

Breakthroughs

Please join us in celebrating
our 2019 achievements, which
you helped make possible.

Thank you.

Protect and defend



A worldwide call for action

In 2019, young people around the world spilled into the streets, demanding action to protect the planet and their future. Inspired by Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish activist, a new generation of activists is working to create the pressure needed to force leaders to act. EDF is helping to amplify these voices and shift the ground on climate action. Members of Defend Our Future, EDF's project to mobilize millennials, joined climate strikes across the U.S., urging students and other young people to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill. Moms Clean Air Force members met with lawmakers in all 50 states, demanding the protection of their children's health and future. There are other signs of momentum. Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have introduced bills to curb climate pollution and invest in clean energy innovation. And in May, a group of CEOs representing some of the world's largest companies, including BP, Ford Motor Company and Citi, publicly announced their support for effective climate policy. EDF helped catalyze the CEO Dialogue, whose voices are critical in the worldwide call for action.



Challenging weak limits on coal-fired power plants

In June, the Trump administration finalized its repeal of the Clean Power Plan, which set the nation's first-ever limits on climate pollution from coal plants. The original plan, released in 2015, was projected to save up to 4,500 lives per year and reduce climate pollution by over 400 million tons per year by 2030; the administration's plan sets no specific limits to reduce pollution, and would actually cause pollution to increase. In August, EDF and many allies, including 22 states and six cities, sued the administration. The outcome of this litigation will impact the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority to address climate pollution from uncontrolled industrial sources for generations to come. EDF is also opposing a separate threat to longstanding clean air standards limiting mercury, arsenic, acid gases and other air toxics from coal-fired plants.



Defending chemical reform to protect public health

EDF is working to ensure a consistent, science-based approach to enacting the landmark Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act, while opposing the Trump administration's efforts to undermine the law. In April, a federal court ruled in EDF's favor in our lawsuit arguing that EPA broke the law by crafting a rule that would conceal important information about the identities of chemicals in our homes, schools and workplaces. As a result of our lawsuit, EPA will now require significantly more evidence from companies about the identities of chemicals they make and sell.



An unprecedented battle over cleaner cars in the U.S.

In July, four of the world's largest automakers announced a plan to build cleaner, lower-polluting vehicles under California's climate-protecting emissions standards. California's rules for cleaner cars lead the nation and have been adopted by 13 other states, including most recently Colorado, which took action with EDF's help. Weeks after automakers announced their plan, the Trump administration moved to revoke California's standards. EDF and allies have strongly defended both federal clean car standards and California's right, under the Clean Air Act, to issue stronger rules. In September, EDF and a coalition of 23 states and allies filed a lawsuit challenging the administration's threat to California's longstanding bipartisan authority.

A satellite with large solar panels and a circular instrument bay is shown in space, orbiting Earth. The Earth's surface is visible below, showing green land and blue oceans. The background is a starry space.

Moving forward on climate action

The global campaign against methane pollution

EDF's science and advocacy are helping to elevate methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, as a priority in the global fight against climate change. In 2019, EDF and BP announced a partnership to advance new technologies to reduce methane emissions from the global oil and gas supply chain. This effort has the potential to inspire the entire industry to follow suit. In China, the government announced this year it is supporting a new EDF initiative that will provide the technical support needed to craft strong emissions reduction policies. Our affiliate, MethaneSAT, LLC, also made strong progress in developing a purpose-built satellite to measure and detect global oil and gas emissions. The satellite will be critical to meeting EDF's goal to reduce oil and gas emissions 45% by 2025. Ball Aerospace, a leader in the space industry, has agreed to design and build the advanced sensing instrument that is the key component of the MethaneSAT satellite, which is scheduled to launch in 2022. In the U.S., we remain vigilant in our defense of important federal methane rules under attack by the Trump administration while making progress in key oil and gas producing states, such as New Mexico and Pennsylvania. We are also working to ensure strong implementation of oil and gas regulations in Mexico and Canada.



Helping airlines solve the climate crisis

Aviation is one of the fastest-growing sources of carbon pollution, but CORSIA—a market-based measure to cap the net carbon dioxide emissions of international flights at 2020 levels—could help airlines become part of the climate solution. EDF is committed to ensuring that an effective, transparent CORSIA goes into effect in 2021. If successful, CORSIA could spur 2.5 to 3 billion tons of emissions reductions, provide valuable insight for near-term action in other sectors, such as shipping, and drive significant investment into low-carbon fuels and technologies. As an important step, we forged a partnership with United Airlines this year to support its emissions reduction goals, including by identifying high-quality, sustainable alternative fuels and environmentally sound credits to meet CORSIA obligations.



New York City passes a historic bill to fix transit

In April, New York became the first city in the U.S. to adopt congestion pricing, serving as a model for other cities and states seeking to reduce traffic, lower harmful air pollution, and invest in a cleaner, more modern, low-carbon transit system. Because transportation is one of New York's biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, the plan is essential to achieving the state's ambitious goal to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. EDF helped win this victory by working with stakeholders from grassroots groups to the governor. We persuaded frustrated subway commuters to call their representatives, worked behind the scenes to bring state legislators on board, and elevated the voices of small business owners as well as partners in the environmental justice, finance and labor communities.



China prepares to launch national carbon trading system

As China prepares to launch its national carbon emissions trading system—which will eventually be the largest in the world—EDF is helping to ensure that reducing climate pollution is a priority for China's leaders. This year, we helped China prepare a national test run of carbon trading in its power sector, an important last step before the national emissions trading system goes live in 2020. More than 1,700 large power companies are expected to participate in the market. EDF is providing technical support for implementing the system in its start-up phase and after the launch. The research is helping to build confidence and support for the trading system, which will play a key role in limiting greenhouse gases.



Protecting our communities and resources

Using cutting-edge technology to improve air quality and health

Worldwide, air pollution is responsible for as many as 5 million premature deaths each year from heart attacks, diabetes and respiratory diseases. EDF is creating an innovative, scalable approach to addressing local air quality by using sensors to measure, map and pinpoint air pollution. This year, we released a new guide that gives local leaders a blueprint to assess their city's local air pollution so they can develop targeted solutions. The guide draws from EDF's groundbreaking work in Oakland (CA), Houston and London.

Our findings in Oakland, where we initiated this effort, are informing a community-driven air pollution reduction plan. In Houston, city officials announced a new toxic alert system for detecting high concentrations of benzene, including during disaster events. This tool was developed in response to EDF's monitoring work during Hurricane Harvey. In London, we launched Breathe London, which collects air pollution data from sensors placed in student backpacks, Google Street View cars (*photo at left*), lampposts and buildings. Data from the sensors confirmed that the city's air pollution is dangerously unhealthy.



A breakthrough for conserving water in the West

After years of negotiations, the seven states that draw water from the Colorado River Basin agreed to a far-reaching plan that will conserve water and stave off a water crisis. The Drought Contingency Plan uses water trading and other EDF priorities to bolster a Colorado River system that supports the region's cities, farms, ranches, industry, tribal communities, wildlife and recreation. In Arizona, which faced the largest water allocation cuts of the states, EDF played an instrumental role in getting the agreement across the finish line by working with the state's legislature and governor. Congress approved the plan, and President Trump signed the bill that sets the plan in motion.



Building a resilient energy system in Puerto Rico

Two years ago, Hurricane Maria severely damaged Puerto Rico's infrastructure, leading to the deaths of nearly 3,000 people. With the frequency and severity of storms expected to increase as the climate warms, EDF is helping create a more resilient Puerto Rico by building low-carbon microgrids that will help protect the island, improve the lives of its residents and strengthen its economy. EDF is collaborating with local communities and coordinating with academic institutions, technical specialists and financial experts to not only support long-term solutions to Puerto Rico's energy crisis, but also make Puerto Rico a model of innovation and resilience for areas vulnerable to climate change.



Japan passes the most sweeping reform to fishing law in 70 years

For the first time in decades, Japan is significantly reforming its fishing policy, potentially opening the door to sustainable fishing for the entire Asia-Pacific region, where most of the world's fish is caught and consumed. Japan's new fishing policy reflects scientific and policy recommendations that EDF developed with partners in Japan. We are working now to build support for new fishing measures and put them into practice on the water. Research we published with partners at Japanese universities suggests that Japan's fishing fleets could generate an additional \$5.5 billion (USD) in annual profits while supporting a 30% increase in fish in Japan's waters by 2065. The change depends on adopting policies that promote conservation and involve fishing communities in protecting the resources that sustain them.



Moving toward a 100% clean future

Extreme weather and increased political pressure are starting to create bipartisan momentum for climate action on Capitol Hill. This fall, dozens of members of Congress are expected to co-sponsor the 100% Clean Economy Act, which would require the U.S. to generate net zero pollution by 2050. EDF and partners have spent the first two years of the Trump administration defending climate-protecting rules; now we are moving forward and building sustained momentum for climate action.

To build support for the 100% clean campaign, EDF launched ads with the image at the left. These ads were plastered throughout New York City during the United Nation's Climate Week. We also ran ads in 47 home districts, and are bringing powerful constituents to Capitol Hill to speak directly to their representatives.



EDF's mission is to preserve the natural systems on which all life depends. Guided by science and economics, we find practical and lasting solutions to the most serious environmental problems. This has drawn us to areas that span the biosphere: climate and energy, oceans, ecosystems and health. Since these are intertwined, our solutions take a multidisciplinary approach. We work in concert with other organizations — as well as with business, government, communities and our sister organization, EDF Action. EDF has a staff of 700 scientists, economists and other professionals, and more than 2.5 million members.

For more information, please visit edf.org