Sierra Club California: Your Voice for the Environment

Sierra Club California is the environment’s strongest and boldest voice in California’s State Capitol. By necessity, we are multi-talented. We stop bad legislation and advance good bills. We follow through and make sure that good legislation is implemented at the state and local level. And we use every tool, from social media to conventional media to community organizing, to apply pressure to keep the environment topmost in California elected officials’ minds.

Since 1986, we have represented Sierra Club’s 13 California chapters to advance state policies that stop pollution and protect California’s rich natural heritage. We have remained relevant and effective because of our 500,000 members and supporters in California, and Sierra Club California’s dedicated staff.

Sierra Club California is recognized for tax purposes as a 501 (c)(4) organization. Donations made directly to Sierra Club California are not tax deductible. They go into our lobbying program to support our work at the Capitol. These funds are the most precious and essential to help maintain our core legislative work, unmatched by any other organization.

We also perform work that qualifies as tax deductible. This includes educating policy makers and the public, and monitoring and testifying for the environment about regulatory proceedings at state agencies. Tax-deductible donations to support our work can be made to The Sierra Club Foundation, with a notation that the funds should be directed to Sierra Club California.

Learn more about Sierra Club California and how to be involved at: http://sierraclubcalifornia.org.

Sierra Club California: Highlight Achievements of 2018

Continuing California’s transition to clean, renewable energy.

Sierra Club California helped shape and advance Senate Bill 100, which accelerates California’s transition to renewable energy. By 2030, at least 60 percent of the energy we use in the state to generate electricity will be renewable, and by 2045, California’s energy supply will be carbon free—that is, it won’t produce climate changing pollution.

We also built on our existing efforts to advance policies that move the state away from gas use in residential and commercial buildings. We helped ensure that the state’s official energy planning agency embraced the notion of “decarbonizing” buildings and is on a path to help get methane gas out of our daily lives. Sierra Club California played a leading role in making sure that some opportunistic utilities didn’t sell the farm to Trump by forcing through legislation that would make the state’s electrical system more beholden to the federal administration’s governance.
We made gains in our work to unhook public subsidies from highly polluting biomass incineration plants that contribute to climate change.

**Keeping the oil and gas industry on the run.**
The most potent opponent of efforts to clean up the air and fight climate change is the oil and gas industry. In 2018, Sierra Club California staff, volunteers and allies worked together across the state to keep the pressure on that industry. In Sacramento, we helped pass and get legislation signed that block new federal proposals for offshore drilling in California. And we continued to advocate against oil and gas drilling close to homes.

Ultimately, we need to make sure we keep oil in the ground and remove it from the transportation sector as the key fuel. With this in mind, we successfully helped block from passage a ballot measure that would have eliminated new funding for transit, bike paths and pedestrian pathways to help people get to where they need to without depending on gas vehicles. We have also continued our ongoing work to ensure that California’s lead regulatory agency on air keeps focused on pushing manufacturers to develop more zero-emission vehicles in the state.

**Forcing common sense into water policy.**
Climate change and the irregular precipitation patterns that accompany it have underscored the need for California to rethink its water policy. In 2018, once again we succeeded in raising awareness of and challenging the ill-conceived twin tunnels idea proposed by the Brown Administration. By the end of the year and Jerry Brown’s term as governor, Brown was considering whether a single tunnel was better than two. Meanwhile, we also continued to advance legislation and regulation to force more responsible water conservation and water use accounting.

We continued to advocate the principles of regional resilience emphasizing efficiency, conservation and groundwater preservation and restoration. And we laid the groundwork to finally end a water baron’s decades-long effort to drain a critical aquifer in the Mojave Desert.

**Protecting wild places, open spaces, wildlife and environmental review.**
Sierra Club California staff and volunteers continued to be the strongest voice in the state capital protecting the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the bedrock law requiring large public and private development projects to disclose their environmental impacts and avoid adding pollution or destroying habitat.

We also continued to work to right a 15-year wrong and ensure that critical Central Valley habitat where John Muir once researched is not sacrificed to become an off-highway vehicle park. And we pushed back on nearly perennial efforts by special interests to undercut laws that protect the most endangered wildlife species.