



SUMMER 2021

IMPACT REPORT

Over the past decade, our staff and volunteers have fought a number of uphill battles that often seemed unwinnable. As we faced down dirty pipelines, coal facilities, and difficult elections, we were told again and again that we didn't stand a chance. We kept going anyway. And this year, we're reaping the rewards.

In January, after recruiting a record number of volunteers to defeat Donald Trump, Sierra Club Independent Action (SCIA) pivoted to working on the Georgia Senate runoffs — a red state race that many thought couldn't be won. Across the country, SCIA volunteers made millions of phone calls and stayed up late writing heartfelt letters to voters. Every single hour of volunteer time we contributed helped inch Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock over the finish line — and moved us closer to securing the bold climate action we need.

In June, we celebrated one of the biggest victories in recent memory, when the Keystone XL pipeline was finally canceled. Shortly after, we got word that the Millennium coal export terminal in Washington would not be built — ending our decade-long campaign against an export network that would have been disastrous for our climate.

These wins offer a stunning illustration of the strength of our movement — and it couldn't come at a better time. Right now we urgently need to protect voting rights and secure federal legislation that prioritizes climate and justice. We're ready. Our staff and volunteers are preparing to unleash the full force of the people power that delivered historic wins like Keystone XL.

These victories are only possible because of you. Your donations to Sierra Club Independent Action in 2020 helped us win the White House and send climate champions in Congress. Now your Sierra Club 501(c)4 donations are giving us a chance to seize this opportunity and pass historic climate legislation. And your Sierra Club 501(c)3 donations allow our legal team and organizers to take on polluters year after year.

Thank you for continuing to believe in us through our long, hard fights. It makes all the difference.

Ramón Cruz
Sierra Club President



“The end of Keystone XL is a testament to what we can accomplish when we come together with the shared goal of protecting our communities, our clean water, and the climate. This is a major victory for our movement, and it won’t be the last.” -Michael Brune



Photo: Javier Sierra

ACTIVISTS WIN 13-YEAR BATTLE AGAINST TOXIC KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

In June, our thirteen-year fight against the Keystone XL pipeline came to an end when TC Energy announced that it had terminated the project. The decision came after years of escalating pressure from the Sierra Club, along with a broad coalition of Tribes, landowners, and communities. The toxic pipeline would have carried 830,000 gallons per day of the dirtiest oil on the planet from the Alberta tar sands through Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska — threatening farmland, water, and wildlife habitat along the way. Sierra Club’s lawyers, media strategists, community organizers, corporate campaigners and other staff have worked diligently to undermine the project since it was first proposed.

The pipeline quickly became a defining symbol of climate change, and our activists did not rest. They marched, they protested, they got arrested. They went to Capitol Hill, they went to the White House, they went to the big banks. And they went to court, again and again. When Trump took office and fast-tracked the project, Sierra Club lawyers notched critical injunctions that held off construction for four years.

The demise of the project marks an important turning point in our fight against climate change. Thanks to relentless activism, more and more companies are beginning to see that investing in expanded fossil fuel infrastructure doesn’t make sense.

A TURNING POINT IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST COAL EXPORTS

For the past decade, the Sierra Club has fought to stop the coal industry from building a network of seven export terminals in the Pacific Northwest. Together, the terminals would have shipped more than 100 million tons of coal per year, greatly exacerbating the climate crisis. In July, the Supreme Court put the final nail in the coffin for the proposed Millennium Coal Terminal in Longview, Washington — the last of the terminals targeted by our regional campaign. The court's decision concludes years of work by our staff and volunteers, along with Tribes and community leaders.

The Sierra Club first launched this campaign after it became clear that the last dying hope of the coal industry was to export its dirty product overseas. From the beginning, our Environmental Law Program played an essential role in designing the strategy, focusing not only on stopping coal exports from the West Coast, but blocking mining on Western public lands that would have fed the terminals.

“When the Sierra Club and allies first got involved with this effort a decade ago, politicians, community leaders, and others told us that resistance was futile. They said we should focus our efforts elsewhere. Nevertheless, we persisted – and none of the planned coal export terminals were ever built. These victories exemplify the ways that we can get anything done when we are working together at our best: with powerful coalition work, creative organizing, volunteer leadership, and courageous grit in the face of odds that seemed overwhelming.” -**Ross Macfarlane, Sierra Club Board Vice President**

Our team fought every single proposed export terminal and worked across multiple states on connected mines and ports. The result was a unified and powerful movement that spanned the entire Pacific Northwest region. The campaign built a diverse coalition and was careful to keep communities at the center of the work; they consistently elevated the stories and power of the people who would have suffered from the trains, ships, and coal dust associated with coal exports. We've emerged stronger as a result of the effort: The highly skilled network of staff, volunteers, and partners we built through the fight are now taking on other fossil fuel projects, including coal export terminals in Northern California and a massive expansion of gas exports in the Gulf South.



A NEW ERA FOR PUBLIC LANDS

One of the biggest lands victories in recent memory came in March, when Deb Haaland was confirmed as Interior Secretary. Sierra Club's Our Wild America campaign lobbied and organized for months to push for Haaland's confirmation, generating tens of thousands of letters to Congress. Haaland is the first Native American cabinet secretary in history and now helms the agency that for years was used as a brutal tool of oppression against Native people.

In May, Haaland took a big step in addressing inequitable access to the outdoors by committing \$150 million in funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership, a program that directs resources to parks and greenspace projects in cities and historically underserved communities. The Sierra Club's Outdoors for All campaign advocated for

expansion of the program, which was eliminated by the Trump administration in its waning days in office. The new commitment marks an enormous victory in our effort to ensure that everyone has access to the healing power of nature.

Meanwhile, in February the U.S. House of Representatives passed a legislative package that will safeguard 2.7 million acres of wilderness and wild and scenic rivers. The package expands access to nature and supports Indigenous communities and local economies. Our chapters in places like Washington, Colorado, and California helped draft and shape key bills in the package and mobilized constituents to voice their support. Our lobbying team in Washington, D.C. secured champions and votes in the House, and have now pivoted to making sure the package passes in the Senate.

PROGRESS ON CLEAN CARS, FRACKED GAS, AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE TARGETS

At the International Climate Leaders Summit in April, the Biden administration formally committed our country to emissions targets that represent a giant leap forward in the fight against climate change. Our International Climate and Policy Campaign advocated fiercely for the ambitious goals adopted by Biden. The new US Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the Paris climate agreement will cut emissions 50 to 52 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2030. The Sierra Club's advocacy over the past decade has helped set our country on a path to meet these targets: We've retired nearly 350 coal plants, blocked risky pipelines, transitioned cities to 100 percent clean energy, and protected millions of acres of carbon-storing forests and grasslands.

We celebrated another landmark climate victory in April, when the Biden administration returned states' authority to regulate tailpipe emissions, reversing

one of the Trump administration's most egregious attacks on climate policy. The Sierra Club and Earthjustice took Trump's EPA to court for revoking California's Clean Air Act waiver, which allowed the golden state (and others) to take aggressive action on climate pollution from cars. By restoring the California waiver, the Biden administration addressed one of the biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions; our team is now working to secure policies that accelerate the adoption of zero emission vehicles.

Our Dirty Fuels team earned another stunning victory in June, when Northwest Innovation Works abandoned its plan for a dangerous fracked gas refinery and pipeline project in Kalama, Washington. The decision follows years of advocacy by the Sierra Club and its partners, including a series of legal challenges that resulted in state and federal rejections of permits for the project.