

Inside Climate News

America's #1 Environmental Newsroom

IMPACT REPORT 2026

Understanding Impact

Inside Climate News has tens of millions of readers, hundreds of thousands of subscribers, and hundreds of media partners who co-publish our journalism. It's taken us almost 20 years to get here. Big numbers are just the start of the story of our newsroom, the oldest and largest of its kind in the nation.

Dig into these pages and you'll find a careful chronicle of five ways our work makes a qualitative difference. The very ways in which you'd want journalism to wield influence:

- By provoking policy change from both sides of the aisle.
- By holding power to account for its blindness and abuse.
- By scrutinizing solutions.
- By amplifying marginalized voices.
- By strengthening the media ecosystem that sustains the practice of democracy.

Our newsroom is filling a critical role at a time when local news is declining, mainstream outlets are shutting down their climate coverage, and ignorance is running rampant. It's also just the moment when climate and environment issues have finally crash landed on the kitchen table.

We've been building Inside Climate News to meet this moment — and any others that may challenge our ability to understand and respond. Scan these pages to see how we have made a difference in communities across the country this year. If you want to learn even more, click into our impact channel, and support our work if you can.

We provide all our articles at no cost to readers and media partners alike, to reach as many people as possible with fair and accurate news about a crisis that desperately needs our attention — with as much impact as we can muster.



David Sassoon
Founder & Publisher

ICN REPORTING MOVES POLICY AND DECISION-MAKERS

Our reporting puts environmental stories at the forefront of political discourse, triggering direct action at the local, state, and national levels.

Coverage Accelerates Response to Corpus Christi Water Crisis

In early 2026, Corpus Christi's water reservoirs were on track to reach emergency levels within months, and fully run out by 2027. That scenario wasn't just a disaster for the city's residents. It would also cut off the flow of jet fuel to Texas airports and other oil exports from one of the nation's largest petroleum ports, triggering potential shockwaves through energy markets in Texas and beyond. Inside Climate News found that officials had no plan to address the crisis, save hoping for rain. After our reporting, Gov. Greg Abbott issued several emergency orders and threatened to take over the city if leaders didn't find a way to avoid a potential catastrophe, a state senator called an emergency meeting to try to re-authorize the city's seawater desalination project, and activists gathered nearly 13,000 signatures to put industrial drought surcharges on the ballot in November.



Dylan Baddour/Inside Climate News

Corpus Christi's largest remaining reservoir, Lake Texana, photographed in March 2026.



Lee Hedgepeth/Inside Climate News

Alabama Power's James H. Miller Electric Generating Plant in Jefferson County, Ala., has been the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States for nine consecutive years.

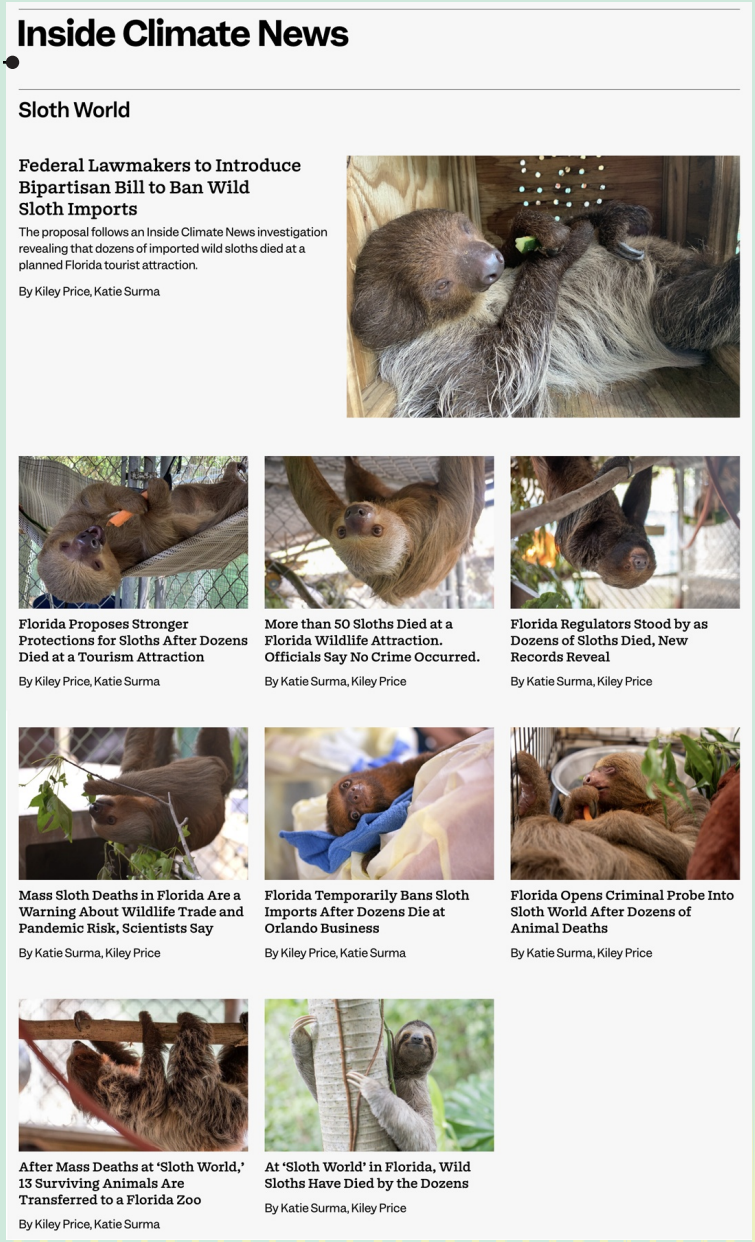
Alabama Power Investigation Fuels Utility Reform and Rate Freeze

Inside Climate News' ongoing investigation into Alabama's lax regulation of its local utility, Alabama Power, found that residential customers pay the highest total electric bills in the country—in one of the poorest states—while the company reports after-tax annual net profit of $1.5 billion. The utility contacted media outlets across the state to try to discredit our investigation, but our partners re-published it anyway. A month after our first story, the Alabama Public Service Commission approved a sweeping package of temporary changes that will freeze electric rates for two years. Utility regulation became a hot topic in the Alabama Legislature, resulting in the most significant utility reform bill the state has seen in four decades.

ICN REPORTING MOVES POLICY AND DECISION-MAKERS

Investigation Prompts Federal Bill to Ban Sloth Imports

An Inside Climate News investigation revealed dozens of wild sloths from South America died at a planned Orlando tourism attraction called Sloth World that wasn't ready to receive them. Our reporting went viral on social media and drew international attention, provoking calls for stricter regulations and a government investigation. Within a few weeks after the first story was published, Sloth World shuttered, the Florida Attorney General's office announced a criminal investigation into the deaths, and the state ordered a temporary ban on all sloth imports. Six months later, federal lawmakers introduced the SLOTHS Act to prohibit imports of wild-caught sloths into the United States.



Inside Climate News

Sloth World

Federal Lawmakers to Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Ban Wild Sloth Imports

The proposal follows an Inside Climate News investigation revealing that dozens of imported wild sloths died at a planned Florida tourist attraction.

By Kiley Price, Katie Surma

Florida Proposes Stronger Protections for Sloths After Dozens Died at a Tourism Attraction

By Kiley Price, Katie Surma

More than 50 Sloths Died at a Florida Wildlife Attraction. Officials Say No Crime Occurred.

By Katie Surma, Kiley Price

Florida Regulators Stood by as Dozens of Sloths Died, New Records Reveal

By Katie Surma, Kiley Price

Mass Sloth Deaths in Florida Are a Warning About Wildlife Trade and Pandemic Risk, Scientists Say

By Katie Surma, Kiley Price

Florida Temporarily Bans Sloth Imports After Dozens Die at Orlando Business

By Kiley Price, Katie Surma

Florida Opens Criminal Probe Into Sloth World After Dozens of Animal Deaths

By Katie Surma, Kiley Price

After Mass Deaths at 'Sloth World,' 13 Surviving Animals Are Transferred to a Florida Zoo

By Kiley Price, Katie Surma

At 'Sloth World' in Florida, Wild Sloths Have Died by the Dozens

By Katie Surma, Kiley Price

Reporting Brings Iowa's 110 Billion Pound Manure Problem to Governor's Race

Iowa is one of only two states where the rate of new cancer cases is on the rise. Inside Climate News reporting revealed that, despite a nearly 50 percent increase in nitrate levels in Iowa's waterways and mounting evidence linking agricultural practices to pollution and health threats, no one is tracking where the state's 110 billion pounds of nitrogen-rich manure goes each year. Our findings were republished in newspapers across the state, triggering a surge of op-eds, policy briefs, and related coverage by other local journalists. A few months later, a frontrunner in the race for governor made reform of manure management a campaign promise.



Inside Climate News

Justice & Health

Factory Farms in Iowa Generate 110 Billion Pounds of Manure Per Year. No One Tracks Where It's Going.

Manure management planning could prevent fertilizer pollution. But an antiquated system isn't doing enough to track manure, a former state employee says.

By Anika Jane Beamer, Nina B. Elkadi
December 4, 2025

ICN REPORTING HOLDS POWER TO ACCOUNT

We expose wrongdoings by polluters, corporations and governments that would otherwise stay hidden.

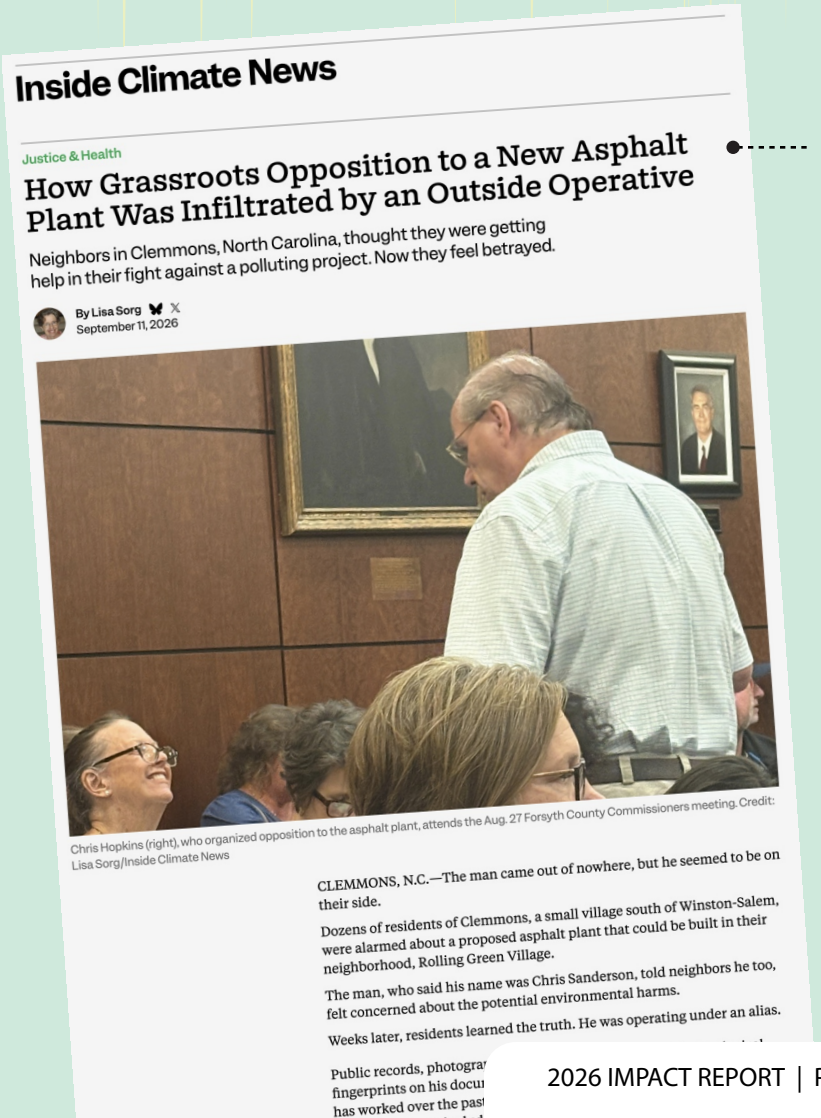
Investigation Exposes Secretive Data Center Agreements and Covert PR

Inside Climate News laid bare the secrets of the data center industry, publishing a non-disclosure agreement an Alabama mayor signed without consulting the city council or public, and exposing the terms of another that barred its city from naming the developer and required officials to destroy records. In North Carolina, our reporting exposed a front group running pro-data center ads without disclosing who is behind them: the Data Center Coalition, a Virginia-based trade group whose members include Amazon, Microsoft, and Google, and which has set up look-alike groups in other states.



Lee Hedgepeth/Inside Climate News

The site of the proposed Bessemer data center.



Inside Climate News

Justice & Health

How Grassroots Opposition to a New Asphalt Plant Was Infiltrated by an Outside Operative

Neighbors in Clemmons, North Carolina, thought they were getting help in their fight against a polluting project. Now they feel betrayed.

By Lisa Sorg
September 11, 2026

Chris Hopkins (right), who organized opposition to the asphalt plant, attends the Aug. 27 Forsyth County Commissioners meeting. Credit: Lisa Sorg/Inside Climate News

CLEMMONS, N.C.—The man came out of nowhere, but he seemed to be on their side.

Dozens of residents of Clemmons, a small village south of Winston-Salem, were alarmed about a proposed asphalt plant that could be built in their neighborhood, Rolling Green Village.

The man, who said his name was Chris Sanderson, told neighbors he too, felt concerned about the potential environmental harms.

Weeks later, residents learned the truth. He was operating under an alias.

Public records, photogra
fingerprints on his docu
has worked over the pas

Reporting Reveals Land-Use Industry Mole Embedded in Grassroots Campaign

An asphalt company is suing an outside operative and his former employer for civil conspiracy, fraud, and market manipulation after an Inside Climate News exposé. We revealed the operative used a false identity to infiltrate a grassroots campaign opposing siting of an asphalt plant in Clemmons, North Carolina, a situation that left residents feeling betrayed. Once our reporter started asking questions, the mole disappeared, and his employer said he had left the company. The reporting brought attention to a shady practice used by land-use firms to pave the way for mining, data centers, landfills, and other polluting projects.

ICN REPORTING HOLDS POWER TO ACCOUNT



Inside Climate News

Fossil Fuels

The Biggest US LNG Exporter Is Claiming a Massive Tax Credit for Using Its Cargo as an 'Alternative' Fuel

Critics say the claim relies on a dubious interpretation of a law intended to promote natural gas and other fuels. An Inside Climate News analysis put the potential windfall at more than $140 million.

By Phil McKenna, Peter Aldhous
July 31, 2025

An aerial view of a Cheniere Energy liquefied natural gas plant. Credit: Brandon Bell/Getty Images

Liquefied natural gas vessels are fueled by their cargo—they're built specifically to make use of the gas boiling off from their tanks.

But Cheniere Energy, the largest U.S. exporter of LNG, is seeking

Investigation Reveals $370 Million Tax Break for LNG Producer

Inside Climate News broke the news that America's largest liquefied natural gas producer and exporter, Cheniere Energy, was seeking a massive "alternative fuel" tax break for using LNG to power its tankers. Using LNG for this purpose is standard practice in the industry, not an alternative. Our reporting included an analysis that revealed a first-of-its-kind estimate of how much Cheniere stood to gain if the IRS approved the company's tax claim. After the company disclosed that it received a massive $370 million payout, seven U.S. senators launched their own investigation.

Watchdog Coverage Brings Texas Oil Regulator's Public Comment Restrictions to Light

When the Texas Railroad Commission—the agency that regulates the state's oil and gas industry—adopted a new policy to disallow the public to comment at monthly meetings, we broke the story. Outlets across the state republished our reporting, and backlash promptly followed. A Democratic candidate for a commissioner seat at the agency announced he would change the policy if elected, and Republican State Rep. Drew Darby, chairman of the Texas House Committee on Energy Resources, criticized the policy and pressed an agency leader to testify.



Inside Climate News

Politics

Texas Oil and Gas Regulators Will No Longer Have to Accept Public Comment at Open Meetings

The Railroad Commission of Texas adopted a new participation policy before sharing it with the public.

By Martha Pskowski
August 21, 2026

Commissioner Wayne Christian (left) introduces a new public participation policy during the Railroad Commission of Texas meeting on Tuesday. Source: RRC Webcast

The three elected officials who regulate the oil and gas industry in Texas hold an open meeting each month in Austin to vote on matters from pipeline violations to permit renewals.

Members of the public can register to speak for up to three minutes at the end of each meeting. People often travel hundreds of miles from South Texas, the Permian Basin and the Gulf Coast for the opportunity to speak directly to the officials who have the final say in oil and gas regulation in Texas. The commission does not accept public comment over the phone during these meetings.

This week the commissioners adopted

ICN REPORTING SHEDS LIGHT ON SOLUTIONS

Our reporters cover climate and environmental solutions with clear eyes, showing what's working, what isn't, and why.

A New Approach to Wolf-Livestock Conflict in Colorado

Working Circle, a small California nonprofit, teaches ranchers to handle their herds differently so their cattle are less vulnerable to predators. The group offers a potential path forward that protects both ranchers' economic interests and wolves at a time when President Donald Trump is taking steps to remove federal protections for wolves.



Jake Bolster/Inside Climate News

Cows that stay together on the ranch are more likely to group up when facing wolves on the range, according to Working Circle.

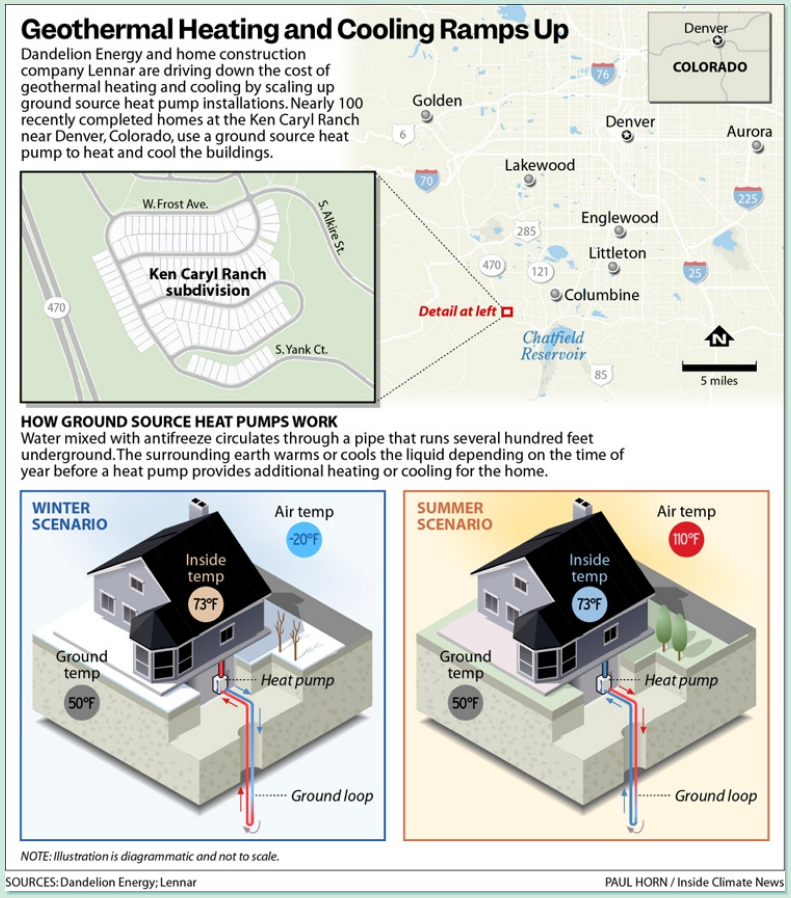
A Colorado Geothermal Project Offers Glimpse Into the Future of Home Energy Use

A geothermal startup and a homebuilder have partnered to build nearly 100 homes in suburban Denver, each with its own ground-source heat pump. The companies argue that geothermal heating and cooling, long a costly custom product, can become mass-market when it's installed across an entire new subdivision at once.



Phil McKenna/Inside Climate News

Geothermal startup Dandelion Energy and homebuilder Lennar recently completed nearly 100 homes with geothermal heating and cooling at the Ken Caryl Ranch housing development near Littleton, Colo.



ICN REPORTING SHEDS LIGHT ON SOLUTIONS

Research Project Empowers Guatemalan Villagers Plagued by Plastic

Over the past decade, Guatemala imported more than 1.2 million tons of household plastic goods. Most people in the country lack access to waste-collection services, and nearly three-quarters of rural households resort to burning their waste, including plastic. Ecolectivos, a five-year study led by U.S. and Guatemalan researchers, is seeing positive results: workshops are bringing villagers together; neighbors are pushing each other to stop burning plastic and use less of it; and the community is working toward a local landfill and collection center.



Michael Kodas/Inside Climate News

A resident of Guatemala's Santa María Xalapán mountains gathers litter, most of it plastic, from under a fence along the road through the region during a community cleanup organized by Soila Elizabeth Cruz.

Dam Removal Efforts Lead to a Comeback for Maine's Alewives

Maine's alewives have made a comeback unmatched elsewhere on the East Coast. Since the 1990s, dam removals like the Penobscot River project have reopened rivers with faster results than expected. At the Benton Falls Dam, fewer than 800 alewives made the trip 35 years ago; last year about 9 million did.

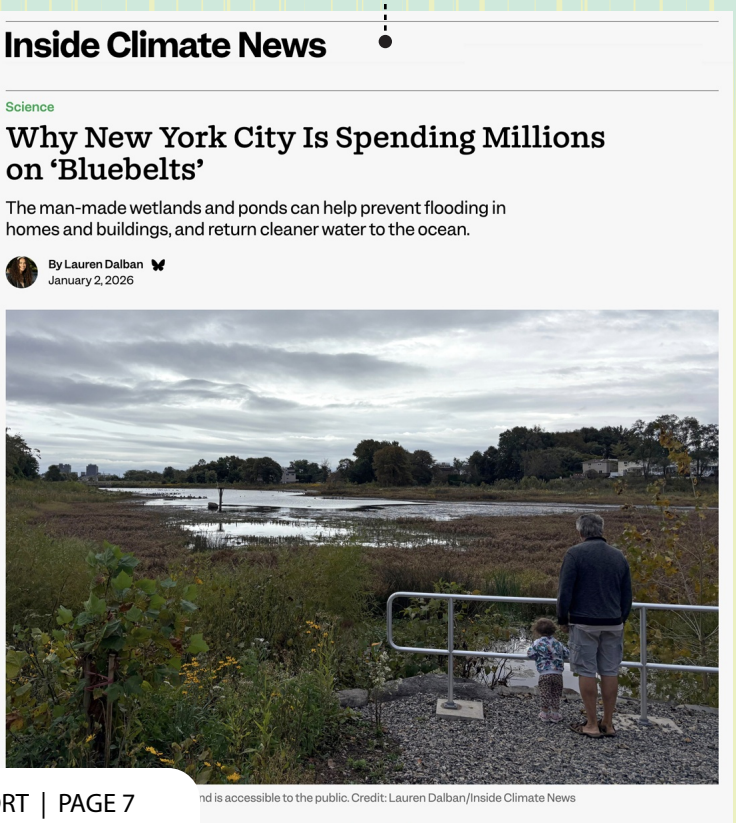


Sydney Cromwell/Inside Climate News

Due to the alewife's depleted populations, towns must track their migration numbers and adhere to strict limits on when, where and how much harvesters can catch.

Man-made Wetlands and Ponds Help Prevent Flooding in NYC

Staten Island began constructing bluebelts—drainage systems that protect homes and natural waterways by slowing floodwaters and filtering pollutants—in the '90s. Amid rising flood risks from climate change, they can help accommodate water from more severe storms. Now the city plans to invest $68 million to build Brooklyn's first.



Inside Climate News

Science

Why New York City Is Spending Millions on 'Bluebelts'

The man-made wetlands and ponds can help prevent flooding in homes and buildings, and return cleaner water to the ocean.

By Lauren Dalban
January 2, 2026

nd is accessible to the public. Credit: Lauren Dalban/Inside Climate News

New York City is expected to experience increasing rainfall over the next

ICN REPORTING AMPLIFIES MARGINALIZED VOICES

Our reporters shine a light on environmental injustices and elevate the voices and stories of those most impacted.

Alabama Community, Long Ignored, Gets National Attention

The rapid ascension of AI has led to a boom in data center development across the country, leaving many residents in rural and low-income areas facing noise and air pollution, destruction of forest land, and spiking electricity costs. In Bessemer, where there are plans to build a 4.5-million-square-foot data center, one resident wrote to Inside Climate News' Alabama reporter, Lee Hedgepeth: "You showed up—in the courthouse, in the community meetings, and in our neighborhood—and that made all the difference. Our community has felt overlooked and unheard throughout this process, and your willingness to listen and tell the full story gave people a voice when they needed it most."



Lee Hedgepeth/Inside Climate News

Bessemer residents attend a City Council meeting on July 15 to express opposition to a proposed data center.



Scott Goldsmith/Inside Climate News

Many residents in Yukon have signs in their yards protesting the landfill and Max Environmental.

Fracking Coverage Fuels Pennsylvania Organizers, Legal Cases, EPA Attention

Inside Climate News reporter Kiley Bense's eight-part series revealed new information about the impact of toxic fracking waste on water, workers and wildlife in Pennsylvania. After her stories about Max Environmental's hazardous waste landfill were published, one of Kiley's sources followed up, sharing that her work "opened up a huge opportunity for ... organizing efforts and for community members to continue to share their realities." We also heard from a local lawyer that "every time you guys run a story, it becomes part of our legal cases." Many residents were resigned to not being heard by decision-makers, but our reporting elevated the issue to the EPA, where Kiley's stories were shared in an internal newsletter. This spring, the EPA began sampling residential drinking water wells near the landfill.

ICN REPORTING AMPLIFIES MARGINALIZED VOICES

Shining a Light On One Florida Community's Fight for Safe Water

Whitted, Florida, is a small unincorporated historically Black community southeast of Orlando, where residents have been fighting for access to clean water for years. In 2024, the Florida Department of Health reported that wells in the area contain dangerous levels of Arsenic and PFAS/PFOS, so-called "forever" chemicals associated with a host of serious health conditions. Whitted received $1.45 million from the state and $850,000 from the federal government to connect residents to the local water system, but two years later, construction still has not begun. Meanwhile, new developments springing up around the outskirts of the neighborhood have clean drinking water flowing from their taps. After Inside Climate News published a story on the water disparity and systemic lack of investment in Whitted, Florida reporter Amy Green heard from a resident, thanking her for bringing their voices to the forefront. "It means so much to have our history, concerns, and lived experiences shared with such care."



Amy Green/Inside Climate News

When the water runs brown in Ann Jones' home, it can look like iced tea. She estimates she and her husband spend about $150 a month on bottled water.



Amy Green/Inside Climate News

Ann Jones says the water at her home in Whitted, Fla., runs clear only some of the time. Other times, the water is brown.

ICN REPORTING STRENGTHENS THE MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

Our work is republished by more than 330 partner media outlets, reaching underserved readers via the publications they trust. Our local coverage is also followed closely by legacy and national media outlets, which frequently follow our lead.

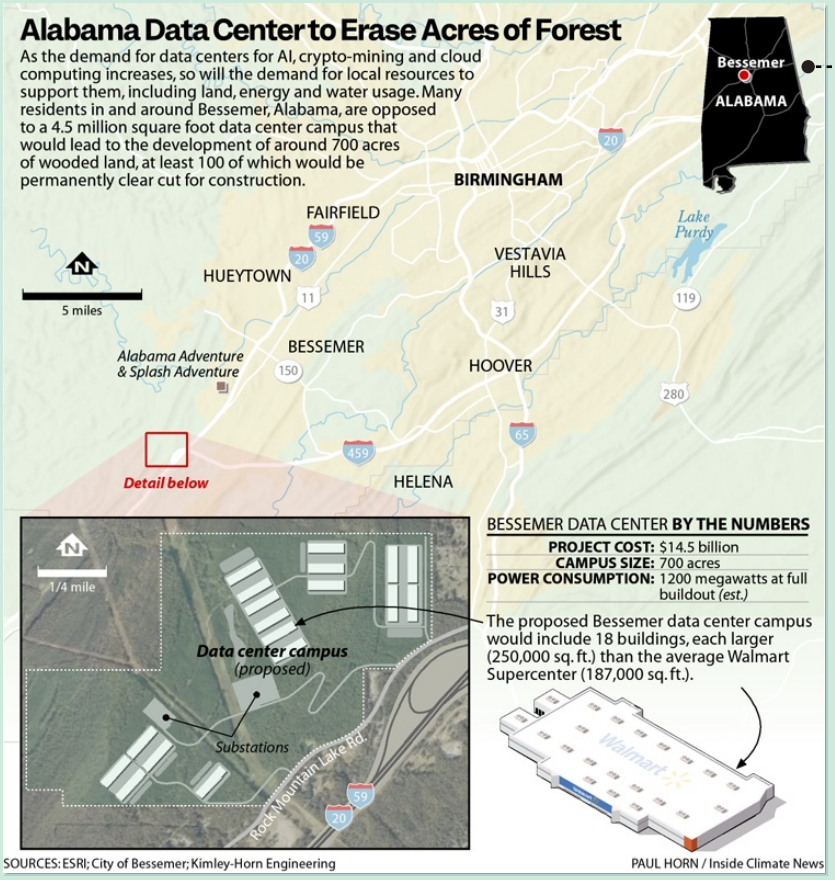
Bringing Big Bend to National Attention

Inside Climate News led coverage around a proposed border wall that would cut through a cherished state and national park in Texas' Big Bend region. The story was picked up by outlets around the state, and when The Washington Post released its own report on the project, the co-author took to Twitter to credit our coverage, calling it an example of "local & expert journalism at its finest."



Martha Pskowski/Inside Climate News

The Rio Grande is seen in Big Bend National Park. The river separates the park from Mexico.



Leading the Journalistic Way

Data Centers

Before publishing their own story, a New York Times reporter consulted with Inside Climate News Reporter Lee Hedgepeth about his extensive reporting on Project Marvel, a plan to build a 4.5-million-square-foot data center in Bessemer, Alabama. The reporter cited Lee's work in his story, and he thanked Lee for "leading the journalistic way."

The Water Crisis

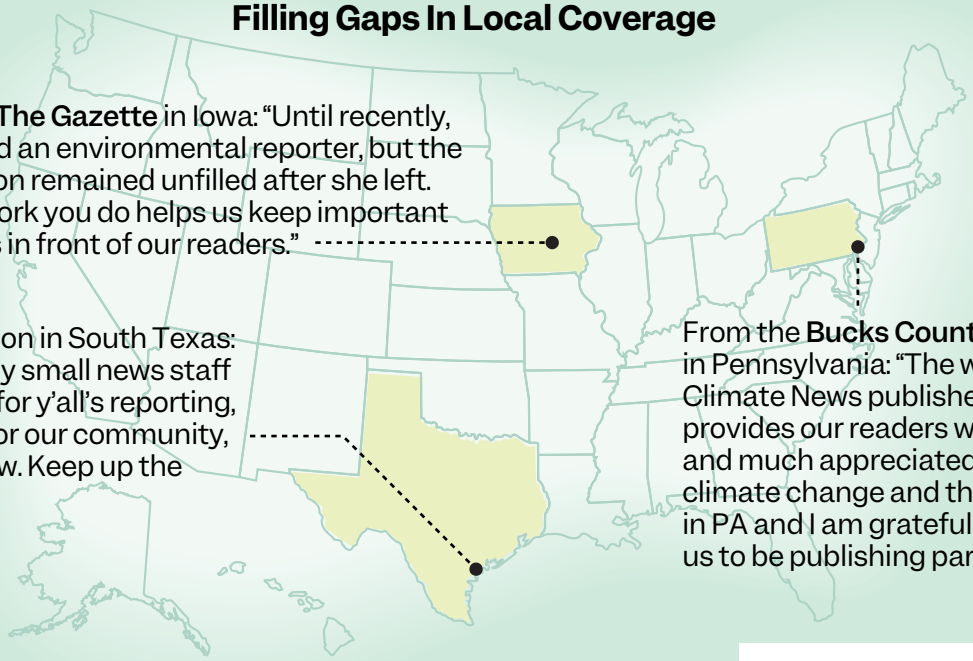
After Inside Climate News' coverage of Corpus Christi's water crisis was picked up all over Texas, our groundbreaking stories provoked coverage from CNN, NPR, and The New York Times.

Mistreatment of Wildlife

When we broke news about Sloth World, The Guardian, The New York Times, the BBC, and NPR credited and followed our coverage.

ICN REPORTING STRENGTHENS THE MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

Filling Gaps In Local Coverage



From **The Gazette** in Iowa: "Until recently, we had an environmental reporter, but the position remained unfilled after she left. The work you do helps us keep important issues in front of our readers."

From **KEDT**, a station in South Texas: "With our extremely small news staff we are so grateful for y'all's reporting, it is so important for our community, especially right now. Keep up the great work!"

From the **Bucks County Beacon** in Pennsylvania: "The work Inside Climate News publishes really provides our readers with essential—and much appreciated—coverage on climate change and the environment in PA and I am grateful that you allow us to be publishing partners."

Tens of Millions of Readers

- Annually, we publish more than **1,300** stories, reach **tens of millions** of readers across multiple channels, with **350,000** of them dedicated subscribers.

Training the Next Generation of Climate Reporters

- More than 90 reporting fellows have completed our training for young journalists in environmental coverage since the fellowship program launched in 2020.

> "This program changed my life! I now know that I want to pursue a career that blends academic work with journalistic writing."
>
> — ICN 2025 Fellow

Dozens of Awards

- Our work has earned the respect of other newsrooms and recognition from more than 35 prestigious award programs and professional societies, including The Pulitzer Prize.



What Our Readers Say

"I'm a retired environmental attorney, trained at US EPA, and I care about these issues and fight the tide of misinformation in small town Arizona."

"Excellent journalism and in-depth, honest research on climate, sustainability and social justice. Covers parts of the USA with little coverage elsewhere. Thank you!"

"A great source of information as I try to keep my college students as informed and up-to-date as possible."

"Federal government data and news on climate is no longer accurate. Yours is one of the most reliably science-based venues for up-to-date climate news."

"I am a science writer who has followed the trajectory of climate change and its impacts for 30 years. I have been disturbed by how little good information and how much misinformation there is. Your work is greatly needed."



To learn more about ICN's impact and how you can support this work, contact:

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