

[ Union of  
Concerned Scientists

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



**50** | YEARS *of*  
SCIENCE  
*and* ACTION





# 50 YEARS OF SCIENCE AND ACTION

*The Union of Concerned Scientists tackles the most urgent problems. We are scientists, engineers, economists, activists, and everyday people using science to protect our health, safety, and environment.*



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CHAIR

*We might have wished for a rosier backdrop to celebrate our organization's 50th anniversary this year. But as the origin story of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) helps us recall, instability and injustice can give rise to movements that lead to lasting change.*

In our founding year of 1969, the Vietnam War was raging and the US president showed little regard for the will of the people. Among the groups organizing and protesting in response were scientists and students who demanded that science be used to serve the public good, launching UCS in the process.

That mission has resonated with supporters like you ever since. With your help, we've made amazing strides in building a healthier planet and safer world, as you can see at [www.ucsusa.org/history](http://www.ucsusa.org/history). We're delighted to show you in the pages of this report that, even in the current political environment, we're making progress on many issues, including the existential threats of climate change and nuclear weapons. At the state level, recent progress has been astonishing, with a number of states embracing a goal of 100 percent clean energy and adopting standards to cut global warming emissions from cars and trucks.

And we're excited for the future. Growing public support for climate action and the Green New Deal

shows that people are eager to confront our gravest challenges with ambitious solutions. To make the systemic changes required, we'll need a broad and diverse coalition, so we've been reaching out to churchgoers in the Southeast to discuss climate change, the US Conference of Mayors on nuclear nonproliferation and the fossil fuel industry's responsibility for climate damages, as well as artists, community activists, and environmental justice allies.

We are actively preparing to take advantage of what the 2020 election may yield: a government committed to science-based decisionmaking, dramatically cutting carbon emissions, supporting sustainable farming, and lowering the risk of nuclear war. But we also have a strategy for moving forward if the election does not bring the needed change. This work, and everything we've achieved since 1969, would not be possible without members like you. Thank you for your continuing support.



**KEN KIMMELL** President



**ANNE R. KAPUSCINSKI** Chair



## THE SCIENCE OF FAIR ELECTIONS

UCS Kendall Science Fellow Michael Latner has been using robust scientific analysis to show how gerrymandering and restrictive voting laws can undermine public health and safety. Latner has found a direct correlation between suppressed voter turnout and communities disproportionately affected by pollution—typically low-income communities and communities of color. The remedy, he says, is to use science as a tool in these communities' fight for the right to vote and have a greater say in the policies that affect their daily lives. Automatic voter registration, increased ballot access, and the creation of nonpartisan and proportional election districts would make elected officials more accountable to their constituents.



# BUILDING THE POWER NEEDED FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

*We need all voices joining together to restore science to its rightful role in American democracy, and we have been amazed by the number of UCS supporters eager to advocate for science in service of their communities. We've been working to turn this enthusiasm into meaningful action.*

The UCS Science Network offers a powerful suite of tools to help scientists and technical experts become effective activists and organizers—who then inspire others to make positive change. The network's more than 25,000 members have access to mentoring opportunities that pair early-career scientists with experienced advocates, resources for developing as leaders of their own local teams, events where they can make meaningful connections with local and national policymakers, and

a grant program that helps fund local science-based advocacy. In the process, we seek to amplify the voices of African American and Latino advocates because we know communities of color have been disproportionately burdened by environmental injustice and unfair policies, and science hasn't always been on the right side of history.

UCS has been working nonstop with scientists and non-scientists alike to raise the importance of science-based policymaking as an issue in US elections. In the buildup to

the 2020 election, our Science Rising initiative—a nationwide effort to build a broad network of partners fighting for science, equity, and justice in our democracy—has put the pressure on all candidates to clearly articulate how they plan to address the two existential threats facing humanity: nuclear weapons and global warming. And we're also using science to show why reforms are needed in our electoral system (see the sidebar).

With your support, we're building a powerful coalition and laying the foundation for a brighter future.

# WHO PAYS FOR THE CLIMATE DAMAGE TO COME?

*In July, the UCS report Killer Heat in the United States projected a dramatic rise in extreme heat, which, when combined with high humidity, represents an unprecedented threat to human health.*

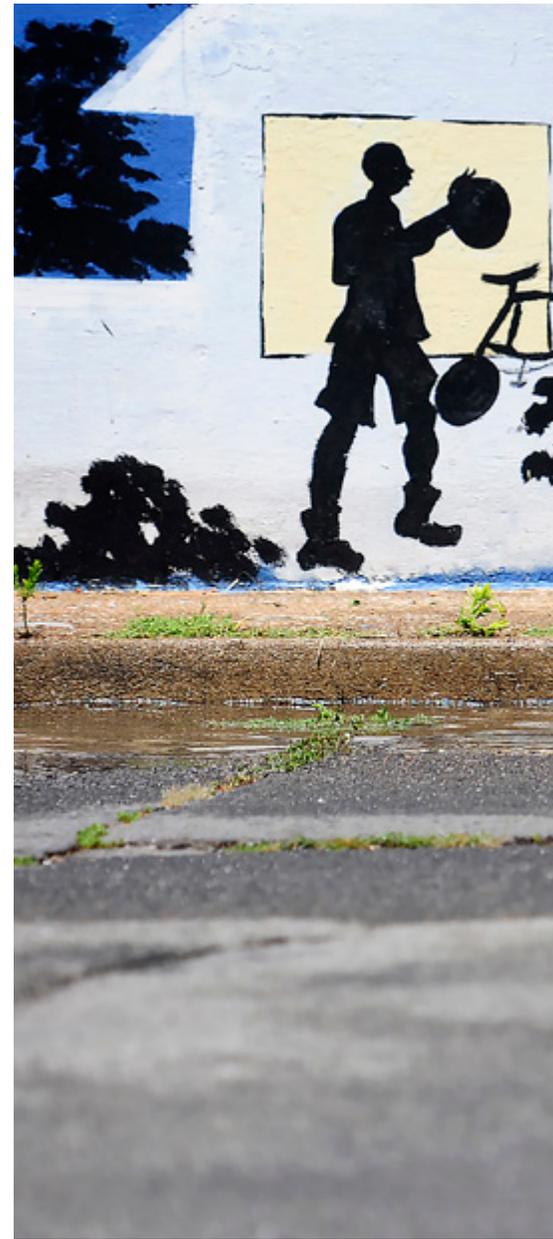
People across the country will experience “off-the-charts” heat—conditions that the National Weather Service heat index can’t calculate (i.e., “feels-like” temperatures above 127°F)—in the next 30 years. The choices we make to reduce heat-trapping emissions can make a difference, but the clock is ticking. The media reacted to *Killer Heat* by running more than 1,000 stories about our findings, in nearly every state, in just the first week after the report’s release.

*Killer Heat* follows original, news-making analyses UCS

published in 2018 and 2017 illustrating the threat climate-driven sea level rise poses to coastal communities. To combat coastal flooding and heat-related illness, the United States will be forced to spend billions of dollars. Will the people being hurt by heat and flooding also have to pay for the damages?

Through pioneering research, UCS has been determining fossil fuel companies’ share of responsibility for these damages, paving the way to hold them accountable. A 2017 peer-reviewed journal article led by UCS scientists found that the carbon

emissions of just 90 companies were responsible for nearly half the rise in global temperature since 1854 and around 30 percent of sea level rise. As this annual report went to press, we were awaiting publication of a similar paper attributing responsibility for ocean acidification, which harms coral, shellfish, and other marine life. These studies not only add to the growing field of climate attribution research but also provide the scientific foundation for more than a dozen lawsuits that have been brought against fossil fuel





producers by states and municipalities around the country, as well as the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

Our work is improving the prospects for federal climate action following the 2020 election by influencing the public's views about climate change. Recent polling conducted at our request by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found a majority of people across the United States (57 percent) believe fossil fuel companies are responsible for climate damages and should pay some of the costs.

**50** YEARS of  
SCIENCE  
and ACTION

## VISIT OUR TIMELINE OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Throughout our 50 years, we have built an impressive record of success, exposing weaknesses in missile defense systems and nuclear plant safety, shaping international climate and deforestation agreements, pioneering clean energy policy, advancing fuel efficiency, and fighting back when science is censored, manipulated, or sidelined from decisions that affect our health and safety. Thank you for these wins and more!

<http://www.ucsusa.org/history>



**50** YEARS of  
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## **CELEBRATING OUR SHARED SUCCESS**

UCS got a chance to personally thank many of the people who made our 50 years of growth and victories possible—people like you—at four anniversary events around the country, near each of our offices: in Cambridge, MA; Chicago, IL; San Francisco, CA; and Washington, DC. Hundreds of our dedicated supporters met UCS staff and board members, discussing ways we can work together to achieve our common goals and hearing from guest speakers including members of Congress and some of our key allies in the fight for clean energy and environmental justice.



# GETTING TO 100 PERCENT CLEAN ENERGY

*Momentum continues to build around the country for a shift away from fossil fuels and toward an economy powered by wind and solar power. States that had already established renewable electricity standards—a policy approach pioneered by UCS—have recently begun setting their sights (and their standards) much higher.*

In March, for example, New Mexico committed to generating 100 percent of its electricity from clean energy by 2045—becoming the third state (after Hawaii and California) to do so. New Mexico’s plan follows a path laid out by UCS in a 2017 analysis that demonstrated how cost-effective the transition would be for the state.

Our analysis and advocacy, bolstered by a petition from the local scientific community, also helped

convince Washington State to make a similar commitment in May, and Maine set a goal of 100 percent renewable energy by 2050 a month later. UCS also contributed to passage of another bill in Maine that makes it easier for homeowners and renters to install solar panels, with some assistance specifically reserved for lower-income households.

In the fight for a national renewable electricity standard, UCS provided

the analytic basis for legislation introduced by Senator Tom Udall in June that would move the country toward 50 percent renewable energy in 15 years and full decarbonization by 2050, using a completely new approach that requires every state to begin building renewable capacity. We’re committed to the ambitious goal of getting a national standard passed through both houses of Congress after the 2020 election.



## BRINGING ATTENTION BACK TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Nuclear weapons are as much a threat to human existence as they were during the Cold War, and President Trump's dealings with Iran and North Korea have only increased the dangers. His administration has expressed its willingness to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict—thereby starting a nuclear war—and US policy gives the president the authority to order a first strike without consulting anyone.

UCS is working to make sure the next administration changes this policy and, over the past year, we have made nuclear weapons an issue in the presidential campaign. We pressed candidates on the campaign trail to discuss whether the United States should use nuclear weapons first, and commissioned polls showing a large majority of people in Iowa, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Ohio believe the United States should never do so. UCS successfully encouraged Senator Elizabeth Warren to introduce

a bill supporting a no-first-use policy, and several other candidates have voiced their support. *The Hill* and *Detroit News* published our op-eds calling for a question about no-first-use at the Democratic debate in Detroit, and after some 11,000 UCS supporters sent emails to CNN urging the same thing, we spoke with moderator Jake Tapper and he did ask the candidates about the policy.

Meanwhile, more cities and states endorsed the “Back from the Brink” resolution drafted by UCS, which lays out five commonsense steps the United States should take to reduce the risk of nuclear war (including a no-first-use policy). And we secured favorable provisions in the House version of the national defense bill that would eliminate funding to deploy a redundant and provocative new low-yield warhead, while requiring more realistic testing of the US missile defense system.

# CLEAN TRANSPORTATION FOR EVERYONE

Transportation—from cars carrying commuters to 18-wheelers shipping goods across the country—is the largest contributor to global warming emissions in the United States, which means it’s also the sector where UCS can make the biggest difference. We’re working from coast to coast to ensure all people have access to clean transportation.

UCS has been battling the Trump administration’s efforts to gut the clean car standards we helped develop, which not only improve fuel efficiency but also keep tons of global warming emissions out of the atmosphere. Over the past year, our scientists, analysts, and Science Network members provided testimony, wrote reports, submitted thousands of comments, and were quoted in news stories voicing their opposition to the proposed rollback. We also helped persuade Colorado to join the bloc of states that have set their own clean car standards in the absence of a national standard.

With progress stalled federally, our analysts and their community partners are making the case for clean

transportation options at the regional and local levels, using geographically specific analyses. Two 2019 UCS reports provided evidence of racial disparities in exposure to vehicular pollution in California and the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic; the latter is now informing that region’s multi-state initiative to cap transportation emissions and invest the proceeds in safe, equitable options. Our study of the potential impact of autonomous vehicles, or self-driving cars, on the Washington, DC, metro area offered policymakers clear guidelines for maximizing the benefits and minimizing the harms of this nascent technology.

And back on the West Coast, we scored a win that will help clear California’s air: after UCS staff held dozens of meetings with state policymakers, wrote blog posts, submitted comments, and delivered letters from mayors and public health officials across the state, California regulators approved 100 percent zero-emissions transit buses throughout the state by 2040.



# USING SCIENCE TO GUIDE DECISIONS ABOUT OUR FOOD

The Trump administration has filled leadership roles in the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)—the agency responsible for ensuring our food is healthy and safe—with executives and lobbyists from the pesticide and junk food industries. UCS is working to ensure corporate interests don't sideline science from policymaking that affects us all.

For example, a 2019 UCS analysis showed how better, science-based dietary guidelines could improve the health of millions: if the US government had followed the best available science by recommending limits on the consumption of processed meats and added sugar—and helped people follow them—it could have prevented tens of thousands of deaths from colorectal cancer and diabetes and reduced medical costs by \$18 billion in 2018 alone. We're closely monitoring Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and the USDA committee charged with updating dietary guidelines in 2020 to ensure the

outcome is based on science, not the financial interests of the meat or soda industries.

Current US policy and company purchasing decisions also encourage farming practices that damage soils, pollute water, and contribute to climate change. Another 2019 UCS report demonstrated that we could significantly reduce erosion, water pollution, and heat-trapping emissions from nitrogen fertilizers by shifting even a small amount of grain production—approximately the amount of corn and oats grown for two top-selling breakfast cereals—to more sustainable practices. A larger shift aided by government and corporate policies would have enormous benefits.

To improve public understanding of the system that shapes our food choices, UCS launched an interactive tool that takes shoppers through a virtual supermarket, revealing problems associated with common items such as coffee, eggs, and meat—and what we can do differently.





## MORE VITAL WORK YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

In May, UCS publicized a deplorable milestone when the Trump administration, partway through its third year, attacked science for the 100th time—more than the George W. Bush administration committed in eight years. UCS has fought to minimize the damage from these often under-the-radar abuses by bringing them to light and then working with Congress on oversight. During the past year we:

- **Stood up for science and public safety** by filing a complaint under NOAA’s scientific integrity policy after President Trump erroneously and repeatedly claimed Alabama was at risk from Hurricane Dorian, and the administration tried to prevent National Weather Service scientists from speaking publicly about the matter.
- **Broke the news** about the EPA’s decision to eliminate a critical air pollution advisory panel—with coverage by Bloomberg, National Public Radio, and the *New York Times*—and took the unprecedented step of convening the panel ourselves so it could provide additional advice.
- **Responded rapidly** to the Trump administration’s announcement that it would eliminate one-third of all federal science advisory panels (which influence government policies on health, the environment, and other critical matters), leading to an invitation to write a column for *Nature*.
- **Stalled an attempt** by the EPA to restrict the types of science used in its decisionmaking; Administrator Andrew Wheeler conceded that the 600,000 comments UCS helped generate required the agency to address problems with its proposal.
- **Successfully pushed** to add a widely used class of toxic chemicals known as PFAS to the list of regulated hazardous substances; this followed our work last year exposing the Trump administration’s attempted suppression of a report on PFAS.
- **Reported on damage** done to wildlife and public lands by the Department of the Interior, leading to a hearing by the House Natural Resources Committee.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal year ending September 30, 2019

## REVENUE

The Union of Concerned Scientists continues to benefit from the generosity of our more than 120,000 members and foundations, who work in partnership with us to build a healthier and safer world. In fiscal 2019, the majority of our support—79 percent—came from generous individual donors through outright and planned gifts, while support from foundations represented 20 percent of our revenue. Other sources provided the remaining 1 percent of revenue, and our board reserve funds provided \$2,892,109 to support operations.

**79%**

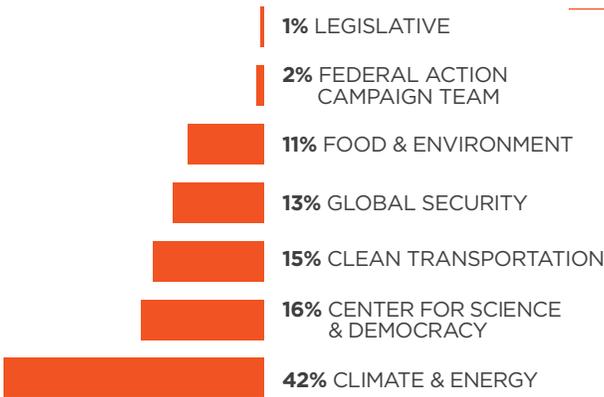
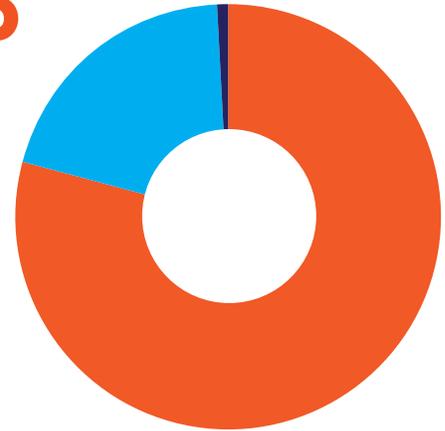
INDIVIDUAL GIVING

**20%**

FOUNDATIONS

**1%**

OTHER



## EXPENSES

Eighty-eight percent of every dollar donated to UCS in fiscal 2019 directly funded our program work, with the remaining 12 percent spent on the critical administrative infrastructure and fundraising that support our programs. With an annual budget of \$41 million, UCS continues to strengthen our unique ability to help solve our planet's most pressing problems with the power of independent science.

**88%**

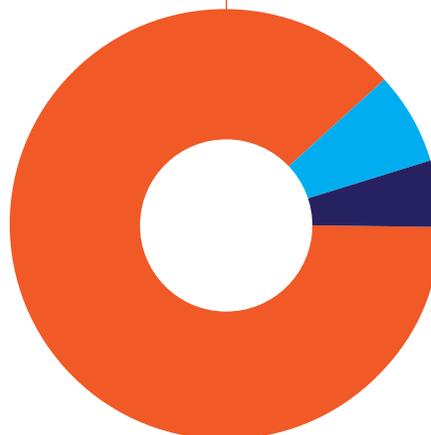
PROGRAMS

**7%**

FUNDRAISING

**5%**

GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE



Note: These results had not been audited at press time; for our audited results, visit the UCS website at [www.ucsusa.org/annualreport](http://www.ucsusa.org/annualreport).

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal year ending September 30, 2019

OPERATING REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT	UNRESTRICTED			RESTRICTED	TOTAL
	GENERAL OPERATING	BOARD DESIGNATED	TOTAL UNRESTRICTED		
Membership and contributions	\$25,393,921		\$25,393,921	\$1,833,928	\$27,227,850
Foundation and other institutional grants	12,646		12,646	7,571,338	7,583,984
Net investment return		1,016,880	1,016,880	194,727	1,211,607
Realized planned gifts	1,549,951	1,549,951	3,099,901		3,099,901
In-kind contributions	134,916		134,916		134,916
Other revenue	231,354		231,354		231,354
Interfund transfer	2,892,109	(2,892,109)			
Spending policy transfer	1,439,792	(1,439,792)			
Net assets released from restriction	9,017,198		9,017,198	(9,017,198)	
<b>Total operating revenue and other support</b>	<b>40,671,886</b>	<b>(1,765,069)</b>	<b>38,906,816</b>	<b>582,795</b>	<b>39,489,612</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Programs:					
Center for Science and Democracy	5,769,817		5,769,817		5,769,817
Clean Transportation	5,310,157		5,310,157		5,310,157
Climate and Energy	14,957,654		14,957,654		14,957,654
Federal Action Campaign Team	911,594		911,594		911,594
Food and Environment	3,940,359		3,940,359		3,940,359
Global Security	4,608,066		4,608,066		4,608,066
Legislative	415,847		415,847		415,847
<b>Total programs</b>	<b>35,913,494</b>		<b>35,913,494</b>		<b>35,913,494</b>
Supporting services:					
Fundraising	2,811,946		2,811,946		2,811,946
General and administrative	1,946,446		1,946,446		1,946,446
<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>4,758,392</b>		<b>4,758,392</b>		<b>4,758,392</b>
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>40,671,886</b>		<b>40,671,886</b>		<b>40,671,886</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE TRANSFER FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>(1,765,070)</b>	<b>(1,765,070)</b>	<b>582,795</b>	<b>(1,182,275)</b>
Spending policy transfer for capital expenditures	795,581	(795,581)			
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>795,581</b>	<b>(2,560,651)</b>	<b>(1,765,070)</b>	<b>582,795</b>	<b>(1,182,275)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>7,042,149</b>	<b>35,679,491</b>	<b>42,721,640</b>	<b>6,045,772</b>	<b>48,767,412</b>
<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$7,837,730</b>	<b>\$33,118,840</b>	<b>\$40,956,570</b>	<b>\$6,628,567</b>	<b>\$47,585,137</b>

Note: These results had not been audited at press time; for our audited results, visit the UCS website at [www.ucsusa.org/annualreport](http://www.ucsusa.org/annualreport). Shaded area indicates operating budget.

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*The following individuals dedicate their valuable time, resources, and expertise to the Union of Concerned Scientists.*

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Union of Concerned Scientists  
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and Foley, Hoag and Eliot

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*As the Union of Concerned Scientists marks its 50th anniversary, we are grateful for the foresight of our founders and the passion and loyalty of you, our supporters. Over the past five decades, scientists, engineers, health care providers, activists, and everyday people have joined with us to advocate for science-based solutions. Today, we're larger and stronger than ever, and we're confident our most important accomplishments lie ahead. Thank you.*



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