

Quarterly Impact Report: July - September 2024

Overview

Following the National Forum in August, NCEL staff were busy hosting regional events and tours as legislators prepare for the 2025 legislative session. NCEL also released new resources and facilitated federal engagement opportunities.

Events

Building the Grid of the Future: On September 12-14, legislators from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia convened in Charleston, South Carolina, to discuss regional transmission goals and how to build the grid of the future. The convening brought together a bipartisan group of 20 legislators and 3 legislative staffers. [View the Highlights](#)

2024 Mississippi River Legislative Caucus (MRLC) Forum: On September 28-28, legislators from across the Mississippi River Basin gathered in Minneapolis, Minnesota to collaborate on the most pressing issues facing the watershed. Sixteen legislators from seven states attended and left with knowledge on promoting the vital river's health. [View the Highlights](#)

New York Climate Week 2024: NCEL hosted a state policy happy hour in partnership with Climate Cabinet, Data for Progress, Evergreen Action, and WRI. The event had over 200 attendees and included remarks from speakers such as Ali Zaidi, MI Rep. Abraham Aiyash, Keishaa Austin, Basil Seggos, and Kara Cook.

Ocean Plastics Leadership Network - 2024 Northeast Technical Expedition: On September 10-13, legislators gathered for a three-day trip traveling from Maine to Quebec. Ten legislators and staffers from nine states gained insights into recycling and material management while learning about best practices for extended producer responsibility (EPR) and deposit return system (DRS) policies.



Federal Engagement

National Ocean Biodiversity Webinar: On September 6, NCEL hosted a webinar on The Role of States in Advancing a National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy, featuring discussion from two of the lead writers of the Strategy, Gabrielle Canonico and Emmett Duffy, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Thomas O'Shea, and Florida State Representative Lindsay Cross. [Learn More](#)

Conserving Ocean Life – Insights from State Managers on the National Ocean Strategy: On September 26, the Pew Lenfest Ocean Program hosted a panel featuring state and regional managers and legislators focused on the partnerships and strategies needed to implement the National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy. Panelists shared insights into their ongoing efforts to protect marine biodiversity and connect their work to the Strategy. NCEL Executive Director Dylan McDowell provided information on state actions and opportunities for federal collaboration. [Watch the Event](#)

National Old Growth Amendment Sign-On Letter: In partnership with Environment America and the Wilderness Society, Oregon State Senator Jeff Golden led a sign-on letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in support of changes to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to ensure that the final National Old Growth Amendment (NOGA) is able to deliver on its promises for climate mitigation. Legislators from 36 states signed. [Read More](#)

Resources

Session Recap: Each year, NCEL staff produces a Legislative Session Recap showcasing trends and milestones in state-level environmental policy from that year. Check out the [2024 Legislative Session Recap](#).

Outdoors as a Health Solution: [This resource](#) examines the human health benefits of time outdoors and the policy options for states in the following categories: One Health, mental health, physical health, safety, jobs, neighborhoods, childhoods, learning, and schoolyards.

Climate Finance Briefing Book: [This resource](#) provides more information and policy options for various aspects of climate finance policy including: understanding climate financial risks, state attacks and opportunities on climate finance, specific policy levers to address climate financial risks, and Arizona's success in fighting off anti-ESG legislation.

National Forum

On August 1-3, over 115 state legislators from 37 states and territories convened for [NCEL's 2024 National Forum](#) in Louisville, Kentucky to learn about and discuss environmental policy solutions with other state leaders.

- **Topics included:** transmission, PFAS, biodiversity, market-based climate and energy solutions, reducing microplastics, land conservation, climate risk in financial decision-making, wetlands, pesticides, and more.
- **Keynote:** Juan D. Martinez Pineda, National Geographic Explorer and founder of Fresh Tracks at The Aspen Institute, spoke about the healing benefits of time in nature, the importance of community-led solutions, and opportunities to authentically engage impacted communities in public land stewardship.
- **Bridging the State/Federal Gap:** Attendees heard from Mary Frances Repko, the White House's Deputy Climate Advisor, on how states and the federal government can work together more efficiently on environmental solutions.
- **New Partnership with University of Hawai'i:** NCEL and UH announced a new partnership and memorandum of agreement to provide state legislators with environmental research expertise. Science-based decision-making is more important than ever. This partnership will expand NCEL's access to vital research so that state legislators can develop evidence-based best practices and new policy solutions. [Learn More](#)

