



National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

# Quarterly Impact Report: December 2025

## Overview

The final few months of 2025 at NCEL focused on hosting regional events, building new partnerships, and assisting legislators in preparing for legislative sessions. A comprehensive overview of NCEL's 2025 offerings and impact is now available in the [2025 Year in Review](#), and the Q4 2025 highlights can be found below.

## Events

**Environmental Leadership Accelerator:** This fall, NCEL launched the [Environmental Leadership Accelerator](#) program — two virtual courses for select groups of lawmakers to build policy expertise in transportation decarbonization and climate risk management.

**Mississippi River Legislative Caucus Forum (New Orleans, LA):** From October 2–4, 12 state legislators convened in New Orleans for NCEL's [2025 Mississippi River Legislative Caucus \(MRLC\) Forum](#). The event brought together lawmakers from across the ten-state Mississippi River corridor, along with experts from national and regional organizations, to explore shared challenges and opportunities for the watershed.

**New England Blue Economy Tour (RI, MA, ME):** This October, over 20 state legislators and staffers from nine states joined NCEL for a [three-day tour across New England](#), exploring innovations and policy solutions within the growing [Blue Economy](#) sector. Through expert panels and hands-on site visits, participants explored solutions related to working waterfronts, offshore wind infrastructure, climate resilience, and sustainable aquaculture.

**Building the Grid of the Future (Salt Lake City, UT):** In late October, legislators from eight Western states gathered in Salt

Lake City, Utah, for the latest installment of [NCEL's Building the Grid of the Future](#) regional event series. Through expert-led sessions and hands-on tours over three days, participants explored emerging technologies, rising energy demand, and policy solutions to strengthen the region's electric grid.



*The photos above were taken during NCEL events in the fourth quarter of 2025.*



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**Plastics Learning Summit (Chicago, IL):** From November 12–14, 24 legislators and staffers from 16 states gathered in Chicago, Illinois, for [NCEL's Plastics Learning Summit](#). Through a variety of panels and interactive tours, participants took a deep dive into the range of policy solutions to address the entire lifecycle of plastics.

**Bay Area Electrification Tour (CA):** In early December, the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) and the Electric Innovation Initiative (EII) convened state and local lawmakers from 18 states in California for the [Bay Area Electrification Tour](#). Participants took part in policy discussions and cutting-edge site visits that showcased how electrification lowers costs, strengthens reliability, and accelerates decarbonization.

**Hawaii Clean Energy Policy Workshop (HI):** From December 8-11, NCEL and Blue Planet Foundation hosted a select cohort of state lawmakers working toward a 100% renewable energy future to learn from local experts and leaders across sectors in Hawaii — the first state to pass laws targeting 100% clean energy.

## Policy Movement & Federal Response

**Policy Updates:** NCEL staff published a new policy update on a 2020 bill from Puerto Rico with increasing relevance for states looking to boost coastal protection and resilience: [Puerto Rico Set National Precedent By Declaring Coral Reefs Essential Infrastructure](#).

**Sign-On Letters:** Federal Water Protections & Endangered Species: On December 22, NCEL members from across the country submitted bipartisan letters to federal agencies in response to proposed rollbacks to [federal waterway protections](#) (signed by 100+ members from 29 states and territories) and the [Endangered Species Act](#) (signed by 190+ members from 34 states and territories).

## Resources

**The Blue Economy and Regional Partnerships Issue Brief & Briefing Book:** The NCEL team published two new resources — a two-page [Issue Brief](#) and a comprehensive [Briefing Book](#) — which provide an overview of the sustainable Blue Economy, how states are expanding the sector and working waterfronts, and examples of regional partnerships to drive impact.

**New Articles:** As states prepare for legislative sessions following a year of federal rollbacks and rising electricity prices, NCEL staff published articles for lawmakers to gain new perspectives and potential solutions related to [advancing public lands protections](#), [accelerating renewable buildout for federal tax credits](#), and [expediting transmission network upgrades](#).

## Partnerships

**International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Conservation Congress:** In early October, NCEL attended the [IUCN World Conservation Congress](#) in Abu Dhabi, where state legislators joined other conservation leaders to share successes and help shape global conservation priorities. NCEL's panel consisted of speakers from three states and showcased how states have become global leaders in efforts to conserve nature.

**Webinar with EWG - Food Chemical Safety and State Leadership:** On November 10, NCEL [hosted a webinar in partnership with the Environmental Working Group \(EWG\)](#) to spotlight how states are stepping up with bipartisan



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solutions to protect the public against harmful chemicals in food and food packaging.

**Model Climate Laws Initiative (MCLI):** In December, NCEL formed an official partnership with the [Model Climate Laws Initiative](#) to collaborate on efforts that provide legislators with climate-focused educational opportunities. The partnership kicked off with a joint webinar providing state lawmakers with updates on the status of federal climate lawsuits and opportunities for continuing to pursue climate policies.

## Media Hits

- **Bloomberg:** [States Struggle to Echo Vermont, New York Climate Superfund Laws](#)
- **Context:** [US states take up conservation goals axed by Trump](#)
- **Latitude Media:** [State lawmakers stand between ratepayers and data center costs](#)
- **Moneywise:** [AI's data center boom is raising power costs as demand surges nationwide and grids expand](#)
- **The Cool Down:** [US officials make extraordinary change to hunting laws: 'Long overdue'](#)
- **Utah News Dispatch:** [Thirsty data centers would have to report water use under Utah bill](#)



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