



EARTHWORKS

IMPACT REPORT 2018

What You Made Possible

These are challenging times for anyone who cares about our natural world and the rights of vulnerable communities on the front lines of mining, drilling, and fracking. That's why the commitment you've shown means so much to us and to the communities we serve.

Standing side-by-side with communities at risk is core to who we are at Earthworks. Your support enables us to share knowledge and tools with people on the frontlines that help them to stand up to polluting corporations.

In this impact report, you will find stories of what you made possible this year.

Our success is built on two things — working closely with local, grassroots partners who know the threats and will be most affected by the outcome, and marshaling the tremendous power of people like you who are united in a righteous cause.

On behalf of so many people who have nowhere else to turn, thank you for standing with us!



Pete Dronkers shows community members emissions from a storage facility in Añelo, Argentina. Photo by Daniel Taillant (CHRE)

Spotlight: Exposing the methane crisis in the Permian Basin

The Permian Basin is approximately 250 miles wide and 300 miles long, stretching from West Texas to southeastern New Mexico. More than 85,000 drilling permits have been issued since 2006. The region now produces close to 7 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day, making the Permian the #1 oil producing region in the country.

Pollution from volatile organic compounds (VOCs) has increased more than 6 times and benzene emissions have increased more than 68 times since 2011. Operations in the Permian Basin threaten to undo years of climate progress due to methane emissions, which are a potent and fast-acting climate pollutant.

Thanks to you, residents from Carlsbad, New Mexico to Balmorhea, Texas have new information and tools to protect their health. Over the past two years, Earthworks has completed 245 investigations of oil and gas facilities in the Permian and submitted 38 complaints to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the New Mexico Environment Department. Five of these complaints have resulted in formal action to clean up the sites in question.



Speak Up Now on Methane Pollution

The Environmental Protection Agency recently announced its intention gut the methane rule put into place by the Obama administration in 2016. In the name of reducing costs to industry, the proposed changes would limit inspections to detect methane leaks and slow the timeline for repairs at new oil and gas facilities nationally. **It's not too late to have your say. The deadline for public comments is December 17. Go to earthworks.org/methanerollback.**





Anne-Line Thingnes Førsund and Jorunn Vallestad look out over the Førdefjord, Norway, which is threatened by mine waste dumping.

Defending our Values and Winning!

This year, we witnessed an aggressive assault on public health and the environment courtesy of the Trump administration. But where the barrage of bad legislation and threats to our climate are the dark, choppy waters before us, the hard-fought victories – that you have made possible – are the beacons of hope lighting the way forward.

Making Sure You Have A Say

In July, the US House of Representatives proposed a national defense bill that included a rider they hoped would go unnoticed. The bill would have allowed mines for so-called “critical minerals” to be permitted with minimal environmental review or public input. But you showed Congress that they couldn’t pull a fast one on us. Your calls, emails, and outreach worked! The final bill did not include the rider, putting Americans ahead of mining companies’ desire to avoid oversight.

Suing for Clean Air

The Bureau of Land Management rescinded most of its 2016 methane waste rule to reduce oil and gas methane pollution on our public lands. With your support, Earthworks has joined with allies to protect our air. We are suing the BLM on the grounds that they violated federal law by underreporting the original rule’s benefits to public health, communities, and the environment.

BELOW: Phil Dickieson and Nadia Steinzor at an oil and gas facility in West Texas, in the heart of the Permian Basin.

Protecting Nature by Holding Corporations Accountable

Citigroup and Standard Chartered say no to dumping mine waste into oceans:

The Ditch Ocean Dumping campaign has opened the ears of big investment banks to the voices of fishermen and indigenous communities impacted by mine waste dumping. Two major banks – Citigroup and Standard Chartered – announced that they would stop financing this risky practice. We are just getting started – our goal is to stop the poisoning of our waterways with mine waste. This dirty and archaic practice does not belong in modern mining. Dumping poses serious risks for fishermen and indigenous communities from Norway to Papua New Guinea.

Another investor backs out of the proposed Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska:

Earthworks and United Tribes of Bristol Bay attended First Quantum’s annual investor meeting in Toronto and met directly with the CEO and Board. Shortly afterwards, First Quantum announced its decision not to invest in the Pebble project. As Northern Dynasty, the junior Canadian company behind the mine, moves through the permitting review process for the revised mine plan, it does so without any major financial backers.

COMMUNITIES FIRST

You made it possible for **Break Free from Plastic** campaigners from the Philippines and India to tour the US. They met with activists organizing against petrochemical development in Texas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Connecting the people trying to stop the expansion of plastic production in the US with people polluted by disposable plastic waste strengthens both movements. The tour was covered by *Yes! Magazine*; *WV Public Radio*; and *The Atlantic*.

The **Community Empowerment Project** (CEP) continues to expand across the US, visiting 1,226 sites across 17 states, and filing 188 complaints. Outside the US,

CEP also visited Mexico and Argentina for the first time. Earthworks documented emissions from both conventional and unconventional oil and gas operations at dozens of sites in both countries and held workshops with indigenous community leaders, legislative authorities, and environmental organizations.

In September, Guatemala’s highest court ruled that **Tahoe Resources’ Escobal Mine will remain suspended** while the government consults with the Xinka Indigenous people. The court found that the Xinka were discriminated against when the silver project went ahead without their consultation or consent. Your commitment helped publish an Op Ed from Xinka lawyer, Quelvin Jiménez, in Tahoe’s hometown paper, the *Reno Gazette Journal*, and deliver a community letter to the company calling for the permanent closure of the mine.

LEFT: Pete Dronkers shows local oil and gas workers emissions from an oil and gas processing facility in Rincon de Los Sauces, Argentina. Photo by Daniel Taillant (CHRE)



Supporting #StopETP Pipeline Fighters

Protecting What You Love in Pennsylvania: Ellen Gerhart and her daughter Elise refused to allow the Mariner East II pipeline, an Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) project, to cross their land. The company used a claim of eminent domain to take it anyway. Ellen, a grandmother and retired schoolteacher, continued to protest the construction of the pipeline on her property. ETP claimed she violated a court order not to interfere. She was arrested and served two months in jail. Thanks to you, her story became known around the country, and \$20,000 was raised for her legal defense.

Water is Life in Louisiana: The Atchafalaya Basin is the largest river swamp in the country. The Bayou Bridge Pipeline is being built by ETP across the swamp, where a spill would be devastating. Louisiana recently increased the criminal charge for trespassing from a misdemeanor to a felony when it occurs on property the state deems vital to “critical infrastructure.” Cherri Foytlin and other protesters with L'eau Est La Vie (Water is Life) have not been deterred. Landowner Peter Aaslestad secured an injunction against ETP in district court, barring them from further construction on his family's 38 acres, elevating the legal problems ETP and police could face for arresting activists on that property.



Ellen Sue Gerhart of south-central Pennsylvania at ETP's headquarters after she confronted CEO Kelcy Warren at a special unitholder meeting in Texas.

National Day of Action: Your support helped draw attention to ETP's destructive practices, organized a national Day of Action, and put pressure on financiers like US Bank to drop their investments. In October, Cherri Foytlin, Ellen Gerhart, and Waniya Locke from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, disrupted the ETP unitholders meeting, calling out CEO Kelsey Warren and others from the company for ETP's harmful practices.



Frontline activists from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Texas, Louisiana, and North Dakota converge for the #StopETP Day of Action in Dallas, Texas this September.

With your support, communities around the country have fought courageous battles against corporate polluters and harmful policies that put industry profits above their families' health and their cherished homes.

Preparing for the Next Fight — Earthworks and allies succeeded in getting a landmark mining reform bill through the Colorado House. The bill gained significant political traction in 2018 and resulted in four loyal and active sponsors; two in the House and two in the Senate. The challenge this year was the Senate, where we fell just one vote short. We will introduce the bill again in 2019 and expect to win the next time.

Keeping Industry Out of the Neighborhood — In July, the City of Arvin, California passed a setback ordinance restricting new oil and gas wells from within 300 feet of residential and commercially zoned areas. Air pollution videos at the city's existing well sites made compelling evidence. The policy is the first of its kind in the state.

Forcing Polluters to Pay Up — Penalties were assessed against a major operator in Pennsylvania and Ohio for violating the Clean Air Act. As part of the settlement, the company agreed to pay \$610,000 in fines and invest \$2.4 million to install equipment to reduce methane pollution at 300 facilities. This measure is expected to reduce pollution by 700 tons a year and benefit thousands of residents and nearby schools.

Defeating Toxic Waste — In May, the Seneca Nation of Indians defeated a project to treat toxic waste from fracking operations in the Marcellus Shale. The project would have released up to 42,000 gallons of industrial wastewater per day into the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania. Earthworks provided data, testimony, and research support on the potential for radioactive elements to accumulate in the watershed.

Branding the Bad Actors — For the first time in Montana history, the state used its “Bad Actor Provision.” Montana blocked Hecla Mining from receiving a permit for two proposed mines threatening the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness. The permit was blocked because of Hecla's CEO, who left the state with millions of dollars in cleanup costs from a previous mine he abandoned.



PHOTOS, RIGHT: Gustavo Aguirre Jr., Kern County Coordinator at the Central California Environmental Justice Network, with Earthworks' optical gas imaging camera in Arvin, California. “A” Peak at Granite Lake, Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, Montana; photo by John Lambing / Alamy Stock

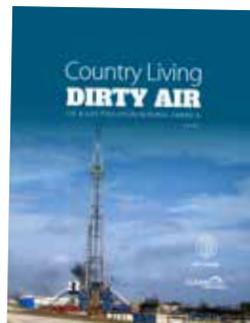
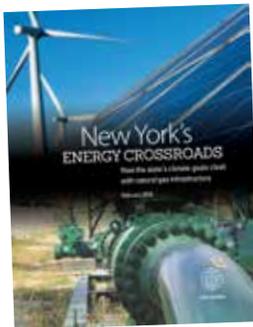
Solutions for a Sustainable Future



The **Initiative for Responsible Mining (IRMA)** launched officially this year. Soon, IRMA will start auditing and certifying responsible mining operations. This will give you and me – and companies in the renewable energy, electronics, and jewelry sectors – a choice in how we obtain our minerals, like the silver used in solar panels or the cobalt used in batteries.

Setting the Record Straight: Your donations supported these reports exposing the truth about the impacts of the oil, gas, and mining industries.

- ▶ **New York's Energy Crossroads** concludes that Governor Andrew Cuomo's ambitious goals to reduce the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 will not be achieved if the state proceeds with its current plans to build natural gas pipelines and associated infrastructure. However, the state could use its regulatory authority to limit pollution and prevent new emission sources.
- ▶ **Country Living – Dirty Air: Oil & Gas Pollution in Rural America** exposes the health impacts clearly linked to oil and gas development in rural America. Six families from Pennsylvania to Utah share their compelling stories of living on the front lines and fighting to protect their rural communities from toxic pollution.
- ▶ **Montana Modern Hardrock Mining Water Quality Impacts and Reclamation Bonding** found that water quality predictions made during mine permitting were wrong 11 out of 12 times. Not only were predictions incorrect, but the water quality impacts were often severe, including drinking water contamination, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, harm to private property and agricultural lands, and the formation of acid mine drainage that will cause lasting pollution that requires water treatment in perpetuity.
- ▶ **Still Wasting Away** follows up on our groundbreaking 2015 report on the disposal of dangerous oil and gas waste across New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. The United States has become the largest producer of natural gas in the world, yet waste tracking and disposal has not improved, and pollution problems continue to grow.



Thank you!



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