

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



CoPIRG

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

YOUR SUPPORT MADE IT POSSIBLE



DEAR MEMBER

As a consumer advocate, CoPIRG can help people save a dollar or avoid a scam. But people have come to expect so much more from PIRG's unique brand of consumer action.

After all, in today's economy, the best deal may be the one that measures value in terms of quality, not quantity. Healthcare that prioritizes wellness, for example, over the most costly treatments. Or products that last, and can be repaired, repurposed and recycled, sparing us (and the planet) the costs of waste.

In this report, you'll find PIRG staff and members taking action and winning results to reduce wasteful plastic packaging, expand the right to repair, and more.

We're grateful that so many people like you support PIRG's advocacy and action. Thank you.



Danny Katz
Executive Director

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

“PIRG keeps me informed. A variety of topics are covered from individual changes I can make to larger government issues that I can at least sign letters of concern. I greatly appreciate PIRG for fighting for a safer, healthier world.”

Helen M., Member

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

RIGHT TO REPAIR



Victory: Colorado passed farm equipment Right to Repair law

As more stuff—including tractors and combines—runs on manufacturer-controlled software, farmers and ranchers have faced delays and inflated repair bills when trying to repair their equipment.

Along with a coalition of repair groups, farmers and allies from across the country, CoPIRG brought the Right to Repair movement to Colorado. In April 2023, our advocacy efforts paid off. Gov. Jared Polis signed a first-in-the-nation law requiring manufacturers of agricultural machinery to provide Colorado consumers access to the tools, parts, diagnostics and software they need to fix their equipment, a measure that could save Colorado farmers as much as \$61 million per year.



Photos: (Left) CoPIRG's Danny Katz joins Gov. Polis at the Right to Repair bill signing. (Above, top to bottom) Colorado farmer Danny Wood speaks to CBS's Barry Petersen about his experience with repairing agricultural equipment; PIRG Right to Repair Campaign Senior Director Nathan Proctor on CBS. Credits: (Left) Ted Gotwals. (Above, top to bottom) CBS, CBS.

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
BEYOND PLASTIC



BEYOND PLASTIC
PIRG.org

**AMAZON:
BREAK UP
WITH PLASTICS**

AMAZON
BREAK UP WITH PLASTICS

**LESS PLASTIC
IS MY VALENTINE!**

**BREAK
UP WITH
PLASTICS**

97,555

**LESS PLASTIC
IS MY
VALENTINE**

Amazon.
♥
**Let's break up
with plastic!**
PIRG

Waste reduced: Amazon is phasing out padded plastic bags

It can be frustrating trying to reduce plastic in your own life when it's all but impossible to avoid. It's even more frustrating when you put it in the blue bin, but it doesn't get recycled as promised.

After a group of PIRG volunteers investigated and found that the plastic Amazon shipping packaging they tried to recycle was instead sent to the landfill, PIRG supporters like you and our national coalition delivered more than 138,000 petition signatures to the company urging it to eliminate plastic in U.S. shipments. And in July, Amazon responded, announcing it would phase out padded plastic shipping bags in favor of recyclable alternatives.



Photos: (Left) PIRG staff and volunteers deliver more than 97,000 Valentine's Day petition signatures to Amazon headquarters in February. (Above, left to right) A Student PIRG volunteer outside Amazon headquarters; PIRG's Jenn Engstrom holds up an electronic tracker, which we used to follow Amazon's plastic packaging to landfills. Credits: (Left) Ricky Osborne. (Above, left to right) Ricky Osborne, Staff, ErickPHOTOPRO via Shutterstock.

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
CLEAN AIR



**ELECTRIC LAWN
EQUIPMENT**

CoPIRG

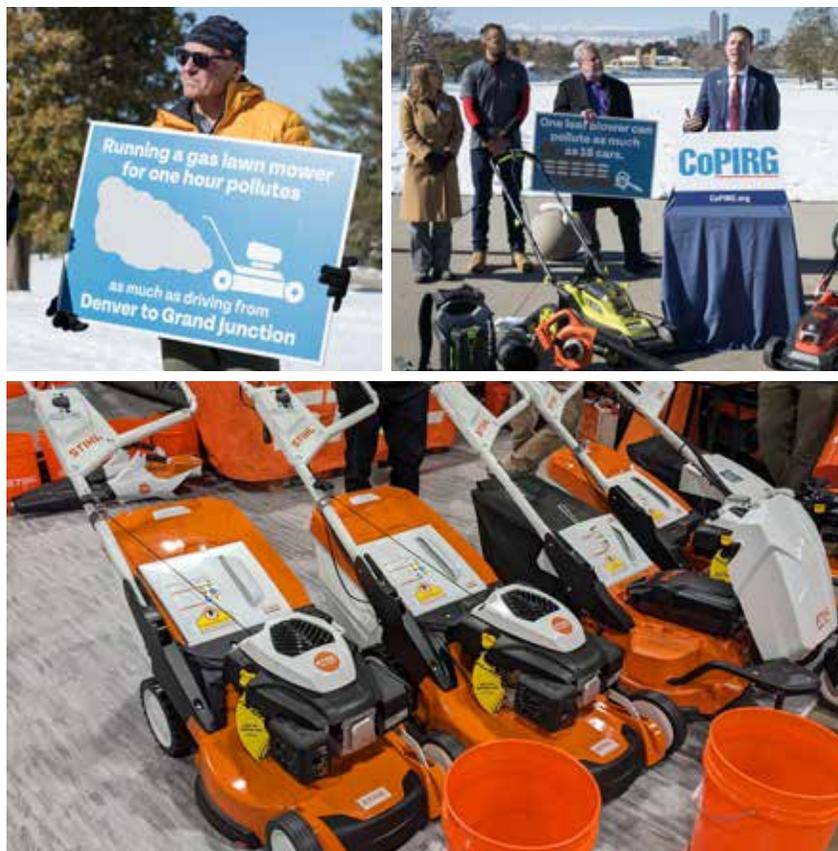
Less noisy,
better for
our health

CoPIRG.org

We helped accelerate the adoption of electric lawn care

Colorado has some of the worst rates of ozone pollution in the nation, and CoPIRG has long worked to clean it up.

In October, we released a report warning that gasoline-powered lawn equipment is a bigger part of that problem than you might expect—for example, using a commercial gas-powered leaf blower for just one hour emits as much smog-forming and health-harming pollution as 15 cars. We recommended electric-powered equipment as a cleaner, quieter alternative. And on Jan. 1, 2024, a new law went into effect that resulted in a 30% discount on electric lawn mowers, leaf blowers, trimmers and snow blowers at participating retailers statewide.



Photos: (Left) CoPIRG Clean Air Advocate Kirsten Schatz releases a report in October 2023 on pollution from gas-powered lawn equipment. (Above, clockwise) Mike Silverstein, executive director of the Regional Air Quality Council at our report release; state Sen. Chris Hansen speaks at our report release; electric lawn mowers. Credits: (Left) Ted Gotwals. (Above, clockwise) Ted Gotwals, Ted Gotwals, Staff.

BAN TOXIC PFAS



Kong Lor

In January, a CoPIRG-supported statewide ban on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in certain consumer products went into effect. The law covers carpets, rugs, fabric treatments, food packaging, kids' products, and oil and gas products while also requiring companies to disclose the presence of PFAS in cookware on product labels.

ELECTRIC BUSES COLORADO



Ted Gottwald

In September, we warned that Colorado wasn't taking full advantage of federal funding for electric school buses, which eliminate exhaust that harms kids' health and provide cost savings to schools. After we called attention to it, 11 Colorado school districts were awarded federal funding for 49 new electric school buses.

BEYOND PLASTIC



AP Photo/The Republican-American, Jim Shannon

In November, CoPIRG spotlighted Colorado's low recycling rate with the report, "State of Recycling and Composting in Colorado." And in January 2024, the CoPIRG-supported Plastic Pollution Reduction Act took effect, banning single-use plastic bags and polystyrene containers, putting Colorado on a path to reduce plastic waste.

PIRG **W** CONSUMER WATCHDOG



CBS News

In July, PIRG warned that two-thirds of phone companies had not yet adopted robocall-fighting technology, as required by law. Scam calls are a huge problem—consumers defrauded over the phone lost a median of \$1,400 in 2022. PIRG called on the Federal Communications Commission to crack down on illegal robocalls.

CLEAN AIR COLORADO ELECTRIC VEHICLES



Mike Flippo via Shutterstock

In October, Colorado adopted the CoPIRG-backed Clean Cars rule, which directs vehicle manufacturers to increase the market share of electric vehicles to 82% by 2032 and increase efficiency among newly manufactured conventional cars and passenger trucks. The rule makes more EVs available to consumers while reducing costs and improving air quality.

BAN BEEKILLING PESTICIDES



Staff

In May, CoPIRG celebrated when our state passed a law restricting the sale of bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides. We rely on bees to support healthy ecosystems and pollinate our food, and with the passage of this new law, bees in Colorado will be a little safer.

50 YEARS OF ACTION & RESULTS

CoPIRG is part of a federation of independent, state-based, citizen funded Public Interest Research Groups. Together, we have a long legacy of victories in the public interest—including state and local wins that have provided blueprints for action nationwide.

1984: Colorado eases voter registration with ‘Motor Voter’

CoPIRG and our allies help win the Motor Voter ballot initiative with 61% of the vote. The law not only makes it easier for citizens to register to vote, but also limits election officials’ ability to remove voters from the rolls for missing an election. The Colorado initiative also built momentum for Motor Voter proposals nationwide.

1992: CoPIRG takes on air pollution

Colorado passes the CoPIRG-backed Colorado Clean Air Act of 1992 that later diminishes Denver’s infamous “Brown Cloud.”



1995: CoPIRG preserves funding for Denver’s light rail system

Over the next 10 years, CoPIRG’s advocacy helps secure and increase funding for light rail projects in Denver and win ballot initiatives for major light rail expansions in the Denver Metro Region.

1997: Coloradans can now get free credit reports

Consumers in Colorado can now access free copies of their credit reports thanks to CoPIRG. The new law also strengthens protections against false or inaccurate credit reports.

2004: CoPIRG-backed cigarette tax to fund more health care programs

Voters pass a CoPIRG-backed ballot initiative to fund new health care programs with a new sales tax on tobacco products.

2007: CoPIRG protects consumers from mortgage fraud

In an effort to reduce predatory lending, CoPIRG assists in passing laws that prevent another housing crisis by protecting loan recipients from mortgage fraud.



Photos: (Above, left to right) CoPIRG organizer Katie Reinisch (right) joins Denver Mayor Federico Peña (left) at a Community Voter Registration Day event; light rail in Denver; CoPIRG staff in 1997: Roland Kuehn, Steff Clothier, Jon Goldin-Dubois, Claudia Horowitz. Credits: Staff, Arina P Habich via Shutterstock, Staff.



Five decades ago, groups of college students began investigating problems from shady business practices to illegal pollution. They called themselves PIRG—Public Interest Research Groups. CoPIRG and the PIRG network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.



2013: Colorado protects consumer credit information from employers

The Colorado Senate votes to pass a CoPIRG-backed ban that prevents employers from considering credit scores when hiring employees.

2017: PIRG makes VW pay for misleading ‘clean diesel’ cars

Two CoPIRG members drive to VW’s headquarters to deliver a petition signed by 20,000 PIRG supporters calling for the company to grant full rebates. A federal judge then orders VW to pay a \$2.8 billion criminal fine and PIRG calls on states to invest the money in electrifying transit.

2018: CoPIRG wins major victories for data security

After the Equifax data breach, CoPIRG helps pass one of the strongest data breach notification laws in the country. CoPIRG’s advocacy also helps eliminate fees on credit freezes so consumers can protect themselves from identity thieves.

2021: Colorado phases out some of the worst single-use plastics

Colorado passes the CoPIRG-backed Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, one of the most comprehensive plastic pollution reduction bills in the country. The law would phase out single-use plastic



bags, polystyrene cups and containers, and reverse a law that prohibited municipalities from taking action around plastic pollution.

2022: CoPIRG helps win first Right to Repair law for wheelchairs

When you are in a wheelchair, even a day or two delay to repair your equipment can lead to injuries or emergencies. Coloradans in wheelchairs will now have access to what they or someone they trust needs to fix it. The new law should also open up the marketplace so there are more repair options.

Photos: (Above, left to right) PIRG’s Mike Litt (left) joined Elisabeth Caspari and Marcus Moench, members of CoPIRG, to call on VW to take back its “clean” diesel vehicles; CoPIRG staff look on as Gov. Jared Polis signs the Plastic Production Reduction Act; state Rep. David Ortiz with PIRG’s Faye Park advocating for wheelchair Right to Repair in Colorado. Credits: Kristopher Connor, Haley Hawn Photo, Ted Gotwals.



Colorado Public Interest Research Group
Colorado Public Interest Research Group Foundation
1543 Wazee St., Ste. 330
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 573-7474

Member questions: 1-800-401-6511

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YOUR CONSUMER ADVOCATES

Danny Katz
Executive Director

Kirsten Schatz
Clean Air Advocate

Alexandra Simon
Public Health Advocate

Lucas Gutterman
Director, Designed to Last Campaign

Patricia Kelmar
Senior Director, Health Care Campaigns

Ed Mierzwinski
Senior Director, Federal Consumer
Program

Teresa Murray
Consumer Watchdog

Nathan Proctor
Senior Director, Campaign for the Right
to Repair

Jenny Douglass
Director, Membership Services

Emily Reid
National Canvass Director

Amy Floyd
Senior Director, Grants

To see a full staff list and learn more about our campaigns, visit us online at copirg.org/about/team.