



# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

## June - July 2019

[covering 5/20/2019 – 6/24/2019]

**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.**

### YOUR CHANCE TO IMPACT NEW JERSEY'S ENERGY FUTURE!



#### NEW JERSEY DRAFT ENERGY MASTER PLAN ISSUED

The Energy Master Plan (EMP) is the roadmap NJ will use for its journey toward a clean and green 2050. The draft plan just issued outlines seven strategies for achieving Governor Murphy's goal of "100% clean energy by 2050." As usual, though, you must read the fine print. The definition of "clean energy" is "carbon neutral electricity generation." That sounds good and addresses global warming, but the plan defines clean energy to include nuclear energy and fossil fuels balanced by an equal amount of carbon removal (rather than reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions). The health and safety issues raised by nuclear energy and fossil fuels aren't addressed. The good news is that the plan would accelerate the transition to renewable resources; it suggests ramping down subsidies for conversion from oil to natural gas; and it has provisions to help EJ communities.

**Reviewing and commenting on the Draft EMP is our opportunity to have an impact on New Jersey's energy future.** There is a comment period from now through September 16 (at noon), and public hearings on three days (Wednesday, July 17 in Trenton, Thursday, August 8, in Newark, and Thursday, September 12, in Camden). The EJTF has begun reviewing the plan, and will continue over the summer. We are following the seven strategies of the EMP, but have added two additional categories, implementation and food. You are welcome to join our discussion, or to provide comments individually. You can find a link to the EMP at <https://nj.gov/emp/>, along with additional information about it. See page 6 for a news story summarizing the plan.

## ***UPCOMING EVENTS***

### **Rally Against Oil Trains and Meadowlands Project – Tuesday, July 9, 2019**

60 Bergen Tpke., corner of Main St. in Ridgefield Park (right near the tracks where dirty and dangerous Bakken Crude is shipped through dozens of NJ towns and across our water supplies)

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### **NJ Energy Master Plan Public Hearings and Comment Period**

The first public hearing is **Wednesday, July 17** at the State House Annex in Trenton. The second is **Thursday, August 8**, at the Larson Auditorium of Seton Hall in Newark. The third is **Thursday, September 12**, at the Black Box Theater in The Kroc Center in Camden. There are two meetings on each of the above days. Each stakeholder can register ahead for only one session, and the deadline for registering ahead is noon of the day before (early registrants usually get preference in being heard).

Written comments are due on **Monday, September 16** at noon.

See <https://www.nj.gov/emp/get/> for details.

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### **Stop New Fossil Fuel Development!**

**Make a quick phone call on “*MORATORIUM MONDAYS*”!!**



In the midst of the climate crisis, New Jersey is getting overrun with fossil-fuel infrastructure. This fossil fuel expansion conflicts with Gov. Murphy’s stated goal of 100% of NJ’s electricity coming from clean energy by 2050. Please join with UU FaithAction NJ (and 78 other groups) in calling Gov. Murphy on #MoratoriumMondays, to urge him to enact a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects until NJ has a real plan in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to 100% clean renewable energy. **Call 866-586-4069 between 9am and 5pm on Mondays.** You will hear a short message giving you talking points, then you will be put through to Gov. Murphy’s office. The goal is 200 phone calls every Monday! More info at <http://empowernewjersey.com/>

EJTF member Bill Potter has an excellent opinion piece on the Moratorium in “NJ Spotlight” (see page 4).

## Moratorium Updates:

- The NJDEP denied permits to Williams Transco for one of the new pipelines, the Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) (see page 5 and <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/piscataway/articles/new-jersey-department-of-environmental-protection-denies-permit-application-for-nese-pipeline-project-citing-deficiencies-5/>). The denial was “without prejudice,” so that Williams Transco can apply again (and has, on June 10, with a 30 day comment period).
- The Delaware River Basin Commission recently confirmed that a developer, Delaware River Partners, is planning to build a Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) plant on a former DuPont site in Gibbstown (see pages 5 and 6). This could encourage more fracking by opening up export markets, which may also be the target of some of the proposed New Jersey pipelines. A recent story about leaks at an LNG plant in Louisiana adds a public safety component to this story: (<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060427035>).

## 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 - a coalition of environmental groups, to demand that Governor Murphy declare a moratorium on building fossil fuel infrastructure. We are asking our members to contact the governor, especially on “Moratorium Mondays” (see page 2), 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.

In addition, we are signing on to EJTF member Bill Potter’s petitions to the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for reconsideration of their permits for various pipelines

### 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.

Although the EV bill (S2252/A4829) is stalled, the VW settlement is being used to help fund an electrification program that includes electric garbage trucks, school buses, and port-related vehicles (see page 4). The EJTF had some criticism of the EV bill based on its relative inattention to public vehicles and transit and its focus on private EVs and EV charging, so this is welcome news.

A position paper on electrification of vehicles is in progress.

## NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

### CLEAN VEHICLES

- **Second Round of Volkswagen Settlement Funds to Support Deployment of Heavy-Duty Electric Vehicles, with Emphasis on Improving Air Quality in Environmental Justice Communities** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection is requesting approval from the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trustee to disburse \$16 million for the deployment of electric heavy-duty garbage trucks, school buses, and port-related vehicles. “The projects to be funded by this second round of grants will improve air quality in environmental justice communities that have for too long have had to bear a disproportionate burden of air pollution and its health consequences,” DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe said. “These projects also will demonstrate the viability of using electric heavy-duty vehicles to improve air quality in urban areas and throughout the state.”  
[https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2019/19\\_0045.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2019/19_0045.htm)



- **Administration Promises Almost \$25M to Electrify Transportation Sector** – A partnership among state agencies announced by Gov. Murphy could help speed the rollout of fast-charging infrastructure; a rebate program could put more NJ drivers behind the wheel of electric vehicles; and, a proposal to spend \$16 million could fund the deployment of electric garbage trucks, school buses, and port-related vehicles. The aim is to jump start efforts to reduce pollution from the transportation sector, the single largest source of global warming pollution in NJ, accounting for more than 40 percent of such emissions: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/03/administration-promises-almost-25m-to-electrify-transportation-sector/>

### FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Opinion: It’s Time for a Moratorium on All Fossil Fuel Projects in NJ - by EJTF member Bill Potter** - A very thorough, reasoned, and substantiated piece, calling on Governor Murphy to order a freeze on pipeline and power-plant projects ‘while we still have a chance’ to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, and providing background to answer the questions: Is it legal? Is it an unconstitutional “regulatory taking” of private property without just compensation?:  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/22/opinion-its-time-for-a-moratorium-on-all-fossil-fuel-projects-in-nj/>

- DEP Denies Permits for Natural Gas Pipeline Under Raritan Bay** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection denied two crucial permits sought by the Williams Companies for the Transco Northeast Supply Enhancement project, a nearly \$1 billion new natural gas pipeline that would cut through portions of NJ and under Raritan Bay to supply New York City and Long Island. The application can be resubmitted with remedies for problems cited (note: they did reapply, on 6/10/2019). The denial of the permits is a significant victory for environmental groups, who deluged Gov. Murphy's office with calls and petitions opposing the project. and marks one of the few times they have stopped any of the dozen or so new fossil-fuel projects pending in NJ:  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/06/dep-denies-permits-for-natural-gas-pipeline-under-raritan-bay/>
- DEP Suspends Review of Meadowlands Power Plant's Application** - Plans for a controversial, natural gas-fired power plant in the Meadowlands have stalled, and the developer of the North Bergen Liberty Generating station is considering changing the plant's technology. The Department of Environmental Protection has suspended its review after the developer pulled its application:  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/18/dep-suspends-review-of-controversial-meadowlands-power-plants-application/>
- Counting the Costs of Pipeline Projects for the Delaware River Basin** – An analysis conducted by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation finds that the PennEast and Mariner East 2 pipelines will significantly increase pollution, degrade natural habitat and rack up big social costs. “The results of the study suggest that the present value of lifetime environmental and social costs associated with the proposed PennEast pipeline and existing Mariner East 2 pipelines in the DRB range from approximately \$758 million to \$2.4 billion,” according to the report:  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/13/study-says-pipeline-projects-will-damage-delaware-river-basin/>
- DRBC Confirms Plan to Build LNG Export Terminal at New South Jersey Port** - DRBC says it only ‘recently’ learned of plan to load potentially explosive liquids onto tankers in Gloucester County, updating its earlier statement that LNG was not part of the company's permit application. Environmental activists have accused the DRBC and other regulators of concealing plans by the developer, Delaware River Partners, to add an LNG terminal to a new port that it plans to build on a former DuPont site in Gibbstown, Gloucester County. Environmentalists assert that an LNG export terminal would endanger public safety by risking an explosion; boost fracking for natural gas by opening up overseas markets; and make it harder for NJ to hit its targets for cutting carbon emissions:  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/11/drbc-confirms-plan-to-build-lng-export-terminal-at-new-south-jersey-port/>



- **Plans for LNG Terminal in South Jersey Kept Under Wraps, Enviro Group Says** - Plans to build a liquefied natural gas export terminal at Gibbstown in Greenwich Township, Gloucester County have not been fully disclosed to the public by regulatory agencies or by the developer of the site on the Delaware River in South Jersey, an environmental group says. Delaware Riverkeeper Network accused the developer, Delaware River Partners, and several regulators of not doing enough to keep the public informed of the plan to build the terminal that would transfer super-cooled natural gas from Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale via trucks to ocean-going tankers: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/02/plans-for-lng-terminal-in-gloucester-county-kept-under-wraps-enviro-group-says/>
- **Report: Natural Gas Does Not Provide Bridge to Clean Energy Future** - Oil Change International, an advocacy group promoting renewable energy, maintains that building new pipelines and other gas infrastructure means carbon emissions will be around for decades. A new study aims to dispel the notion that natural gas could be a bridge to a clean-energy future, suggesting it will instead undermine the Murphy administration's goal to sharply curb climate-warming carbon emissions: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/30/report-natural-gas-does-not-provide-bridge-to-clean-energy-future/>
- **Op-Ed: PennEast Pipeline Doesn't Go With a Clean-Energy Future** – by Brandon McKoy, president of New Jersey Policy Perspective - We already have more gas than we need. Moreover, we must use less gas to reduce harmful emissions and meet our goals for combating climate change. The PennEast pipeline isn't needed to meet the state's energy needs because NJ already has substantial excess pipeline capacity. Considering this, it's almost laughable when gas companies suggest that a few cold winter days require our state to build a new 120-mile pipeline that we're not even close to needing. That's like living in Antarctica and buying a convertible for the one "hot" day each year: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/03/op-ed-penneast-pipeline-doesnt-go-with-a-clean-energy-future/>
- **Environmentalists Protest Expansion of Roseland Compressor Station** - Protesters say the governor should issue a stay on the construction until appeals have been settled in court. It started with singing and ended with two under arrest, as environmentalists gathered in a last-ditch effort to stop the expansion of a compressor station in Roseland, part of a larger gas pipeline expansion run by Oklahoma-based Williams Companies. The protesters said the expansion is unnecessary because the current compressor is only operating at 10 percent and it has the potential to harm surrounding wetlands and puts local residents' health at risk: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/22/environmentalists-protest-expansion-of-roseland-compressor-station/>

## **NJ DRAFT ENERGY MASTER PLAN**

- **NJ Draft Energy Master Plan Issued** – The draft Energy Master Plan (EMP) calls for shifting away from gas and other fossil fuels, primarily by maximum electrification of the transportation and building sectors, the biggest source of greenhouse-gas emissions in NJ. Gov. Murphy said the strategies set forth in the plan will foster economic growth by creating thousands of jobs. Besides reducing energy consumption and emissions from the transportation sector (by moving primarily to electric cars) and the building sector (through using less fossil fuels and improvements in building codes), the plan identifies five other strategies. They include: accelerating deployment of renewable energy (primarily offshore wind and solar); maximizing energy efficiency and conservation; modernizing the grid and utility infrastructure (including advanced metering infrastructure); supporting underserved communities; and expanding the clean-energy innovation economy. However, the plan defines clean energy to include nuclear energy and fossil fuels balanced by an equal amount of carbon removal from the atmosphere, rather reducing CO2 emissions, which is not a well-established technology, and research is needed: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/10/draft-energy-master-plan-maps-njs-journey-to-clean-and-green-2050/>

- **Editorial: Lofty Goals on Clean Energy, but Will There Be Follow-up?** by the North Jersey Editorial Board - A chief frustration with the Murphy administration in Trenton is not that it doesn't have big ideas. It has plenty of them. The problem is in the follow-through, the failure, all too often, to deliver a final product... Murphy unveiled an energy master plan for the state, one that repeats his oft-made hopes of putting NJ on a full "clean energy" footing by 2050. The 108-page draft report makes the usual pitches for use of more renewable energy going forward, including solar and wind. It also throws its support behind using nuclear energy to lower NJ's contribution to global warming....: <https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/editorials/2019/06/12/lofty-nj-goals-clean-energy-but-there-follow-up/1419577001/>

## RENEWABLE RESOURCES



- **Finally, Major Movement on Governor's Promises for Offshore Wind** - With the largest ever award for offshore-wind capacity (made to Ørsted's Ocean Wind project), NJ signaled it will be a major, if not dominant, player in the sector rapidly developing along the Eastern Seaboard. The selection of the \$1.6 billion, 1,100-megawatt project about 15 miles off the coast of Atlantic City is significant in not only being the largest single offshore-wind project ever awarded in this country, but also its cost came in lower than many expected: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/23/finally-major-movement-on-governors-promises-for-offshore-wind/>
- **Big Question for Offshore Wind: Who Gets Power to the Customers?** - The federal government is moving to gauge industry interest in building a regional offshore transmission system. The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management announced that it will publish a "request for competitive interest" in building a transmission line off the coasts of NJ and NY: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/18/big-question-for-offshore-wind-who-gets-power-to-the-customers/>
- **What's in Store for Energy Storage, a Key Element of NJ's Clean-Energy Future?** Systems capable of capturing and storing power will provide a necessary backstop to keep the electrons moving on the electric grid, the lights on in homes, and commerce humming. But getting to that stage promises to be a long, complicated and expensive undertaking, according to a new analysis of energy storage in NJ by Rutgers University: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/19/whats-in-store-for-energy-storage-a-key-element-of-njs-clean-energy-future/>
- **Study Shows an Already Strong Green Economy in NJ, Poised for More Growth** - With nearly 52,00 workers, clean energy in NJ employs about as many people as UPS, Walmart, and Verizon combined. A new study by a nonpartisan business group found clean energy is already a growing part of the state's economy and is well-positioned to expand beyond the more than 50,000 jobs already in the sector with its aggressive targets set by legislators and the Murphy administration: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/23/study-shows-an-already-strong-green-economy-in-nj-poised-for-more-growth/>

- **Six Flags in NJ Is Now One of the World's Only Solar-powered Theme Parks** - Roughly 12.5 megawatts of grounded solar panels now sit on 40 acres of land near Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson Township, Ocean County, NJ. It is now almost entirely powered by nearly 60,000 solar panels spanning parking lots and 40 acres of previously unused land. The panels, which cost more than \$70 million to construct, convert sunlight to 23.5 megawatts of electricity and provide 98% of the power needed to keep the theme park running. The solar farm is now the largest net-metered solar array in the state (i.e., the solar arrays send extra electricity back into the larger power grid): <https://enviropolitics.com/six-flags-in-nj-is-now-one-of-the-worlds-only-solar-powered-theme-parks/>

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- **NJ Getting Ready to Rejoin Regional Effort to Curb Pollution** – The Department of Environmental Protection's adoption of new rules upends the Christie decision to pull out of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in 2012. Pulling out of RGGI cost NJ about \$300 million in clean-energy funding, and rejoining it, as promised by Phil Murphy during his gubernatorial campaign, will mark a step toward further curbing power plant pollution. However, some people question just how effective rejoining the nine-state initiative will prove, if at all. They argue the caps on carbon pollution are set at a level so that cheaper and dirtier power plants out of state will run more frequently than cleaner and more expensive generating facilities in NJ: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/17/nj-ready-to-rejoin-regional-clean-energy-group-clears-another-obstacle/>



- **NJ Could Need 2,700 Miles of Sea Walls to Defend against Rising Waters** – NJ would have to pay almost \$25 billion to build almost 2,700 miles of seawalls to protect its coastal communities from anticipated sea-level rise by 2040, according to the latest study on the state's vulnerability to rising ocean levels. The study suggests the fossil-fuel industry should pay. The Center for Climate Integrity, a Washington, DC-based advocacy group, said NJ faces the sixth-biggest bill for sea-wall construction of any state: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/20/nj-could-need-2-700-miles-of-sea-walls-to-defend-against-rising-waters/>
- **Watch: How Is Climate Change Affecting New Jersey?** - Dr. Robert Kopp, the director of the Rutgers Institute of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences, uses computer modeling to demonstrate how sea levels would rise if humans kept pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. At 9 feet — the sea levels reached in Superstorm Sandy — Port Newark, the airport and much of Jersey City would be submerged. It would set off a cascade that could wash out homes and businesses, impede power lines, and cut off the supply lines for goods coming into harbor: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/06/how-is-climate-change-affecting-new-jersey/>



- **Watch: What Will It Take to Chart a Clean-Energy Future for NJ?** - Gov. Phil Murphy wants 50% of the state's power to come from renewable sources by 2050, but the path to that goal may not be easy. "The Clean Energy Act makes a good start on bringing us something new: community solar," said state Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine McCabe. It would be available to all, including people living in low-income housing developments and multifamily complexes. The Murphy administration recently published a draft of the state's new Energy Master Plan on how it wants to produce, distribute, consume and conserve energy. The plan lays out an ambitious road map to achieve the governor's clean-energy goals — from pushing renewables, to expanding the power grid, and electrically heating homes and businesses. But the plan also maintains the state's heavy reliance on natural gas, which heats 75 percent of NJ homes: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/13/what-will-it-take-to-get-nj-to-100-renewable-energy/>
- **Measure Approved to Reduce Global Warming, But Some Doubt It Has Teeth** - Despite protests from some environmentalists, lawmakers approved a bill that aims to ensure NJ achieves its aggressive targets to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050. But some climate activists said the bill fails to advance any meaningful policies to combat global warming, merely requiring more monitoring and modeling of climate-changing pollutants without mandating anything the state could do to actually curb emissions: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/20/nj-approval-of-measure-to-reduce-global-warming-but-some-doubt-it-has-teeth/>
- **Duke Farms Partners with Rutgers on Evaluating Natural Climate Solutions** - The Duke Farms property is the site of a range of wetlands, grasslands, stream corridor, and lakeshore restorations, afforestation and reforestation projects, as well as sustainable farming practices. These areas and practices offer promise as natural ways to sequester carbon. Rutgers University researchers will conduct research and monitoring on-site at Duke Farms, starting with baseline data to understand carbon stocks associated with various land types and land management strategies. They plan to devise strategies to remove significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere and store it in soils and vegetation (referred to as a carbon sink): <https://enviropolitics.com/duke-farms-partners-with-rutgers-on-evaluating-natural-climate-solutions/>
- **Op-Ed: The Road Ahead for New Jersey's Climate Leadership** - by Fred Krupp, president of the Environmental Defense Fund - Last year, Gov. Phil Murphy signed the Clean Energy Act and Executive Order 28, which together require the state to develop and implement a plan to reach 100 percent clean energy by mid-century. Now it's time to accelerate progress by laying out the path to achieve the goal. For starters, Gov. Murphy, the Legislature and the NJ Board of Public Utilities must empower and incentivize the state's electric and gas providers, and also hold them accountable for achieving the results: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/11/op-ed-the-road-ahead-for-new-jerseys-climate-leadership/>

## POLLUTION

- **Plastic Pollution: Will New Jersey Towns Ban All Plastic Bags or Only Thin Ones?** - Hoboken is one of several municipalities across NJ whose "bans" still let customers buy plastic bags that are slightly thicker than traditional grocery store bags and are billed as reusable. Some environmentalists say this is a loophole that doesn't do enough to tackle plastic waste in NJ. Municipal officials counter that it's a start toward a complete ban while still greatly reducing the number of bags used by customers: <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/environment/2019/06/10/nj-plastic-bag-ban-arent-always-really-bans-hoboken-bhalla-plastic-pollution/1339862001/>



- **Bayonne Will Vote on Plastic Bag Ban, as Jersey City's Set to Take Effect** - Grocery store patrons may soon see a big difference in these two Hudson County cities in the coming months. An ordinance up for approval would ban most single-use plastic bags and straws throughout the city. Meanwhile, Jersey City, which approved its own ban in June 2018, is set prohibit the use of single-use plastic throughout the city on June 28. If Bayonne approves its ordinance, it would join Hoboken, and dozens of other municipalities in the state including Belmar, Point Pleasant and Teaneck by banning all retail locations from providing single-use plastic bags to customers: <https://enviropolitics.com/bayonne-will-vote-on-plastic-bag-ban-as-jersey-citys-set-to-take-effect/>
- **Lincoln Elementary Students Petition Caldwell Council to Ban Single-Use Plastic Bags** - Fifth grade students from Lincoln Elementary School attended a Caldwell Borough Council meeting to request that they adopt an ordinance banning single-use plastic bags in the borough. Ann Marchionni of the Caldwell Environmental Commission (CEC) recently shared the movie "Plastic Ocean," which reports on the impact of plastic debris in oceans and waterways as well as the long-and short-term effects that it has on the environment, with the students. The students read poems and spoke to council members about the effects of plastic in the environment and the need for the borough to "lead the way in Essex County and ban single-use plastics bags:" <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/west-essex/articles/lincoln-elementary-students-petition-caldwell-council-to-ban-single-use-plastic-bags>

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- **No Increase in Funds for Clean Energy Overall but Extra for Energy Efficiency** - As the Murphy administration phases out diversion of funds from Clean Energy Program, more money is being directed toward measures that would reduce energy use. "The Office of Clean Energy has been fighting with one hand tied behind its back for the last 10 years," said Doug O'Malley, director of Environment New Jersey, referring to the more than \$1.5 billion raided from clean-energy programs over the last decade. Several new initiatives are planned for the energy efficiency programs, including special incentives for low- to moderate-income eligible customers with a particular focus on environmental justice communities: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/02/no-increase-in-funds-for-clean-energy-overall-but-extra-for-energy-efficiency/>

- **Wrestling with the Devilish Details of How to Curb Energy Use in NJ** - A year-old law could save gas and electric customers a lot of money, but it was apparent at a NJ Spotlight roundtable there's no consensus on how to implement the law. There is widespread agreement NJ has the potential to achieve huge benefits and savings for customers, but far less consensus on how the state will realize those goals. It is a dilemma as policymakers, utilities and clean-energy advocates struggle to iron out the details on how to implement the year-old law requiring electric and gas companies to curb customer use by 2 percent and 0.75 percent, respectively, annually:

<https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/09/wrestling-with-devilish-details-of-how-to-curb-energy-use-in-nj/>

You can listen to the entire roundtable here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-731709396/roundtable-achieving-energy-efficiency-in-nj-06-05-19>

Decoupling was discussed at the NJ Spotlight Roundtable on Achieving Energy Efficiency in NJ (see above). I have long been troubled by the proposal to “decouple” rates and revenues for New Jersey’s Electricity Distribution Companies (PSE&G, JCPL, etc.). Decoupling would mean that the companies have a revenue target set before a fiscal year begins. If their revenues don’t meet the target, they can raise rates. If they exceed the target, they would lower rates. However, lowering rates— which makes decoupling symmetric — may not actually be part of the electric utilities’ plan. Furthermore, according to Stefanie Brand of the Division of Rate Counsel, they are already guaranteed a return on investments in clean energy, so decoupling would amount to paying them twice. Some very depressing facts about the realities of EJ communities also came up when I asked what new approaches could be taken to making the clean energy economy accessible to low and moderate income households. The answer seemed to be “not much.” EJTF member Mike Skelly and I had a discussion after the roundtable with Laureen Boles of NJEJA and Rev. Ronald Tuff of Greenfaith about the obstacles to access to clean energy and how to overcome them. I hope that we will develop a project to make some proposals to the BPU or to write legislation. – Nancy Griffeth, EJTF Chair



- **Questions Abound over Key Study of NJ’s Potential to Cut Energy Use** - A new draft analysis of the state’s potential to reduce energy use is raising more questions than it answers, at least based on feedback from utilities, energy efficiency firms, clean-energy advocates and others. The study, by Optimal Energy, is expected to form the framework of a more comprehensive range of state policies to expand energy efficiency projects: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/21/questions-abound-over-key-study-of-njs-potential-to-cut-energy-use/>

- **No Fast Enactment by NJ of Measures on Energy Efficiency** – An analysis that was expected to underpin the state’s implementation of clean-energy law now is to be examined by a BPU advisory group. The state plans to take another deep dive into Optimal Energy’s analysis of how NJ should go about mandating how gas and electric utilities curb energy use by customers before it arrives at any decisions: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/28/no-fast-enactment-by-nj-of-measures-on-energy-efficiency/>

## OTHER

- **Private Partners to Fund Overdue Energy Upgrades at Government Facilities?** - With an aging, and often obsolete energy infrastructure in government-owned facilities in NJ, lawmakers are pushing a bill that would allow the private sector to invest in energy-related projects at those facilities. The bill won approval from committees in both houses - a sign that legislators are warming to the idea of private investments funding long-neglected projects because of increasing constraints on local and other government entities: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/05/19/private-partners-to-fund-overdue-energy-upgrades-at-government-facilities/>
- **Whitman, Other Former EPA Heads Tell Congress EPA Is Failing Its Core Mission** - Four former Environmental Protection Agency administrators told Congress the agency’s core mission to protect public health and the environment is being undermined by the people who are running it. In a hearing before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Energy & Commerce, the administrators, including former NJ Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, urged the panel to exercise more oversight over EPA’s actions to roll back environmental protections, particularly regarding its continuing denial of and failure to address climate change: <https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/11/whitman-other-former-epa-heads-tell-congress-agency-failing-its-core-mission/>

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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