



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION



The Environmental Integrity Project

The Environmental Integrity Project is a nonprofit organization, based in Washington D.C. and Austin, Texas, dedicated to enforcing environmental laws and strengthening policy to protect public health and the environment. For more information on EIP, visit: www.environmentalintegrity.org

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“Our environmental laws can never be taken for granted. EIP’s mission is to put them to work to protect air and water quality for everyone, especially those already exposed to more pollution than the laws allow or public health can tolerate.”



Eric Schaeffer
Executive Director
Environmental
Integrity Project

The Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) racked up wins in 2023 that helped to beat back illegal pollution, strengthen rules that protect air and water quality, and improve access to the data and technical assistance needed to challenge industry propaganda. Our team of attorneys, engineers, and analysts defeated proposals to build a dirty gas-fired power plant in Pennsylvania, expand a Liquefied Natural Gas terminal in Texas, and operate other large pollution sources in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas without public review or any serious monitoring of emissions. Our settlement of a lawsuit against Henrico County, VA, will help clean up raw sewage overflows into the James River. And our litigation against EPA resulted in a consent decree requiring the agency to write new rules to crack down on wastewater pollution from slaughterhouses across the country. Our advocacy also helped motivate EPA to propose tough new standards to cut emissions of benzene and other carcinogens from chemical plants.

We are not afraid to challenge the biggest polluters or government agencies and fight in court for the health of communities overwhelmed by pollution. This year, EIP and the Clean Air Council took the Shell Corporation to court for blowing emission limits for benzene and other pollutants at a plastics plant northwest of Pittsburgh. We also sued EPA for failing to upgrade wastewater treatment standards for the petrochemical industry that are four decades old and give the industry a free pass to pollute. We challenged weak permits or lax regulations to help neighborhoods fight pollution from [petrochemical projects](#) and [leaking coal ash dumps](#).

But EIP does more than just litigate. We make pollution data public, which informs local communities about [pollution threats](#) in their back yards. EIP also publishes in-depth, data-driven reports that expose hidden sources of contamination. In 2023, our reports exposed vast amounts of unregulated wastewater from oil refineries, exposed the need for stronger regulation of methane from landfills, and highlighted strategies to clean-up the aluminum industry, among other topics. In addition, our [Oil & Gas Watch News](#) team investigates and shares new information about the impact this growing industry has on public health and the environment.

Also last year, our [Center for Applied Environmental Science \(CAES\)](#) continued to advance environmental justice by ensuring that the most vulnerable communities and their advocates have access to high-quality science and engineering expertise. Since its inception in 2020, CAES has funded over 100 consulting contracts that pay for the services that technical experts provide to communities on the frontlines of pollution. Access to the right technical expertise can level the playing field and make it easier for local residents to exercise their right to challenge polluter-friendly permitting decisions.

The following sections highlight our 2023 accomplishments, achieved with the help of our partners and generous donors.

FIGHTING FOR CLEAN AIR AND A HEALTHY CLIMATE





Federal Court Blocks Illegal Permit for Construction of LNG Terminal

A federal appeals court in November [halted the construction](#) of a massive liquefied natural gas terminal planned for southeast Texas, ruling that state regulators failed to include the required emission controls in a permit authorizing Sempra Energy's Port Arthur LNG project. The decision was a major victory for community advocates, who challenged the air pollution control permit because the facility would release harmful emissions into a largely Black and Latino community that is already overburdened.



Defeated Invenergy's Proposal to Build Gas-Fired Power Plant

After years of community opposition and hard-fought litigation brought by EIP and our allies to challenge the air permit for a dirty power plant south of Pittsburgh, [Invenergy abandoned its proposal](#) in November. If built, the Allegheny Energy Center in Elizabeth Township, PA, would have emitted millions of tons of global warming gases and hundreds of tons of harmful air pollutants in an area already suffering from poor air quality.



Secured Proposed Denial of Permit Authorizing Pollution Increases at Corpus Christi Refinery

Represented by EIP, residents of Corpus Christi's so-called "refinery row" successfully blocked a permit that would have allowed Valero to modify its refinery to process a wider array of fracked oil and gas. The proposal would be a victory by Citizens for Environmental Justice and Hillcrest Residents Association, but now must be reviewed by Texas regulators. The decision to issue or deny the permit will be subject to judicial review.



Won Right to Challenge Expansion of Petrochemical Plant East of Houston

EIP, Environment Texas and people living near the fenceline of ExxonMobil's Baytown petrochemical plant in Baytown, Texas, won the right to challenge Exxon's construction permit through an administrative trial in September. Two administrative law judges sided with EIP attorneys over the objections of Exxon and state regulators and agreed that neighbors living near the plant have the legal standing to challenge the new plastics manufacturing plant, which would significantly increase emissions while ramping up production of ethylene and other chemicals.



Persuaded EPA to Object to South Carolina Permit That Allows More Air Pollution from Aluminum Plant

In response to a petition filed by EIP and allies in November, the EPA objected to a South Carolina permit that would allow more air pollution from an aluminum factory north of Charleston, including a 50 percent increase in deadly particulate matter.



Won EPA Objection to U.S. Steel's Weak Air Pollution Permit

EPA sided with EIP by [objecting](#) to a Clean Air Act permit issued to U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works by Allegheny County in October. U.S. Steel has a long history of violating the Clean Air Act, exposing residents of Pennsylvania's Mon Valley to illegal emissions of benzene, fine particles, and other pollutants dangerous to public health. The county must now revise the permit to include emissions monitoring and testing requirements.



Taking Shell to Court for Illegal Pollution

EIP and the Clean Air Council [filed a federal lawsuit](#) in May against Shell for illegal flaring and repeatedly violating other air pollution standards at new plant northwest of Pittsburgh that makes chemicals used to manufacture plastics. Air pollution monitors at the fenceline of the Shell Monaca plant, required by an earlier settlement that EIP and the council negotiated with Shell, have documented dangerously high concentrations of benzene at the plant's boundaries.



Petitioned EPA for Stronger Controls on Climate-Warming Methane from Landfills

An EIP-led coalition of environmental and community advocacy groups [petitioned EPA for stronger regulations](#) in June to control methane pollution from municipal landfills. These dumps release as much greenhouse gas in the U.S. as 66 million gasoline-powered vehicles driving for a year. To better control the third largest human-driven source of methane in America, after livestock and natural gas, the coalition called on EPA to require more effective gas collection systems at landfills, direct measurement of methane, and more composting of waste.

A large, dark, rusted metal pipe is shown discharging a thick, yellowish-brown liquid into a body of water. The liquid is splashing and creating a large amount of white foam and bubbles. The background is filled with tall, green grass. The text "CLEANING UP OUR WATERWAYS" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the right side of the image.

CLEANING UP OUR WATERWAYS



Secured EPA Commitment to Require Modern Pollution Controls for Slaughterhouses

In response to a lawsuit filed by EIP and Earthjustice on behalf of an environmental coalition, EPA in March [agreed](#) to publish proposed water pollution control standards for slaughterhouses and animal rendering facilities. In December, EPA proposed new rules that could slash nutrient pollution from the largest slaughterhouses that discharge directly into waterways by approximately 75 percent or more although other plants would be exempt.



Secured EPA Proposal to Require New Limits on Pollution from Coal-Fired Power Plants

In response advocacy by EIP and our partners, EPA proposed zero-discharge requirements for two of the largest waste streams at coal-fired power plants: wastewater from air pollution control devices called “scrubbers” and water used to transport coal ash. These new rules would eliminate 500 million pounds of contaminants per year.



Filed Lawsuit Against EPA to Require Modern Pollution Controls for Oil Refineries, Plastics Plants, and Other Petrochemical Industries

EIP [filed a federal lawsuit](#) in April on behalf of a coalition of environmental groups against EPA for failing to set limits on harmful nutrient pollution and contaminants like mercury, benzene, chlorides, and heavy metals in the billions of gallons of wastewater pouring out of U.S. petrochemical plants. EPA has never set limits for many pollutants and has failed to update the handful of outdated standards set almost 40 years ago for oil refineries, plastics manufacturers, and fertilizer plants.



Fighting Aluminum Plant's Illegal Mercury Pollution in Indiana

EIP notified the Alcoa Warrick aluminum smelting plant in southwest Indiana that it intended to sue the company on behalf of the Sierra Club for repeated violations of the Clean Water Act, including dumping illegal amounts of mercury, a potent neurotoxin, into the Ohio River. In response, the state of Indiana took enforcement action in court to clean up these illegal discharges.



Reducing Raw Sewage in Virginia's Historic James River

EIP, the James River Association, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation [finalized a settlement agreement](#) in March with Henrico County, Virginia, to reduce violations at the county's Water Reclamation Facility. The settlement agreement requires Henrico County, near Richmond, to invest \$1 million in an environmental project that will reduce pollution and benefit Henrico residents.



Closing Loopholes for Coal Ash Clean Up

In response to litigation brought by EIP and our partners, EPA proposed revising federal coal ash rules to close a giant loophole in cleanup standards. Right now, coal ash dumps that were closed and dried out prior to 2015 are exempt from federal regulations. This includes over 566 coal ash dumps in 40 states that are effectively unregulated, most of which continue to leak toxins into groundwater and nearby streams and rivers. EPA's proposed revision would close that loophole by requiring site owners to monitor and clean up all coal ash at a given site.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING





Report Shows Disproportionate Impact of Smog on Houston's Communities of Color

EIP's November [analysis](#) of air monitoring data shows that communities of color and lower-income neighborhoods were the hardest hit as the Houston region in 2023 suffered its worst year for smog in more than a decade. Scorching temperatures combined with air pollution—including from an expanding oil and gas industry—triggered an increase in ozone across the Houston region in recent years.



Photo Credit: Mike Calabro, urbancamper.com

Study Shows Vast Amount of Unregulated Water Pollution from Oil Refineries

EIP's national study of water pollution from oil refineries, "[Oil's Unchecked Outfalls](#)," revealed that EPA is failing in its legal responsibilities to regulate the half billion gallons of wastewater a day that pours out of U.S. refineries loaded with nitrogen, industrial salts, cyanide, arsenic, chromium, selenium, and other pollutants. Our report inspired more than 200 news stories, including on the front page of the Chicago Tribune, and helped to explain to the public the need for a lawsuit we later filed against EPA for stronger water pollution control standards.



Oil & Gas Watch Celebrates One Year Anniversary

[Oil & Gas Watch News](#) shares investigations, analysis, and community perspectives on the oil and gas industry's impact on the environment and public health. Articles in our growing newsletter have inspired reports in mainstream news outlets, including The Washington Post, Houston Chronicle, Houston Public Media, and Inside Climate News. In October 2023, Oil & Gas Watch News joined the [Covering Climate Now](#) partnership to act as a data resource and engage in investigations with other news outlets covering climate change.



Investigation Spotlights Failure of Texas to Crack Down on Pollution from Repeat Offenders

Industries in Texas reported 21,769 incidents that released 409,575 tons of illegal air pollution during malfunctions, startups, and shutdowns from September 1, 2016, to August 31, 2022. But in only one half of one percent of these incidents did the state use its legal authority to require the companies to analyze the cause of the problem and take concrete action to avoid these pollution releases in the future, according to our March report, "[The Polluter's Playbook](#)." The report inspired news coverage by The Houston Chronicle, Texas Tribune, and Houston Public Media, among other outlets.



Report Exposes the Need for Stronger Methane Capture Systems at Municipal Landfills

More than 1,100 municipal landfills emitted at least 3.7 million metric tons of methane in 2021, which had the climate-warming impact of 66 million gasoline-powered vehicles driving for a year or 79 coal-fired power plants, according to our May analysis in [“Trashing the Climate.”](#) The report’s release was part of ongoing advocacy to urge EPA to tighten up its rules for controlling this source of potent greenhouse gases.



EIP Highlights Need to Clean Up Pollution from Aluminum Refineries

EIP’s September report, [“The Aluminum Paradox,”](#) details the impacts of the aluminum “mining-to-metal” production chain and identifies opportunities for the U.S. industry to reduce climate emissions and clean up its act as aluminum becomes part of a more sustainable economy. The remaining aluminum production plants in the U.S. are old and use mostly fossil fuel-based electricity.



**GIVING COMMUNITIES
EXPERT HELP TO FIGHT
POLLUTION**



The Center for Applied Environmental Science (CAES) Continues to Help Frontline Communities with Technical Assistance. CAES works to advance environmental justice by ensuring that communities and environmental advocates have access to high-quality science and engineering expertise. Since its inception in 2020, [CAES](#) has funded over 100 consulting contracts on behalf of 68 impacted organizations or individuals, while also providing direct assistance from CAES staff. This past year alone, CAES has provided funding for 46 projects. Examples of CAES projects include:



NATURAL GAS LIQUID STORAGE (OHIO)

On behalf of the Buckeye Environmental Network, CAES retained two environmental scientists to review plans for underground storage of natural gas liquids and found numerous technical deficiencies. In the face of strong local pushback supported by CAES technical support, the company let the permits expire without initiating construction, and has not re-applied.



BENZENE MONITORING (PENNSYLVANIA)

Starting in 2021, EIP, the Breathe Project, and Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE Lab, in partnership with local residents, conducted an 18-month benzene monitoring near the U.S. Steel Clairton Coke Works in Pennsylvania. Monitoring results showed unhealthy long-term average benzene levels in three locations and suggested that there may also be periodic episodes of unsafe acute (1- to 24-hour) exposures. These monitoring results helped secure proposed federal rules that would require monitoring of benzene at the fenceline of Clairton Coke Works and other coke oven plants, as well as action to clean up benzene emissions when emissions exceed a certain threshold.



CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is a new and largely untested technology that presents a range of risks including the escape of greenhouse gases, environmental contamination, and human health impacts. This past year, CAES hosted a [webinar](#) for community and environmental advocates. Technical experts discussed the risks of re-using pipelines for CO2 transport, and discussed the risks of abandoned, leaky wells located near these projects. CAES is now working with the same experts to prepare research papers and interactive data tools to make abandoned well data available to the public during permit reviews.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The support of our friends and allies allowed the Environmental Integrity Project to expand our programs and increase our impact in 2023, and to further advocate for fair and effective enforcement of environmental laws.

The support we receive allows us to keep growing our work to protect human health and the natural world, and we are grateful for every contribution.

Thank you again for making our work possible, and please don't hesitate to check out our website at www.environmentalintegrity.org for more information.

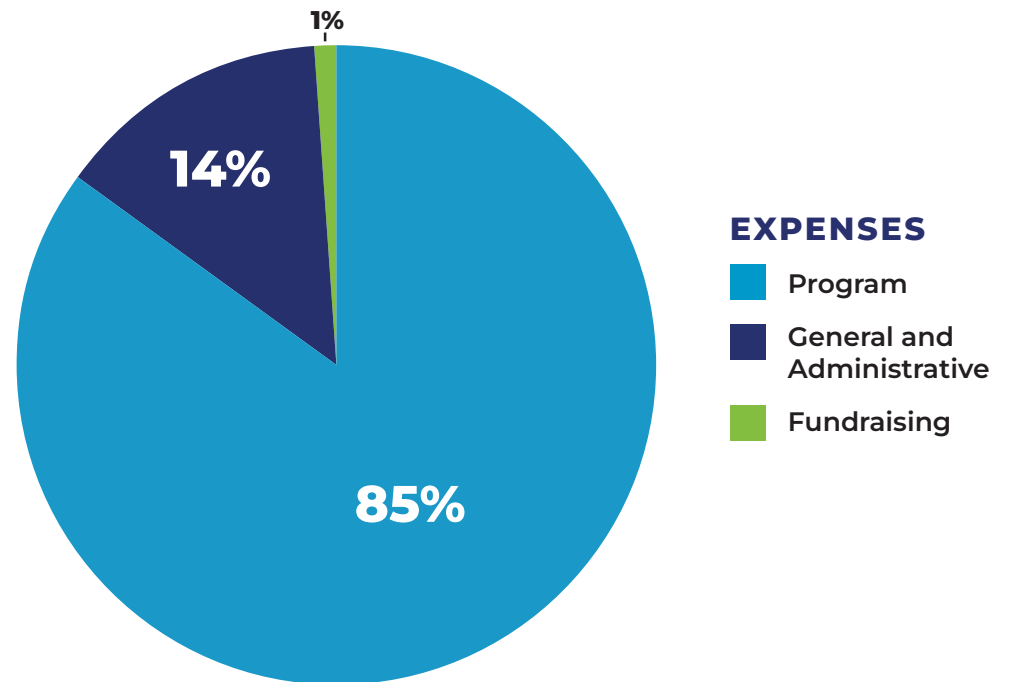
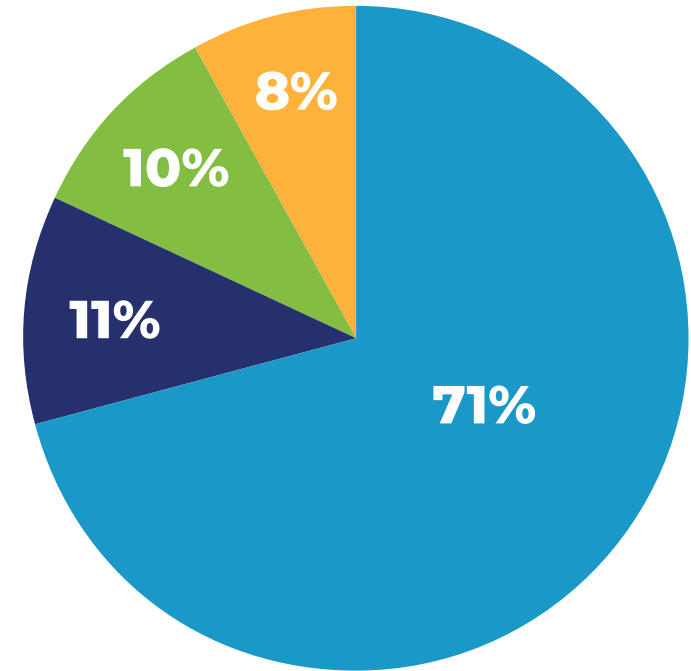
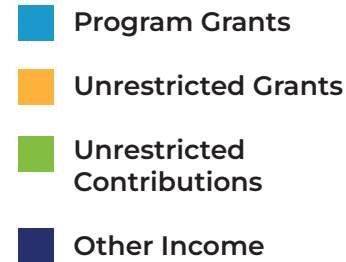
2023 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

INCOME	
Program Grants	\$4,552,950
Unrestricted Grants	\$660,000
Unrestricted Contributions	\$494,718
*Other Income	\$4,946,358
Total Income	\$10,654,026
EXPENSES	
Program Expenses	\$5,884,150
General and Administrative Expenses	\$959,787
Fundraising Expenses	\$56,905
Total Expenses	\$6,900,842
Net Income	\$3,753,184

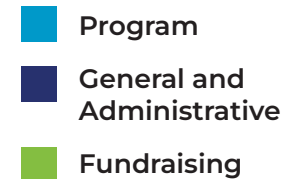
*Other income includes grants and carryover income from prior years, fee recovery income, and interest income.

Note: This report contains preliminary estimates to be audited.

INCOME



EXPENSES



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AT LEAST \$50,000

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\$1,000 TO \$49,999

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¹The Town Creek Foundation sunset in 2019 and continues to fund our activities through 2024.

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