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# Annual Report



# 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION

In 2023 we saw the fruit of 30 years of work protecting our health and the environment. Our anniversary year marked a milestone that allowed us to look back at our work over the three decades since our founding and to celebrate our successes.

During the year, we built on our tried-and-true strategies – groundbreaking research, unstoppable advocacy and unparalleled media and communications – to advance our agenda, our priority chemicals, build responses to our policy positions, and to evolve consumer awareness of what’s in the products they use. Because of the vision of our co-Founders Ken Cook and Richard Wiles, and their colleagues, 30 years later we celebrate wins that will improve the lives of all who drink water, eat fruit and vegetables, sleep on mattresses and brush their teeth. These are intimate moments in our lives that animate the entire field of public health and, in short, the environment and they affect everyone in the country.

Raising – and credibly addressing – these everyday issues is key to engaging individuals, government and the private sector in any effort to reduce chemical exposures and pollution.

For over more than a quarter-century, EWG has made it our business to engage those audiences meaningfully. That’s why EWG is now the most effective and efficient nonprofit working in the public health and environment space. Because of work that began in 1993, more people today

are connecting the dots between exposure to toxic chemicals and disease.

We’re proud to have contributed to making the world just a little safer for you and your family. And thanks to your support, we honored our 30th anniversary with one of our most impactful years yet.

## Highlights from this year

- EWG toxicologists assessed the safety of 10,000 chemicals, contaminants and other active ingredients this year – more than ever before, by far. These updated assessments are now included in EWG Verified® lists of unacceptable and restricted ingredients.
- EWG’s research and messaging on food chemicals were key to our successful advocacy efforts in California, which led to the signing of a groundbreaking bill to ban four dangerous food chemicals: brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben and Red Dye No. 3.
- EWG launched a new priority chemical campaign testing oat foods and human body burden levels for chlormequat, a pesticide used in the harvest of oats and other grains grown in Canada. A toxic chemical, it can harm the developing fetus and children’s reproductive and nervous systems.
- To support the Environmental Protection Agency as it finalizes its standards for the toxic “forever chemicals” known as PFAS, we conducted several new testing and mapping

## Accomplishments by the Numbers

**47,000**

Mentions in online and print media

**127**

News releases

**126**

Articles published on ewg.org

**30**

Maps created

**19**

Bills Introduced to Congress

**24**

Stories in the New York Times and the Washington Post

**Mattresses**

New EWG Verified® category

**27**

Meetings with members of Congress

**131**

Meetings with Biden administration agencies

**701**

Meetings with congressional staff

**5**

Congressional briefings hosted

**496**

Emails to supporters

**298**

Toxicology reviews

**144,485**

Small dollar online donations

**100,000**

Total Skin Deep® products

**1.4 million**

EWG email recipients

**\$17,250,000**

Revenue processed

**34,742**

New donors

projects this year including field tests of tap water samples across the U.S., water filter pitchers for PFAS removal efficacy and updates to our PFAS contamination maps and federal PFAS report card.

- For the first time since our breakthrough 1995 research, we tested baby food for pesticide residue, evaluating how they have changed with consumer awareness of pesticide risks. We found that the pesticides detected were, on average, far less toxic and dangerous for infants, illustrating the longtail impact of EWG's advocacy in this space.
- EWG researchers published our latest assessment of pesticide application in California, this time in Stanislaus County, one of 10 counties with the highest use of pesticide, much of which is sprayed near homes and schools. We partnered with grassroots groups to begin talks with parents and community members about the pesticides sprayed in their neighborhoods and associated health risks and how we can work together to stop it. The project included safety tip sheets and other resources in Spanish and English.
- EWG experts fought to update provisions in the farm bill to address agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions. Using our unique data and mapping expertise, we were able to illustrate the massive crop losses – and billions of dollars spent – due to extreme weather linked to the climate crisis.
- EWG maintained its voice in the fight to advance a clean energy economy. We

advocated for the protection of rooftop solar incentives as an option for consumers and used our communications bullhorn to raise awareness about industry attempts to revive dangerous and wasteful nuclear options in California and North Carolina.



#### AREA OF IMPACT

## Toxicology Research and Advocacy

Toxic chemical reform has been our main focus since our founding and we're grateful for your support to empower our research, education, and advocacy. This year, we saw major regulatory change in the use of PFAS, industry-leading action on toxics in California, and new EWG leadership on chlormequat – a new pesticide of concern showing up in America's food supply.

### National PFAS regulation picks up speed

Over the past several years, lawmakers and agencies have made extensive use of EWG's PFAS toxicology research and pollution mapping to develop significant pieces of legislation and craft new regulations, including a bill dedicating billions of dollars for cleanup. In March 2023, this scientific leadership resulted in historic progress

on behalf of public health: The EPA set the first federal legal limit – the maximum contaminant level – for six PFAS chemicals commonly found in drinking water. The EPA limit is four parts per trillion, the lowest detection level possible.

### **Public education on chlormequat**

In 2022, EWG researchers discovered residue of a new pesticide – chlormequat – in oat-based children’s foods while testing for another pesticide, glyphosate. After seeing these results, we conducted additional research and found several alarming health issues. It is known to pose a risk to children’s health. It isn’t allowed for use on food crops in the U.S. – but it shows up in our food. And chemical companies are seeking EPA approval to expand its use to food in the U.S. As part of this work in 2023, we conducted a successful and wide-spread communications campaign to educate the public on health risks and raise awareness about this harmful toxin.

Because of our comprehensive testing and communications campaign, other influential advocacy groups provided comments to the EPA about chlormequat’s risks, prompting a groundswell of support over the summer. This support included the American Academy of Pediatrics, which cited EWG’s research in its formal comment letter to the EPA.

### **Mapping pesticide exposure in California’s agricultural regions**

In 2023, EWG researchers worked with local advocates in Stanislaus County, just east of the Bay Area, to create our second county-wide pesticide map and outreach materials for

families living in high-spray zones.

Given the response from local media, residents and California advocate groups, we believe this project has tremendous potential to make a long-term positive impact in the state, ultimately reducing the quantity and toxicity of pesticides sprayed near homes and schools.



## **SPOTLIGHT WIN**

### **Lobby days**

Once a year, the EWG Government Affairs team takes on the massive challenge of bringing community members to visit congressional offices to tell their stories and advocate for reforms. These lobby days wouldn’t be possible without the relationships we’ve built over time with community members affected by exposure to toxic chemicals – people whose lives have been destroyed by these substances.

Affected communities are in this fight for the long haul – they have no other choice. They need to know EWG has their back before, during, and after meeting with Congress. And they know that EWG is with them the entire journey.

EWG looks to create an outsize impact with these visits, and that sets our strategy. Because

EWG holds lobby days to make the most of events on the ground that set the stage of maximum impact instead waiting for a confluence of events that create the conditions for impact and moving the moment it becomes politically advantageous to, staff does not always have a lot of time to prepare.

Jared Hayes, Senior Policy Analyst, says "We have about a month and a half to get this done because we jump on it only when the time is right. Giant puzzle pieces need to be in place, and it's all hands on deck. You have to plan breaks, lunch, no one can be dead tired in the middle of the day, and everyone needs to be comfortable talking about tough topics." Every member of the Government Affairs team makes a huge push, putting in 110 percent to make our lobby days successful for all that contribute. The team might contact hundreds of Capitol Hill offices. When the date approaches, six or more groups of community advocates and EWG staff will each do around eight meetings in a single day. "The Hill is intimidating," says Jared. "Until you actually do it. Then all the preparation pays off. Our community advocates understand this is the time to tell their story. They're not policy experts – lawmakers want to hear about the community." And sometimes the storytelling happens outside the scheduled meetings, as when a community member from Arizona brought by EWG glimpsed Sen. Bernie Sanders in the hallway and chased him down so she could tell her story.

In 2023 EWG partnered with the National PFAS Community Coalition and NRDC for a lobby day in May. Our team drew stories out of cancer clusters

all over the country, sites of contaminated water from Arizona to Florida, Maine to Michigan. They brought in people who had lost family members, or themselves had faced medical complications.

Amara Strande was a 20-year-old Minnesotan who went to high school near an old 3M dumping site. She died 6 months after EWG's 2022 lobby day – and in 2023, her parents and sister were back on Capitol Hill with EWG.

They were there to talk about her death – and passage of the Minnesota law named after her that restricts the harmful chemicals that ended her life so early.

The Strandes want to see the law implemented nationwide so other families need never face the same kind of loss. Jared spoke to them in countless preparatory sessions to make sure they felt ready and again the morning of their Hill meetings.

Senior VP for Government Affairs Scott Faber maintains that relationship. "EWG is not in these spaces to use community members for political gain," says Hayes. "We want to maintain these relationships because their stories are worth telling. Amara's sister told us she wants to be more involved and continue the fight – so now we're helping her get ready. This work doesn't end until the harm does."



#### AREA OF IMPACT

## Public Health in California

We were proud to sponsor six bills (an EWG single-year record!) in 2023 based on our groundbreaking scientific research. Signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom, these first-in-the-nation laws ban fiberglass in mattresses, an expanded list of harmful chemicals in cosmetics, and dangerous additives in foods. These are just the latest in a long history of EWG wins.

Over the past 12 years, 25 EWG-sponsored bills protecting people and the environment have become law in the Golden State.

California's role as the world's fifth largest economy means environmental health measures it adopts, particularly laws on consumer products, can influence policy nationally – and manufacturing practices for products sold in the rest of the country.

And since it's long been a forerunner in environmental policy, if California bans a toxic chemical, companies are likely to stop using it altogether.

Policy wins like these are essential to creating

equitable and systemic solutions for everyone. This is a major area to watch as the 2024 legislative agenda ramps up, promising even more groundbreaking reform.

#### AREA OF IMPACT

## Climate-smart Agricultural Practices

EWG is leading the fight to connect agricultural practices and climate change with the public and with policymakers. EWG is one of the only organizations identifying the agricultural sector's impact on climate change and is working tirelessly to bridge the education gap.

While Congress hasn't yet passed a Farm Bill, EWG staff has ensured that protecting the \$19.5 billion earmarked for climate-start agriculture policy is a red line issue for House and Senate Democrats. Despite pressure from Republicans, it is clear lawmakers would rather see no farm bill than cuts to that funding.

EWG helped members write letters, convened over 100 meetings, organized briefings and hearings and, critically, recruited partners that haven't traditionally been involved – groups heavily involved in climate issues but new to the world of ag policy – as part of our efforts to secure climate-smart agricultural funds.

This coalition wielded its power fighting on behalf of the 153,000 farmers who will benefit from the climate-smart agriculture funding, and making sure lawmakers beholden to special interest groups are blocked from using it to boost cotton, peanut and rice reference prices, which would benefit only 6,000 farmers in the Southeast.

But that's not the only work EWG has done to elevate climate-smart farming. EWG's powerhouse advocacy shop is also the force behind marker bills that have garnered bipartisan support – like the Crop for Farming and CRP Reform Acts to promote reduction in water and air pollution and structuring support for farmers who enroll their land in the conservation reserve program.

In fact, EWG resources so dominated one congressional lobby day that, as one member walked off the podium after speaking and heard yet another EWG government affairs expert announced as the next speaker, turned and said "EWG again??"

Also in 2023, our Midwest EWG team released the first major update to the Crop Insurance Database, launched in January 2022. It now analyzes crop insurance payments down to the county level, reaching back to 1995. With this data in hand, EWG was able to release a report highlighting hot spots country-wide that are prone to drought, floods and other weather events. Our report included an interactive mapping component that highlights environmentally sensitive land to help users determine geographic safety and climate-catastrophe proneness.



## LOOK AHEAD

### **A new deputy commissioner for human foods (and 36 new bills!)**

EWG continued to work with the FDA to establish a new program to review the safety of chemicals added to food and food packaging and set limits on toxic metals in baby food. We have continued to build support for legislation to close loopholes that allow companies, not the FDA, to assess the safety of food chemicals and to require the FDA to review the safety of chemicals.

Thanks to our efforts, the FDA's new deputy commissioner for human foods will be a long-time advocate for stronger chemical safety standards. States across the country have introduced 36 bills to ban food chemicals. These states include Illinois, New York, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Washington.

### **Partnering to take on Parkinson's disease**

EWG is partnering with the Michael J. Fox Foundation to work on state legislative efforts and we're excited to see California will introduce the first paraquat ban in April of 2024. More than 50 countries - but not the United States - have banned the use of the toxic weed killer paraquat because of the short-term and long-term risks it poses to workers and nearby communities. But the EPA is still ignoring the science and refusing to move on a ban.

## **PFAS and Firefighters**

We were proud in 2023 to launch a research project years in the making – testing firefighters' blood for the presence of PFAS.

We partnered with the International Association of Firefighters, or IAFF, to recruit volunteers to take part and set the study in motion. EWG and IAFF hosted a discussion with experts on firefighter exposure to toxic forever chemicals known as PFAS and associated health risks on Capitol Hill in Jan 2024 – including a screening of the documentary “Burned: Protecting the Protectors” in honor of Firefighter Cancer Awareness month. The first round of tests is now complete with results received, and EWG is scoping second round locations.

## **The New Lede, EWG's journalism initiative**

In late 2023, The New Lede launched a new series called “Toxic Terrain,” in which former New York Times reporter Keith Schneider examines the rampant overuse of farm fertilizers in U.S. agriculture, and the dire consequences for human and environmental health. The project – supported by the Alicia Patterson Foundation and the Fund For Investigative Journalism – has already had several articles co-published by other outlets, including the Guardian, Circle of Blue and Investigate Midwest.

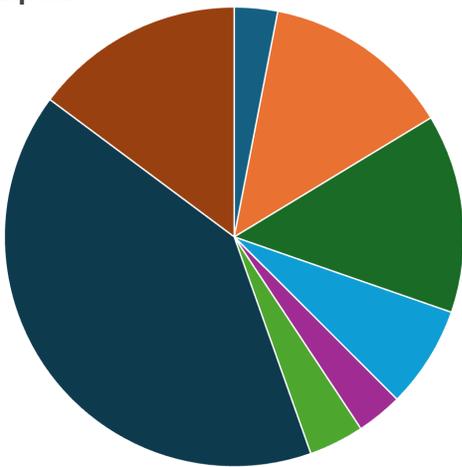
We are proud of what The New Lede has accomplished in just a few years, drawing attention to the most critical environmental issues of our time. This series is already making

waves in environmental journalism, and we eagerly anticipate its continued growth.

## 2023 Financial Audit

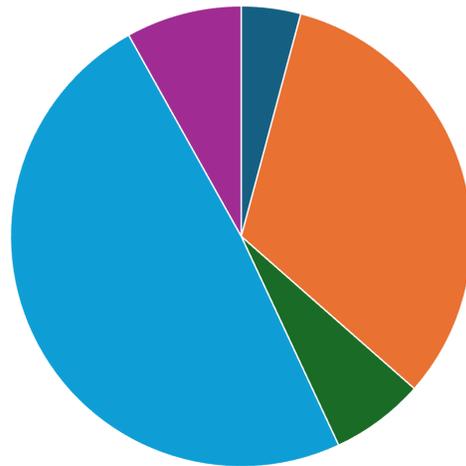
With a relatively modest budget of \$17 million, EWG produces far-reaching results on just a fraction of the budget of other environmental nonprofits. Still, even in the face of headwinds that can frustrate even the most incremental regulatory and legal progress, EWG is widely recognized for its research chops, policy successes, and ability to move markets.

### Expenses



Energy	\$519,928
Food & Agriculture	\$2,271,899
Fundraising	\$2,391,002
Management & General	\$1,223,287
Other	\$553,043
The New Lede	\$662,733
Toxics Program	\$6,940,230
Verified	\$2,531,339
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,093,461</b>

### Revenue



Events	\$773,370
Foundations	\$6,019,000
Individuals	\$9,088,549
Inkind & Misc	\$1,222,155
Licensing & Consulting	\$1,509,771
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,612,845</b>