

CALPIRG

Standing Up
To Powerful Interests

California Public Interest Research Group
Citizen Agenda: An Update For Members Of CALPIRG

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Find links to resources and actions at www.calpirg.org

U.S. PIRG Education Fund

Healthy Living

Sounding The Alarm On Antibiotics

Antibiotic overuse in any setting breeds deadly, antibiotic-resistant bacteria that put public health at risk.

Alarmed by the fact that 70 percent of medically important antibiotics in the U.S. are used on livestock and poultry—not humans—doctors and nurses are coming forward to raise the alarm about the misuse of our life-saving medicines in agriculture.

To make sure elected and corporate decision-makers hear from these experts about antibiotic resistance and what can be done to stop it, U.S. PIRG Education Fund created the Health Professional Action Network.

Already, more than 40,000 health professionals have signed on, and a group of doctors worked with us this summer to produce a video interview series about antibiotic resistance that is reaching thousands online.

450,000 Doors In 18 States

With your support, we're spreading the word one household at a time. In July, CALPIRG and our national network kicked off a summer public education drive in 18 states.

By summer's end, our organizers knocked on more than 450,000 doors across the country, mobilizing nearly 80,000 citizens to join our campaign calling on McDonald's to stop misusing human antibiotics in its supply chain.

As the biggest purchaser of beef in the country, a strong commitment from McDonald's could change the entire food industry and save lives.

Citizen support also gives us the resources we need to advocate directly in the halls of power. In June, we joined other groups in support of a federal bill to enforce duration limits on antibiotics given to livestock, just like we require in human medicine.

Together with you, we'll keep working at the state, national and corporate levels to protect the health of future generations. ■



DOCTORS ARE SPEAKING OUT—Dr. Marty Makary from The Johns Hopkins Hospital points to the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture as a major contributor to deadly, antibiotic-resistant infections in a July video interview from U.S. PIRG Education Fund.

Product Safety

Stores Stop Selling Deadly Paint Strippers

There are more than 80,000 chemicals on the U.S. market, many of which were never tested for their health impacts.

Drew Wynne's parents saw the tragic consequences firsthand when their son died from using a paint stripper containing methylene chloride. After hearing Drew's story in May, our national network joined a coalition effort to get dangerous paint strippers off store shelves.

First, we sent Lowe's 7,000 petition signatures, urging them to drop these deadly products. Lowe's listened, announcing it would do so before 2019. Next, we focused on Home Depot. After receiving thousands of comments, the retailer also announced plans to phase out these paint strippers.

With supporters like you by our side, CALPIRG will continue protecting consumers from toxic threats hidden in plain sight. ■

Member Resources

Read the latest news and sign up for email alerts on our public health and consumer campaigns at:

www.calpirg.org



21st Century Transportation

California Closes In On Electric Buses

Transit buses provide services to millions and reduce traffic congestion, but often emit diesel fumes that threaten our health.



GOING ELECTRIC—CALPIRG Education Fund Executive Director Emily Rusch speaks to the media about the health, climate and financial benefits of all-electric buses.

Thanks to citizen support, however, California is moving closer to a cleaner, all-electric transit bus fleet.

CALPIRG Education Fund's recent "Electric Buses" report shows how all-electric buses are cleaner and cheaper for transit agencies and school districts to run in the long term. The report summarizes the dangers posed by diesel bus emissions, and details how electric buses are a healthier, more sustainable alternative for our communities.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) member John Gioia joined us at our report release event to talk about CARB's plans to require transit buses to be 100 percent electric by 2035. The proposal, which still needs to be formally voted on, would provide tremendous benefits to the state and public health. ■

New Economy

Right To Repair Is The Fix We Need

If a product you own breaks, you should be able to fix it or find some-

one who can. But products ranging from dishwashers to smartphones are purposefully made to be difficult, if not impossible, to repair.

"While companies profit, the public is forced to pay the price in financial costs and environmental damage," said Nathan Proctor, director of CALPIRG's campaign for the Right to Repair.

When Microsoft pressed criminal charges against e-waste recycler Eric Lundgren for copying restore disks that allow people to fix old computers—even though the software on those disks is available online for free—we launched an effort to urge Microsoft to work with recyclers, not penalize them.

Our national network is supporting Right to Repair reforms in 18 states, because it shouldn't be this difficult to keep our products away from the trash heap. ■

Zero Out Toxics

Progress To Ban Toxic Chemicals

With support from our members, CALPIRG is working to keep people safe from toxic flame retardants by supporting Assembly Bill 2998, legislation that would ban the sale of new mattresses, upholstered furniture and certain kids' products containing the chemicals.

Studies have linked flame retardant chemicals to adverse health effects, ranging from cancer to decreased IQ

in children. And these chemicals are not even necessary—a study by the National Fire Protection Association concluded that treated furniture did not provide more fire safety.

"California needs to step up and get these chemicals out of our consumer products once and for all," wrote CALPIRG Public Health Advocate Laura Deehan in an op-ed for The Sacramento Bee. ■

Consumer Defense

Defending The CFPB

CALPIRG's national advocates have been hard at work urging lawmakers to pass a budget that doesn't dismantle the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

On July 21, the Consumer Bureau celebrated a bittersweet seventh birthday. While Congress was making various anti-consumer moves, more than 100 groups joined CALPIRG Education Fund in sending consumers a message of hope.

In a video, CALPIRG Education Fund's Mike Litt criticized the slowdown in consumer protections at the Consumer Bureau—but said the ability of the agency to protect consumers is largely still intact, thanks to our advocates, members and allies.

"As long as consumers keep speaking up, a future CFPB director will be able to ensure a fair and transparent marketplace for consumers and businesses alike," said Litt. ■

An advertisement for Green Century Funds. It features a young girl in a green dress standing in a field with wind turbines in the background. The text reads: "Invest fossil fuel free. Because her future matters." Below this, it says: "Download our guide to get started at www.greencentury.com/myguide". The Green Century Funds logo is also present. At the bottom, there is a disclaimer: "Investments in mutual funds carry risks and investors may lose principal value. You should carefully consider the Funds' investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses before investing. To obtain a Prospectus that contains this and other information about the Funds, please visit www.greencentury.com, email info@greencentury.com, or call 1-800-934-7336. Please read the Prospectus carefully before investing. Distributor: UMB Distribution Services, LLC. 8/18".

Protecting Consumers In The Digital Age

Why do we let companies like Facebook and Equifax, who have done so much to advance digital technology, be so careless with our personal information? And why are we doing so little to hold them accountable when they make a mistake, or allow identity thieves to access our personal information?

These questions drive our national network's efforts to implement better consumer protections and privacy laws in California and across the country—work that is only possible thanks to members and supporters like you.

At the national level, while CALPIRG and our network are excited to see bipartisan action for free credit freezes—an important protection that was included in a bill passed in May—the new federal law unfortunately preempts stronger state laws.

As our advocates told The New York Times, this law could undermine consumer protections that our affiliate groups helped establish in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington over the past year.

With support from our members, we will keep encouraging consumers to use credit freezes to protect themselves, and continue looking for new opportunities to push for stronger protections against identity theft.

Progress In The States

CALPIRG has also made important progress on data privacy at the state level—where protections can often lay the groundwork for federal action.

In our state, CALPIRG teamed up with the Consumer Attorneys of California to prevent future data breaches and make sure negligent companies can be held accountable. Together, we co-sponsored Senate Bill 1121 to make clear that consumers should have a private right to sue when a breach occurs.

Despite strong industry opposition, this policy was ultimately adopted as part of the California Consumer Privacy Act, which acts as a model for strong consumer protections in other states.

Permission To Use Our Data

To bring current privacy laws up to date with our digital world, CALPIRG is recommending Congress pass a privacy bill of rights similar to the General Data Protection Regulation, a new privacy law that went into effect in the European Union in May.

“A cornerstone of the new European law is the requirement to obtain permission from consumers



Jonathan Comer

YOUR ADVOCATE IN CONGRESS—CALPIRG Consumer Campaign Director Mike Litt testifies before the House Financial Services Committee on the Equifax breach and data privacy laws.

before their data can be used. In order to guarantee privacy from companies, Congress should pass legislation that requires permission from American consumers too,” said CALPIRG’s Mike Litt. ■

Thanks To You



Dear CALPIRG member,

It's terrifying, but simple: If we continue misusing antibiotics, common infections could become a lot more deadly.

In July, CALPIRG and our national network kicked off efforts to knock on 450,000 doors to educate people across the country about the overuse of our life-saving antibiotics in agriculture.

So far, tens of thousands have signed our petition asking McDonald's to only buy beef and pork from farms that use antibiotics responsibly. By summer's end, that number will have climbed to nearly 80,000, adding the power of consumer opinion to our research and advocacy.

Sure, there are food industry interests, as well as the power of “that's just the way the world works,” standing in the way of solutions. But CALPIRG stands for two different forces: the idea that there's a public interest—a position that benefits all of us—and the idea that change is always possible.

This approach, combined with support from members like you, has helped us convince some of the country's top restaurants to phase antibiotics out of their supply chains, and we hope McDonald's will soon do the same.

From addressing antibiotic resistance, to protecting consumers in the financial marketplace, to getting toxic products off store shelves, we stand up for you—but we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you,

Emily Rusch, Executive Director
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Solid Waste

It's Time To Stop Trashing Our Future

Nothing we use for a few minutes should threaten our health or pollute our future for hundreds of years—especially when we don't need it.

But polystyrene foam, the stuff most of us call Styrofoam, persists in the environment for centuries—meaning every bit of it ever made is still out there clogging our landfills, littering our streets, and polluting our parks, rivers and oceans.

CALPIRG supporters like you have already sent tens of thousands of comments asking state lawmakers to eliminate polystyrene cups and containers for good, but we're just getting started.

If we're successful in banning single-use polystyrene items, we'll be moving one step



Staff

WE HAVE A TRASH PROBLEM—*This summer, our national network held beach cleanup events, like the one pictured above in Maryland, to raise awareness about plastic pollution and spur action at the local and state levels.*

closer to zero waste. We'll see cleaner parks, streets and beaches, less overall waste choking our planet, and a more sustainable future to leave to our children and grandchildren. This is something we can do right now, with your support. ■

CALPIRG

CALPIRG's Mission

When consumers are cheated or the voices of ordinary citizens are drowned out by special interest lobbyists, CALPIRG speaks up and takes action. We uncover threats to public health and well-being and fight to end them, using the time-tested tools of investigative research, media exposés, grassroots organizing, advocacy and litigation. CALPIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, results-oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy, and fosters responsive, democratic government.

Citizen Agenda Credits

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