2026

There is no shortage of environmental news. There is a shortage of people paying attention to it.



This month's briefing arrives amid new rollbacks and mounting environmental damage. The EPA finalized the repeal of power plant carbon limits. The administration narrowed Endangered Species Act protections. Companies are backing away from climate pledges, and the Supreme Court opened its term with Big Oil's bid to end climate lawsuits. A record El Niño is heating the oceans, and Hurricane Isaias struck the Florida Panhandle. According to Environment America, PFAS turned up at 83% of tested U.S. waterway locations.

Despite this, the science of environmental solutions is advancing. Courts are holding the line. One hundred nations have ratified the High Seas Treaty. Dams are coming down. Communities are pushing back against data centers, drilling plans, polluters and the destruction of wild places. We choose biodiversity and sustainability.

Look at the pattern. Where rules are enforced, results follow and the environment benefits. According to Mongabay, Brazil has cut Amazon deforestation to its lowest rate since records began in 1988. According to Thames Water, London's super sewer has cut raw sewage entering the Thames by 86%.

Where rules are loosened, harm follows. According to "The New York Times," the EPA is moving to relax methane limits for hundreds of thousands of low-output wells that produce roughly half the industry's methane. The evidence is in. The question is who acts for the environment, for our youth and for all of Earth's living creatures. That means you.

This is the case for a Renaissance of the Environmental Movement. A rebirth begins with people who refuse to look away, demand action and press their legislators to follow. This is not nostalgia. This is necessity. Each month, this briefing makes the case again with new proof.

This month's evidence is clear. Environmental enforcement works. Rollbacks cost us. A positive environmental movement brings good results, and the movement that brings change is the one that shows up. Keep treating the environment as just another line on a balance sheet, and the results will be bad. A rebirth of our dedication cannot allow that.

There are no bystanders. Read one article. Read them all. Share what moves you with everyone in your world. Call your legislators. Help cause the renaissance.

A note on paywalls: some sources below are labeled "paywalled." If a link stops at a paywall, open the page in your browser's Reader Mode, or clear your browsing history for that site, and try again.

Missed last month? Read the September 2026 briefing: <https://ourblueorb.org/eNewsUpdate.09.26.pdf>

ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS & GOOD NEWS

Proof That Positive Action Works

1. Australia's High Court Blocks Coal Mine Expansion in Landmark

Climate Ruling: In a 3-2 decision on October 7, the High Court of Australia sided with Hunter Valley retired teachers Wendy Wales and Tony Lonergan and their community group, overturning the approval of MACH Energy's Mount Pleasant coal mine expansion, which would have run to 2048. The court found that planning authorities failed to consider conditions limiting emissions from coal burned overseas. Campaigners say

it is the first climate case to reach the country's top court. The matter returns to a lower court, and a New South Wales minister says the expansion could still be reconsidered. The Guardian, Oct 8, 2026: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/oct/08/overseas-albanese-sees-the-very-definition-of-climate-injustice-but-at-home-he-still-wants-coal>; AFP via Yahoo News, Oct 7, 2026: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/world/articles/australias-high-court-rules-against-003038885.html>; Al Jazeera: <https://aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/7/australia-top-court-rules-against-coal-mine-expansion-citing-climate-harm>

2. Governor Newsom Signs Bill Blocking New Offshore Drilling Off

California: AB 1448 makes it illegal to use existing oil rigs and pipelines in California's state waters to support any new offshore oil, and strengthens state authority over existing leases. The law answers a Trump administration proposal to open California's entire coast to drilling. California banned drilling in state waters more than three decades ago, and no new federal leases have been issued since 1984. Oceana, Sept 29, 2026: <https://usa.oceana.org/press-releases/governor-newsom-signs-pivotal-bill-to-protect-californias-coast-from-new-offshore-drilling/>

3. Judge Blocks Border Construction Across the Big Bend Region: A federal judge issued an emergency injunction halting border barrier and road construction across Big Bend while a lawsuit challenges the government's sweeping waiver of environmental laws. The Center for Biological Diversity is among the plaintiffs. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 2, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/court-grants-emergency-injunction-to-block-big-bend-border-construction-2026-10-02/>

4. Glass To Sand: Recycled Bottles Show Early Promise for Beach

Restoration: Keep Franklin County Beautiful volunteers in Apalachicola have started turning glass into sand with a crusher. According to the group, they recycled 30,000 pounds of glass in 2025 from 7 to 8 hours of volunteer work a month. Businesses in Miami and New Orleans are doing the same. In a Miami pilot study, sea oats grown in recycled-glass sand did as well as those in natural beach sand, according to the Miami Herald. The volume is still small, and nothing yet shows the sand meets Florida beach-nourishment standards. stevendphilbrick OurBlueOrb.Org (Substack), Oct 10, 2026: <https://srplusenvironmentaladvocacy.substack.com/p/glass-into-sand>

5. MLB Drops Grand Teton Baseball Game Proposal: Major League Baseball dropped its proposal to host a game inside Grand Teton National Park. The idea had drawn objections from conservation advocates, who said the land is home to bears, wolves, bison, elk, and pronghorn.

Washington Post (paywalled), Oct 1, 2026: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2026/10/01/mlb-drops-proposal-host-baseball-game-grand-teton-national-park/>

6. High Seas Treaty Reaches 100 Ratifications: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Germany, Papua New Guinea, and Zimbabwe were the latest nations to ratify the High Seas Treaty, bringing the total to 100. The treaty, in force since January, is the world's first legal framework to conserve life in international waters, which cover nearly half the planet's surface. Less than 1% of those waters is fully protected. Positive News, Sept 25, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-39-of-2026/>

7. Global 30x30 Conservation Goal "Within Reach": A major policy review finds the global goal to protect 30% of the planet's land and ocean by 2030 is achievable if governments accelerate action. About 20% of land and inland waters are already protected, with existing commitments raising that to 27% by 2030. Ocean protection lags badly, with only 10% currently protected, but the High Seas Treaty could help close that gap. Positive News, Sept 25, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-39-of-2026/>

8. Island Nations Keep Sovereignty as Seas Rise: UN member states unanimously approved the first declaration on sea-level rise, agreeing that low-lying nations remain sovereign states even if their land disappears. The US joined the consensus. Positive News, Oct 2, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/democracy/good-news-stories-from-week-40-of-2026/>; Down To Earth: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/un-adopts-first-declaration-on-sea-level-rise-backs-continued-statehood-of-island-nations>

9. Norway Creates Its Largest Marine Reserve: The Andfjorden protected area covers cold-water coral reefs and kelp forests, with a dedicated management board that includes Sámi Indigenous

representatives. Positive News, Oct 2, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/democracy/good-news-stories-from-week-40-of-2026/>

10. Canada Announces C\$1.2 Billion to Protect Oceans and Marine Ecosystems: The Canadian government announced C\$1.2 billion in new ocean-protection investment, including over C\$740 million over four years to strengthen ocean conservation, marine science, monitoring and incident preparedness, plus C\$136 million for marine-mammal protection and underwater-noise monitoring. SustainabilityOnline, Sept 30, 2026: <https://sustainabilityonline.net/news/sustainabilityonline-the-sustainability-brief-30-september-2026>

11. Germany Pledges to Phase Out Fossil Fuels by 2045: Germany published a roadmap to transition away from coal, oil, and gas, including ramping up renewables, accelerating EV rollout, and cutting methane emissions 30% in line with the global methane pledge. Climate Action Tracker notes Germany is currently off track to meet existing obligations, so the pledge faces real headwinds. Positive News, Sept 25, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-39-of-2026/>

12. California and Washington Take Step Toward Linking Cap-and-Invest Programs: Governor Newsom announced a move toward linking California's and Washington's carbon Cap-and-Invest programs, which would expand the carbon market both states use to cut emissions. Random Lengths News, Sept 23, 2026: <https://www.randomlengthsnews.com/archives/2026/09/23/link-carbon-markets-washington-state/77673>

13. New Cat Species Discovered in Bolivia: A cat initially mistaken for a stray was confirmed through DNA testing as an entirely new species, the first new cat species discovered in over 100 years, found in Bolivia's Yungas cloud forest. Scientists say the find underscores how much biodiversity remains unknown and how much protection those forests still need. Positive News, Sept 25, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-39-of-2026/>

14. Scientists Discover First New Penguin Species in Over 100 Years: Genetic evidence revealed a previously unknown gentoo penguin species on the remote Kerguelen Islands, and showed gentoos actually consist of

four distinct species rather than one. The discovery also highlights a growing threat, as warming oceans could leave some of these newly distinguished populations more vulnerable. ScienceDaily, Sept 21, 2026: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/09/260920222410.htm>

15. Rehabilitated Gorilla Gives Birth in the Wild: Lulingu, one of the first eastern lowland gorillas returned to the wild, gave birth in Virunga National Park, DRC, reinforcing a small, isolated population. Positive News, Oct 2, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/democracy/good-news-stories-from-week-40-of-2026/>

16. England's Terns Show Signs of Recovery: Little terns set a record at Long Nanny, Northumberland, with 126 nesting pairs against a prior record of 57. Sandwich terns returned to Blakeney Point after two years away. Positive News, Oct 2, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/democracy/good-news-stories-from-week-40-of-2026/>

17. Floating Scarecrows Cut Seabird Deaths in Fishing Nets: A two-year trial off Cornwall found scarecrows reduced bycatch in gillnets by 59% and bird-shaped kites by 71%. Positive News, Oct 2, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/democracy/good-news-stories-from-week-40-of-2026/>

18. Amazon Study: Protecting Standing Forests Is the Most Powerful Conservation Move: A large-scale study of the Amazon found that preventing damage to forests already standing, through wildfire and logging prevention, delivers greater conservation value than restoration efforts after the fact. ScienceDaily, Sept 21, 2026: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/09/260920222356.htm>

19. Billions in Rare Earth Elements May Be Hiding in America's Coal Ash: Researchers are developing methods to recover valuable rare earth elements and critical minerals from coal ash waste, offering a potential domestic source of materials needed for clean-energy technology while addressing a legacy pollution problem. ScienceDaily, Sept 16, 2026: https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/earth_climate/environmental_issues/

20. A 30-Year Forest Experiment in Australia Delivers a Surprise: Heavily thinned mountain ash forests grew unusually large trees and recovered enough carbon to match or exceed untouched areas. According

to the researchers, careful thinning could support timber, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage together. ScienceDaily, Oct 4, 2026: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/10/261001214120.htm>

21. Light-Activated Material Makes Hydrogen From Water Without an Added Metal Catalyst: Oregon State University researchers say the sulfur-based material could make solar hydrogen cheaper and more practical. The climate benefit depends on where the electricity comes from. ScienceDaily, Oct 4, 2026: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/10/261001214017.htm>

22. EPA Administrator Visits Maine Firm With PFAS Destruction Technology: According to Onterris, its regenerable ion-exchange resin could give small, lower-income towns a cheaper way to remove PFAS from drinking water. WGME, Oct 1, 2026: <https://wgme.com/newsletter-daily/epa-official-praises-maine-company-for-new-technology-to-destroy-pfas-environmental-protection-agency-forever-chemicals>

23. UK Wind and Solar Avoid £5.9 Billion in Gas Imports: Carbon Brief analysis found record wind and solar output supplied 41% of UK electricity this year, versus 25% for gas. Heat pump sales also rose 11% across 12 EU nations. Positive News, Oct 2, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/democracy/good-news-stories-from-week-40-of-2026/>

24. Underwater Umbrellas Reduce Bleaching in Florida Corals: In a trial after Florida's record 2023 marine heatwave, shaded brain corals bleached less than unshaded ones at peak heat stress. Both groups survived, and the researchers say survival benefits remain unproven. The Brighter Side of News (Frontiers in Marine Science study), Oct 5, 2026: <https://thebrighterside.news/post/underwater-umbrellas-reduce-bleaching-in-heat-stressed-coral-reefs>

25. Hualapai Tribe Bans Data Center Development: The Hualapai Tribal Council in northern Arizona passed a resolution opposing hyperscale data centers on its nearly one-million-acre reservation, citing threats to its water and land. KJZZ: <https://www.kjzz.org/tribal-natural-resources/2026-09-14/hualapai-tribe-enacts-moratorium-to-halt-irresponsible-development-of-hyperscale-data-centers>

26. Washington Supreme Court Strikes Down Initiative 2066: The court threw out a fossil-fuel-industry-funded ballot measure that would have rolled back the state's electrification and climate policies. It ruled the measure violated the state's one-subject rule. Washington Conservation Action, a League of Conservation Voters affiliate, was a party to the lawsuit. League of Conservation Voters: <https://www.lcv.org/media-center/this-week-in-climate-action-october-2-2026/>

27. North Carolina Regulators Deny Duke Energy Gas Plant Expansion: The North Carolina Utilities Commission rejected a proposal to add 255 MW to an existing gas plant. It cited the cost to ratepayers and reliance on assumed future data center demand. North Carolina LCV advocated for the denial. League of Conservation Voters: <https://www.lcv.org/media-center/this-week-in-climate-action-october-2-2026/>

28. California Enacts Data Center Guardrails: Governor Newsom signed a package requiring data center operators to cover their own energy costs and to protect the state's clean energy goals. League of Conservation Voters: <https://www.lcv.org/media-center/this-week-in-climate-action-october-2-2026/>

29. Lowell Residents Win Pause on Data Center Diesel Generators: A Massachusetts Superior Court judge paused installation of four new diesel generators at the Markley Group data center in a dense residential area. Residents challenged the state's air permits on environmental justice grounds, represented by the Conservation Law Foundation and Yale Law School's Environmental Justice Law and Advocacy Clinic. Markley says it expects to prevail. This item dates from Aug. 11. WGBH: <https://wgbh.org/news/local/2026-08-11/court-orders-pause-lowell-data-center-expansion>

30. New York Incentivizes Electric Landscaping Equipment: Governor Hochul signed a law offering commercial incentives to buy electric landscaping tools, aimed at cutting air pollution and noise. League of Conservation Voters: <https://www.lcv.org/media-center/this-week-in-climate-action-october-2-2026/>

31. Large New Zealand Study Links Environment and Youth Mental Health: A University of Canterbury study of 957,381 young people examined links between the environment around them and their mental

health. Phys.org: <https://phys.org/news/2026-10-links-environment-youth-mental-health.html>

32. Qatar's Young Environmentalists Seen as Ready for a Formal Voice: An opinion piece in the Gulf Times argues that Qatar's young environmentalists are well prepared to take a formal role in decision-making. Gulf Times: <https://www.gulf-times.com/article/735637/opinion/qatars-young-environmentalists-well-prepared-for-a-formal-voice>

33. Quadratec Offers Two \$3,500 Environmental Grants: Quadratec offers two \$3,500 environmental grants a year. The deadline is October 30. The grants are not youth-specific. Quadratec: <https://www.quadratec.com/page/quadratec-cares-grant-program>

34. Pro-Solar Super PAC Plays Hardball in the Midterms: The Invest in Tomorrow Coalition, a pro-solar political action committee, is running attack ads in this year's midterm races. Crypto billionaire Chris Larsen helps fund it. He says the solar industry has been "a little too nice." According to Wired, some MAGA figures now speak up for solar, Texas has become a solar powerhouse, and the Trump administration's opposition to solar may be starting to crack. Wired: <https://www.wired.com/story/the-politics-of-solar-energy-are-getting-weird-mean-and-a-little-maga/>

35. New Environmental Books: Author Interviews and Summaries: New Books Network lists interviews with scholars of the environment about their new books. The page links to summaries of environmental books published over the last month. A button at the bottom of the page opens summaries of books published in earlier months. New Books Network: <https://newbooksnetwork.com/category/science-technology/environmental-studies>

36. Pediatricians Recommend Environmental Books to Help Children Build Resilience: HealthyChildren.org, the website of the American Academy of Pediatrics, published a reading guide on environmental books that inspire children to care for the planet. According to the guide, shared reading can buffer eco-anxiety by helping children feel safe and secure. It also offers a way to start conversations about the environment and shows children how they can take action. HealthyChildren.org, Sept 18, 2026: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/>

[Building-Resilience/Pages/recommended-reading-childrens-books-about-the-environment-to-inspire-hope-action-resilience.aspx](#)

37. World Resources Institute Lays Out a Sustainable Ocean

Economy: The World Resources Institute (WRI) says the ocean adds \$2.5 trillion a year to the global economy, feeds 3 billion people and holds more than half the world's species. It also says overfishing, habitat loss, pollution and rising temperatures are driving rapid biodiversity loss. According to WRI, a sustainable ocean economy could produce six times more food than today, deliver 35% of the emissions cuts needed by 2050, provide 40 times more renewable energy by 2050 and create 12 million new jobs by 2030. WRI convenes the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and hosts the secretariat for the Our Ocean Conference. World Resources Institute: <https://www.wri.org/ocean>

38. EARTHDAY.ORG Launches Food for Our Planet as Global Earth

Day Theme: EARTHDAY.ORG launched Food for Our Planet, a multiyear global campaign, at the World Food Forum in Rome on October 14. The campaign aims to change how food is produced, consumed and valued. According to EARTHDAY.ORG, its goals include cutting harmful pesticides, chemicals, plastics and microplastics in food by 30 percent by 2040, moving 100 million acres of farmland to regenerative practices, mobilizing at least \$20 billion for safer alternatives to harmful chemicals, and reaching at least 100 million people with education. The campaign will be a central focus of Earth Day 2027. EARTHDAY.ORG, Oct 14, 2026: <https://www.earthday.org/press-release/food-for-our-planet-as-global-earth-day-theme/>

39. Rewilding Britain: Restored Land Resists Wildfire: According to a Rewilding Britain report, only one of 285 rewilding projects over 40 hectares was affected by fire this year. Burned areas from 2016 to 2026 were mostly acid grassland, heather grassland, heather and bog. That suggests monocultures burn more readily than restored habitats. Positive News, Oct 9, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-41-of-2026/>

40. New Zealand's Wētāpunga Is Back From the Brink: New Zealand's wētāpunga, believed to be the world's heaviest insect, was once classed as nationally endangered. It is now classed as nationally increasing. More than 11,000 insects were released across 10 predator-free islands over 15

years. Positive News, Oct 9, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-41-of-2026/>

41. California Commission Moves to Protect Mount Pinos Sooty

Grouse: On October 13, the California Fish and Game Commission voted to make the Mount Pinos sooty grouse a candidate for protection under the California Endangered Species Act. The Center for Biological Diversity and Los Padres ForestWatch petitioned for it in March 2026. The subspecies disappeared from Mount Pinos and other Southern California ranges by the 1980s. Possible survivors remain in the southern Sierra Nevada. Candidate status bans unauthorized killing while the state reviews the bird's status. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 13, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/mount-pinos-sooty-grouse-designated-candidate-for-california-endangered-status-2026-10-13/>

42. California EV Rebates Reach Nearly 12,000 Buyers: California said nearly 12,000 residents bought electric vehicles since August using a new \$270 million rebate program funded by the state and automakers. Rebates are \$3,500 for new EVs and \$1,750 for used ones. About \$200 million remains. Overall EV sales are still down in California, at 18% of sales through September 30 compared with 23% last year, according to the state, now that the federal tax credits are gone. Reuters, Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2026-10-16/nearly-12-000-california-residents-bought-evs-using-state-rebate-program>

43. Study Finds Atlantic Ocean Currents Can Recover From Severe Weakening: A Danish Meteorological Institute study in Science Advances found no irreversible tipping point for the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC). In the model, the current regains strength if warming is reversed. Recovery could take centuries, and the Greenland ice sheet could not be restored once melted. Lead author Chuncheng Guo said it is “a much, much safer strategy to not have warming in the first place.” Reuters, Oct 14, 2026: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/world/2026-10-14-atlantic-ocean-currents-can-recover-from-severe-climate-weakening-study-finds/>

44. Dam Removals Are Bringing Fish Back Across the Northeast:

Most U.S. dam removals happen in eastern states, where smaller dams are coming out of streams and rivers. Maine's Penobscot River saw about six million river herring return in 2025, double the count from two years

earlier, after two dams were removed in 2012 and 2013. In Plymouth, Massachusetts, Town Brook's herring runs grew from about 25,000 fish a year to more than 200,000 in many years. At least 35,000 dams still block northeastern fish runs, according to one inventory. Smithsonian Magazine (reprinted from bioGraphic), Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/dam-removals-are-bringing-fish-back-across-the-northeastern-united-states-striking-down-one-tiny-barrier-at-a-time-180989679/>

45. Remove the Damn Dams: Nature heals itself when given a break, and dam removal is the clearest proof. This post draws on Smithsonian Magazine's reporting on northeastern dam removals and the herring returning to rivers once the barriers come out. SR+ IngeniousVortex EcoBLOG, Oct 21, 2026: <https://srplus.wordpress.com/2026/10/21/remove-the-damn-dams/>; stevendphilbrick OurBlueOrb.Org (Substack), Oct 21, 2026: <https://srplusenvironmentaladvocacy.substack.com/p/remove-the-damn-dams>

46. Lansing, Michigan, Could Install America's First Bubble Barrier Against River Plastic: A Dutch Bubble Barrier uses a perforated tube on the bottom of a waterway to pump air and push floating plastic to the surface, where the current carries it into a catchment trap. According to its maker, the Great Bubble Barrier, it catches 86% of floating plastic. Lansing wants to install the first U.S. barrier in the Grand River, which flows to Lake Michigan. The Great Lakes collect an estimated 22 million pounds of plastic debris each year, with Lake Michigan accounting for nearly half. The project is still in planning, and permits and funding must be secured. Smithsonian Magazine, Oct 9, 2026: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/could-this-dutch-invention-help-tackle-plastic-pollution-in-americas-waterways-180989651/>

47. London's Super Sewer Cuts Raw Sewage in the Thames by 86%: Thames Water reported an 86% drop in raw sewage entering the River Thames since its 16-mile tunnel opened. The sewer has also kept about 84 tonnes of litter, including wet wipes, out of the river. Positive News, Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-42-of-2026/>

48. Colorado Wildlife Overpass Cuts Collisions by 91%: The Greenland overpass, North America's largest wildlife crossing, has reduced animal-

vehicle collisions on Interstate 25 by 91% since it opened last December. The \$15 million bridge was built alongside five underpasses. Positive News, Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-42-of-2026/>

49. Aldabra Atoll Hosts a Record 180,000 Giant Tortoises: A survey counted 180,000 giant tortoises on Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles, the highest number ever recorded. The population fell to around 1,000 in the 19th century. There are now more tortoises than the 135,000 people living in the Seychelles. Positive News, Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-42-of-2026/>

50. Australia's Bogong Moths Make a Strong Comeback: Bogong moths, listed as endangered in 2021 after a steep decline since the 1980s, have rebounded strongly in Australia. Scientists attribute the recovery to a milder winter and more rainfall. Positive News, Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-42-of-2026/>

51. EV Sales Hit Records in 49 of 56 Tracked Countries: According to an Ember report, 49 of 56 tracked countries set records for electric vehicle sales after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz. Ember says China's EV fleet has saved it \$14 billion in oil imports since the crisis began. Positive News, Oct 16, 2026: <https://www.positive.news/society/good-news-stories-from-week-42-of-2026/>

52. Biodiversity Plans Are Improving, but COP17 Must Turn Pledges Into Action: Writing in Earth.Org, Kaveh Zahedi of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says countries are starting to treat agriculture as part of the solution. An FAO analysis of 78 national biodiversity plans found that more than a third of planned actions involve agrifood systems. Only 43% of the plans include indicators to track progress on those actions. Madagascar adopted a strategy to phase out highly hazardous pesticides by 2035, and at one FAO-supported site in the Boeny region, rice and crab production have doubled since 2024. Zahedi argues that COP17 must focus on finance and monitoring systems that turn plans into action. Earth.Org (opinion), Oct 17, 2026: <https://earth.org/biodiversity-plans-are-improving-now-its-time-to-turn-pledges-into-action/>

53. World's First Permanent Microplastic Removal System Opens at Atlantic City Wastewater Plant: The Atlantic County Utilities Authority

(ACUA) opened what is described as the world's first permanent system to remove microplastics from wastewater at its Atlantic City plant. Built with PolyGone Systems, the commercial unit follows a 2024 pilot. A ribbon cutting was held October 20. Press of Atlantic City, Oct 21, 2026: https://pressofatlanticcity.com/news/local/business/article_f098ac28-c5a8-4372-8de0-d5d63f44970f.html

54. Lula Wins Brazil Runoff as Amazon Deforestation Falls to a Record Low: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won a fourth term in the October 25 runoff with 51.8% of valid votes to Flávio Bolsonaro's 48.2%, according to Mongabay. Amazon deforestation has fallen to its lowest rate since records began in 1988, though about 333,500 hectares were still cut from August 2025 to July 2026. Lula said, “We are going to teach the world how climate policy is done, here in this country,” and pledged to end legal and illegal deforestation by 2030. Challenges remain. Flávio Bolsonaro's Liberal Party won the most seats in both chambers of Congress, and Euronews reports he says he does not recognize the result and will challenge it in court. Mongabay, Oct 2026: <https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/10/defeat-for-denialism-lula-beats-far-right-bolsonaro-in-brazilian-presidential-election/>; Euronews, Oct 26, 2026: <https://www.euronews.com/2026/10/26/lula-wins-brazil-election-after-cutting-amazon-deforestation-to-record-low>

THE URGENT PRESSING ISSUES

What Demands Immediate Attention

1. A Kelvin Wave Is Heading Toward the California Coast, Raising Sea Levels: An El Niño-generated pulse of wave energy, known as a Kelvin wave, will soon reach Southern California and travel north, lifting sea levels by half a foot or more for months across an area extending 12 to 18 miles offshore. It arrives on top of other factors already raising California's seas, increasing the threat of coastal flooding, erosion, and saltwater intrusion. New York Times (paywalled), Sept 30, 2026: <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/30/climate/el-nino-storm-flooding-kelvin-waves.html>; U.S. News & World Report, Oct 1, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2026-10-01/what-is-the-kelvin-wave-threatening-california-heres-what-to-know>

2. 2026 El Niño Is the Strongest on Record by Daily Ocean

Temperature: On September 21, sea surface temperature in the central Pacific where El Niño forms reached 3.08 degrees Celsius above the 1991 to 2020 average, a record, according to Science News. NOAA has not formally declared it the strongest ever. Mongabay reported the global ocean also logged 100 straight days of record heat from June to September, and scientists expect El Niño to peak toward the end of 2026. Science News, Sept 24, 2026: <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/record-breaking-el-nino-temperatures>; Mongabay, Sept 18, 2026: <https://news.mongabay.com/2026/09/global-ocean-breaks-records-with-100-days-of-heat-as-el-nino-adds-new-threat/>

3. Hurricane Nolo Stalls Near Hawaii After Rapid Intensification:

Hurricane Nolo passed within 150 miles of the Big Island without making landfall, then stalled and battered the Big Island and Maui County with rain and wind, according to the Weather Channel. Rain reached 17 inches at the highest elevations, and wind gusts hit 88 mph on Maui. Waves pounded the Big Island's south shores. Nolo grew from Category 1 to Category 4 in about 24 hours and peaked at 155 mph on Sept. 28 south of the islands. The National Weather Service reported no significant flooding. Nolo was the fourth storm of 2026 to affect Hawaii. Weather.com: <https://weather.com/2026/09/28/storms/hurricane/hawaii-hurricane-nolo-flooding-wind-forecast>; CNN: <https://www.cnn.com/2026/09/25/weather/hurricane-nolo-hawaii-el-nino-impacts-climate>

4. Record El Niño Threatens Washington State's Coastal Towns:

According to KUOW, sea surface temperatures off South America are the warmest in 150 years of records. Scientists call it a perfect storm for coastal erosion, and Hoquiam faces the winter without the protective levee it has sought since 2015. KUOW, Oct 1, 2026: <https://kuow.org/environment/2026-10-01/el-nino-could-put-washingtons-coastal-towns-in-hot-water>

5. Ocean Heatwaves Are Hiding Months of Extra Warming: According to researchers at William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, warm water lingers for weeks or months before and after a marine heatwave, so standard measurements understate total heat exposure by more than 150% on average. The team analyzed more than 2,580 heatwaves across 20 U.S. estuaries over two decades. Longer warming can worsen low-oxygen conditions and harmful algal blooms.

ScienceDaily, Sept 30, 2026: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/09/260928100603.htm>

6. Critical Atlantic Ocean Current Found Weakening, Effects Could Be Global:

University of Miami researchers found strong direct observational evidence that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) has been weakening across a wide stretch of ocean for nearly two decades, using mooring-array data rather than computer models alone. The AMOC helps regulate climate across the Northern Hemisphere. ScienceDaily, Sept 23, 2026: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/09/260922222558.htm>

7. Lake Powell Falls to Lowest Level on Record: An exceptionally dry, warm winter left the Colorado River Basin with little mountain snow to melt, driving Lake Powell to its lowest recorded level and deepening the long-running Colorado River water crisis. ScienceDaily, Sept 22, 2026: https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/earth_climate/environmental_science/

8. Swiss Glaciers Lose Nearly a Fifth of Their Ice in Just Five Years:

Switzerland's glaciers lost 5.5% of their remaining ice volume in 2026 alone, the second-biggest annual melt on record, after a record-breaking heatwave followed a winter with little snowfall. GLAMOS called 2026 "a catastrophic year," reporting the melt rate from 2022 to 2026 was more than twice as high as any previous five-year period on record, with Aletsch, Rhône, Allalin, and Clariden glaciers all posting their greatest-ever losses. GLAMOS director Matthias Huss warned "there will probably be no ice in 10 or maybe 15 years." The melt released roughly 2.2 trillion liters of water between July and September alone, more than four times Switzerland's annual household water consumption. Reuters, Oct 1, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-09-30/swiss-glaciers-lose-more-than-5-of-ice-after-record-heatwave>

9. TOP TEN: Threats to a Sustainable Future: Ten threats to a sustainable future, listed in no particular order: plastic and microplastic pollution, biodiversity loss, ocean decline, fresh water pollution and scarcity, air pollution, the climate crisis, toxic chemicals and hazardous waste, loss of wild places, soil loss and unsustainable farming, and loosened regulations with no one held accountable. There are no bystanders. Readers decide which threats matter most to them.

stevendphilbrick OurBlueOrb.Org (Substack): <https://srplusenvironmentaladvocacy.substack.com/p/top-ten>

10. Greenpeace Links 20 Agricultural Companies to Indonesian Fires:

Working with Indonesian group Pantau Gambut, Greenpeace used satellite data to find 6,811 likely smoke sources from August 1 through October 1 across Kalimantan, Papua, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Maluku. According to Greenpeace, more than 20 palm, pulp, and sugar companies, some tied to Malaysia and Singapore, held land concessions containing those sources. Bloomberg (paywalled), Oct 6, 2026: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-10-06/greenpeace-links-20-agricultural-companies-to-indonesian-fires>

11. "Catastrophic Wildfire Loop" After Colonisation Left Parts of

Australia More at Risk From Bushfires: Researchers working with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation reconstructed 1,000 years of vegetation and fire history from a lake in Croajingolong National Park, Victoria. According to the study, Gunaikurnai cultural burning before 1788 kept the forest an open woodland. Colonial disruption brought hotter fires, a fourfold rise in eucalypt cover, and more soil erosion, changes that came before human-caused warming. The authors say integrating Indigenous knowledge into fire management is essential to reduce future risk. The Guardian, Oct 8, 2026: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/oct/08/colonisation-wildfire-loop-australia-climate-bushfires>; Nature (abstract free, full paper by subscription), Oct 7, 2026: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-026-11097-z>

12. New Hampshire Towns Sue 3M and DuPont Over PFAS-

Contaminated Firefighter Gear: Keene and Londonderry filed a proposed case in federal court against 3M, DuPont, and other chemical and gear manufacturers, accusing them of knowingly exposing firefighters to PFAS through turnout gear despite EPA records describing a chronic PFAS threat tied to firefighting chemicals for decades. The Cool Down, Sept 29, 2026: <https://thecooldown.com/green-business/new-hampshire-firefighters-cancer-risk-lawsuit>

13. Zavodovski Island Chinstrap Penguin Colony Falls by Two-Thirds:

The world's largest chinstrap penguin colony, on Zavodovski Island in the South Sandwich Islands, is down by about two-thirds since 2011, according to the Guardian. The cause is probably the climate crisis. Prof

Norman Ratcliffe of the British Antarctic Survey called it “an enormous population crash, equivalent to half a million breeding individuals being lost from that island.” The Guardian reported in 2020 that chinstrap numbers were also falling on Low Island in the South Shetland Islands, prompting scientists to say “something is broken.” The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/oct/07/penguin-colony-population-crash-zavodovski-island-antarctica>

14. Hurricane Isaias Strikes the Florida Panhandle Over Unusually Warm Gulf Waters: Isaias came ashore near Destin on Friday night, Oct. 9, as a Category 2 hurricane with 105 mph winds. According to the Associated Press, about 800,000 customers lost power. As of October 13, Governor DeSantis had counted six deaths in Florida, including indirect ones, and Alabama had reported two more, according to Fox Weather. About 54,000 customers were still without power that day, according to WLRN, and DeSantis said about 95% of those who lost power had been restored. Governor DeSantis declared a state of emergency in 27 counties. The storm formed over Gulf waters 3 to 3.5 degrees warmer than average for October, according to WUSF. Shel Winkley, chief meteorologist for Climate Central, said global warming made that warm area 300 to 800 times more likely. Winkley warned that rapid intensification can lead a storm to exceed expectations, which “really decreases our ability to either evacuate or prepare.” Fox 13: <https://www.fox13news.com/news/hurricane-isaias-updates-desantis-addresses-widespread-power-outages-after-landfall.amp>; WUSF: <https://www.wusf.org/weather/2026-10-07/how-warm-gulf-waters-influence-tropical-activity-heavy-rainfall-this-week>; Fox Weather, Oct 13, 2026: <https://www.foxweather.com/weather-news/florida-death-toll-rises-hurricane-isaias-dangerous-landfall>; WLRN, Oct 14, 2026: <https://www.wlrn.org/weather/2026-10-14/the-panhandle-continues-to-recover-from-isaias-as-more-deaths-are-reported>

15. Large Earthquake in Panama Sets Off Tsunami Alert: A magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck southern Panama on Oct. 9, followed by a magnitude 6.6 quake and dozens of aftershocks, and set off a tsunami alert, according to the New York Times. Buildings collapsed near the epicenter in Herrera, Veraguas and Los Santos provinces, and several people were injured. Early reports confirmed no deaths. Panama City was undamaged, and Panama Canal operations continued normally. New York Times (paywalled): <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/10/09/world/americas/>

[panama-earthquake-tsunami.html](#); ABC7 New York, Oct 2026: <https://abc7ny.com/story/panama-earthquake-76-shakes-region/19925359/>

16. Hurricane Polo Hits Baja California and Floods the U.S.

Southwest: Hurricane Polo struck Baja California Sur on Sept. 29 with 110 mph winds, according to the Associated Press. It downed trees and power lines and flooded homes, and hundreds of people sheltered. Its remnants then flooded parts of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. New Mexico officials warned of a possible dam failure along the Rio Grande and ordered evacuations in Hatch and Placitas. Helicopters rescued people near Phoenix and near Zion National Park. The AP article reported no deaths. WUFT (AP): <https://www.wuft.org/2026-09-30/hurricane-polos-remnants-bringing-more-rain-to-flood-struck-u-s-southwest>

17. WWF Living Planet Report: Wildlife Populations Down 73% Since 1970:

Monitored wildlife populations fell an average of 73% from 1970 to 2022, according to WWF and the Zoological Society of London. Freshwater species fell the most, at 85%. WWF: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/2026-living-planet-report/>

18. Water Becomes the Top Issue in Arizona's Election: With the November 3 midterm weeks away, water has overtaken affordability and immigration as the leading campaign concern in drought-hit Arizona. A September survey by the Center for the Future of Arizona found long-term water supply was voters' top concern for the first time in the survey's five years. The shift followed deep federal cuts in Colorado River supplies to Arizona in August. Governor Katie Hobbs and Turning Point USA are trading ads and street signs over who lost the state water. Reuters, Oct 1, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-10-01/water-wars-come-to-the-ballot-box-in-arizona>

19. Toledo Chemical Tank Rupture Forces Evacuations and Sends 57 to Hospitals:

A tank at the MC Tank Transport terminal in north Toledo, Ohio, ruptured and began releasing glycidyl methacrylate, an industrial coating chemical, around 9:30 p.m. October 20. Officials ordered about 983 people within a mile to evacuate and told residents within three miles to shelter in place. The zone shrank over the next two days, and the evacuation order was lifted October 23 after hazardous materials crews found no detectable hazards. According to the city, Toledo-area hospitals treated 57 people for symptoms tied to the incident, and none were in

serious condition. Officials say the tap water is not contaminated. The site has been turned over to the owners and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for cleanup. USA TODAY, Oct 21, 2026: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2026/10/21/toledo-hazardous-materials-chemical-explosion/92359046007/>; ClickOnDetroit, Oct 23, 2026: <https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/local/2026/10/23/evacuation-orders-lifted-days-after-chemical-leak-in-toledo/>; FOX 35 Orlando, Oct 22, 2026: <https://www.fox35orlando.com/news/toledo-chemical-leak-update-57-people-treated-hospitals-evacuation-area-reduced>

ENVIRONMENTAL SETBACKS AND DISASTERS

Beyond Urgent Issues

1. EPA Announces Rollback of Oil and Gas Methane Rules:

Administrator Lee Zeldin announced at a New Mexico oil and gas industry conference that the EPA will soon propose weakening the Biden administration's methane rules, including ending the Super Emitter Program, which lets certified third parties report large leaks. On October 27, "The New York Times" reported that President Trump is expected to announce the plan at a Texas campaign rally, according to two administration officials. The EPA is moving to relax requirements for hundreds of thousands of low-output "marginal" wells nearing the end of their useful lives. According to the EPA, these wells account for about 7% of U.S. oil and gas production but roughly half of the industry's methane emissions. According to the Times, the Biden administration issued the rules in 2023 and the Trump administration has already delayed them. Methane traps about 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide in the short term, according to the Times. Santa Fe New Mexican, Oct 7, 2026: https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/epa-head-announces-sweeping-oil-and-gas-regulation-rollback/article_2f05aa51-31ac-4fd9-b363-af2c2768f7b6.html; Environmental Defense Fund, Oct 7, 2026: <https://www.edf.org/media/statement-epas-methane-repeal-would-put-polluters-first-and-waste-americas-energy>; Source New Mexico: <https://sourcenm.com/2026/10/07/epa-head-announces-oil-and-gas-emission-rules-rollbacks-during-visit-to-santa-fe/>; The New York Times, Oct 27, 2026: <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/10/27/climate/trump-methane-rules-epa-greenhouse-gas.html>

2. Administration Limits Endangered Species Protections to

Intentional Killing: A Fish and Wildlife Service memo from Director Brian Nesvik limits the Endangered Species Act's ban on "take" to cases where someone knowingly and intentionally kills a protected species. On October 1, the Center for Biological Diversity and eight allied groups filed a legal challenge. The groups were already in court over a July rule that removed habitat destruction from the definition of harm. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 1, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/legal-filing-challenges-trump-move-to-ok-killing-of-endangered-wildlife-2026-10-01/>; Alaska Public Media, Oct 6, 2026: <https://alaskapublic.org/news/environment/2026-10-06/alaska-fish-and-game-approves-of-trump-administration-curtailling-endangered-species-act-protections>

3. Louisiana Ruling Expands, Eliminating EPA's Use of Disparate-Impact Analysis Nationwide:

A Louisiana federal court permanently barred the EPA and DOJ from enforcing Title VI disparate-impact requirements against any entity in the state, a tool historically used to examine whether environmental permitting decisions disproportionately harm minority communities. Advocates warn the ruling could embolden other states to seek similar exemptions, further weakening federal environmental justice enforcement nationwide. National Law Review, Sept 21, 2026: <https://natlawreview.com/article/what-we-are-reading-environmental-energy-series-21-september-2026>

4. EPA Finalizes Repeal of Power Plant Greenhouse Gas Standards:

The EPA published a final rule rescinding the greenhouse gas findings for fossil fuel-fired power plants and repealing Clean Air Act Section 111 regulations for the sector, finalizing the rollback first reported as in-progress in September's briefing. Court challenges followed. On September 17, environmental and public health groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council and the American Lung Association, filed in the D.C. Circuit. On October 1, coalitions of states, counties and cities led by Illinois and New York filed their own petitions. EPA also proposed to rescind all remaining power plant greenhouse gas standards, arguing the Clean Air Act does not authorize them. Public comment on that proposal closes November 2. Federal Register, Sept 17, 2026: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-09-17/pdf/2026-19072.pdf>; Earth Times, Oct 8, 2026: <https://earthtimes.org/epa-power-repeal-draws-new-court/>

5. Federal Judge Blocks New Mexico's PFAS Product Labeling Rule:

U.S. District Judge Margaret Strickland blocked New Mexico's PFAS Protection Act labeling requirement, ruling the state failed to show the label "is a rational vehicle to achieve the goals of protecting consumer and environmental health." Manufacturing groups argued the rule violated First Amendment commercial-speech protections. New Mexico's definition of PFAS aligns with rules already adopted in Colorado, California, and Connecticut, and officials plan to appeal. Source New Mexico, Sept 18, 2026: <https://sourcenm.com/2026/09/18/federal-judge-sides-with-manufacturers-blocks-new-mexicos-pfas-labeling-rule/>

6. Groups Urge Congress to Reject Clean Water Act Changes in Permitting Bill:

More than 120 organizations oppose Clean Water Act provisions in the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026, introduced by Senators Whitehouse, Heinrich, Capito, and Lee. According to the groups, the provisions would gut core protections for rivers, streams, wetlands, and drinking water. On October 13, a coalition of 185 organizations, led by the Center for Biological Diversity and the AI Now Institute, called the bill a back-door deal to expand AI data centers and the fossil fuel infrastructure that powers them. According to the groups, it would cap NEPA reviews at one to two years and give communities only 150 days to challenge federal permits in court. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 7, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/over-120-organizations-oppose-attacks-on-clean-water-act-in-permitting-bill-2026-10-07/>; Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 13, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/185-groups-slam-permitting-bills-sweetheart-deal-for-data-centers-2026-10-13/>

7. Lawsuit Targets Utah Oil Highway Through Nine Mile Canyon:

Three groups sued the Bureau of Land Management over its approval of a highway for oil tanker trucks through Gate Canyon in eastern Utah. According to the groups, construction would demolish 100-foot canyon walls and damage Native rock imagery. The BLM posted the latest version of the project in March without public notice or a formal comment period. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 6, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-targets-utah-oil-highway-threatening-world-renowned-nine-mile-canyon-2026-10-06/>

8. American Samoa Group Sues Over Deep-Sea Mining Plans: Fa'asao Amerika Samoa is challenging a federal finding that leasing would not likely affect endangered marine species, arguing the risks were not properly analyzed. RNZ, Oct 1, 2026: <https://rnz.co.nz/news/pacific/1666137/american-samoa-environmental-group-sues-us-govt-over-deep-sea-mining-plans>

9. NOAA Weighs First Commercial Deep Seabed Mining Application After Comment Period Closes: NOAA took public comment through October 19, with a virtual public hearing on October 13, on a deep seabed mining application from TMC USA. NOAA found the application meets information requirements, so it can move into processing. NOAA will now weigh public and agency feedback. If it certifies the application, it would prepare an environmental impact statement with more chances for public comment. NOAA has not announced a decision date. NOAA, comment period through Oct 19, 2026: <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/deep-seabed-mineral-resources/deep-seabed-mining/>; Ocean News: <https://oceannews.com/news/energy/noaa-advances-tmc-usa-application-under-dshmra-compliance-review/>

10. 99% of Viruses Found in a Deep-Sea Mining Zone Are New to Science: Researchers documented 11,742 distinct viruses in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone and call the work a pre-mining baseline for future impact assessments. ScienceAlert, Oct 3, 2026: <https://www.sciencealert.com/almost-all-the-viruses-found-in-a-vast-deep-sea-mining-zone-were-new-to-science>

11. Who Owns the Ocean? Ocean Governance Explained: No one owns the ocean. Coastal nations govern waters out to 12 nautical miles and manage resources within 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones, while the high seas, about two-thirds of the ocean, are a shared global commons. The High Seas Treaty took effect in January 2026 but binds only the countries that ratified it, 93 as of this post. The post also says U.S. plans for deep-sea mining in international waters challenge the system most nations follow. Oceana, Sept 9, 2026: <https://oceana.org/blog/who-owns-the-ocean-ocean-governance-explained/>

12. Plastics Treaty Chair Sees March Deal as Oil States Hold Out: After informal Bangkok talks, chair Julio Cordano said he expects adoption at the March session. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Russia still resist

production limits. Bangkok Post (AFP), Oct 2026: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/3329613/plastic-treaty-talks-chair-sees-deal-possible-in-march>

13. Beyond Plastics Protests Starbucks Nationwide Over "Widely Recyclable" Cups: Beyond Plastics organized 22 actions in 11 states from September 28 to October 14, asking Starbucks to stop calling its single-use plastic cold cups "widely recyclable." According to Beyond Plastics, a tracking investigation that placed 53 Bluetooth trackers in cups in store recycling bins could not confirm a single cup reached a recycling facility. Starbucks says tracker studies do not reflect how recycling systems work in practice. In New York, groups also urged lawmakers to pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. In Southern California, according to the Daily Pilot, activists rallied outside CEO Brian Niccol's Newport Beach office on October 1, asking Starbucks to cut plastic use and support its workers, but barricades kept them from delivering a petition carrying 14,000 signatures. Sanctuary for Independent Media (Hudson Mohawk Magazine), Oct 5, 2026: <https://www.mediasanctuary.org/stories/2026/beyond-plastics-protests-starbucks-nationwide/>; Daily Pilot (Los Angeles Times, paywalled), Oct 1, 2026: <https://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/news/story/2026-10-01/activists-rally-outside-starbucks-ceos-newport-beach-office-over-greenwashing-claims>; Beyond Plastics report, May 2026: <https://www.beyondplastics.org/publications/starbucks-cups>

14. Overseas Plastic on Australian Beaches Set to Double by 2050: New modeling by The Ocean Cleanup projects plastic arriving from overseas will grow from 440 tonnes in 2020 to more than 850 tonnes a year by 2050 without action. Southeast Asia is the main source, and Indonesia is the largest single contributor at over 110 tonnes. Australian rivers add just 7 tonnes a year. The Ocean Cleanup (press release via EIN Presswire), Oct 6, 2026: <https://natlawreview.com/press-releases/aussie-beaches-double-overseas-plastic-pollution-2050-without-action-now>

15. Comebacks for Wild Tigers, Tuna and Green Sea Turtles Show Nature Loss Can Be Reversed: Scientists say the recoveries prove biodiversity loss can be turned around, but a WWF report warns that food production must become the next "positive tipping point" to avoid collapse. According to WWF's analysis of nearly 36,000 animal populations and more than 5,000 species, wildlife populations have fallen

an average of 73% since 1970. The report says about half of global GDP depends on nature. Land and freshwater wildlife in Latin America and the Caribbean fell an average of 95% from 1970 to 2022, and 80% in Africa. The Guardian, Oct 8, 2026: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/oct/08/world-must-change-food-avoid-biodiversity-collapse-wwf>

16. Scientists Who Trust Technology to Solve Climate Change Take Less Climate Action, Study Finds: A London School of Economics study of 9,199 scientists in 115 countries found that those who agree technology will largely solve climate change are 23% less likely to take civic climate action, such as signing petitions or protesting, and 18% less likely to make high-impact lifestyle changes. Overall, 27% of the scientists agreed with that statement. According to the researchers, the belief was most common among right-leaning scientists and those in applied and natural sciences, and it did not vary with how closely a scientist's research relates to climate. The Guardian, Oct 7, 2026: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/oct/07/scientists-technology-less-likely-climate-crisis-action>; Environmental Research Letters (open access), Oct 7, 2026: <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aea4c7>

17. Pacific Pre-COP Ends With Finance Complaints and Few World Leaders: Fiji and Tuvalu hosted the preparatory climate talks, and Pacific leaders pressed for climate finance, ocean protection, and keeping the 1.5C goal alive. According to Climate Home News, leaders said international finance is too slow, too small, and on bad terms, and only two non-Pacific leaders attended. Fiji's climate minister said the talks produced concrete commitments, including millions of dollars for resilience and renewable energy. COP31 opens in Antalya, Türkiye, in November. Climate Home News, Oct 6, 2026: <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2026/10/06/pacific-leaders-rail-at-climate-finance-failures-after-pre-cop-trip-to-tuvalu/>; Islands Business (PACNEWS), Oct 8, 2026: <https://islandsbusiness.com/pacnews/pacnews-three-08-october-2026>

18. Ron DeSantis and the Environment: Did He Keep His Promise?: According to the Tallahassee Democrat, DeSantis has secured about \$9 billion for water quality and Everglades restoration, and Everglades groups credit him for speeding up projects. According to Friends of the Everglades, more than 80% of his 2019 executive order went unfulfilled. Critics say the Everglades reservoir sits on 16,500 acres when some

estimates called for 60,000, and they object to the Alligator Alcatraz detention center in Big Cypress National Preserve. Tallahassee Democrat (Kimberly Miller, USA TODAY Network Florida), Oct 4, 2026: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/desantis-everglades-champion-ecological-villain-090159321.html>

19. DeSantis Legacy: 5 Accomplishments, 5 Debatable Misfires: The wins include the fast-tracked Everglades reservoir and the Picayune Strand restoration, which removes 260 miles of roads and plugs 40 miles of canals. The misses include a law that erased most climate change references from state law and bars net-zero policies, a law that preempts local environmental zoning, and the Twin Rivers land swap, dropped only after public opposition. Tallahassee Democrat (Kimberly Miller, USA TODAY Network Florida), Oct 4, 2026: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/us/articles/five-environmental-hits-misses-under-090328491.html>

20. Pennsylvania Advocates Rally for Bigger Gas Well Buffers as Data Centers Drive Demand: Environmental and community groups rallied at the Pennsylvania state capitol in Harrisburg on Wednesday. They want regulators to increase the minimum buffer between gas wells and homes, schools and water sources. According to the groups, they have waited two years for the Department of Environmental Protection to act on a 2024 petition for larger setbacks. The AI data center buildout is adding urgency by driving demand for natural gas. Katie Weber of Hanover Township, Washington County, joined the rally because of plans for a large data center cluster powered by an on-site gas plant near her home. Inside Climate News: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/08102026/pennsylvania-natural-gas-well-buffers-data-centers/>

21. Maryland Demands Answers as Jet Fuel Keeps Seeping From Joint Base Andrews: Jet fuel is still seeping into Piscataway Creek from Joint Base Andrews more than six months after the spill was reported, according to the Maryland Department of the Environment. The base says it has isolated the damaged fuel system and stopped the leak. Water testing at several locations still shows diesel-range hydrocarbons flushing into the creek. MDE said fuel “continues to flush into the creek, particularly after heavy rain.” The base told Inside Climate News it continues to “actively contain and recover” spilled fuel trapped in soil. The creek connects the base to the Potomac River near Fort Washington Park, and Piscataway Park offers public access for fishing and boating. Inside

Climate News: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/08102026/joint-base-andrews-fuel-leak-into-piscataway-creek/>

22. Environmental Groups Call Senate Permitting Deal a Bad Bargain:

Environmental groups are criticizing a Senate permitting proposal, according to Bloomberg. The proposal includes tradeoffs meant to speed clean-power generation. The groups say they cannot accept those tradeoffs. Bloomberg (paywalled): <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2026-10-08/environmental-groups-criticize-us-senate-permitting-deal-as-bad-bargain>

23. Supreme Court Hears Suncor Climate Case From Boulder, but May Not Decide It:

The Supreme Court opened arguments on Monday in a climate case brought by Boulder, Colo., and other municipalities against oil companies, and the first question was whether the court can hear it at all, according to the New York Times. Suncor Energy asked the justices to take the case. Its lawyer, Kannon Shanmugam, is expected to argue that federal law bars the state-law claims that seek to hold oil companies liable for climate damages. Federal law allows appeals from state courts only after a “final judgment.” The Colorado Supreme Court let the lawsuit move forward and sent it back to lower state courts without ruling on whether the claims are valid. The plaintiffs say that leaves the U.S. Supreme Court without jurisdiction. The companies say the state ruling finally resolved whether the case can proceed. New York Times (paywalled): <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2026/10/05/climate/oil-companies-climate-supreme-court>

24. Key West Weighs Pilot Program to Remove Sargassum From Its Beaches:

Key West is one of many Florida cities wondering how to remove the smelly, rotting sargassum seaweed blanketing their shorelines, according to WLRN Public Media. City commissioners recently voted to hire scientific and environmental consultants to study whether a removal project is feasible. The pilot would cover a half-mile stretch of beach along the city’s southern Atlantic coast. The resolution does not approve construction or a removal system. Any future project would need another commission vote. WUSF (WLRN Public Media): <https://www.wusf.org/environment/2026-10-07/key-west-looks-at-pilot-program-to-remove-sargassum-from-its-shores>

25. Environmental Groups Sue Over Fuel Economy Rollback: The Center for Biological Diversity, Conservation Law Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, Public Citizen and Sierra Club sued in federal appellate court over the Department of Transportation's move to lower fuel economy standards. According to Electrek, the Department of Energy says the change will raise gas prices by 76 cents a gallon. Electrek: <https://electrek.co/2026/10/02/environmental-groups-sue-trump-for-raising-your-fuel-costs/>

26. Canada Fast-Tracks Pacific Link Oil Pipeline: Prime Minister Mark Carney announced that the proposed Pacific Link oil pipeline will be listed as a Project of National Interest under the Building Canada Act. The announcement came less than 24 hours after the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. According to Keepers of the Water, the pipeline would move about one million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta to the West Coast. The group cites a Pembina Institute report that oil sands emissions have risen 177% since 2005. Keepers of the Water: <https://www.keepersofthewater.ca/news/juh3j98tmtrbqlgo54v3vcdei4yg0x>

27. Navajo Environmental Group Offered Money to Drop Opposition: According to NPR, a would-be energy developer appears to have tried to buy off a local environmental group on the Navajo Nation. NPR (via Connecticut Public): <https://www.ctpublic.org/2026-10-09/navajo-environmentalists-were-offered-money-to-drop-opposition-to-energy-project>

28. Newsom Vetoes California Plastic Pollution Mitigation Fund Bill: Governor Newsom vetoed SB 1180, the plastic pollution mitigation fund bill. Packaging Dive: <https://www.packagingdive.com/news/california-newsom-vetoes-sb1180-plastic-pollution-mitigation-fund/830870/>

29. Newsom Vetoes California Recycled Content Bill: Governor Newsom vetoed AB 2253, the recycled content bill. It pairs with the SB 1180 veto above. Waste Dive: <https://www.wastedive.com/news/california-governor-gavin-newsom-vetoes-ab2253-recycled-content/831481/>

30. Wetlands Protection Narrows After Sackett as WOTUS Rule Remains Unfinished: On November 17, 2025, the EPA and the Army Corps proposed a revised WOTUS rule to apply the Supreme Court's

Sackett decision. The agencies said federal jurisdiction would focus on relatively permanent waters and wetlands that have a continuous surface connection to them. The proposal also adds an exclusion for groundwater. The agencies received more than 220,000 comments. A supplemental notice published September 9, 2026 closed for comment on October 9. The rule is not final. According to a December 2024 Union of Concerned Scientists analysis, 30 million acres of Upper Midwest wetlands are at risk, with potential flood-mitigation losses above \$22 billion a year. That figure is an advocacy group's estimate, not a federal total. Earth Times, Oct 13, 2026: <https://earthtimes.org/how-wetlands-protection-narrowed-after/>

31. Executive Order 14428 Revokes the 2009 Chesapeake Bay Order: Executive Order 14428, signed September 16, 2026, revoked Executive Order 13508, the 2009 order that guided federal coordination on Chesapeake Bay restoration. The new order directs federal agencies to review their support and redirect it to projects with the highest measurable effect on nutrient, phosphorus and sediment runoff. It also says some jurisdictions' stormwater fees burdened residents without clear benefits to the Bay. According to Earth Times, critics worry that coordination and accountability could become less predictable. The order did not cancel Bay restoration work, and as of October 10 the full effects were not yet measurable. Earth Times, Oct 2026: <https://earthtimes.org/executive-order-14428-and-chesapeake-bay/>

32. EPA Atrazine Plan Would Leave 99% of Contaminated Watersheds Polluted, Study Finds: A study led by Nathan Donley of the Center for Biological Diversity, published October 6 in the Journal of Environmental Quality, found that EPA's atrazine plan would bring only 1% of more than 11,000 heavily contaminated watersheds down to levels the agency considers safe for aquatic life. According to the study, atrazine harms aquatic life in 25% of continental U.S. river miles. Donley says about 20% of surface-water drinking intakes draw from those rivers. Hot spots include the Corn Belt, the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the sugarcane country around Lake Okeechobee in Florida. In early October, California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment announced plans to list atrazine as a known carcinogen. EPA is expected to reapprove the pesticide in 2027. It is banned in more than 60 countries. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 6, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/study-epa-atrazine-plan-will-leave-99-of-most-contaminated-waterways-polluted-at-unsafe-levels-2026-10-06/>; Inside Climate News

(Living on Earth interview), Oct 17, 2026: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/17102026/atrazine-carcinogenic-pesticide-found-in-us-rivers/>

33. New Federal Rules Fall Short on West Coast Whale

Entanglements, Group Says: The National Marine Fisheries Service published new rules on October 9 for the West Coast sablefish pot fishery. They require stricter line marking, cap floating line near the surface and let fishers use one vertical line instead of two. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the rules are unlikely to reduce entanglements. Preliminary agency data show 37 humpback whales entangled on the West Coast so far in 2026, the most since 2016, with three months left. Center for Biological Diversity, Oct 9, 2026: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/new-federal-rules-fall-short-on-protecting-west-coast-whales-from-entanglements-2026-10-09/>

34. Investigation Maps the Human and Environmental Cost of

Fishmeal: The Outlaw Ocean Project's "Food for Feed" investigation mapped more than 1,400 fish reduction plants in 64 countries. It documented forced labor, preventable workplace deaths, pollution and fishing violations. Oceana's Chief Scientist, Dr. Katie Matthews, said carnivorous aquaculture is "not feeding the world — it's depleting it." Oceana, Oct 9, 2026: <https://oceana.org/press-releases/new-investigation-exposes-the-human-and-environmental-costs-of-turning-fish-into-feed/>

35. 3M Fights Australia's \$1.4 Billion PFAS Lawsuit: 3M plans to argue that Australia's lawsuit over PFAS "forever chemicals" in its firefighting foam is legally flawed, a court heard October 16. Australia's claim, the largest it has ever brought, seeks more than A\$2 billion (\$1.38 billion) for contamination at 28 military bases. 3M's defence is expected December 11. Reuters, Oct 15, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2026-10-15/3m-to-argue-australias-1-4-billion-forever-chemicals-lawsuit-legally-flawed-court-hears>

36. Corporate Climate Pledges Are Being Rolled Back: The Financial Times reported that Starbucks has revised or abandoned pledges to cut waste and water use in half and is reconsidering a similar emissions goal. Trellis, an environmental consultancy, reported that Walmart cut its emissions in 2025 but postponed target dates for some goals. A July New York Times analysis cited Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Kraft Heinz and ArcelorMittal

for moving the goal posts. BP walked away from its pledges in 2023. U.S. News & World Report, Sept 30, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2026-09-30/corporate-climate-change-pledges-are-shifting-and-evolving>

37. Supreme Court Opens Term With Big Oil's Bid to End Climate

Suits: The U.S. Supreme Court opened its term October 5 with a case in which ExxonMobil and Suncor Energy ask the justices to throw out Boulder, Colorado's climate lawsuit. Boulder's city and county governments want the companies to pay for past and future costs such as infrastructure repairs, emergency management and harms to public health. The Trump administration backs the companies. According to the companies, nearly 60 state and local governments have filed similar suits, and a win for the oil companies could get many of them dismissed. Reuters, Oct 4, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2026-10-04/us-supreme-court-to-kick-off-term-with-bid-by-big-oil-to-toss-climate-suits>

38. Wilderness Society Calls for a Moratorium on AI Data Centers on

Public Lands: The Wilderness Society called for a pause on artificial intelligence data centers on federal lands, citing water use, electricity demand, wildlife habitat and public access. According to federal land records, the Trump administration is considering permits for several data center developments on Bureau of Land Management land. The agency manages about a tenth of America's land. Reuters, Oct 5, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2026-10-05/conservation-group-calls-for-moratorium-on-ai-data-centers-on-us-public-lands>

39. Mining and Oil Concessions Overlap Millions of Hectares of

Protected Tropical Land: Research led by Earth Insight found oil and gas blocks overlap more than 61 million hectares of protected tropical ecosystems, an area nearly the size of France, and mining concessions overlap another 42.7 million. Earth Insight says current pledges would raise protection to 23% by 2030, short of the 30% goal. Most of the concessions have not been licensed yet, so countries could still remove them. The findings came ahead of the UN biodiversity talks (COP17) in Yerevan, Armenia, which Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan opened October 18. Reuters, Oct 8, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2026-10-08/encroaching-energy-mine-concessions-threaten->

[protected-ecosystems-research-shows](#); Armenpress, Oct 18, 2026: <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1263152>

40. Conservation Groups Sue to Stop Blasting of Utah's Gate Canyon: Conservation groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, sued the Bureau of Land Management over its April approval to blast 100-foot cliffs and pave a road for oil trucks through Gate Canyon. According to the lawsuit, the project would destroy at least 47 historic sites, including inscriptions by Black American “Buffalo Soldiers,” and put pressure on nearby Native rock art in Nine Mile Canyon. Reuters, Oct 8, 2026: <https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2026-10-08/us-sued-over-plan-to-blast-utah-canyon-inscribed-by-19th-century-buffalo-soldiers-european-pioneers>

41. Amazon Wetland Loss Equals the Size of Belgium: A new study found more than 6% of the Amazon's floodplain forests and other wetlands have been cleared over 40 years, nearly a third of it between 2015 and 2024. Lead author Guilherme Lobo of Brazil's State University of Campinas said the converted area is “basically the size of Belgium.” Unassigned public land lost the most, with a median of nearly 14% deforested. Indigenous territories lost 0.3% or less, and strictly protected areas under 0.3%. Lobo said what separates the areas that conserve from those that don't is “having rules.” Mongabay, Oct 19, 2026: <https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/10/a-belgium-sized-area-of-amazon-wetland-has-been-converted-and-losses-are-climbing/>

42. Oceana UK Petition Urges the Government to Ban New North Sea Oil and Gas: Oceana UK, an ocean conservation group, is petitioning the Prime Minister through 38 Degrees to keep the government's promise to ban new oil and gas licences in UK seas. According to the petition, there were more than 630 oil and chemical spills in UK seas in 2025, and very little oil and gas remains in the North Sea. It says the fossil fuel lobby is pushing to keep the status quo. 38 Degrees (Oceana UK petition): https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-big-oil-billionaires-polluting-our-seas-for-profit?source=bluesky&utm_medium=socialshare&utm_source=bluesky

43. PFAS Found at 83% of Tested U.S. Lakes, Rivers and Streams: According to an Environment America analysis of federal, state and nonprofit data, PFAS “forever chemicals” were detected at 1,329 of 1,602

surface-water locations tested between 2022 and 2024. As many as 114 different PFAS compounds turned up. The group says the results likely show only the tip of the iceberg, because many waterways are never tested for PFAS. Environment America, Oct 13, 2026: <https://environmentamerica.org/center/resources/pfas-found-in-americas-lakes-and-streams/>

44. Earth.Org Lists 23 Facts About Global Food Waste for World Food Day: For World Food Day, Earth.Org compiled 23 facts about food waste. According to the list, households produced 631 million of the 1.05 billion tons of food wasted in 2022, about 60%. Earth.Org says food loss and waste generate 8% to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, almost five times the total from aviation, while an estimated 735 million people go hungry. It also says an area larger than China and 25% of the world's freshwater are used to grow food that is never eaten. Earth.Org, Oct 16, 2026: <https://earth.org/facts-about-food-waste>

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