Environmental law programs are worthy of your support because of their unique blend of teaching, research, and public service. They educate future environmental leaders, generate new solutions to environmental problems, and engage with policy makers, courts, and the public.

To begin with, environmental law programs train the lawyers who will represent governments, businesses, and public interest groups with regard to environment and energy issues. This isn't just a matter of litigation; it's also a matter of creative problem solving to achieve compliance with environmental goals. Many of those students will eventually become business leaders or policy makers in legislatures or agencies, or sit on courts that decide environmental cases.

Environmental law professors are also in the forefront of research about key environmental and energy issues. A sample might include issues like: (1) when does an environmental regulation become a "taking" of property that requires compensation?, (2) how can regulations of air pollution be improved?, (3) what legal rules should apply to nanotechnology?, and (4) how can we best provide incentives to develop renewable energy sources?

Environmental law programs are also heavily involved in public service. Here is a sample of activities that I plucked from the websites of schools across the country:

- Representing an environmental justice community in a challenge to an air permit for a new power plant.
- Analyzing proposed greenhouse gas trading regulations to assess the risks of market manipulation and rules violations.
- Helping advocacy organizations use cost-benefit analysis and economics to address issues like toxic substance storage and climate change.
- Providing guidance to state and local governments on their ability to regulate in the areas of environment and energy without running afoul of the federal preemption doctrine.
- Working with businesses, state government, and other stakeholders to eliminate legal obstacles to renewable energy.

In short, a gift to an environmental law program allows you to educate environmental leaders of the future, support cutting-edge research, and promote hands-on improvements in public policy. If you're a lawyer, it can also help support dear old alma mater.

In short, a generous donation to an environmental law program is the perfect way to end the year. You'll be glad you did it!