

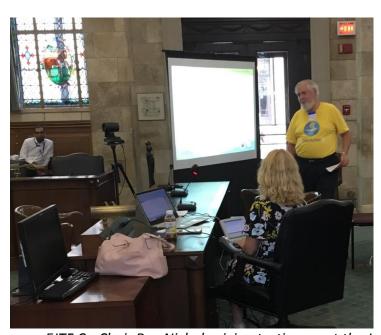
Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter August 2019

[covering 6/25/2019 - 7/26/2019]

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.

UTILIZING OUR CHANCE TO IMPACT NEW JERSEY'S ENERGY FUTURE!

UUFANJ/EJTF TESTIFIES ON NJ DRAFT ENERGY MASTER PLAN





EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols giving testimony at the July 17, 2019 public hearing in Trenton

Reviewing and commenting on the Draft EMP is our opportunity to have an impact on New Jersey's energy future.

UUFANJ/EJTF is taking full advantage of the comment period on the draft NJ Energy Master Plan (EMP), which ends on September 16 (at noon), and of the three public hearings that are scheduled. We have been extensively reviewing the plan, and gave testimony at the first hearing, held July 17, 2019 in Trenton (see photos on this page and on page 2), and have also provided written comments. We plan to testify at additional hearings and to provide additional comments, throughout the summer. We are following the seven strategies of the EMP, but have added two additional categories, implementation and food. Others 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.

UU FaithAction NJ Executive Director Rev. Rob Gregson Testifying on NJ Draft EMP



"I appeal not just to the BPU panel but to everyone in the room, both environmentalists and industry spokespeople, to do more than your job specifies and more than the blinkered approach that "I'll just do this one small piece." Please recall, as I ask the Governor and members of this panel to recall, that when we review our lives, we will not be proud of pursuing profits or convenience over a clear and present danger. You and I have a chance this year to turn this ship around. Private businesses, environmental advocates, public servants, and people of faith, please exercise your personal courage. In the end, that is the real path to honor and success." – Rev. Rob Gregson, Executive Director, UUFANJ

Rev. Gregson also criticized the redefinition of "clean energy" as "carbon neutral," which allows use of fossil fuels with carbon offsets or carbon capture. This approach is the most likely to shift damage to EJ communities. Also, draft EMP Strategy 6, addressing low and moderate income (LMI) participation in clean energy projects, makes "Community Energy Planning" a central feature of its approach. There is even a new grant program in the Clean Energy program for Community Energy Planning. However, the evaluation criteria for getting a grant include the following: "Demonstrated success in participating in Clean Energy Programs and energy and emissions reduction programs in the past." Unfortunately, as the draft EMP acknowledges, it has been hard for LMI communities to participate in clean energy programs, much less succeed, and other parts of the plan acknowledge this by their emphasis on making clean energy programs more accessible to LMI communities. This criterion biases the grant selection process against LMI communities. A better, and more justifiable criterion, would be to prioritize grant applications from communities that have experienced the most environmental degradation from fossil fuel use.



CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A Green Vespers Sermon at Beacon - Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit



A sermon about covenant and the cosmos that directly relates to the UU Seventh Principle was given by Helen Kaar, the lay leader of Beacon UUCS's Green Vespers, on July 21, 2019. The sermon is included here: https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/faithful-cosmos-booklet-II.pdf.

Green Vespers, which are monthly worship services held at Beacon - UUCS, are dedicated to seeking right relationship with Earth. Green Vespers centers on respect for the Interdependent Web of all existence of which we are a part—which is no more than the golden rule extended to the whole of Nature. Led by lay member Helen Kaar, the group meets typically on the third Saturday evening of the month and then shares a potluck meal together. To find out more, email halfmoonhouse@mac.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NJ Energy Master Plan Public Hearings and Comment Period

Thursday, August 8, at the Larson Auditorium of Seton Hall in Newark. **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.

Stop New Fossil Fuel Development!

Make a quick phone call on "MORATORIUM MONDAYS"!!



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 3), 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. 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

• "Jersey Renews" Calls on NJ to Ensure that EV Development Is Equitable, Helps Poorer Communities - If and when NJ gets around to electrifying the transportation sector, it must ensure urban and low-income communities that bear the brunt of its pollution share in that transformation. Jersey Renews — a coalition of labor, faith, community and environmental groups including UU FaithAction NJ — has called on NJ to implement a statewide strategic plan to integrate electric vehicles into the transportation network, making sure that communities hit hard by pollution are prioritized. The white paper, "Transportation Electrification: Keeping an Eye on Equity," reflects some of the recommendations suggested by New Jersey's draft Energy Master Plan as well as by a stalled bill (S-2252) that aims to jump-start the electrification of the sector, which contributes nearly half of the state's greenhouse gas emissions: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/30/calling-on-state-to-ensure-ev-development-is-equitable-helps-poorer-communities/

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE



- 'Green' Coalition Asks Burlington Freeholders to Block SRL Pipeline Enviros want the Burlington County Board of Freeholders board to deny a permit to New Jersey Natural Gas for the Southern Reliability Link (SRL) pipeline project. New Jersey Natural Gas is already building the nearly 30-mile pipeline through parts of the 1-million-acre Pinelands National Preserve, even though the issue is still tied up in ongoing litigation by opponents. A coalition of 23 conservation groups led by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance is asking the board to exercise its authority to deny any permit, in this case a construction approval, in the interest of public safety. The pipeline, initially approved in 2016 by the state Board of Public Utilities and challenged in court, is designed to provide more dependable gas delivery to New Jersey Natural Gas customers should there be major disruptions in other pipelines crisscrossing the state: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/22/green-coalition-asks-burlington-county-freeholders-to-block-srl-pipeline/
- LNG Export Terminal Would Take 360 Trucks a Day, 24/7, Army Corps Says Previously unpublished information about the proposed terminal at Gibbstown in Gloucester County, came from details the Army Corps received about the plan by the developer, Delaware River Partners, since the agency published an earlier notice on the project in April. The new document said LNG a supercooled form of natural gas that can explode if its vapor is mixed with air in an enclosed space would not be processed or stored on site but would be pumped directly from trucks into ships, as many as 15 trucks an hour around the clock to fill an ocean-going tanker every two weeks:

 https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/16/lng-export-terminal-would-take-360-trucks-a-day-24-7-army-corps-says/

- DRBC Considers Request for a Review of the LNG Terminal Application for the Delaware River Basin The environmental group Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) has accused the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) of abandoning its responsibility to protect water, by approving plans for a controversial liquefied natural gas terminal at Gibbstown, Gloucester County. Enviros say the LNG component of the project would risk major explosions, stimulate the production of climate-altering natural gas, and endanger the water resources that the DRBC is required to protect. The environmental group previously accused DRBC and other agencies of trying to cover up the plan by Delaware River Partners to transfer LNG produced in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale from trucks or railcars on to ships bound for overseas ports; now, DRN has formally asked the commission to reexamine the plan: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/15/agency-mulls-review-of-lng-terminal-application-for-delaware-river-basin/
- Op-Ed: Health and Safety Is at Risk If More Gas Pipelines Are Allowed in NJ (by Patty Cronheim, outreach coordinator for ReThink Energy NJ) Federal safety rules are inadequate and liable to be made weaker by the Trump administration. After the San Bruno, CA pipeline explosion in 2010, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended, and Congress directed, the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to redo the rules for pipeline safety. Some nine years later, nothing has changed. Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ), chair of the House Committee on Energy & Commerce, is fighting proposals to make pipeline regulation even weaker. The Trump administration has proposed easing requirements that companies monitor and repair methane leaks at oil and gas facilities. On top of that, President Trump signed an executive order in April aimed at speeding pipeline permitting and construction. Furthermore, although New Jersey regulations require natural gas pipelines built, operated, and maintained in our state to meet a higher safety standard than federal law requires, New Jersey is barred from enforcing its own rules for pipelines if they aren't solely in New Jersey: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/17/op-ed-health-and-safety-at-risk-if-more-gas-pipelines-allowed-in-nj/

NJ DRAFT ENERGY MASTER PLAN

- Critics Contend State's Draft Energy Master Plan Won't Slow Climate Change Enviros came out in droves for Murphy. Now they're saying his draft plan is too soft on natural gas projects, too reliant on nuclear power. The state's draft Energy Master Plan's failure to impose a moratorium on new natural-gas projects is likely to jeopardize the Murphy administration's efforts to address the urgency of the climate-change crisis, clean-energy advocates said at the first public hearing on the plan 9/17/2019. Many speakers also questioned how it defines clean energy, saying the draft could open up the state to more natural-gas projects and increased use of garbage incinerators, as well as continued reliance on nuclear power until 2050 well beyond when the licenses for the three plants expire. The recurring criticism could create a significant rift between the environmental community, which largely supported Gov. Phil Murphy's gubernatorial bid based on his pledge to commit to 100 percent clean energy by 2050, and the administration, which is trying to determine how to achieve that goal: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/17/critics-contend-states-draft-energy-master-plan-wont-slow-climate-change/
- Unhappy Enviros Blast Murphy's Draft Energy Master Plan Empower NJ, a coalition of environmental groups of which UU Faithaction NJ is a member, voiced their displeasure that the draft plan doesn't impose a needed moratorium on new fossil-fuel projects, and falls far short of achieving its goals to curb climate-changing pollution and reach 100 percent clean energy in three decades. In a 7/16/2019 press conference on the steps of the State House Annex, they argued that this flaw would imperil any gains to be had from greater reliance on carbon-free renewable energy, like solar and offshore wind, as well as reduced energy use: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/15/unhappy-enviros-blast-murphys-draft-energy-master-plan/

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RENEWABLE RESOURCES

• New York Tops NJ with Plans for Offshore Wind — On 7/18/2019, NY awarded the nation's largest ever contracts to build two offshore-wind farms, topping the record set by NJ in April and setting up a competition between the two states to become the hub of a rapidly growing sector. In an announcement, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, flanked by former Vice President Al Gore, said he signed what he and Gore termed the nation's most aggressive law to combat climate change, and backed it up immediately with a procurement for two developers to build up to 1,700 megawatts of offshore-wind capacity. The two projects, targeted to be providing clean, renewable energy to Long Island and NY by 2024, are part of NY's commitment to develop 9,000 mw of offshore-wind capacity by 2035, nearly triple what NJ hopes to build by 2030. Gov. Cuomo said the initiatives will make NY the hub of this industry, words virtually voiced earlier in April when Gov. Murphy announced the then-biggest solicitation for offshore-wind projects in NJ: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/18/new-york-tops-nj-with-plans-for-offshore-wind/



• Thinking Small Could Alter Power Grid by Integrating Small-Scale Power Systems - Distributed energy resources like solar arrays and small wind systems can help customers save while giving utilities a way to trim spending on local and long-distance infrastructure. If NJ is to achieve its ambitious clean-energy goals, it needs to integrate small-scale power systems, like solar systems and energy storage, into the electricity grid, according to a new study by groups working to promote renewable energy. The study embraced much of the Murphy administration's clean-energy agenda, particularly electrifying the transportation and building sectors, but also recommended a moratorium on new natural-gas pipelines, an issue pushed by large segments of the environmental community but so far ignored by the governor's office: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/10/thinking-small-could-alter-power-grid-by-integrating-small-scale-power-systems/

- Danish Developer Ørsted's Plan for Wind in NJ Promises to Aid Economic Development One of the reasons the BPU awarded Ørsted the state's first offshore-wind farm last month was the promise of economic-development benefits. The Danish developer may already be delivering on that promise, designating Paulsboro as the NJ fabrication facility for a German manufacturer of wind-turbine foundations. This could well be the first step in creating a robust, new green-energy sector in NJ. That benefit is often touted by advocates of offshore wind, but has yet to be realized: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/01/216-rsteds-plan-for-wind-in-nj-promises-to-aid-economic-development/
- Hard to Believe, but Some Solar Panels Already Are Worn Out. Can They Be Recycled? Can solar components be safely recycled and put to new uses? Two state legislators, Senator Bob Smith and Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin, want to know and sponsored identical bills, S601 and A4011, establishing the New Jersey Solar Panel Recycling Commission to investigate those questions. Initial research already has been performed. A 2016 report by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and International Energy Agency Photovoltaic Power Systems Program (IEA-PVPS) found that over 90 percent of materials in typical photovoltaic (PV) solar panels, silicon, aluminum, and glass can be recycled and used again to produce new solar panels. The nine-member NJ commission would conduct its own investigation and submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature within one year: https://enviropolitics.com/hard-to-believe-but-some-solar-panels-already-are-worn-out-can-they-be-recycled/
- More on Great Adventure Solar Success Story from a Grateful Jackson Township Resident The original Great Adventure plan called for over 90 acres of forest to be cleared to make way for the solar arrays. A coalition of environmental groups launched a staunch battle to save the forest while promoting solar where it would best serve the environment in the parking lot. Environmental groups, with Clean Water Action as the lead plaintiff, sued Great Adventure and KDC Solar, leading to a hard-won agreement that suited all parties. Each environmental group contributed expertise, including; Save Barnegat Bay, Crosswicks Creek-Doctors Creek Watershed Association, New Jersey Conservation Association, NJ Sierra Club, Environment NJ, as well as Clean Water Action. The work included drone footage, threatened and endangered species evaluation, water quality study, grassroots mobilization, hearing attendance, activism, and more: https://enviropolitics.com/more-on-great-adventure-solar-success-from-a-grateful-jackson-twp-resident/





CLIMATE CHANGE

- **PSEG Plans to Power Down All but Three Natural-Gas Power Plants** Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) intends to shutter all but its three of its newest natural-gas-fired power plants by 2046, a step driven by a company push to reduce climate-warming emissions to net zero by 2050. Realizing those goals, however, depend on policy changes, like putting a price on carbon, along with technological advances, such as lower costs for energy storage and nuclear power. The announcement aligns with PSEG's recent moves to shift away from fossil fuels by closing or selling its coal-fired units and switching to cleaner ways of producing electricity, as well as encouraging customers to use less energy: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/25/pseg-plans-to-power-down-all-but-three-natural-gas-power-plants/
- NJ Congressman Pallone and Other Congressional Dems Plot the Route to Clean-Energy Consensus House Democrats, led by New Jersey's Rep. Frank Pallone, are hoping to come up with a consensus plan by the end of the year laying out a pathway to achieve a 100 percent clean-energy economy by 2050. Pallone, the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, kicked off the process 7/24/2019 with a subcommittee hearing, as he and others on the committee want to slow global warming to the extent that by mid-century the nation ends up reducing greenhouse-gas emissions to net-zero. Net-zero is a process of curbing greenhouse gas emissions in a way that balances what is emitted against what is captured and removed from the atmosphere through natural conditions and technology. Nature can store carbon pollution in forests, grasslands and through changes in agriculture: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/24/pallone-congressional-dems-plot-pathway-to-consensus-on-clean-energy-plan/



• Murphy Signs Law that Targets Global Warming, Concedes It's Not Enough - One activist calls a measure to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in NJ 'really significant' while another says it falls far short of efforts by other states. Gov. Murphy signed a bill on 7/23/2019 that aims to ensure the state achieves aggressive targets to curb global-warming emissions while acknowledging the measure does not go far enough in addressing some of the most potent greenhouse-gas emissions. The legislation (S-3207) focuses on an earlier law that requires the state to reduce carbon pollution in NJ by 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050, a target some climate activists view as unlikely to be met. Others see the new law as bolstering the state's Global Warming Response Act, a measure passed in 2007, seeking to sharply curb carbon-forming pollution: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/23/murphy-signs-law-that-targets-global-warming-concedes-its-not-enough/

- Lethal Heat Waves in Offing Without Global Action; Heat Index Would Leap in NJ NJ has averaged three days per year with heat index above 100 degrees Fahrenheit; that could go to 49 days by the end of the century if nothing is done. Extreme heat forecasts driven by climate change will be so widespread and frequent within the next few decades that the resultant conditions could affect daily life for residents more than any other facet of climate change, according to an analysis entitled "Killer Heat in the U.S.: Climate Choices and the Future of Dangerously Hot Days," by the Union of Concerned Scientists. Without global action to reduce heat-trapping greenhouse-gas emissions, the number of days when the heat index or "feels like" temperature exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit would more than double from historical levels to an average of 36 across the country by midcentury and increase four-fold to an average of 54 by late century:

 https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/16/lethal-heat-waves-in-offing-without-global-action-heat-index-would-leap-in-nj/
- Preparing Shore Towns for Rising Sea Levels A new state initiative aims to help 15 Shore towns develop strategies to combat rising sea levels, which are expected to increase significantly over the next decade. An initiative launched by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection aims to get ahead of the coastal damage that comes with rising seas. It's called "Two Rivers, One Future, New Jersey Fostering Regional Adaptation through Municipal Economic Scenarios", or NJ FRAMES. Recommendations include short-term actions raising roads and homes, fortifying levees and raising sea wall heights to longer-term plans like elevating NJ Transit bridges, relocating marinas and designing a new "inland coast" with public waterfront access: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/11/preparing-shore-towns-for-rising-sea-levels/
- Could Hoboken Become a National Model for Storm Resiliency? Hoboken's strategy is: to resist stormwater, delay its release, store it, and discharge it when it can do the least damage. Two-thirds of Hoboken lies in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood zone and most of the city's water infrastructure dates back a century or more. During Superstorm Sandy, the storm surge from the sea, combined with torrential rains from the sky, flooded the combined sewer system that overflowed into the harbor. But Hoboken could be a national model of re-engineering in the face of climate change with a combination of hard and soft protections:

 https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/27/could-hoboken-become-a-national-model-for-storm-resiliency/

DRINKING WATER and OTHER WATER-RELATED ISSUES

• Advocates Optimistic About Bid To Monitor PFAS In Water Systems - Amendments to the annual federal defense spending bill contain language that could help define the scope of the contamination. For the past few years, NJ has taken a lead nationally in addressing the risks associated with a range of manmade chemicals linked to health problems in water systems across the nation. Now Congress appears poised to take a huge first step to detailing how widespread the public exposure is to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) — chemicals used in a range of household products such as non-stick cookware as well as foam used in firefighting. With bipartisan support, advocates added amendments to the annual Department of Defense spending appropriation to monitor drinking-water supplies to understand the scope of the problem and possibly accelerate cleanup of contaminated sites: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/09/advocates-optimistic-about-bid-to-monitor-pfas-chemicals-in-water-systems/

- Impacts of PFAS Chemicals on Human Immune System Highlighted A new compilation of research into how toxic PFAS chemicals, which are widespread in NJ, affect the human immune system finds suppressed immune function, lower vaccine effectiveness, hypersensitivity and greater risk of autoimmune diseases. In NJ, environmental officials have adopted the nation's strictest drinking-water standard on PFNA a PFAS chemical and are in the process of imposing similarly tough standards for PFOA and PFOS: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/26/impacts-of-pfas-chemicals-on-human-immune-system-highlighted/
- **Delaware Basin Report Mostly Upbeat but Warns on Impact of Rising Seas** Waterquality indicators in the Delaware River basin are improving and some fish are making a comeback, but runoff from paved areas is increasing, invasive species are on the rise, and the salt-water line is creeping upstream from the ocean toward drinking-water intakes in NJ and Philadelphia, the Delaware River Basin Commission said, in its State of the Basin report for 2019, its first for six years. The interstate regulator painted a cautiously upbeat picture of the environmental health of the area that stretches from upstate New York to the mouth of the Delaware Bay: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/25/delaware-basin-report-upbeat-on-most-indicators-but-warns-on-climate-change/
- DRBC in Funding Shortfall from Three States and Federal Government The interstate water regulator Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) says it isn't getting the necessary funds to plan for climate change. The shortfall is the latest to deprive the agency of some of the funding that it was promised more than 30 years ago, and which has not always materialized, either from States or the federal government. The DRBC oversees water quality and supply in the watershed:

 https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/06/30/drbc-faces-another-funding-shortfall-from-three-states-and-federal-government/

OTHER



• **NJ Joins Other States in Asbestos Lawsuit Against Trump's EPA -** NJ is joining with 11 other states in claiming the federal government does not adequately regulate asbestos, a failure they contend opens the possible use of the carcinogen in new consumer products. According to the plaintiffs, the EPA does not possess, and is not collecting, the necessary comprehensive data about the importation, processing and use of asbestos in some products: https://www.njspotlight.com/stories/19/07/02/nj-joins-other-states-in-asbestos-lawsuit-against-trumps-epa/

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