



Annual Report 2018

ROCK
THE
VOTE.

Letter from the Director



As you know, elected officials in some parts of the country are putting up new barriers to voting. I've been sickened to see how other states have closed polling places, disenfranchised people of color, forced voters to stand in line for hours, and enacted new voter identification and residency requirements. All this has been done to keep people from exercising their right to vote.

I'm glad to say we haven't seen anything like that here in Vermont. Secretary of State Jim Condos is a voting rights champion. And Vermont has been a leader in eliminating unnecessary barriers to the ballot box. With VPIRG's support, the state has adopted progressive policies like automatic voter registration and Election Day registration.

Yet, it remains a struggle to get voters to the polls. In 2014

for instance, just 41 percent of eligible voters cast ballots, the lowest voter turnout in more than 50 years in Vermont. Since VPIRG has always believed that government works best when more people participate, we were determined to break the trend and improve voter participation in 2018.

So, as you'll read in the pages ahead, we launched a brand new campaign in 2018 called "VPIRG Votes." Through thousands of one-on-one conversations around the state, we pulled off the most robust voter turnout effort in our organization's history.

I'm proud to say that 2018 turnout among VPIRG members was 85% statewide, and above 90% in some legislative districts. And while many factors contributed to increased turnout across the board from 2014 to 2018, the increase

in VPIRG member turnout was nearly twice that of the overall increase.

If we don't have a healthy democracy where elected officials are responsive to their constituents, we can't possibly win as we take on the likes of Exxon Mobil, Monsanto and Comcast. That's why I'm grateful to all those who made our voter engagement campaign such a success – particularly our canvassers and members.

Together, we win.

Paul

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About VPIRG and VPIREF

Founded in 1972, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) is the largest nonprofit consumer and environmental advocacy organization in the state. As a 501(c)4 nonprofit advocacy group, VPIRG conducts non-partisan public interest advocacy in support of priority public interest issues and campaigns and seeks legislative and policy solutions affecting Vermonters. Donations to VPIRG are not tax deductible.

VPIRG established the Vermont Public Interest Research and Education Fund (VPIREF) in 1975 as its 501(c)3 outreach and education arm in order to conduct independent research and public education on the range of issues on which we work. Donations to VPIREF are tax deductible.

For 45 years, we have brought the voice of Vermont citizens to public policy debates concerning the environment, health care, consumer protection and

democracy. The common mission of VPIRG and VPIREF is to promote and protect the health of Vermont's people, environment and locally based economy by informing and mobilizing citizens statewide. VPIRG advocates and organizers use independent research, policy analysis, public outreach and grassroots mobilization to design and implement effective strategies for each of our campaigns.

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VPIRG VOTES

INSIDE THE LARGEST GET OUT THE VOTE EFFORT IN VPIRG HISTORY

Strong voter turnout is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy, and critical to our success as public interest advocates. And thanks in part to VPIRG's work over the years, voting in Vermont is far more accessible, inclusive, and convenient than in many other states. Even so, voter turnout in Vermont has been declining in recent years.

In 2014 – the last non-presidential election year – Vermont saw the worst voter turnout in more than 50 years at a mere 41%. Compared to the 63% voter turnout in 2016, that's more than 125,000 eligible Vermont voters that did not cast their vote in the last off-year election.

Conventional wisdom suggested that 2018 would be another year

of very low voter participation in Vermont. After all, we didn't have hot races for the US Senate or House, and voter turnout had been on a downhill trajectory.

Here at VPIRG, we knew that we would not be living up to our mission as a public interest organization if we let this trend persist without doing everything

in our power to help as many Vermonters as possible exercise their fundamental right to vote.

That's why in 2018 we committed ourselves to reversing the trend of declining voter participation in Vermont. Our canvassers spent the entire summer talking to potential voters across the state. Then in September we launched

In 2018, the VPIRG Votes campaign:



Sent more than **100** canvassers working a combined **3000+** days door-to-door in more than **200** towns in the state



Held over **40,000** face-to-face conversations with Vermonters about the importance of voting in 2018



Generated more than **20,000** voter pledges



Sent **1,400** text messages



Made nearly **1,000** phone calls



Sent **25,000** mailers



Had **32,000** of our "Get Out the Vote" emails read



Generated nearly **150,000** impressions on social media



VPIRG Votes, the most robust voter turnout effort in our organization's history. Canvassers fanned out around the state again to talk with Vermonters on their doorsteps about the importance of voting and encouraging them to take a pledge to get out to the polls on Election Day or vote through any of the quick and easy early-voting systems Vermont has in place.

VPIRG was one of the only organizations in the state focusing on primary election turnout, and our efforts – including generating more than 20,000 vote pledges -- paid off.

In early and absentee voting, more than 23% of VPIRG voters cast their ballot, compared to 13% of registered voters statewide. All told, VPIRG members outpaced registered voters in early voting in 103 of 104 districts.

And the good news kept coming on Election Day.

VPIRG MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS CAME OUT TO VOTE IN DROVES.

Turnout among VPIRG members was 85% statewide, and in 16 legislative districts VPIRG members turned out to vote at or

above 90%. And while turnout increased across the board from 2014 to 2018, the increase in VPIRG member turnout was nearly twice as much as the overall turnout increase.

Now we won't pretend to take all the credit for high voter energy in Vermont and across the country, but we know that our door-knocking, phone calls, texts, emails and personalized mailings certainly contributed significantly to the surge of Vermonters voting in 2018.

Since Donald Trump took office in 2016, we vowed that we would do

all we can do help Vermont fight back against the outrageous attacks on our people and planet coming from the Trump Administration and corporate lobbyists in D.C. — but we've also been equally committed to moving Vermont forward in these challenging times. The success of the VPIRG Votes campaign and Vermont's voter turnout is a clear signal that Vermonters are energized and ready for bold legislative leadership that will chart a positive path forward.



IN 2018, VPIRG KNOCKED ON DOORS ALL ACROSS THE STATE ASKING VOTERS TO TAKE THE VPIRG VOTER PLEDGE. MORE THAN 20,000 VERMONTERS STEPPED UP AND COMMITTED TO VOTE IN THE 2018 ELECTION.



Top 9 Legislative Districts with Best VPIRG Voter Turnout:

1. WINDHAM 2-3 (BRATTLEBORO): 94.01%
2. WINDSOR 4-1 (BARNARD, POMFRET, HARTFORD): 93.75%
3. CHITTENDEN 6-2 (BURLINGTON): 93.15%
4. ADDISON 1 (MIDDLEBURY): 93.01%
5. WINDSOR-ORANGE 1 (ROYALTON, TUNBRIDGE): 91.78%
6. RUTLAND 1 (IRA, POULTNEY): 91.67%
7. ADDISON 3 (ADDISON, FERRISBURGH, PANTON, VERGENNES, WALTHAM): 91.01%
8. CHITTENDEN 5-1 (SHELBURNE): 90.78%
9. WINDHAM 2-1 (BRATTLEBORO): 90.72%

VOTER PLEDGE

To Candidates for Vermont Office: The time to wait and see is over. We need leaders committed to protecting Vermonters from the outrageous attacks on our people and environment coming from Washington, D.C., and advocating for strong policies that actually move Vermont forward.

I am a Fight Back and Move Forward VOTER. And I support:



**BOLD CLIMATE ACTION &
CLEAN ENERGY**



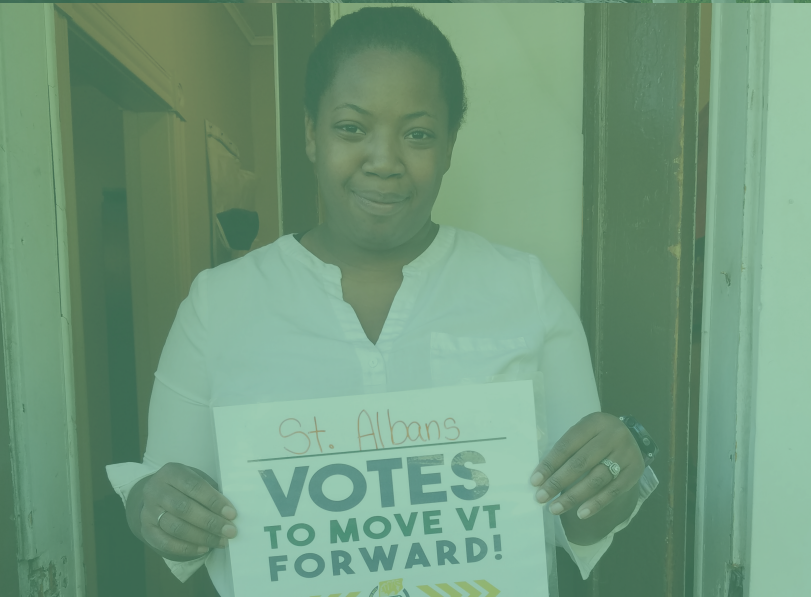
**SAFE DRINKING WATER &
A TOXIC-FREE VERMONT**



**AFFORDABLE, HIGH-SPEED,
NET NEUTRAL INTERNET FOR ALL**



**A GOVERNMENT THAT FAVORS
PEOPLE OVER CORPORATIONS**



12 Years, \$500 billion, + 16 Percent:

Staggering numbers made 2018 an eye-opening year for the climate crisis. What do they mean and what are we doing about it?

Rally
Planet
⚡ Electrify ⚡
Prevent Fossil Fuel

For the third straight year, hundreds of Vermont students rallied on the State House lawn to demand legislators take bold climate action to address the climate. VPIRG has continued to work with these student leaders to amplify their voices inside and outside the State House.

WE ARE IN A CLIMATE CRISIS.

For those of us who follow the science of this issue, so much has been abundantly clear for some time.

However, 2018 provided a fresh trove of evidence at the international, national and state levels to demonstrate the necessity of bold, immediate climate action.

12 YEARS: That's how long we have left to radically transform our energy system away from fossil fuels to energy efficiency and clean energy in order to prevent the worst of the climate crisis. This is according to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

\$500 BILLION: That's how much the climate crisis will cost the U.S. economy *per year* if dramatic action is not taken to cut pollution. This is according to the U.S. National Climate Assessment.

+16 PERCENT: That's the amount Vermont's own climate pollution has risen over 1990 levels. This is according to the latest Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. This number would be bad enough on its own, but it's made worse when one considers that all of Vermont's neighboring states and provinces have reduced their pollution in the same time frame.

At VPIRG – we see these numbers as sobering to be sure, but we also see them as a call to action. Since 2018, VPIRG and our members have made the very public case

to our elected officials that we can no longer nibble around the edges of this issue and rest on past accomplishments. Such efforts did lead to important victories last year – including:

Helping to enact stronger appliance efficiency standards:

VPIRG successfully moved legislation (Act 139) that will require a number of household appliances sold in Vermont to meet modern efficiency standards. This policy is one of the best in the country. It builds upon our success in the 2017 session in passing Act 42, which put into state law current federal efficiency standards in case of a rollback from Washington. The new law expands these efficiency requirements to a wider range of appliances.

Electrifying our transportation sector with Volkswagen settlement funds:

VPIRG continues to be a leading voice advocating for effective use of the funds allocated to Vermont because of the Volkswagen emissions scandal settlement.

After the Scott Administration, and Gov. Scott himself, made clear that they intended to spend a significant portion of the settlement money on fossil fuel vehicles, VPIRG and our members urged the legislature to require it be spent on electric transportation instead – in particular electric school buses.

In 2018, the legislature included language in the budget that did just that for the portion of the money to be spent over the next

year. And VPIRG continues to fight to prevent the settlement money from subsidizing fossil fuels going forward.

Getting 110+ candidates for Vermont office to reject contributions from the fossil fuel industry:

VPIRG joined national partners encouraging candidates across the country to take a No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge – a rejection of the influence of dirty fossil fuel money in our democracy by pledging not to accept campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry.

Leading the charge here in Vermont, VPIRG was proud to have recruited more than 110 candidates for Vermont office to sign the pledge.

We're thrilled to report that of the 150 candidates elected to the Vermont House of Representatives, 60 took the No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge — or 40% of the overall members of the House of Representatives.

In the Senate, 17 victors took the pledge, which is greater than 55% of the 30-member Senate body.

Much More to Be Done

These victories, while important, are modest when compared to the transformational action this crisis requires. By the time VPIRG members read this, many of those numbers from those reports will either remain unchanged, or perhaps, have gotten worse.

The clock is ticking. For VPIRG, our members and our allies across the state – making sure our elected officials understand that inaction on climate is unacceptable is a top priority.

Q&A

with Zach Tomanelli on VPIRG's efforts to protect Vermont consumers on the internet



In 2018, VPIRG helped pass a number of laws to better protect Vermont consumers online. These victories came as part of a renewed focus by VPIRG and our advocates in the State House on digital consumer protection issues. We sat down with Zach Tomanelli, VPIRG's consumer protection advocate, to discuss the threats facing Vermonters, why VPIRG has chosen to focus on them and what these victories mean for consumers.

Q: SO WHAT ARE "DIGITAL" CONSUMER PROTECTION ISSUES?

A: Well when we talk about "digital" consumer protection issues – we're really just talking about a subset of consumer protection issues. Protecting Vermonters from scams, threats and the worst abuses of industry has long been a part of VPIRG's history. From protecting people from the high-pressure tactics of the hearing aid industry to stopping the abusive practices of rent-to-own businesses – VPIRG has always fought to ensure Vermont consumers get a fair shake. But as more of our activities and commercial interactions have moved online, VPIRG has decided to place an emphasis on making sure that Vermonters are protected in the digital space.

Q: SO WHAT DOES THAT WORK LOOK LIKE?

A: We sum it up by saying that the internet should be secure, fair and accessible. And what that means is Vermonters should 1.) have a reasonable expectation of privacy and security in their internet activities and not see their information used for nefarious purposes or without their consent, 2.) have the ability to use the internet openly and fairly – a principle otherwise known as net neutrality and 3.) have access to affordable high-speed internet.

Q: WHAT WERE SOME OF THE VICTORIES VPIRG HAD ON THIS FRONT IN 2018?

A: Vermont consumers scored major victories last year when two VPIRG-supported digital consumer protection bills were enacted into law. One dealt with net neutrality (S.289) and, the other, involved landmark action to rein-in the data broker industry (H.764).

Q: WHAT DID THE NET NEUTRALITY LAW DO?

A: Vermont took a critical step toward countering the Trump administration's disastrous repeal of net neutrality by enacting a law that will ensure the state only contract with net neutral internet service providers.

The enactment of that law resulted in an almost immediate lawsuit from the telecom industry – i.e. Comcast. That resulted in Vermont pausing its enforcement of the law. But a recent federal court ruling on a separate net neutrality case gave states the authority to enact their own net neutrality protections, which may allow Vermont's law to move forward and give us the opportunity to press for even more robust protections going forward.

Q: AND WHAT ABOUT THE DATA BROKER LAW?

A: This law is the first of its kind (which has since been copied by California). It requires data brokers – third party companies that buy and sell individuals' personal information – to register with the state and report their opt-out practices. It also requires these companies to maintain a minimum data security standard and makes it a crime to obtain an individual's information for malicious purposes.

Finally, this law removes the fees that consumers have to pay to put a security freeze on their credit after a company like Equifax experiences a breach.

It's worth noting that Gov. Phil Scott had previously indicated he opposed this bill because of a \$100 registration fee that data brokers like Equifax would need to pay to support the registry. He eventually allowed the bill to become law without his signature, tacitly indicating his understanding that Vermonters want these protections.

His change of heart can only mean that the calls and messages of countless VPIRG members and supporters made a huge difference.



Get It Off the Shelves: Taking on Toxic Paint Strippers

In late May 2018, a group of VPIRG canvassers joined executive director Paul Burns outside the Lowe's home improvement store in South Burlington to hold a press conference urging store management to stop selling deadly paint strippers. We presented a petition calling for this action in a cordial meeting with store representatives.

This event was organized as part of a national 'Mind the Store' Day of Action. Similar events across the country got the attention of Lowe's management, and the company soon became the first major U.S. retailer to commit to ending sales of paint strippers containing methylene chloride and N-Methylpyrrolidone (NMP) by the end of 2018.

This was a victory for Vermonters and the 200,000+ consumers across the country who signed petitions demanding action. It also marked another achievement for VPIRG's campaign to protect consumers from exposure to dangerous toxic chemicals.

Acute exposure to methylene chloride is known to cause asphyxiation, heart failure, and sudden death, while long-term exposure presents an increased

risk of cancer, liver disease, and other serious health effects. NMP, marketed as a safer alternative to methylene chloride, has been linked to miscarriage and other fetal developmental effects.

According to the EPA, over 60,000 workers and 2 million consumers are exposed to methylene chloride and NMP from paint strippers every year, and

THESE HIGHLY TOXIC CHEMICALS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE THAN 60 DEATHS SINCE 1980.

In the European Union, methylene chloride has been banned from paint strippers since 2012, and NMP is currently under close consideration for a ban there as well.

Similar consumer protections have floundered in the United States, however, as the Trump administration's EPA backed off on plans to ban the use of these toxins in paint strippers under pressure from the chemical industry.

In the absence of strong federal protections under the Trump administration, VPIRG's work to protect Vermonters from harmful

toxins has become more essential than ever.

In 2018 we partnered with our allies at Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families as part of a national "Mind the Store" campaign intended to put pressure on retailers to take responsibility for protecting their customers by restricting the sale of these toxic chemicals.

Here's a look at the timeline of this successful campaign:

January 2017: The Obama administration determines that methylene chloride places consumers, workers, and bystanders at unreasonable risk of injury and proposes to ban its use in paint strippers. The EPA fails to act on the proposed ban.

May 2018: VPIRG joins allies in calling on Lowe's to stop selling toxic paint strippers. Lowe's subsequently becomes the first major U.S. retailer to commit to ending sales of paint strippers containing methylene chloride and NMP.

June 2018: Sherwin-Williams and The Home Depot both announce that they will ban the sale of toxic paint strippers by the end of 2018.

August 2018: Walmart announces it will ban toxic paint strippers in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and on walmart.com by February 2019.

September 2018: Canadian Tire commits to banning paint strippers containing methylene chloride and NMP by the end of 2018.

October 2018: AutoZone, PPG, and Kelly Moore Paints commit to banning toxic paint strippers.

November 2018: VPIRG succeeds in convincing local retailer Biben's Ace Hardware to adopt a new policy ending the sale of paint strippers containing methylene chloride and NMP effective immediately, stating "Bibens Ace is not only committed to the safety of our customers and residents of Vermont, but also to reducing the usage of hazardous chemicals to ensure the viability of our environment in the future."

Home Hardware and True Value also announce bans on the sale of toxic paint strippers, and Amazon.com posts a new policy prohibiting the sale of methylene chloride and NMP in all paint stripper products it sells, effective March 2019.

We Started with Straws:

How a Simple Campaign Helped Spark a Movement to Stop Single-Use Plastics

We have a plastics problem.

Thanks to decades of unchecked consumption, plastic waste can now be found everywhere from the middle of the Pacific Ocean to within our own digestive tracts.

Single-use plastics like straws and plastic bags are especially pernicious. These “throwaway” products have a useful life of just minutes but can last in the environment for 500 years or more, harming our environment and threatening human health.

That’s why in 2018 VPIRG gathered with business owners and environmentalists to officially announce the Straws Upon Request Pledge campaign – a statewide effort to reduce the number of single-use plastic

straws used and thrown away in Vermont. The goal was straightforward: food and beverage establishments that took the pledge would make straws available to their customers only upon request.

We elected to target straws because they’re one of the easiest “gateway” plastics to go without. We knew that this modest, voluntary shift in business practice would be a win for both businesses and the environment, and our strategy paid off, as dozens of businesses from all across the state signed on to the pledge.

At the same time, communities across the state began taking action on their own to deal with

plastics pollution. Brattleboro led with a ban on plastic carryout bags, and in Montpelier, voters expressed strong support for more aggressive local action on bags, straws and more. Other communities began to step up as well, responding to a groundswell of public support.

Buoyed by all of this momentum, we pressed forward with the launch of our Campaign to Stop Single-Use Plastics. From straws to bags to bottles to packaging, we knew that there was still lots to be done to curb unnecessary plastic use, and we went into 2019 ready to bring the fight against plastic waste to the State House.

VPIRG members know that effort led Vermont to pass the toughest

anti-plastic pollution law in the country in 2019 – banning carryout plastic bags, expanded polystyrene containers, plastic drink stirrers and enacting the straws-upon-request policy statewide.

VPIRG members also know that all of this is really just the beginning – we have a lot more work to do if we’re going to stop the environmental disaster of throwaway plastics.

Nevertheless – massive movements often begin with small steps – and the 2018 Straws Upon Request campaign was a step that put us on the path to say no to single-use plastics.





VPIRG'S CAMPAIGN TO

STOP

**SINGLE-USE
PLASTICS**

SAY NO TO
PLASTIC
POLLUTION!

SAY NO TO
PLASTIC
POLLUTION!

SAY NO TO
PLASTIC
POLLUTION!



Our 2018 Accomplishments

VPIRG Pushes for Toxic Chemical Reform

For almost two years VPIRG fought to pass S.103 – a wide-ranging toxic chemical reform bill that would, among other things, have given parents clearer information about toxic chemicals in children’s products, and given Vermont’s Health Commissioner greater authority to regulate a children’s product if it presented a toxic threat to kids.

In 2018 VPIRG and our allies finally succeeded in putting the bill on Gov. Phil Scott’s desk, only to see the governor side with industry lobbyists over kids’ health by vetoing the legislation. A veto override vote succeeded in the Senate, but fell just 4 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed in the House of Representatives. We vowed to come back again in 2019.

Vermont Puts Unclaimed Bottle Bill Deposits Toward Clean Water

After more than two decades, VPIRG’s campaign to end the giveaway of millions of dollars in unclaimed Bottle Bill deposits to the beverage industry was successfully concluded. State policymakers decided to put the money to work for Vermonters instead. Under Act 208, the State will now reclaim the deposits and use the money to help clean up Vermont’s water ways. This is a victory many years in the making – the result of hard work and grassroots advocacy by countless VPIRG staffers, members, supporters and allies.

VPIRG Stands Firm on Corporate Campaign Contribution Ban

Corporate money has no place in Vermont elections. VPIRG and our members have been saying that for years, and in 2018 we got closer than ever to real action in Montpelier that would drastically reduce the influence of corporate money in our democracy.

The Senate passed S.120 – a VPIRG-supported bill that would ban corporate campaign contributions in Vermont – just before the Town Meeting break. Ultimately the bill stalled in the House, but we remain committed to pushing for Vermont to join 22 other states and the federal government in banning such contributions.

Vermont Enacts Landmark Prescription Drug Affordability Law

VPIRG has long-supported efforts to make prescription medications affordable for all those who need them. In 2018, we backed Act 133, a law that creates a process whereby certain prescription medicines could be imported into Vermont from Canada, where they cost only a fraction of what they do in the US. Vermont is the first state in the nation to pass this type of law, and we will need federal approval to implement it.

VPIRG Helps Pass Net Neutrality and Data Broker Laws

Two VPIRG-supported digital consumer protection bills were enacted into law in 2018, marking major victories for Vermont consumers. The net neutrality law ensures the state only contract with net neutral internet service providers and lays the groundwork for even more robust net neutrality protections moving forward. The data broker law gives back to consumers some control over their own data and privacy by



requiring data brokers – third party companies that buy and sell individuals’ personal information – to register with the state and report their opt-out practices. It also requires these companies to maintain a minimum data security standard and makes it a crime to obtain an individual’s information for malicious purposes.

Together, these pieces of legislation represent major wins for Vermont taxpayers, consumers and anyone who cares about preserving a fair and open internet and maintaining their security and privacy online.

Vermont Expands Appliance Efficiency Standards

Vermont’s new law goes beyond current federal standards by establishing efficiency standards for 16 appliance types not currently covered at the federal level, from air compressors and commercial dishwashers to computers and computer monitors. Taking these inefficient appliances out of the market will cumulatively save Vermonters \$210 million by 2035 and dramatically reduce carbon pollution.

VPIRG Holds Line on Volkswagen Settlement Fund Usage

After the Scott Administration made clear its intention to spend a significant portion of the \$18.7 million Volkswagen settlement on fossil fuel vehicles, VPIRG and our members urged the legislature to require the funds be allocated toward electric vehicles instead. Along with our allies, we pushed for at least \$4.5 million to go toward a statewide electric vehicle incentive program. While the final allocation fell short of this goal, we’re proud to have played a role in ensuring that at least a portion of the funds went toward electric vehicle expansion.

VPIRG Gets Local Retailer to Ban Toxic Paint Strippers

Protecting Vermonters from toxic chemicals has been a key priority of VPIRG for most of our organization’s history. In 2018 this work once again came to the forefront as we joined with local and national allies to push for stronger protections against deadly paint strippers containing methylene chloride and N-Methylpyrrolidone (NMP). Through VPIRG’s efforts, local retailer Bibens Ace Hardware joined Lowes and many other retailers in adopting a new policy ending the sale of paint strippers containing methylene chloride and NMP effective immediately.

VPIRG Runs the Most Successful “Get Out the Vote” Effort in Our History

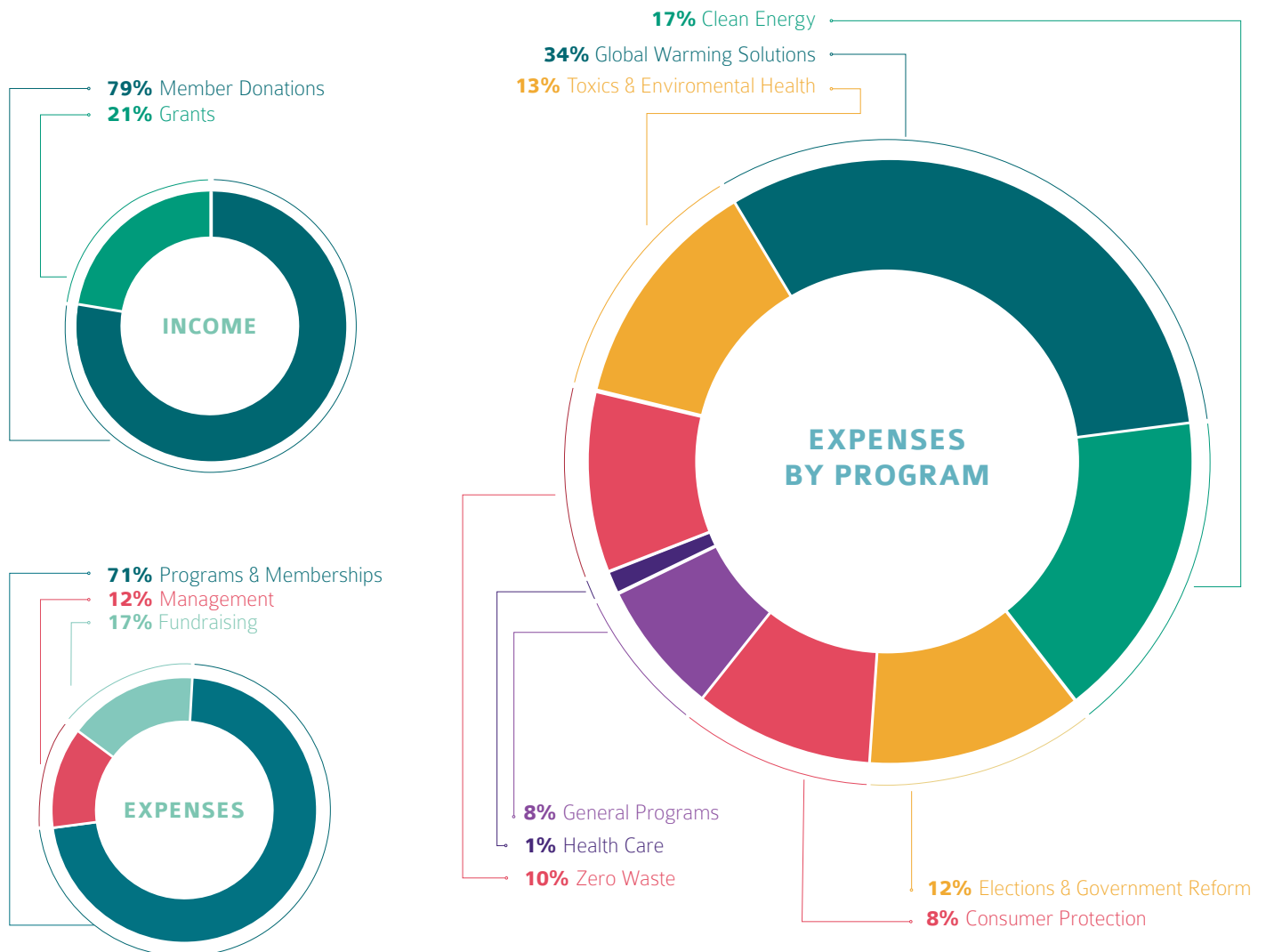
In response to an alarming decline in Vermont voter turnout in recent years, VPIRG launched “VPIRG Votes,” the most robust voter turnout effort in our organization’s history. Canvassers went door to door around the state to engage in conversations with Vermonters about the importance of voting, ultimately generating more than 20,000 voter pledges. The effort paid off. Turnout among VPIRG members was 85% statewide, and in 16 legislative districts VPIRG members turned out to vote at or above 90%. And while turnout increased across the board from 2014 to 2018, the increase in VPIRG member turnout was nearly twice as much as the overall turnout increase.

Powered by You: Our 2018 Finances by the Numbers

In 2018, thousands of Vermonters stepped up with grassroots contributions to power our work. The big-money special interests don't fund groups like ours, and we wouldn't take it if they did. We're a people-powered organization and we're proud of it. We couldn't advance the public interest without you – so thank you.

VPIRG and VPIREF combined income totaled \$2,280,195 — of which more than \$1.7 million came from individual member donations, 42% of that coming from our monthly sustaining members. Combined expenses totaled \$2,193,724. Program expenses and member services accounts for nearly three quarters of our expenses.

	VPIRG	VPIREF	TOTAL
Income	\$1,485,862	\$835,829	\$2,280,195
Expenses	\$1,012,035	\$1,168,999	\$2,193,724



People Power: Recognizing Our Supporters

At VPIRG, our members are our strength.

Your financial support and grassroots muscle makes VPIRG effective. Last year alone, VPIRG supporters made more than 59,000 individual donations and took more than 40,000 actions (signing petitions, contacting lawmakers, writing letters to the editor, etc.) Together we

were able to protect and promote the health and well-being of our people and environment and move Vermont forward. Thank you for your support.

Check out these profiles of a few of our standout members and see a partial list of our members on the next page.



Dennis Bates & Ann Hazelrigg

Dennis and Ann have been dedicated VPIRG supporters for more than thirty years, ever since a summer canvasser biked up to their house asking for support. They were drawn to VPIRG's commitment to progressive causes, and today are passionate about addressing the climate crisis and reducing plastics production and consumption.

Ann has been a plant pathologist with UVM Extension for 35 years and is also the director of the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic, a clinic available to all commercial growers, Master Gardeners, and the public to help with disease and pest diagnosis and management. All of her work involves integrated pest management, a system of managing pests and diseases with minimal pesticide use. She's brought that expertise to her volunteer work with international organizations and the USAID Farmer to Farmer Program, helping farmers in Nepal and other countries with disease and pest problems in their crops.

Dennis studied solar energy engineering and at one time worked for a regional solar advocacy group based in Colorado. Since moving to Vermont nearly 40 years ago, he has developed a contracting business designing and installing energy efficient sunrooms and passive solar greenhouses. During that time, Dennis and Ann raised two children – one of whom spent a summer working for VPIRG!

Our work wouldn't be possible without committed VPIRG members like Dennis and Ann, and we're grateful for their support and the inspiration they provide.



Jen Duggan

In 2018, VPIRG was lucky to have one of our dedicated environmental health allies, Jen Duggan, join the Board.

As Vice President and Director of Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) Vermont, Jen has been an invaluable ally in our work on environmental health issues across the state, from tackling PFAS to protecting Vermonters from the hazards of the fracked gas industry.

Jen's passion for protecting the environment and public health stem from her childhood experiences growing up near "Cancer Alley" in Louisiana. She has dedicated much of her career to fighting for clean air and water, including working as an attorney for the Environmental Integrity Project in Washington, D.C., and as general counsel for the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources before joining CLF. Jen first fell in love with Vermont while attending Vermont Law School, and now lives in Montpelier with her family.

VPIRG is thankful to have her unique experience and perspective on our Board.

Supporters

Note: While we wish we could thank every single member in this annual report it's impossible to list the thousands of VPIRG supporters statewide. The generosity of those listed in this report deserves special recognition.

FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS

Alcyon Foundation
Applied Materials Foundation
Blittersdorf Family Foundation
Concept2 Fund
Educational Foundation of America
Holborn Foundation
John Merck Fund
Lintilhac Foundation
Merck Family Fund
Patagonia
The Prentice Foundation, Inc.
Ruth H. Brown Foundation
The Salon Family Foundation
Seventh Generation Foundation
State Alliance for Federal Reform of Chemical Policy
Sustainable Markets Foundation

INDIVIDUALS

Maryanne Abad
Stephen and Katherine Abbott
Hala Ahmad
Mary and Bruce Albert
The Alchemist Brewery
Susan Alden
Barry Aleshnick and Martina Sczesny-Aleshnick
Wesley Allen and Susan Busier
Deborah Allen
Jayne Allister
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