We relaunched Environment Texas’ door-to-door canvassing offices in June, with a full set of health precautions in place to keep our staff and members of the public safe.

Our staff are visiting neighborhoods across Austin to build support for action to reduce the water pollution contributing to the fecal bacteria in our creeks and the toxic algae blooms in our lakes, which have killed seven dogs.

I’m excited to share our plans with you and let you know how you can add your voice to this grassroots movement.

**Canvassing is in our DNA**

Fifty years ago, water pollution ran virtually unchecked, putting Canvassing—going door-to-door—has been a core part of our work at Environment Texas since the beginning. We canvass to educate the public about the problems facing our environment, build grassroots support for solutions and raise money to fund our campaigns.

Many of our senior staff got their start working on the canvass or helped direct one of our canvassing offices early in their careers. I remember showing up on my first day as a canvass director of our Austin office back in 2001.

When I walked in the front door of the office, it was practically empty—with blank walls and no canvassers in sight. Within just a few weeks, we had hired dozens of staff to work with us, and by the end of the summer, we had recruited thousands of people to join our campaign.

I ultimately worked on our canvass for five summers and became director of Environment Texas in 2006.

One of the biggest reasons we’re excited to relaunch our canvass is to recruit the next generation of young people to join the environmental movement. This summer, we’ve helped college students and recent graduates develop a passion for social change, and maybe even launch a career working to protect our air, water and climate.

Continued on page 3
59,000 supporters, 40 lawmakers tell Whole Foods to put ‘planet over plastic’

A massive environmental crisis requires a massive call to action.

That’s why our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with our friends at U.S. PIRG Education Fund and the Student PIRGs, delivered a letter to Whole Foods on May 6, 2021—signed by nearly 60,000 supporters, including 40 state lawmakers—calling on the grocer to phase out single-use plastic packaging in its stores. Once an environmental leader that stopped providing plastic bags to its customers at checkout in 2008, Whole Foods recently earned an “F” for its plastic policies in a report by environmental group As You Sow.

“Nothing we use for just a few minutes should pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years,” said Kelsey Lamp, Protect Our Oceans campaign director for Environment America Research & Policy Center, our national research partners. “That's why the companies that rely on single-use plastic to package their products must adopt more sustainable packaging options or eliminate single-use plastic packaging altogether.”

“Change is possible, and Whole Foods should lead the way to a future where we put the planet over plastic.”

Federal judge once again imposes penalty on Exxon for thousands of Clean Air Act violations

You can call it deja vu; we call it another win for clean air.

In March, a federal judge once again decided to assess a penalty on ExxonMobil Corporation for violating the Clean Air Act thousands of times over eight years at its refinery and chemical plant complex in Baytown, Texas. The $14.25 million penalty was handed down after Exxon lost its appeal of the original penalty, imposed after a lawsuit brought by Environment Texas and Sierra Club's Lone Star chapter.

“Exxon has been fighting this case for 11 years now, refusing to take any responsibility for spewing millions of pounds of illegal pollution into Texas communities,” said Luke Metzger, executive director of Environment Texas. “We call on Exxon to finally stop its scorched-earth litigation tactics, pay its penalty and drop these endless appeals.”

This penalty, like the first, is larger than any penalty ever imposed in a Clean Air Act citizen enforcement suit.

Report: After years of advancement in clean energy technology, it’s clear that ‘We Have The Power’

It’s time for Texas to move beyond fossil fuels—and fortunately, we have the power to realize our clean, renewable energy potential.

That was the finding of the “We Have The Power” report, released in June by our national research partner, Environment America Research & Policy Center. According to the report, America has the technical potential to meet all its electricity needs many times over with wind and solar energy.

“To a visitor from an earlier century, America in 2021 would be unimaginably advanced in all ways but one: We still rely on dirty and dangerous fossil fuels to meet our energy needs,” said Susan Rakov, chair of Environment America Research & Policy Center's Clean Energy program.

“But it doesn’t have to be that way. This report shows that between the sunshine and the wind, we have the potential to run our society on clean energy, today and in the future.”

Get more updates on our work online at http://environmenttexas.org.
How we’ll win cleaner water

Our goal is to convince the Austin City Council to reduce water pollution by requiring nature-based infrastructure in new developments.

One major source of pollution is stormwater runoff. As we pave over more of the city, rain can’t soak into the ground. Instead it rushes along the concrete, picking up dog waste, fertilizer and other pollutants and pushing it all into creeks and lakes.

Nature-based infrastructure, including rain gardens and green roofs, allows rainwater to soak into the ground, slowing it down and filtering out pollution.

City staff have proposed changes to require nature-based infrastructure on commercial properties, close loopholes that allow pollution, and reduce water-polluting sprawl by encouraging infill development (developing vacant or under-used areas in cities instead of developing wild, untouched lands). These would be huge steps toward cleaner water.

The issue is not currently a City Council priority—but we need to convince lawmakers to take up and implement the proposals.

That’s why we’re going door-to-door across Austin. We’re reaching thousands of households and collecting petition signatures to build the support we need to convince our lawmakers to act on clean water. Let’s build a more natural Austin and guarantee healthy waters for our families, pets and wildlife.

By Luke Metzger, Environment Texas executive director

---

Environment Texas State Director Luke Metzger spoke to Texans about the threats to our communities that lie just below the surface.
Over 47,000 supporters tell Amazon: Stop selling bee-killing pesticides

To save the bees, our staff have asked the world’s largest online retailer to stop selling the pesticides that kill them. And we’re not alone.

By August, campaigners with our network had collected more than 47,000 petition signatures online and in 10 communities across the country.

“We need to reduce the use of this pesticide that’s contributing to the collapse of our most important pollinators,” said Malia Libby, our national Save the Bees campaign associate. “Amazon should join other retailers in doing the right thing and taking it off its shelves.”

Our ask is far from unprecedented: The Home Depot and Lowe’s have already pledged to phase out the use of neonics on their live plants, and Lowe’s has committed to taking the pesticides off its shelves altogether.

Our national network’s summer canvassers talked to tens of thousands of people across the country about our campaign to get Amazon to stop the sale of bee-killing pesticides.