Consumer Protection

Defend The Consumer Bureau

The Great Recession made it clear: We need a watchdog agency on Wall Street, devoted to creating and enforcing fair, clear and transparent rules to protect consumers.

That’s why we helped create the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—to be our consumer cop on the financial beat. In just six years, it’s been a huge success, returning nearly $12 billion to more than 29 million people who were ripped off by companies that broke the law.

But with the Trump administration and some in Congress looking to weaken or eliminate the Consumer Bureau, OSPIRG sprang into action. With your support, we’re holding the line to defend the Consumer Bureau.

In June, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a massive package of cuts and rollbacks to financial protections for everyday people. We’re calling it the Wrong CHOICE Act, and if it becomes law, it would put our economy at risk and dismantle the Consumer Bureau as we know it.

Our Watchdog On Wall St.

That’s why we’re doing everything we can to stop this bill in the Senate. Already, we’ve generated more than 45,000 messages to senators from members like you asking them to defend the Consumer Bureau.

Ban Roundup

Calling On Communities To Ban Monsanto’s Roundup

Mounting scientific evidence has shown that the combination of chemicals in Monsanto’s Roundup can cause cancer and other serious health problems. These chemicals are even starting to show up in our food, air and water.

That’s why OSPIRG launched a campaign to ban Roundup unless and until independent research proves it’s safe. But Monsanto and others are doing everything they can to discourage decision makers from doing a full and honest assessment of the risks of Roundup. Monsanto has even “ghostwritten” studies affirming Roundup’s safety, asking scientists to “just sign their names” to the studies.

In the absence of federal action, cities and states must take the lead to protect our health and well-being. We were glad to see California add glyphosate to the state’s list of cancer-causing chemicals, and other cities across the country are already in the process of eliminating glyphosate from their public spaces. Now, we’re calling on more communities to follow their lead, and ban the use of Roundup.

THE CONSUMER BUREAU PROTECTS VETS—Consumer Program Director Ed Mierzwinski joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other allies to release “Protecting Those Who Serve,” OSPIRG Foundation’s report into how the Consumer Bureau protects service members and veterans from abuse in the financial marketplace.

Member Resources

THRIVING COMMUNITIES GUIDE
Read our report looking into 10 communities that have taken action to limit glyphosate use.
www.ospirg.org
Pledge To Be Toxic-Free

Finding Out What Is In Our Personal Care Products

Over the past year, your support has helped us make great strides in our efforts to get the makers of personal care product to either disclose or remove toxic ingredients from their products.

After OSPIRG helped push Procter & Gamble and Unilever to take steps to improve ingredient transparency, SC Johnson—maker of products like Glade—responded to our call for change. The company agreed to remove galaxolide, a toxic chemical associated with developmental problems, from its products.

Then for Mother’s Day, OSPIRG joined coalition partners to deliver more than 150,000 petitions to L’Oréal, calling on the company to disclose fragrance ingredients and to remove chemicals of concern from its products.

BECAUSE WE’RE WORTH IT—We joined other coalition partners to deliver more than 150,000 petitions to L’Oréal, calling on the company to disclose fragrance ingredients and to remove chemicals of concern from its products.

and blue states across the country, from Connecticut to Alaska.

It’s called automatic voter registration, and it works like this: Whenever a citizen interacts with a specific government agency, often the DMV, they’re automatically added to the voter rolls unless they opt out.

More and more states are adopting the policy. Thanks to the hard work of our colleagues at Illinois PIRG, this summer Illinois became the tenth state to approve automatic voter registration, passing the bill into law with unanimous, bipartisan support. Now, OSPIRG is working with our members to modernize the vote in Oregon and across the country.

Democracy

Red And Blue States Agree On Modernizing The Vote

A simple, effective way to make our elections more modern, convenient and accurate is being adopted in red and blue states across the country.

Healthy Farms

Reducing Farms’ Reliance On Chemicals & Fertilizers

Today, Americans are interested in whether their food is sustainable, and whether the farming practices that produce it help or hurt our health and the environment. Yet we spend billions of tax dollars every year on subsidies that incentivize practices that require more and more chemicals, putting our food, drinking water and health at risk.

But many farmers and researchers agree we can grow as much food as we do now without relying so heavily on chemicals. Shouldn’t we invest in farming practices that grow the food we need and also protect our health and environment?

OSPIRG Foundation is building a coalition of concerned citizens, farmers and health professionals. Together, we can convince our decision makers in Washington, D.C., that we need better farm policies—ones that support healthy farms and healthy families.

Toxics

EPA Head Ignores Science On Dangerous Insecticide

Crucial decisions that will affect our children’s health should rely on scientific evidence. But Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt’s decision not to ban chlorpyrifos, an insecticide sprayed on the food we eat, ignored the EPA’s own scientists, who warned last year that chlorpyrifos is linked to brain and developmental damage in children.

For years, science has shown that chlorpyrifos is dangerous. In fact, the EPA banned the indoor use of the insecticide more than a decade ago. But it’s still used on food crops, and the EPA estimates that 90 percent of American women have unsafe levels of chlorpyrifos in their bloodstream. Alongside our members, OSPIRG is calling on the EPA to revisit its decision, and on Oregon and other states to ban chlorpyrifos.

Be An Advocate For Oregon’s Future

OSPIRG and OSPIRG Foundation gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work for consumers and toward a healthy democracy in our state.

For information, call 1-800-841-7299, ext. 310, or email plannedgiving@osp.org.
Advocacy

Legislative Victories And Setbacks In 2017

With support from our members, OSPIRG stood up for the public interest in 2017, building public support for critical legislation and advocating in the halls of power on behalf of Oregonians like you.

Here’s a rundown of some of the bills we supported in the 2017 legislative session:

- **Protecting consumers from surprise out-of-network medical bills (HB 2339):** Places a ban on billing consumers for more than the in-network rate when they unintentionally receive care from out-of-network providers at in-network facilities, and creates a process to ensure that providers receive a reasonable reimbursement in these situations. Passed.

- **Protecting antibiotics (SB 785):** Would have stopped the routine low-dose use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry production, and required tracking and reporting on the use of antibiotics on factory farms. Did not receive a vote.

- **Transparency and accountability for prescription drug prices (HB 2387):** Would have reduced consumer out-of-pocket costs and required prescription drug corporations to explain their pricing practices. Passed House Health Care Committee but did not receive a floor vote.

- **Small donor democracy (HB 2578):** Would have created a publicly financed matching system to amplify the power of small donors in state elections to counterbalance the power of big money in politics. Did not receive a vote.

- **Crackdown on abuse of anonymous shell companies (HB 2191):** Requires more transparency when forming a corporation in Oregon and provides law enforcement with more tools for preventing the use of shell corporations for criminal activity. Passed.

- **Public records reform (SB 106, SB 481 and HB 2101):** A package of bills that creates Oregon’s first binding deadlines for public bodies to respond to requests for public information, creates a new public records watchdog office, initiates a review of Oregon’s hundreds of exemptions to public records law, and creates a Sunshine Committee to recommend changes to strengthen the public’s right to know. All passed.

Thanks To You

Dear OSPIRG member,

In the current moment, looking at the American scene feels like using a big cracked mirror. The events of the day emphasize the differences between Americans—between the people living on our coasts and the residents of the great center of our country, between different ethnic groups, between economic strata, between red and blue. But the problems we’re working on here at OSPIRG—the problems that your support helps us address—don’t respect those lines. They affect all of us. And the solutions we strive for would make all of our lives better.

We all need to know that antibiotics are going to be available for us if we’re facing a deadly infection. We all need to be assured that the world’s enormous financial institutions, with their seemingly endless power in the age of digital information, will be held to account for their actions when they endeavor to place profitability ahead of fair practices. We need to make our transportation system make sense, economically and environmentally.

We need to evolve from a throwaway society to a reduce/reuse society, cutting way back on the stuff we “need” to begin with.

And we need to be able to look ahead with anticipation, not fear, to the potential for better lives in a safer, healthier world that makes wise use of its unparalleled resources—natural, intellectual and human.

Thanks for being a part of our community.

Charlie Fisher, State Director
info@ospirg.org
More States & Restaurants Act On Antibiotics

Thanks to the support of our members, OSPIRG has been able to change the marketplace, shifting some of the country’s biggest restaurants—like McDonald’s, Subway and KFC—away from selling meat raised with the routine use of medically important antibiotics.

Now, other chains are responding to keep up with their competitors. We celebrated in June when we learned that Burger King, the fourth-largest restaurant chain in the United States, committed to no longer serve chicken raised on antibiotics important to human medicine by the end of 2018.

Action on this public health threat isn’t limited to the marketplace. Thanks in part to the hard work and leadership of our colleagues at Maryland PIRG, Maryland became the second state in the country (after California) to ban the routine use of antibiotics on livestock and poultry. This is a huge victory that was only possible thanks to our members laying the groundwork of support it took to win. Now, we’re calling on Oregon and other states to follow Maryland and California’s lead, and take action to stop the overuse of antibiotics.