

# National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

## Quarterly Impact Report: June 2026

### Overview

Spring 2026 was a season of immense momentum for NCEL. Through targeted state visits, resource development, and peer convenings, we continued to serve as a trusted partner for legislators navigating a fast-moving policy landscape. High-impact milestones included the release of our new [Energy Affordability Briefing Book](#), events such as the [State Plastic Policy Workshop](#), and a timely [member-led comment letter](#) to the federal government. As legislative sessions draw to a close, NCEL is shifting focus to a highly active event season, starting with the [2026 National Forum](#) in late July, with over 200 state lawmakers expected to attend, followed by our most robust schedule of fall events ever.

### Events

**State Visits:** From April to June, NCEL staff traveled to four state capitols — Louisiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Alaska — to meet with state legislators and discuss their environmental policy priorities.

**Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) Annual Conference:** NCEL collaborated with [NAP](#) on a conference session in April, featuring state government leaders and partners in Native-led philanthropy, to highlight how states and Tribal Nations can work together to protect watersheds and drinking water for all communities.

**2026 State Plastic Policy Workshop:** On April 28, NCEL and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) co-hosted the State Plastic Policy Workshop in Washington, D.C., for lawmakers from three distinct regions to explore system-wide solutions to plastic pollution, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Systems (DRS). [Learn more.](#)

**Indigenous Led Buffalo Beyond Borders:** In April, NCEL staff presented at the [Buffalo Beyond Borders](#) convening to share a variety of state policy examples where legislation has laid the groundwork for buffalo reintegration.

**Youth Outdoor Policy Partnership:** On May 11, NCEL and partners from the Youth Outdoor Policy Partnership (YOPP) hosted a webinar to explore the latest policy innovations shaping equitable youth outdoor access. The webinar — which included 49 registered attendees from both state legislatures and outdoor industries — built on findings from the newly released 2025 Youth Outdoor Policy Trends Report. To help inform and inspire key stakeholders, the report summarizes the latest policy trends and innovations aimed at increasing equitable youth outdoor opportunities. [Read the full report.](#)

**Capitol Hill Ocean Week & Upwell:** In June, NCEL staff attended Capitol Hill Ocean Week and Upwell in Washington, D.C., to engage with federal agencies, national conservation partners, and philanthropic funders on ocean and coastal priorities. Staff also supported NCEL members from Puerto Rico and Connecticut as they took part in panels on ocean conservation.



The photos above were taken during NCEL events in the second quarter of 2026.



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**Lake Pepin River Tour:** On June 10, legislators from Minnesota and Wisconsin participated in NCEL's annual Mississippi River Legislative Caucus (MRLC) River Tour, as part of the [River Days of Action](#). During the tour, legislators learned about the issues impacting Lake Pepin — the largest lake on the Mississippi River — and how Minnesota and Wisconsin state agencies are collaborating with federal, Tribal, and local partners on restoration projects.

**PJM Legislator Convening:** In June, NCEL convened legislators from six states in the PJM region to meet with PJM's President to discuss pressing issues impacting costs, reliability, and decarbonization. The meeting allowed lawmakers to share the perspectives of their constituents and collaborate with PJM leadership on possible solutions.

**Southeast Outdoor Opportunity Summit:** In June, NCEL convened legislators and practitioners from three states for the Southeast Outdoor Opportunity Summit hosted in North Carolina. Attendees explored the role of the outdoor industry in supporting local businesses and sustainable tourism, as well as the Southeast states' emerging leadership on outdoor policy solutions. Participants came away with tools for accessing federal funding for outdoor opportunity programming, as well as policy options for fostering economic growth and cultural heritage conservation.

**Washington Blue Economy Tour:** In June, NCEL hosted its second Blue Economy Tour in Washington State, with a focus on marine innovation, port decarbonization, workforce development, and sustainable ocean management. Legislators from 10 states took part in a range of site visits, including the Port of Seattle, Maritime Blue, Tidal Vision, and Taylor Shellfish. The tour concluded with a policy workshop where attendees walked away with concrete policy options to advance the sustainable Blue Economy in their states and regions.

**NCEL Webinars:** Throughout the second quarter of 2026, NCEL staff hosted webinars on a range of policy issue areas important to states, such as wildfire impacts, climate risk, and youth outdoor engagement.

## Network Engagement

**NEW Resilient Communities and Environmental Justice Working Group:** On June 11, NCEL launched a new Working Group in partnership with [WE ACT for Environmental Justice](#) and the [Sustain Our Future Foundation](#). This new Working Group will provide lawmakers with opportunities to learn and collaborate towards reducing environmental injustices and building resilience at the neighborhood, regional, and statewide levels. The Working Group kick-off garnered interest from 25 legislators and staffers across 16 states.

**Clean Air Act Sign-On Letter:** In response to the U.S. EPA's proposal to weaken federal Clean Air Act protections for pyrolysis — a type of “chemical recycling” for plastics — NCEL engaged 119 state legislators across 30 states to jointly sign a comment letter to

the federal government requesting that the protections be upheld. [Read the letter.](#)

## Policy Movement

**Bill Tracking:** NCEL is actively [tracking](#) over 2,500 bills in 45 states and territories.

**Policy Updates:** As states advanced legislation to protect the natural and human environment, NCEL staff published updates on emerging policy trends, such as [state transmission authorities](#), [wildlife conservation funding](#), [endangered species protections](#), and outdoor [recreation](#) and [stewardship](#) funding.

## Resources

**Energy Affordability Briefing Book:** NCEL's new [Energy Affordability Briefing Book](#) equips legislators with actionable policy options to both lower costs in the near term and advance a resilient clean energy future. A forthcoming companion Messaging Toolkit will provide legislators with effective messaging strategies for these clean energy and affordability policies.

**New Fact Sheets & Other Resources:** NCEL continued to produce timely and actionable resources for state legislators on a range of topics, including [Data Centers](#), [Private Pest Control](#), the [Blue Economy](#), [Nature-Based Solutions](#), [Nutrient Pollution](#), [Soil Health](#), [Agrivoltaics](#), [Renewable Energy Messaging](#), and more.

**Recent Blogs:** As federal climate and energy policy continues to shift, NCEL published blogs on emerging state policy solutions such as [Indirect Source Rules for vehicle emissions](#) and [Virginia's major policy progress on energy affordability](#).

## NCEL in the News

- **CleanTechnica:** “[How States Are Powering America's Clean Energy Future](#)”
- **Public News Service:** “[Ohio bills pave way for 'plug-in' solar panels in rentals](#)”
- **Latitude Media:** “[The rise of the state transmission authority](#)”
- **Alaska Beacon:** “[Alaska lawmakers approve ban on polystyrene foam food containers](#)”
- **Canary Media:** “[New York state gives up on its most ambitious climate targets](#)”
- **ECIKS:** “[Insurance industry navigates AI adoption and climate risks in 2026](#)”

