

How the bills undermine protections for our environment

Energy companies, corporate polluters, factory farms and their politician allies voted to change environmental rules by:

- Limiting the ability of people to use their local governmental power to protect their towns and neighborhoods from pollution and other hazards, by:
 - [Forbidding local governments from limiting pesticide use](#).
 - [Streamlining siting for nuclear and other power plants](#) by placing siting authority in a central agency.
 - [Prohibiting local efforts to oppose genetically modified \(GMO\) crops](#).
 - [Opposing local, state, and federal waste reduction and mandated recycling laws](#), including regulations on packaging (such as Styrofoam restrictions), in favor of a "voluntary" approach to waste reduction.
 - [Eliminating land use and zoning regulations](#) designed to guide new development, and replacing them with private negotiations.
 - [Privatizing public water and sewer systems](#) and prohibiting local governments from requiring that contractors meet labor and wage standards.
 - Undermining environmental regulations through novel, aggressive legal theories that claim regulations limiting pollution, for example, constitute a "taking" of the right to pollute and thus require compensation under the Constitution, through innocuously named bills like:
 - [the "Private Property Protection Act"](#) and the
 - [the "Regulatory Costs Fairness Act"](#)
- Expanding the rights of polluters, and limiting regulation of greenhouse gases and other industrial activities, by:
 - [Protecting polluting corporations from civil and criminal liability](#) by making a company's internal audit or assessments of its pollution "privileged" and thus inadmissible in legal proceedings. (See also [this bill](#)).
 - [Opposing uniform rules on hazardous coal combustion waste](#), in favor of a race-to-the-bottom amongst state rules.
 - Creating new burdens for legislators and agencies to pass environmental regulations by:
 - [Establishing a business-dominated panel to "assess" all environmental regulations](#), using a framework established by a climate change-denier, the "Copenhagen Consensus."
 - [Requiring states pass through multiple layers of process before passing environmental regulations](#), including approval by two five-person panels emphasizing the theoretical "economic" effect of regulations.

- [Hindering state-level regulation of groundwater contaminants](#) by establishing EPA standards as a ceiling, rather than a floor, giving an agribusiness-dominated agency a regulatory veto, and adding other burdens.
- [Putting the regulation of "fracking" for methane gas in the hands of the states rather than establishing federal safety and environmental standards.](#) Fracking has been shown to spoil enormous quantities of drinkable water and contaminate nearby wells and watersheds.
- Reversing notions of preemption by [giving states authority to invalidate any federal law or directive](#) deemed to violate an expansive conception of state's rights.
- [Giving states the power to appropriate national parks and other federal public land,](#) possibly to allow greater oil, gas, and coal extraction.
- *Additionally, the "[Limited Immunity for Persons Responding to Oil Spills Act](#)" is available through the Heartland Institute website; it would free corporations from liability when they cause injury using toxic chemical dispersants to clean oil spills (as happened with the BP-funded cleanup after the Deepwater Horizon spill).*

For a full list of bills from this section, [click here](#)

Some of this Corporate Agenda Has Already Become Law



Wisconsin Governor and ALEC alumni Scott Walker included language in the 2011 budget bill designed to end mandatory recycling programs for Wisconsin communities. More than 1,000 municipalities in Wisconsin rely on a small landfill tax to fund local recycling programs. Walker wanted to use the money collected from the landfill tax for a new, privatized economic development agency. The proposal outraged county leaders and administrators as well as Republican legislators. Republican State Rep. John Nygren questioned whether the budget measure would really save money in the long run, when balanced with the increased cost of maintaining and building expensive new landfills. The Governor's actions made no financial sense, but they did comport with ALEC's [Resolution on Packaging and the Municipal Solid Waste Stream](#), which criticizes "interfering government mandates" and promotes a free market approach to waste removal and recycling. In the end, cost-effective recycling prevailed in Wisconsin. Learn more [here](#).

For an updated look at ALEC's education agenda in Wisconsin, see the Center for Media and Democracy's in-depth report, "[ALEC Exposed in Wisconsin: The Hijacking of a State.](#)"
