

The influence of citizen science grows despite some resistance

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Citizen science is taking off and could make a difference at regional and national regulatory levels. But not everyone thinks that's a good idea. The cover story of *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, delves into the progress of the budding movement, as well as the pushback.

Steven K. Gibb, senior editor at *C&EN*, reports that in some states, regulators actively encourage and support local residents' participation in [environmental monitoring](#). For example, Maryland's Department of the Environment and Department of Natural Resources welcome the data collected by local volunteer groups. One of these nonprofits has been collecting water quality data for 10 years from 21 locations on a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The state only has one monitoring location in the same area. In 2014, citizen scientists' data helped Maryland put together its required Clean Water Act report, which informs future regulations.

On the other hand, some states are weary of such efforts. Policymakers in Ohio passed a law in 2003 mandating that state agencies only use water quality data that's been gathered by a qualified collector. Idaho, Utah and Wyoming prohibit citizen scientists from collecting environmental data near agricultural sites. But at the national and international levels, the movement is becoming more accepted. Federal officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are friendly to the idea. And national groups advancing the trend have sprung up in the U.S., Europe and Australia.

More information: Volunteers Against Pollution -
[cen.acs.org/articles/93/i36/Ci ... -Data-Influence.html](https://cen.acs.org/articles/93/i36/Ci...-Data-Influence.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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