



NGO SUSTAINABILITY

GLOBAL WARNING 1.2°C

LATEST NEWS IN SUSTAINABILITY

NO. 163 | May 2025

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET

ngosustainability@gmail.com | unngosustainability.org

Consultative Status, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Observer Status, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Don't hesitate to provide feedback [here](#). Your comments are always welcome.

Please feel free to reproduce and share.

- NGO Sustainability Team

"Every day when we look after the trees, they look after us, but these trees and the life-saving fruit they bear will not survive on a warmer planet."

– Elizabeth Wathuti

Elizabeth Wathuti

Elizabeth Wathuti, a prominent Kenyan climate activist, was recently honored with the Wangari Maathai Scholarship Award in recognition of her impactful environmental work. Her journey began in 2016 when she founded the Green Generation Initiative, an organization dedicated to fostering climate education by engaging students in tree planting, environmental cleanups, and sustainability workshops. The initiative focuses on reforestation and promoting climate awareness in schools, laying the foundation for her broader climate activism.

Wathuti has led numerous campaigns and programs, earning widespread recognition for her efforts. Beyond her grassroots work, she has taken on influential roles in various international youth climate networks. Notably, she was appointed as a Commissioner by Kenya's President, enabling her to represent youth perspectives on sustainable development at the national level. As a Wangari Maathai Scholar, Wathuti also launched the Youth Hub under the Wangari Maathai Foundation, which played a pivotal role in organizing the largest African youth delegation at COP27. Her continued dedication to environmental advocacy has earned her prestigious

accolades such as the UN Young Champions of the Earth, the TIME100 list, the Diana Award, and the Young Climate Champion Award. Her work truly exemplifies the impact of youth in climate globally, and demonstrates the need for sustainable development across international fronts.



Elizabeth Wathuti speaks annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Switzerland on May 24, 2022.

Source: Getty Images

Source:
United Nations Environment Programme. (2019). Elizabeth Wathuti | Young Champions of the Earth.
<https://www.unep.org/youngchampions/bio/2019/africa/elizabeth-wathuti>

World Bank. (n.d.). Elizabeth Wathuti. <https://live.worldbank.org/en/experts/e/elizabeth-wath>

Boats and Bones

By Amir Murtaza

*Come aboard this submarine,
and observe the sea,
so peaceful and serene,
yet terrifying.*

*Ebbing and flowing, never shrinking nor growing,
the tides come
for payment due.*

*Waves crash and slash, writhing and weaving,
smoothing rocks,
bringing seashells
but spreading plastic.*

*Coral grows in a thousand hues amidst the bright and dreary blues.
Fish and octopi wander
unaware of the world so sombre.*

*Debris and rotting bones sink,
along with skin and dust,
uncaring and indifferent.*

*Descend into these darkened depths,
no, no need for eyes,
do try and hold your breath.*

*Curling tails and bladed mandibles, they promise to only take a bite.
Deceiving lights and crushing pressure,
this place welcomes not.*

*Finally. At the depths.
The water crushes your skull,
and you are truly free. Why is there a plastic bag?*

Source:

Yusuf, Boats and Bones, Hello Poetry.

<https://hellopoetry.com/poem/5057586/boats-and-bones/>

“How 2,600 CT contaminated properties could be improved under proposed legislation”

By: Ken Dixon, *CT Post*



Photo: Getty Images

Connecticut state officials are campaigning to replace the Transfer Act, a law that stalled community progress and discouraged investments for developers and businesses. This devastated locals by requiring property owners to prove their estates are contamination-free. The laws' strict regulations had consequences that spurred properties to be abandoned, property values to decrease, and long-term economic stagnation. In an effort to release stress from the defunct regulations, lawmakers aim to transition to a new ‘release-based’ cleanup system that recognizes hazards and the absence of contamination. This attempts to streamline environmental regulation and stimulate economic growth, especially in urban centers with vacant industrial properties. The bill has broad bipartisan support and aligns Connecticut's policy with 48 other states as it aims to revive thousands of properties long stuck on hold due to regulatory barriers.

[Full Article](#)

“Major Advances in E.V. Batteries Are Announced by Chinese Company”

By: Keith Bradsher, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

The world's largest electric vehicle battery manufacturer, CATL, has announced major technological advances that may make electric vehicles cheaper, faster to charge, more temperature resistant, lighter, and capable of traveling further distances. CATL introduced a new auxiliary battery at a Shanghai auto show preview that increases energy density by 60% and would be able to offer backup power for self-driving features. CATL also unveiled a rapid charging system that is capable of delivering 320 miles of range in around 5 minutes, competing with similar innovations from BYD and Huawei. In addition, CATL announced the rollout of sodium-ion batteries to possibly replace traditional lead-acid batteries. These batteries would first appear in freight trucks in China's cold northeast, given the battery's ability to withstand extreme cold, and could eventually benefit the global automotive industry.

[Full Article](#)

“Houston Storm Prep Threatened after Trump Pulls Resources from Major Climate Report”

By: Rebekah F. Ward, *The Houston Chronicle*

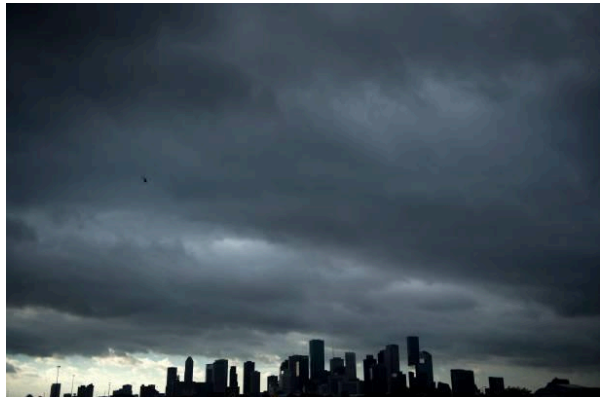


Photo: Getty Images

Recently, the Trump administration has ousted hundreds from the National Climate Assessment, a report used by Houston to gauge hazards from extreme weather events like hurricanes. In Texas, several researchers had worked on an assessment to help deal with climate impacts, and over 400 volunteers helped on the report. Katharine Hayhoe, a Texan author, called it “essential and exhaustively peer-reviewed.” The National Climate Assessment is periodically updated to distill new climate trends to provide information on climate impacts. Texan climatologists and professors even stated that extreme weather trends require national assessments to clarify research.

[Full Article](#)

“How Pope Francis helped inspire the global movement against Climate Change”

By: Claire Brown, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

Pope Francis inspired climate action during his 12 years as the Pope of the catholic church. Francis was the first pope to declare global warming a spiritual crisis and penned, in 2015, the first papal encyclical focused on the environment. Francis emphasized climate change as both an environmental and a social crisis, with the world’s poorest shouldering most of the consequences. When 195 countries gathered for the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, at least 10 world leaders referred to the pope’s words. The legacy Pope Francis leaves behind makes him one of the most influential climate activists in recent history.

[Full Article](#)

“Minnesota as a Refuge From Climate Change? Three Wildfires Show Otherwise”.

By: Soumya Karlamangla, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

Three wildfires in northeastern Minnesota have burned over 32,000 acres and destroyed at least 150 structures, challenging the idea that the state is a refuge from climate change. Fueled by record-high temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds, the fires reflect a growing pattern of more intense and frequent wildfires in the region. Scientists say climate change is extending Minnesota’s fire season, once considered short and mild, by warming temperatures and earlier snowmelt. The event has shocked residents and recent transplants alike, many of whom viewed the area as safe from extreme weather. State officials warn that such destructive spring wildfires are likely to become more common as the climate continues to warm.

[Full Article](#)

“Cuts to England’s Canal Network Could Put Lives at Risk, Experts Say”

By: Helena Horton, *The Guardian*



Photo: Getty Images

The House magazine reveals that funding cuts for England’s canal network and climate change could threaten public safety. According to experts, under-maintained and ageing waterway infrastructure could lead to severe flooding, endangering towns. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) provides a quarter of the funding for the Canal and River Trust (CRT), the organization responsible for most of the UK’s inland waterways. However, in the June spending review, hundreds of millions of pounds in cuts are anticipated to reduce this support. These pressures have been compounded by prolonged heat and drought, followed by intense winter storms, causing £9 million in emergency damage repairs. Britain’s canal system is a “linear national park,” supporting a range of wildlife, including otters, kingfishers, and dragonflies, and providing recreation for people. However, without adequate maintenance, these waterways become hazardous.

[Full Article](#)

“Plastic may be warming the planet more than we thought.”

By: Nicolás Rivero, *Washington Post*



Photo: Getty Images

A new report suggests that plastic’s impact on climate change is significantly underestimated. While plastic production already accounts for 5% of global emissions, microplastics may further accelerate warming by disrupting carbon storage in oceans and soils. Plastic can interfere with marine snow, reducing carbon sequestration, and alter microbial activity in soil. It may also affect Earth’s reflectivity by changing how snow, ice, and clouds reflect sunlight. Although evidence is still emerging, researchers urge immediate action and further study. Plastic industry leaders pushed back, claiming plastics help cut emissions in other sectors. The report calls for a more comprehensive accounting of plastic’s climate impact.

[Full Article](#)

“An Effort to Kill Off Lawsuits Against Oil Giants Is Gaining Steam”

By: Karen Zraick, *NY Times*



Photo: Getty Images

The Trump administration is aggressively pushing back against climate lawsuits filed by states and cities against major oil companies, declaring them a threat to the U.S. economy. These lawsuits aim to hold fossil fuel firms accountable for hiding the risks of climate change. In a dramatic move, the Justice Department sued states like Hawaii and Michigan to stop them from filing. Critics worry this could deter other legal challenges and echo past efforts to shield industries from liability. Despite setbacks, some cases, like Colorado’s, are advancing in state courts, highlighting a deep legal divide over who should bear the costs of climate-related damage.

[Full Article](#)

Biodegradable Glitter Offers New Hope for Water Vole Conservation in Wales

Mitaly Chakraborty (NGO Intern)

Water voles, once widespread across South Wales, are now facing near extinction. Conservationists report a dramatic 90% decline in population over the last 30 years, with the species now surviving only in a few isolated pockets. In response to this crisis, conservation group Nature Conservation Cymru (NCC) has launched an unconventional and innovative effort to help monitor and eventually recover the water vole population by feeding them edible glitter. These small, semi-aquatic mammals are naturally shy and elusive, making them difficult to track in the wild. Conservationists needed a non-invasive method to study their movement and habitat use. Inspired by similar tracking strategies used with other animals, like badgers, NCC decided to adopt the idea using biodegradable glitter that is safe to consume, based on advice from veterinarians. The glitter is the same kind commonly used to decorate cakes.

How it works: The edible glitter is sprinkled on chunks of apple, a food the captive water voles enjoy, though it's not part of their natural diet. Once consumed, the glitter passes through the vole's digestive system and appears in their droppings. By locating the glittery feces, conservationists can trace where individual voles have been and gain insight into how they move across different landscapes. Using different glitter colors may even allow researchers to track distinct vole families.

Although the method may sound whimsical, the conservationists are very serious about its potential impact. Tracking the voles accurately can help inform habitat management decisions, such as removing invasive conifers from wetland areas or installing fencing to prevent livestock from damaging riverbanks, thus improving the voles' chances of surviving and spreading. Rob Parry, the Chief Executive of NCC, emphasized the importance of understanding how water voles use their environment. Are they sticking to linear watercourses like ditches, or are they venturing into open bogs and molinia grassland habitats? Answering these questions is essential for planning future conservation and land use in upland areas. The edible glitter method is currently being tested on captive-bred water voles that are part of a larger Natural Resources Wales (NRW) reintroduction program. Richard Davies of NRW noted that while they've successfully bred hundreds of water voles for release, predation remains a serious threat, as most native predators in the UK readily prey on the small mammals. He explained that the voles need to reproduce quickly to survive such predation pressures.

References

Evans, C. (2025, May 18). Water voles are almost extinct in wales - could glitter save them? BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czx08exwp97o>

Trump Signs Executive Orders to Expand U.S. Nuclear Power

Arian Isaczai (NGO Intern)

A series of executive orders was signed by Donald Trump on May 23 to spur a “nuclear energy renaissance” and speed up the construction of nuclear power plants in the United States. These measures are part of a broader plan to boost electricity production to satisfy the demands of artificial intelligence-driven data centers. While these executive orders adhere to the long-standing U.S. policy that supports nuclear innovation, they depart from a few crucial areas. Most importantly, they reduce the independence of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and promote commercial nuclear fuel recycling, which the US has historically opposed. Nuclear energy is carbon-neutral but generates radioactive waste for which the U.S. lacks long-term storage facilities.

A second order, “Deploying Nuclear Reactor Technologies for National Security,” focuses on accelerating reactor deployment at the Department of Defense. The order instructs the Energy and Defence departments to examine the possibility of siting reactors on federal lands and military bases by 2028, and encourages utilizing AI-related data centers, reclassified as “critical defense facilities,” as well as advanced nuclear power at the Department of Energy (DOE) sites. The order also supports recycling uranium and plutonium from DOE stockpiles for use as reactor fuel and backs the production of high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU) for next-generation reactors. Significantly, it exempts particular projects from the National Environmental Policy Act’s (NEPA) environmental review requirements.

House Republicans recently passed a far-reaching domestic policy bill to halt federal funding for the majority of emission-free energy sources, except for nuclear. This sprawling tax and spending bill altered the tax incentives created under former President Biden for renewable energy power plants to only apply to projects that began construction within 60 days of the bill being enacted and completed by 2028. In contrast, the less stringent guideline simply requires nuclear plants to be under construction by 2028.

References

- Jennifer Gordon. (2025, May 25). *What Trump’s new executive orders mean for the US nuclear energy industry*. Atlantic Council.
<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/what-trumps-new-executive-orders-mean-for-the-us-nuclear-energy-industry/>
- Plumer, B. (2025, May 23). Trump Signs Executive Orders for Faster Build-Out of Nuclear Power Plants. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/23/climate/trump-executive-order-nuclear-power.html>
- Stein, C. (2025, May 23). *Trump signs executive orders to spur US “nuclear energy renaissance.”* The Guardian.
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/23/trump-executive-orders-nuclear-energ>

Producer: Roma Stibravy, NGO Sustainability President
Editor: Arian Isaczai, New York University
Contributors: NGO Sustainability Interns and Associates

Corporate Sponsors



MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
BECOME A MEMBER OF NGO SUSTAINABILITY!
SEE CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
unngosustainability.org