

Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

April 2019

UU Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Environmental Justice (EJ): Addressing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects in communities of low-income residents or persons of color.

UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITY MORRISTOWN UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

Many thanks to members of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship who signed on to a petition action during their coffee hours on March 17 and 24! Acting on issues identified by the EJTF, the Fellowship's Green Earth Ministry collected 61 signatures for a Green Amendment to our NJ State Constitution and 99 signatures calling for a Moratorium of fossil fuel infrastructure projects!



UPCOMING EVENTS

FORUMS – Empower NJ: For a Moratorium on New Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

EARTH DAY: Monday, April 22nd. 7:30 - 9 pm
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton
50 Cherry Hill Road, Princeton, NJ

Learn about New Jersey energy issues in an Earth Day forum on April 22

Empower NJ is a coalition of more than 50 environmental groups, demanding that Governor Murphy declare a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure until there is a plan in place to comply with the Global Warming Response Act of 2007 and to reach Governor Murphy's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2050. Neither of these will be possible if any of the 12 fossil fuel projects (8 pipeline/compressor projects and 4 power plants) is completed. [See their Facebook page here.](#)

A coalition of environmental groups that are part of Empower New Jersey, along with Indivisible Princeton, will host an educational forum focused on state-wide energy issues beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton, 50 Cherry Hill Road, Princeton, N.J. Members of the public are invited to attend this free event.

The speakers include leaders of major statewide environmental organizations. They will discuss the dozen new fossil fuel projects proposed throughout New Jersey, including the PennEast Pipeline and the Williams' Northeast Compressor Stations and proposals by the coalition to combat these projects, including proposals for a moratorium on fossil fuel development and a complete ban on fracking.

Speakers include:

- Amy Goldsmith, N.J. State Director of Clean Water Action, who will discuss Empower New Jersey and campaign overview.
- Doug O'Malley, State Director of Environment NJ, who will discuss environmental issues related to fossil fuels.
- Jeff Tittel, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, New Jersey Chapter, who will discuss the status of the Penn East and NESE projects.
- Matthew Smith, senior organizer of Food and Water Watch will describe how citizens can take action.
- Rev. Bob Moore, of Princeton Community Peace Action.



Governor Murphy:
**NO FOSSIL FUEL
PROJECTS**

To avoid climate catastrophe & protect public health,
Governor Murphy must enact fossil fuel moratorium.



You are Invited! Empower NJ Public Forums:

Co-sponsors: UUCP's Ministry for Earth, UU Faith Action NJ, Princeton Coalition for Peace Action, Indivisible Princeton, and the Princeton Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby.

EJTF ACTIVITIES

- On March 7, 2019, the UU FaithAction NJ co-sponsored a panel at the Westfield High School on "Handling Our Trash: Getting to a Circular Carbon Economy." Other co-sponsors were Network for Responsible Public Policy (NFRPP), Westfield High School, and the Westfield Green Team.
- EJTF Members attended the UU FaithAction NJ Spring Plenary on April 13, 2019. The report of EJTF's activities for the past year is available here: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/reports/>.

TWO UU VIEWS ON CARBON PRICING

1 - UUs in Citizens' Climate Lobby – H.R. 763

We all care about climate change and its devastating effects. Many Unitarian Universalists have found Citizens' Climate Lobby to be a great fit with their values and their passion to address this critical issue. CCL emphasizes building relationships in a respectful way with all members of Congress, and the larger communities of which we are a part. The non-partisan organization aligns well with our UU principles of inherent worth and dignity, use of the democratic process, and, of course, the interdependent web.

CCL has been working for 11 years toward a carbon pricing bill that returns the fees collected to American households. CCL volunteers lobby their members of Congress in-District and in Washington, DC. At long last, the *bipartisan* Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, H.R. 763, was introduced in Congress in November 2018, and reintroduced in January 2019.

When enacted, the bill will put a steadily-rising fee on carbon emissions and return those monies equally to American households with a monthly dividend. The legislation will quickly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, clean our waters, improve our health, save lives, add jobs to the economy (2 million+ in 10 years), and put extra money in everyone's pockets with a monthly dividend.¹

All of these impacts will change people's lives for the better, but especially those in marginalized communities who bear the brunt of the effects of climate change. It is projected that 300,000 lives will be saved in the first 10 years due to improved air quality!! Many of those people live in areas where it is difficult to escape the pollution of burning fossil fuels.

In March, the Unitarian Universalist Association [endorsed](#) the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. In addition, they shared this [statement](#) that provides context for the support:

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act incentivizes fossil fuel reduction, supports alternative energies, and sends money back into households. These are all excellent strategies for combating climate change. This legislation is supported by Unitarian Universalists across the country who are working hard to get it passed. UUA President Rev Susan Frederick-Gray states: "May our love of this blue green earth feed our souls to act on its behalf. Whether we choose to put our bodies in front of a pipeline or throw our considerable energies into legislation for just energy transitions, may we do so centering the margins." It will take all of us and many strategies to create climate justice, including passage by the 116th Congress of the EICDA.

Two NJ Congressmen are already co-sponsors of the bill: Tom Malinowski in NJ07 and Albio Sires in NJ08. An easy **action item** for all UUs: call your Member of Congress to show support for the bill as a person of faith. You can use this CCL tool: [Call Congress](#). If you prefer to write, CCL has a tool for that, too: [Write Your Representative](#).

There are thousands of UUs in CCL all around the country. The Unitarian Universalist Action Team is the largest faith-based Action Team in Citizens' Climate Lobby. It is led by Nadine Kadell Sapirman and Ann Perry, both from the UU Congregation of Somerset Hills in Somerville, New Jersey. If you'd like to learn more, go to www.citizensclimatelobby.org, or email Ann at alliperr@verizon.net.

¹ – Information on financial impacts on low-and moderate-income populations is here: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/household-impact-study/>; explanation of benefits of carbon fee/dividend vs. cap and trade is here: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/laser-talks/carbon-fee-vs-cap-trade/>

Energy Innovation AND Carbon Dividend Act

THE BIPARTISAN CLIMATE SOLUTION

H.R. 763

This bill will drive down America's carbon pollution and bring climate change under control. It is:

EFFECTIVE



GOOD FOR PEOPLE



GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY



REVENUE NEUTRAL



2 - EJ-Focused Perspective of EJTF Chair

I greatly admire the Citizens' Climate Lobby and their emphasis on respect for Congressmen on all sides of the partisan divide.

They have worked tirelessly and effectively to get their propose carbon fee and dividend into a bill, and I wish I could say that I support it whole-heartedly.

However, many environmental justice advocates, including me, are concerned about using any price on carbon as the only mechanism for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The fear is that while pricing carbon should almost certainly reduce average emissions across the nation, it will move greenhouse gas emissions to environmental justice communities. This fear has a basis in fact. After California adopted cap-and-trade, greenhouse gas emissions did indeed go down statewide, but nonetheless went up in many environmental justice communities.

Support for carbon pricing is based in part on the fallacy that "a rising tide will lift all boats." A better metaphor for the era of climate change would be "a rising tide floods all properties (but mostly those of the poor)." It is wrong to assume that average reduction in emissions will guarantee reductions for everyone. It's like the joke about Bill Gates walking into a bar with a 100 homeless men. Once he's in the bar, the average customer is a millionaire (without doing anything at all for the homeless).

We need to demand mandatory emissions reductions in environmental justice communities. We cannot rely solely on market mechanisms. If HR763 included this, it would be greatly improved.

- Nancy Griffeth, Chair, EJTF

UPDATE ON EJTF KEY ISSUES FOR 2019:

1) Fighting against fossil fuel infrastructure

We are working on actions related to achieving a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure in NJ. We have joined Empower NJ - Twitter hashtag, #empowernj - (see “Forum” on pages 1 and 2), a coalition of environmental groups, to demand that Governor Murphy declare a moratorium on building fossil fuel infrastructure, just as [Governor Brendan Byrne did to prevent development in the Pinelands](#) and [Governor Thomas Kean did to protect freshwater wetlands in New Jersey](#). We are asking our members to contact the governor and to write letters to print and on-line news sources, to attend demonstrations against new pipelines and power plants, and to organize educational events in their congregations and in our municipalities.

Empower NJ has launched a “Stop Fossil Fuel” campaign - there’s good information about it here: <https://www.cleanwateraction.org/releases/empower-nj-stop-fossil-fuel-campaign-launch>. Their report, “FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE IN NJ: The Urgent Case for a Moratorium on all Fossil Fuel Projects,” is available here: https://www.cleanwateraction.org/sites/default/files/EmpowerNJ_Report_190211_Color_1.pdf. It articulates the evidence-based case for a moratorium on fossil fuel projects in New Jersey.

2) Reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from transportation

- Electric Vehicles (EV’s)

Legislation: For electrification of New Jersey’s transportation sector, we are supporting New Jersey Senate Bill 2252/ Assembly Bill 4819, which “establishes goals, initiatives, and programs to encourage and support use of plug-in electric vehicles,” with some changes, for example, to include electrifying school buses and improving public transportation in New Jersey.

Margaret Babcock of EJTF attended the Senate hearing on S2252 in order to testify. Unfortunately, only invited speakers were allowed to testify. However, Rev. Ronald Tuff of Greenfaith worked with Assemblyman Wimberley to arrange a meeting with himself and Assemblyman DeAngelo to discuss the bill, and invited UU FaithAction, JerseyRenews, Environment NJ, Isles, and others to attend. At the meeting on Monday March 26, most of the discussion was about jobs and job training in EJ communities. Assemblyman DeAngelo opposes classifying jobs as “green jobs” or any other category – they all require electricians, and electricians can do any of them. He didn’t respond to a question about rebates for leasing vehicles or for motorbikes and motorcycles. The meeting was terminated after about 15 minutes because it was a very busy day in Trenton. Rev. Tuff agreed to try to set up another meeting with him at his Hamilton office.

A position paper on electrification of vehicles is in progress.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

CLEAN VEHICLES

- **Coalition Gets Antsy, Urges Rebate Program for Electric Vehicles** -Growing frustration over state's failure to make headway against pollution caused by transportation sector; groups want rebates to boost sales of electric vehicles: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/24/coalition-gets-antsy-urges-governor-to-give-rebates-for-electric-vehicles/>
- **Utilities See Green in the Electric Vehicle Charging Business — and Growing Competition** - U.S. electric vehicle sales are growing, and so is demand for charging stations. Automakers, cities and businesses have started providing them. Now utilities in several states are asking permission to have their ratepayers fund charging infrastructure the utilities would operate. California, Oregon and, most recently, New Mexico, have passed legislation requiring utilities to submit investment proposals to their regulators to accelerate transportation electrification, and New Jersey and Illinois are actively pursuing similar legislation. With electric vehicle sales climbing, utilities are investing in thousands of new EV charging stations, recognizing that if they don't move now, they could lose out on a growing and increasingly competitive market: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/04042019/electric-vehicle-charging-stations-states-utilities-competition-tesla-volkswagen>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

- **Trump Executive Order Would Stop States from Using Water Quality to Block Pipelines** - President Donald Trump issued an executive order to hinder states from blocking unwanted oil and natural-gas pipelines by potentially stripping away their authority to reject projects that impair water quality. The executive order could limit the ability of states to use the federal Clean Water Act to refuse to certify energy projects that officials believe could endanger their waterways or fail to meet surface-water quality standards. Both Connecticut and New York have used that tool to stop pipeline projects, and opponents of the controversial PennEast pipeline project in New Jersey believe it is the best option for stopping the \$1 billion, 120-mile pipeline that begins in Pennsylvania and ends in Mercer County: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/11/trump-eo-would-stop-states-from-using-water-quality-to-block-pipelines/>



- **Will New Energy Master Plan Make Fossil Fuel a Dinosaur in New Jersey?** - Murphy and BPU president Fiordaliso play it cagey when answering questions about the role of fossil fuel in governor's clean-energy agenda. The state is planning to release a revamped energy plan in the next few weeks, but officials are keeping a tight rein on how much it will slow the prior administration's aggressive expansion of New Jersey's natural-gas infrastructure: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/10/will-new-energy-master-plan-make-fossil-fuel-a-dinosaur-in-new-jersey/>
- **Op-Ed: Opposition to the PennEast Gas Pipeline Is Not Going Away** - Opponents of controversial project say their resistance is rooted in a commitment to protecting communities, properties and property rights. When PennEast filed its application to build a 120-mile-long pipeline through Pennsylvania and New Jersey, every New Jersey township it touches passed a resolution in opposition. Fifteen hundred people moved to intervene — a record-breaking number. Most of them are regular citizens: homeowners, farmers, single moms, retired couples, and small-business owners. Even though the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has conditionally approved the project, and even though land is being taken through eminent domain, they are not giving up: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/02/op-ed-opposition-to-the-penneast-gas-pipeline-is-not-going-away/>
- **PSE&G Wants to Spend Almost \$900M on Resiliency of Natural-Gas Network** - Critics argue most of the backup pipelines will never be needed, question utility's decision to invest in infrastructure based on problems not likely ever to occur: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/20/pse-g-wants-to-spend-almost-900m-adding-resiliency-to-natural-gas-network/>
- **Another Utility Wants to Spend Big on Pipeline, Other Projects** - New Jersey Natural Gas is back before regulators seeking to boost its rates by \$128.2 million annually, an increase that could cost its typical residential customer more than \$19 a month, if approved. The filing, with the state Board of Public Utilities, seeks to recover past operational and maintenance investments. As part of the filing, the utility also is seeking \$28.6 million for a 30-mile transmission pipeline through parts of the Pinelands in another regulatory proceeding. If approved, it would add \$4.58 to a typical residential bill: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/31/another-utility-wants-to-spend-big-on-pipeline-other-projects/>
- **Gas Pipeline to NY Would Rip Up NJ Clam Beds, Foes Say** - The Williams Companies, Inc., a Tulsa, Oklahoma-based company, has already been granted permits by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the Raritan loop, part of Williams' Northeast Supply Enhancement project, a \$1 billion expansion of the 10,000-mile Transco Pipeline network stretching from Texas to New York. The Raritan Loop is a 26-inch pipeline that would form a loop with an existing gas pipeline, built in 1951 and operating at capacity, that also stretches across the Raritan and New York bays. The existing pipeline was meant to serve a much smaller market. The project still needs approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection: http://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.com/2019/03/gas-pipeline-to-ny-would-rip-up-nj-clam.html#.XLNglu_sapo

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER (and other water issues)

- **State DEP: Getting Lead Out of NJ Water Pipes Could Cost \$2.3 billion** - Some 350,000 supply lines bringing drinking water to New Jersey residents are thought to have lead components. It could cost up to \$2.3 billion to replace all of the estimated 350,000 water-service lines in New Jersey with lead issues, according to projections by the state Department of Environmental Protection: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/04/state-dep-getting-lead-out-of-nj-water-pipes-could-cost-2-3-billion/>

- **Suez Water Company Speeds Replacement of Lead Service Lines, Aims for 25% by End of Year** - Water company had come under pressure from towns in northern New Jersey to accelerate the program. The Suez water company yesterday said it will step up replacing lead service lines in northern New Jersey that have fouled drinking water for thousands of customers, vowing to spend \$15 million to remove 25 percent of the lead in its system by the end of the year: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/21/suez-accelerates-replacement-of-lead-service-lines-aims-for-25-by-end-of-year/>
- **Clean Water Projects: DEP Agrees Additional State Funding Needed** - The necessity for water infrastructure improvements in New Jersey is expected to outpace available financing. Within the next few years, the state will run out of matching funds to obtain hundreds of millions in federal dollars for crucial clean water projects, according to projections by the Office of Legislative Services and state Department of Environmental Protection: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/07/clean-water-projects-dep-agrees-additional-state-funding-needed/>
- **New Jersey Moves to Enact Tougher Drinking Water Standards for PFAS** - New Jersey unveiled a proposal 4/1/2019 for a drinking water standard for two PFAS chemicals, moving to establish limits that would be among the most stringent in the country and could force at least 40 public systems to clean up their water. The proposed standards, released in the state register, are much tougher than current federal advisories for the chemicals. New Jersey is among the states moving most quickly to address the problem, which has affected drinking water systems nationwide: <https://www.philly.com/news/pfas-new-jersey-drinking-water-limit-pfoa-pfos-20190401.html>
- **DEP Says Five Companies Must Pay for PFAS Contamination in NJ** - First-in-nation directive underlines New Jersey's leadership on curbing toxic chemicals; requires details of manufacture, use and discharge of the chemicals: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/25/dep-says-five-companies-must-pay-for-pfas-contamination-in-new-jersey/>



- **Op-Ed: We Must Defend Our Rivers and Streams from the EPA** - The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing rule changes that would significantly weaken protections for our waterways. When discussing the future of the environment, one cannot forget the important resource of fresh water. In the United States, sources of drinking water face incredible stress from the impacts of climate change, toxic chemicals, plastic waste, overdevelopment, and many other issues. While protections for our waterways are essential, the current administration's Environmental Protection Agency is attempting to redefine the Waters of the United States rule under the Clean Water Act. If the proposed changes are implemented, it would be the largest weakening of the Clean Water Act since its passage. In New Jersey, more than 1.5 million people get their water from the Delaware River Watershed: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/10/op-ed-we-must-defend-our-rivers-and-streams-from-the-epa/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **Murphy Announces Offshore-Wind Registry to Pair Investors, Companies** - Businesses commend New Jersey's push to increase reliance on renewables like wind and solar. On a day when offshore-wind advocates touted the sector's future, Gov. Phil Murphy said the state would create a registry to partner investors with New Jersey companies seeking to cash in on the emerging industry: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/09/murphy-announces-offshore-wind-registry-to-pair-investors-companies/>
- **A Map to NJ's Clean Energy Future: NJ Spotlight Roundtable** - Is it possible for New Jersey to get to a carbon-free economy by 2050? In the first of NJ Spotlight's 2019 series of energy roundtables, held in Hamilton Township on March 15, experts discussed the possibilities, practicalities and benefits of transitioning to a clean-energy future: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/21/map-to-njs-clean-energy-future-nj-spotlight-roundtable/>
- **Percentage Change in Solar Jobs in New Jersey Last Year; -9.8%** - Employment in solar in the Garden State went down by 9.8 percent overall last year, a loss of 696 jobs. New Jersey generated 4.17 percent of its electricity from solar energy last year: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/26/9-8/>

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Op-Ed: Murphy Keeps His Promises on Environment — Let's Stay the Course** - Governor has been delivering on his commitment to make New Jersey the greenest state in the country. He 'walks the talk' on clean energy: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/01/op-ed-murphy-keeps-his-promises-on-environment-lets-stay-the-course/>
- **Despite Favorable Political Winds, Scant Progress in NJ on Climate Change** - Environmental advocates weigh in on why pollution-control efforts in the Garden State have lagged, and on prospects for reaching the state's goal on carbon emissions: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/26/despite-favorable-political-winds-scant-progress-in-nj-on-climate-change/>
- **The NOAA Just Released an Ominous Map That Shows 'Unprecedented' Flooding Across the US That Might Affect 'More Than 200 Million' Americans** - "This is shaping up to be a potentially unprecedented flood season, with more than 200 million people at risk for flooding in their communities," the center's director said. The flooding can't be considered without the ongoing effects of climate change. Since a warmer atmosphere can retain more water vapor, extreme precipitation is becoming more frequent and more intense. Rainfall in the eastern U.S. is now between 29 and 55 percent heavier than it was 60 years ago, depending on the region: <https://www.businessinsider.com/noaa-flood-map-might-affect-more-than-200-million-americans-2019-3>

POLLUTION

- **State Sues DuPont and Chemours over Decades of Pollution** - New Jersey Attorney General files lawsuits 'to hold polluters accountable' for alleged contamination: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/27/state-sues-dupont-and-chemours-over-decades-of-pollution/>

- **Chemours Quantifies Toxic PFAS Substitute Sent to South Jersey Plant** - Revelation raises fresh concerns over possible contamination of local drinking water as scientists say GenX may be just as hazardous as the chemical it's designed to replace:
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/28/epa-document-tons-of-pfas-substitute-shipped-to-south-jersey-plant/>
- **DEP Permit Would Let Treated Sewage Be Dumped into Rockaway Creek** - New Jersey Highlands Council, joined by others, argues scheme incompatible with the Regional Master Plan and the township's Water Quality Management Plan:
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/03/pending-dep-permit-would-let-treated-sewage-be-dumped-into-rockaway-creek/>
- **NY Mandates Food-waste Recycling, Bans Plastic Bags** - Effective January 2022, any establishment that generates more than two tons of food waste per week must separate material for donation and arrange for inedible scraps to be taken to an organics recycler within 25 miles. Temporary waivers will be granted by the state based on factors such as cost and distance. Effective March 2020, the state will prohibit distribution of any "plastic carryout bag" (with some exemptions) and allow cities or counties to implement their own five-cent fees on paper bags. New York City, among other local governments, is now expected to take that step: <https://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.com/2019/04/ny-mandates-food-waste-recycling-bans.html>



- **New York Just Agreed to Ban Plastic Bags. Is New Jersey Next?** - New Jersey's efforts to ban plastic bags, straws and foam food containers has remained in legislative limbo for six months, with no action in Trenton on a bill championed by supporters as the strongest set of plastic regulations in the nation. Now environmentalists hope New York's adoption last week of a ban on thin supermarket bags will help reinvigorate efforts in New Jersey to do away with products that make up a sizable portion of pollution found in every corner of the Garden State. **Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin, D-Middlesex, a primary sponsor of the bill in the Assembly and chairwoman of the environment committee, said Thursday that a stacked legislative agenda including bills dealing with beach access and stormwater controls has delayed a hearing on the bill, which was introduced in July. She did not know when a hearing would be held:**
<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/environment/2019/04/04/new-york-ban-plastic-bags-new-jersey-next/3352092002/>
- **Opinion Recycling in the US Will Survive — Despite the Media Narrative** - The Atlantic and The New York Times recently carried near identical stories about what they portrayed as the "end of recycling" due to China's ban on scrap imports from the U.S. They outlined how this sent the price of recycling soaring, causing some cities to begin cutting down or even eliminating programs and sending

materials to incinerators or landfills. They got some of the story right, but omitted the fact that some 20 years ago, Big Waste companies made a deliberate decision to disrupt the then well-functioning dual-stream systems by convincing cities to switch to single-stream recycling. This caused contamination rates to increase and led to the market crunch started by Chinese import restrictions. Nor did they mention how this moment is a much-needed wake-up call to reform a recycling system that has been redesigned to meet the needs of a handful of large waste companies rather than maximize recycling for the public good: <https://www.wastedive.com/news/recycling-in-the-us-will-survive-despite-the-media-narrative/551262/>

OTHER

- **Murphy Undoes A Pair of Executive Orders Issued by Christie that Critics Had Argued Were Undermining Some of the State’s Environmental and Public-Health Safeguards** - Christie’s executive orders had frozen pending regulations for 90 days and made it more difficult to enact environmental rules more stringent than federal standards. The orders formed the rationale behind a number of actions taken by the Republican’s administration over its eight years to roll back regulations it claimed hindered economic growth. They also led the state Department of Environmental Protection to issue new regulations that waived certain environmental rules in limited cases where the standards were deemed to be unduly burdensome. **Some of the principles outlined in the Executive Order already are embraced in a bill (A-5033) sponsored by Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin (D-Middlesex), which aims to blunt the effects of the Trump administration’s rollback of environmental protections by enshrining those safeguards into state law.** Environmentalists welcomed Murphy’s action, saying the prior administration’s orders were designed to block and roll back critical environmental rules in the state: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/02/murphy-undoes-a-pair-of-executive-orders-issued-by-christie/> The text of the Executive Order (No. 63) is here: <https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-63.pdf>
- **Rate Counsel Opposes PSE&G’s \$2.78 Billion Energy-Efficiency Filing** - In filings with the state Board of Public Utilities, Rate Counsel’s experts argued the utility overstated how cost effective the proposed six-year program would be. They also contended a provision to recoup revenues PSE&G would lose due to its energy-saving actions is contrary to the Clean Energy Act (CEA) signed by Gov. Phil Murphy last May: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/03/27/rate-counsel-opposes-pse-gs-2-78-billion-energy-efficiency-filing/>
- **As Decision on Nuclear Subsidies Nears, Where Is Consultant’s Report?** - Consumer, environmental, and industry groups want to know why an independent report commissioned by the BPU has yet to be seen by the public. With a decision seemingly imminent, several groups urged a consultant’s report be made public on whether three nuclear plants in South Jersey ought to be given up to \$300 million in annual ratepayer subsidies: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/04/15/with-decision-on-nuclear-subsidies-looming-groups-ask-where-is-consultants-report/>

UUFaithAction NJ - Environmental Justice Task Force - <https://uufaithaction.org/environment/>
Chair - Nancy Griffeth; Vice Chair - Ray Nichols

Visit our website for Environmental links and resources / sign up for email alerts / join the EJTF