



# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

## November 2019

[covering 9/26/2019 – 10/28/2019] <https://www.uufaithaction.org/blog/>

**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.**

### PHONE CALLS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

**Friends and natural gas infrastructure opponents:  
We did it! A great success on fossil fuel infrastructure!**



Governor Murphy announced on his radio call-in show on Wednesday, October 9 that he opposes building a controversial power plant in the Meadowlands that would have sent electricity to New York.

Yes, this is the Meadowlands power plant that we've been fighting for so long (see the news story on p. 6).

Thank you for all your calls to the governor's office!

**The fight isn't won though — we must keep the pressure up!**

There are still 8 pipelines and 3 power plants in the works. Please call Governor Murphy today, and every Monday at 866-586-4069. First, thank him for his opposition to the Meadowlands power plant, and then ask for a moratorium on fossil fuel infrastructure – the number is **866-586-4069**.

### EJTF's GOALS FOR 2020

- 1) Mandatory emissions reductions in EJ communities, along with transitioning to electric vehicles, especially buses and trucks** (This is a re-focusing of our goal to get off fossil fuels, now that the Energy Master Plan is almost complete - we need to focus on the most important sources of emissions in EJ communities.)
- 2) Mitigating lead in the New Jersey water supply** (This affects much more than just Newark.)

## ***.UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES***

### **Morristown Unitarian Fellowship**

The Green Earth Ministry at Morristown Unitarian Fellowship has purchased several products for smart recycling/trash disposal and composting (see photos):

1. New green compost barrel (stored outside) to use when the black one gets full.
2. Two attractive stainless steel table-top containers for small items like fruit peels, used tea bags and coffee grounds.
3. With monies donated by the recently dissolved Garden State Earth Institute, purchased commercial-grade containers - trash & recycle collection bins - for the Great Hall at the Fellowship.



## ***UPCOMING EVENTS***

### **NJ Integrated Energy Plan Webinar**

Friday, November 1, 2019, 1:00 p.m.

The **Draft 2019 Energy Master Plan (EMP)**, released in June 2019, focuses on strategies and goals to reach Governor Murphy's 100 percent clean energy mandates. In conjunction with developing the Draft 2019 EMP, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) contracted with Rocky Mountain Institute to develop the **Integrated Energy Plan (IEP)**. The EMP that the EJTF has been discussing so far is policy. The IEP should describe actual implementation. The IEP models several future scenarios and identifies the most strategic and least-cost pathways to achieve NJ's 2050 goals of 100 percent clean energy and the 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050 required by the Global Warming Response Act. The scenarios that result from the IEP will be incorporated into the Final 2019 EMP, which will be delivered by the end of 2019.

**To summarize the findings of the IEP, the EMP Committee will be hosting a public webinar at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2019.** The webinar can be accessed at the following URL: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1803235755786173453>

In addition to the webinar, the EMP Committee is opening a comment period to provide written feedback on the IEP following the webinar until **5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 15**. For further details about the webinar and the comment period, please consult the Public Notice, which is available here: <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/IEP%20Webinar%20Public%20Notice.pdf>.

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### **Greenfaith Panel Presentation on The Green New Deal**

Tuesday, November 12, 2019, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
at Beacon UU Congregation in Summit, located at 4 Waldron Avenue, Summit, NJ

The panel, hosted by the Summit Greenfaith Circle, is to include Marian Glen of the Raritan River Valley Association and Rev Ronald Tuff of Greenfaith, and is to be moderated by Daniela Gioseffi, an eco-poet and Beacon member.

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The fifth annual Jersey Water Works Conference will bring together more than 300 state and local decision-makers, practitioners and stakeholders to amplify the importance of addressing NJ's water infrastructure, explore national models for innovative solutions and celebrate the work of Jersey Water Works and its members. Jersey Water Works is a collaborative effort of many diverse organizations (UU FaithAction NJ is a member) and individuals. Their common purpose is to transform NJ's inadequate water infrastructure by investing in sustainable, cost-effective solutions that provide communities with clean water and waterways; healthier, safer neighborhoods; local jobs; flood and climate resilience; and economic growth. The keynote speaker at the conference is to be George S. Hawkins, Esq., Founder and President, Moonshot Missions. George helps agencies identify and adopt strategies to deliver better service and lower cost. More information and registration (there are fees, which increase on November 22) is available here: <https://conference.jerseywaterworks.org/>

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### **SAVE THE DATE – UUFANJ's FIRST ANNUAL GALA! January 10, 2020**

In celebration of its upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, UU FaithAction NJ is hosting its first annual gala, an Eco-Gala, as both a fundraiser and celebration of UU justice ministry. The gala will take place at **6:30 pm, Friday, January 10, 2020 (snow date January 24) at Beacon UU Congregation in Summit, located at 4 Waldron Avenue**. Tickets are on sale now, at \$100 per ticket with a sliding scale from \$45 to \$150. Free infant and child care will be provided at Beacon. Tickets for children 18 and under attending the event are available for purchase. Dinner will include vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options as well as a cash bar. More information and tickets are available here: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/2019/10/25/uufaithaction-nj-first-annual-eco-gala/#more-8408>



## ***EJTF ACTIVITIES***

### **UU FaithAction NJ Fall Issues Conference**



Members of the EJTF attended the UU FaithAction NJ Fall Issues Conference, held on Saturday, October 19, 2019 at the Central Unitarian Church in Paramus, NJ. The conference included a great panel discussing mass incarceration.

Dr. Sara Wakefield, a professor at Rutgers, spoke about her research on the impacts of imprisonment on families.



Tia Ryans, currently a political advocate for social justice and criminal justice reform, spoke about her personal experiences behind bars as well as the impacts on individuals and families.



Andrea McChristian, the Law & Policy Director at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, spoke about NJ's legal system for criminal justice.

For the panelists' biographies, go to <https://www.ufaithaction.org/issues-2019-panelists-bios/>.

**The EJTF report to the conference of all of last year's many accomplishments is available here:**

**<https://www.ufaithaction.org/issues-2019-environmental-justice-task-force-report/>**

## UPDATE ON EJTF KEY ISSUES FOR 2019:

### 1) Fighting against fossil fuel infrastructure

We worked on actions related to achieving a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure in NJ, and have seen some actual success, in the form of Governor Murphy's newly-voiced opposition to the Meadowlands Power Plant (see p. 1 and news story on p. 6). 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 continue to contact the governor, especially on "Moratorium Mondays" (see page 1), 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 NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and the NJ 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 NJ. On October 28, 2019, it was reported that a revamped, consensus version of this bill is in the works (see news story on p. 7).

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 was welcome news.

Here is an update on the status of NJ bills related to electrifying buses: S-721/A-1751 would authorize use of electric school buses. On February 1, 2018, S-721 passed the Senate. The companion bill, A-1751, was referred to the Assembly Education Committee on January 9, 2018. You may wish to write to the chair of this Assembly committee, Pamela Lampitt, to voice your views. With respect to funding, S-3566 was introduced in the Senate on March 7, 2019 and referred to the Senate Transportation Committee. S-3566 would make an appropriation of \$3,000,000 to the NJ Department of Transportation (DOT) for electric buses and \$3,000,000 to New Jersey Transit for private carrier capital improvements from revenues and other funds of Transportation Trust Fund Authority. You may wish to write to the chair of this committee, Patrick Diegnan, Jr. to voice your views.

## NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

### FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **NJ Agencies Challenge PennEast's Effort to Overturn Adverse Court Ruling on Pipeline -** Federal court last month blocked PennEast's bid to condemn state-owned properties as part of its plan to build a pipeline; however, the company continues to argue that the National Gas Act gives it that right, and is asking the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to overturn the ruling. Three NJ state agencies and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission filed protest petitions with FERC, characterizing PennEast's request as an attempt to relitigate an issue decided authoritatively by a federal court. The court had found that a private company lacked legal authority to seize or condemn state lands under the 11th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and under the legal doctrine of sovereign immunity, a state cannot be sued by a private company without its consent. Without a reversal of the court's decision, the project faces an uncertain future. Many of the state-owned properties along the pipeline route had been preserved as open space or farmland with taxpayers' funds: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/three-state-agencies-challenge-penneasts-effort-to-overturn-adverse-court-ruling-on-pipeline/>
- **DEP Pushes Back Again on PennEast Pipeline -** The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has shut the door again on a bid by PennEast Pipeline to obtain crucial permits for its 120-mile interstate project. The agency deemed the company's applications deficient, largely based on a federal court's decision blocking the company's bid to condemn state-owned lands to build its pipeline. DEP's rejection occurs at the same time the governor came out on in a call-in radio show opposing a big new gas-fired power plant in the Meadowlands (see p. 1 and news story below). The agency's actions signal a possible shift in the Murphy administration's stance on allowing new fossil fuel projects, advocates said: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/dep-pushes-back-again-on-penneast-pipeline/>
- **Governor Opposes Controversial Meadowlands Power Plant -** After more than a year of deliberating, Gov. Phil Murphy has for the first time taken a stance against a controversial \$1.5 billion gas-fired power plant project in the Meadowlands that would generate electricity solely for New York City. "I've come to the point that I've deferred on this long enough, and I have to say definitively, this project simply doesn't make sense for New Jersey," Murphy said. "At the end of the day, I'm opposed to it. I just can't find the justification for building a power plant in the Meadowlands and increasing emissions." The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approved initial permits for the project in July 2018, but the plan stalled this past June over permitting issues related to air quality. Environmentalists have called Murphy out repeatedly for failing to take a stance, saying the plant would have a devastating impact on the protected wetlands that surround the proposed site and would be a major source of greenhouse gas pollution, while providing no benefit to the region. Critics have also argued the fossil fuel-powered plant flies in the face of the governor's plan to move the state toward 100% renewable energy sources like solar and wind by 2050. NJ Sierra Club director Jeff Tittel said that now that the governor has made his opposition known, he needs to go a step further to keep the plant from being built. "If the governor is serious about this, then he needs to put a moratorium on new fossil fuel projects. That way, the DEP can put rules and regulations in place for CO2 and (greenhouse gases) and stop this power plant." Tittel said: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/governor-opposes-controversial-meadowlands-power-plant/>

- **Delaware Riverkeeper Network Files Appeal re: DEP Permit for South Jersey LNG Terminal** - The Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) appealed a permit issued by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for construction of the state's first liquefied natural-gas (LNG) export terminal at Gibbstown on the Delaware River. DRN stated that DEP didn't have enough evidence to determine whether the project would hurt water quality, and did not require a stormwater permit or an investigation by the developer into contamination on the 370-acre Superfund site that was used by DuPont for making explosives and chemicals. The appeal says the DEP's waterfront development permit violates regulations on coastal zone management that are intended to protect coastal and water resources: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/environmental-group-appeals-arbitrary-dep-permit-for-south-jersey-lng-terminal/>
- **Environmental Groups Assail Plan for LNG Terminal in South Jersey** - Environmentalists renewed their attack on plans to build NJ's first terminal for the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG) on the site of a former DuPont explosives factory at Gibbstown in South Jersey. The terminal would be an addition to an earlier plan to trans-ship goods including automobiles, refrigerated cargo and natural gas liquids (NGLs) such as propane and butane. The original proposal was opposed by environmental groups, in part because it would involve shipment of products from fracking. But the LNG component — which was exposed by Delaware Riverkeeper through a Freedom of Information Act request — creates a “completely new ball game” that requires increased regulatory scrutiny, detailed health and safety analysis and much greater public review and input, the DRN said. The anti-fossil fuel organization Empower NJ has accused the port developer of giving inconsistent information about the project to state and federal regulators — some of whom, critics say, are operating in “silos” rather than coordinating their evaluations: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/environmental-groups-assail-plan-for-lng-terminal-in-south-jersey/>

## ELECTRIC VEHICLES



- **Picking up the Pace on Electric Vehicles — and Charging Stations — in NJ** — A new consensus bill from state Sen. Bob Smith sets ambitious goals for multiplying public charging stations and could funnel up to \$30 million in rebates to motorists (maximum of \$5,000 for each rebate). With backing from Gov. Phil Murphy's office, key legislators and a wide coalition of business and clean energy interests, prospects have improved for the revamped version of the legislation (S-2252) to win passage in the lame duck Legislature, which begins after next month's statewide elections. With lawmakers facing an unusually heavy lame duck session, it is not at all certain whether the new consensus bill could win passage in the term, which ends in early January. If not, Sen. Smith vowed to take it up early next year. Environmentalists welcomed the consensus. “What's important about moving



this bill is that it has been held up for over a year,” said Jeff Tittel, director of the NJ Sierra Club. “Time is running out. We have to move forward on electric vehicles as quickly as possible.” <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/picking-up-the-pace-on-electric-vehicles-and-charging-stations-in-nj/>

- **New State Effort to Ramp Up Electric Vehicle Usage** – The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) plans to create a \$30 million rebate program to tackle one of NJ’s toughest climate action goals: putting 330,000 electric vehicles on the road in less than six years. Consumers have been reluctant to pay the higher price for electric vehicles, a concern that is addressed by this rebate program – funded by a state Clean Energy Fund financed by utility customers. However, concerns have been voiced that the rebates should not be targeted to affluent communities to help higher-income residents purchase electric vehicles. In addition, a bill (S-2252) to encourage the transition to cleaner cars has stalled in the NJ Legislature; clean-energy advocates hope it will win approval in the lame duck session after the November election. A rebate provision in that bill is the chief source of opposition to the measure. The bill also aims to ramp up installation of charging stations, including fast chargers: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/new-state-effort-to-ramp-up-electric-vehicle-usage/>
- **Status of NJ Motorists’ Switch to Electric Vehicles** – NJ has committed to 330,000 electric vehicles in the state by 2025. As of this past June, there were just over 30,000 plug-in and battery-powered electric vehicles in NJ. Most of the slow progress is due to range anxiety, the concern among motorists that their electric vehicles will run out of power with no station available to recharge their batteries. The higher cost of electric vehicles also is a factor, with a price tag up to \$15,000 more for zero-emission vehicles than for conventional vehicles. To address this, the Murphy administration has set aside \$30 million in potential rebates for electric vehicles and started pilot programs to finance new charging stations. There is also a bill in the Legislature for a more comprehensive program that has stalled amid concerns of rising energy bills for utility customers from offshore wind, new subsidies for nuclear power and other clean-energy initiatives. NJ has also joined a multistate initiative, the Transportation Climate Alliance, for a clean-car program throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, which is in the preliminary stages: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/fine-print-are-new-jersey-motorists-switching-to-electric-vehicles/>

## **NJ DRAFT ENERGY MASTER PLAN**

- **How Nuclear Power Will Impact NJ’s Clean Energy Future** - One of the unanswered policy questions as state officials finalize a new energy master plan (EMP) is how big a factor nuclear power will play in meeting NJ’s future energy needs. It is an issue that sparked widely varying views in written comments to the state Board of Public Utilities (BPU), based on projections that NJ’s three nuclear plants may continue operating beyond their current permits. The plants now provide about 90% of the carbon-free electricity in the state. Beginning this past April, utility customers began paying roughly \$300 million in annual subsidies to avert the units’ closing. Nuclear energy is touted as providing carbon-free power without any greenhouse gas emissions, but environmentalists hardly view it as “clean energy.” “As producers of large quantities of radioactive waste, these plants do not meet the definition of zero-pollution energy sources,” the Sierra Club argued in comments submitted to the BPU. “There is nothing in this plan to address the phase out of existing nuclear plants in New Jersey,” the club said. **The Unitarian Universalist FaithAction NJ agreed. It said the new EMP should assume that all of PSE&G’s nuclear plants should shut down no later than when their current licenses from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission expire (in 2036, 2040 and 2046), and plan accordingly:** <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/how-nuclear-power-will-impact-njs-clean-energy-future/>



## RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **How Best to Bring Offshore Wind Power to NJ** - With NJ poised to build enough offshore wind capacity to provide power to up to 2 million households annually, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is holding the first of what is anticipated to be several sessions to establish an offshore wind transmission framework that will be most cost-effective for ratepayers. The issue includes questions such as who is best suited to build the transmission lines, which option is best for the environment - both on land and sea - and what are the costs and benefits to the wind developers and the ratepayer. The issue also has drawn the Legislature's attention - Sen. Bob Smith introduced a bill (S-3985) that would encourage development of offshore wind transmission lines, which would be eligible for ratepayer subsidies: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/how-best-to-bring-offshore-wind-power-to-new-jersey/>
- **Three Gigawatts of Solar Power Installed in NJ - a Milestone** - A milestone in solar power has been reached in NJ, according to the NJ Board of Public Utilities. The Garden State has surpassed three gigawatts of solar power and 116,000 solar installations statewide. That places it in the top 10 among the states for the number of residential and business solar installations. In 2009, there were just over 4,900 such installations: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/3-2/>
- **NJ Rate Counsel Faults New Solar Subsidies for Not Reducing Costs to Utility Customers** - The NJ Division of Rate Counsel advised NJ regulatory officials that a new proposal to reduce subsidies utility customers pay to promote solar energy will end up maximizing value to install new solar panels, rather than minimizing costs to ratepayers. Solar developers are lobbying against the proposed proposal, but from a wholly different perspective. They contend the new incentives are far too low to convince solar companies to invest in new projects in NJ. According to the Rate Counsel, the development of any solar incentive mechanism should be focused on establishing the lowest price necessary to stimulate investment and encourage development. The dispute may end up being decided by the Legislature. Solar developers have met with Sen. Bob Smith, the chairman of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee, with a view to convince lawmakers to resolve the dispute during the lame-duck legislative session after next month's Assembly elections: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/rate-counsel-faults-new-solar-subsidies-for-not-reducing-costs-to-utility-customers/>



- **Controversial New Funding Plan for Solar Sector Could Cause Big Disruption** – NJ has revamped a controversial proposal to fund new solar projects, but the changes may not go far enough to quash developers’ concerns that the new incentives could disrupt a good portion of the sector. The dispute stems from a requirement under a 2018 law that the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) end the existing incentives to promote solar, a system many deem too expensive to ratepayers who largely foot the bill. The issue is important because solar is projected to be a vital component of the Murphy administration’s goal of transitioning NJ to 100% clean energy by 2050. **EJTF member Lyle Rawlings**, a longtime solar developer and founder of Advanced Solar Products, argued the state’s changes still will make it difficult to finance all types of solar projects, including residential and ground-mounted solar systems with net metering: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/controversial-new-funding-plan-for-solar-sector-could-cause-big-disruption/>
- **The Promise and Challenges of Energy Storage: NJ Spotlight Roundtable** - As NJ pursues its clean-energy agenda, the challenge of effective storage and distribution is critical, and finding the money is one of the biggest hurdles. At an NJ Spotlight roundtable on September 20 in Newark, a utility executive, energy-storage executives and a lawmaker discussed this and related questions, including: 1) is NJ expanding energy storage solutions quickly enough to allow the scale adoption of renewable energy sources? 2) how can the state advance the deployment of energy-storage technologies without sacrificing resiliency of the traditional power grid? 3) what role can microgrids play in enabling energy to be sourced and stored closer to where it will be used by consumers and businesses? and 4) what kind of incentives may be needed to ensure the state will meet its 2021 energy storage mandates? Listen to the Roundtable here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-731709396/roundtable-energy-storage-issues-09202019>
- **Developers Line Up to Take Part in Community Solar Program for Low- and Moderate-Income Communities** – The NJ Community Solar pilot program to expand the availability of solar energy to low- and moderate-income households is proving to be immensely attractive to developers who have swamped the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) with 252 applications to participate in the first year of the three-year pilot; 232 of the applications involve projects where at least 51 percent of capacity would benefit low- and moderate-income residents. The community solar pilot has been touted by the Murphy administration as a way to bring cleaner power to households largely left out of the solar boom in NJ, even though they have been subsidizing installation in more affluent areas for years by a surcharge on their gas and electric bills. However, the surge of interest in the program is seen as somewhat surprising, given the uncertainty about how NJ intends to promote the renewable energy technology in the future, as well as concerns previously cited by solar developers about the economics of such a program: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/developers-line-up-to-take-part-in-solar-program-for-low-and-moderate-income-communities/>

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Stockton University Poll: NJ Residents Believe Climate Change is a Major Problem in the State** - Two-thirds of NJ residents believe climate change is a crisis or a major problem and almost three-quarters believe it is affecting NJ now, according to a Stockton University poll. Among those who believe climate change is currently affecting the state, more than 75% cited rising sea level, earth warming, harming or changing the ocean, extreme weather and worsening pollution as major problems. Beach erosion was cited by 70%, while harm to farming was mentioned by 68%, flooding by 66% and health effects by 57%. Sixty-four percent of respondents believe climate change is caused mainly by human activity and burning fossil fuels; 27% believe it is a natural occurrence. Democrats (92%) and independents (64%) were more likely to see climate change as a crisis or major problem than Republicans (35%). Women (72%) were more likely to view it as a crisis or major problem than men

(62%). A majority of respondents (59%) oppose drilling for natural gas or oil off the Atlantic Coast, while 80% said they would support wind turbines off the coast to harness wind energy:

<https://stockton.edu/news/2019/climate-change-poll-2019.html>



Photos of Unitarian Universalists at the September 20, 2019 Climate Strike

- **NJ in New Regional Effort to Cap Vehicle Emissions** - In what could amount to a significant regional effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 12 states have issued a draft policy framework to create a cap-and-trade program for vehicles. The proposal, developed by the Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI), is modeled somewhat after the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a cap-and-trade program that for the past decade has been in effect for carbon pollution from power plants. This draft framework proposes to require state fuel suppliers to buy allowances, which would be auctioned off for the right to emit carbon. The TCI is looking to come up with a final memorandum of understanding by next spring, at which time states would have to decide whether to sign on. Like RGGI, proceeds from the auction of carbon allowances would be allocated back to the states participating in the program, which will be targeted to other clean-energy and transportation initiatives to help address climate change: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/nj-in-new-regional-effort-to-cap-car-emissions/>
- **Blue Acres Makes a ‘Good Start’ at Removing Flood-Prone Properties** - Blue Acres is a program under which the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) buys and clears properties that are chronically flooded by storms and rising seas. But even as the buyout program recently made its 700th purchase, critics say it has barely scratched the surface. According to a 2016 projection by climate scientists at Rutgers University, sea levels at the Jersey Shore are expected to rise 1.4 feet between 2000 and 2050 as oceans swell in response to melting polar ice caps and rising temperatures. Sea-level rise in New Jersey and other areas of the U.S. mid-Atlantic coast is occurring at about twice the global rate because the land is sinking at the same time. It is estimated that some 231,000 NJ homes would be in the flood “risk zone” by 2100 if there are modest cuts in global carbon emissions, rising to more than 280,000 if emissions go unchecked: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/blue-acres-makes-a-good-start-at-removing-flood-prone-properties/>

- **NJ Neighbor (PA) Plans to Put Cap on Carbon Dioxide Emissions** – PA Governor Tom Wolf announced plans to have PA, the nation’s fourth largest source of carbon dioxide emissions, join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which would then include all of the Mid-Atlantic states and the Northeast. The cap-and-trade program is designed to reduce emissions from power plants, while at the same time generating hundreds of millions of dollars for states to invest in clean energy and other technologies. It works by placing a tax on carbon emissions, eventually passed on to utility customers. Since 2005, it has reduced carbon pollution by about 45%, advocates say. In the deregulated energy marketplace, power plants are called on to supply electricity to the grid based on the lowest cost. If cheaper and more polluting power plants in states like PA are chosen to operate, it could crowd out and idle more efficient and cleaner generating stations elsewhere. The issue has been dubbed “leakage,” and has been used as an argument for why some have said RGGI is ineffective. If PA joins the initiative and sets a cap on new carbon emissions, it would largely reduce those arguments, advocates say: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/pa-gov-plans-to-put-cap-on-carbon-dioxide-emissions/>

## **DRINKING WATER and OTHER WATER-RELATED ISSUES**

- **Murphy Unveils Plan to Replace All Lead Service Lines in NJ by 2029** - On October 10, 2019, Gov. Phil Murphy unveiled a plan to replace every lead service line in NJ in ten years, and requiring every child to be tested for lead before starting school. (Note: the governor’s plan closely follows a task force report issued by Jersey Water Works, available here: <https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/JWW-Lead-Report.pdf>). Information from NJ water utilities estimates that 350,000 lead service lines need to be replaced statewide, and that the cost to replace them all could top \$2 billion. Murphy would ask voters to approve a \$500 million bond issue in November 2020 to help public water utilities pay for lead service line replacement. He would permit private water utilities to raise rates to help cover costs, estimated at about \$6,000 per home. The plan would require home sellers to disclose all lead in the house, whether in pipes or paint, and create a “Lead Free” certificate for renters: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/murphys-target-replace-all-lead-service-lines-in-nj-by-2029/>
- **Murphy Answers Critics, Lays out Plan to Get Lead Out of Schools** – On October 7, 2019, Gov. Phil Murphy announced a multi-pronged program to bolster the state’s response to addressing the existence of lead in public schools’ water. The steps announced include: increasing inspections of school drinking water from the currently-required once every six years to every three years; enhancing enforcement against schools that do not comply with testing protocols; and improving the state’s and the schools’ reporting of water results, including a central database kept by the state. Additionally, the department will include in these regulations new direct enforcement powers to ensure that schools are transparent in the public reporting of their lead testing results and remediation efforts: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/murphy-answers-critics-lays-out-plan-to-get-lead-out-of-schools/>





- NJ State Senators Say More Urgency, More Money Needed for State’s Water Infrastructure** - Senate President Steve Sweeney and Senator Linda Greenstein, vice chair of the Environment and Energy Committee, said it would cost \$40 billion over 20 years to fix the state’s water infrastructure issues. Their Water Quality Accountability Act became law in 2016. A Senate committee has been holding hearings on water quality in NJ and making recommendations that are now in legislation. Recommendations include: the Schools Development Authority taking action to remove lead from drinking water; making replacement of lead service lines an emergency across the state; treating water systems to control corrosion to prevent lead leaching; and dropping the acceptable level of lead in drinking water below the federal standard: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/senators-say-more-urgency-more-money-needed-for-states-water-infrastructure/>
- More Than 100 NJ Water Systems May Have Unsafe Lead Levels** - A new analysis by New Jersey Future has found 104 NJ water systems with 161,000 lead service lines, which are a primary source of exposing consumers to unsafe levels of the contaminant. The analysis focused on data self-reported by water systems to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), potentially exposing more than 5 million residents who live in those service areas. In a statewide map, New Jersey Future projected areas most likely to have lead service lines. It suggested that residents in those areas concerned with high lead concentrations can contact their water systems to request results from water tests in the area; a table listing numbers of lead service lines by water system is available here: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/more-than-100-nj-water-systems-may-have-unsafe-lead-levels/>
- At a Town Hall, Newark Officials Defend the Response to Lead in the Water** - A meeting that had been billed as a town hall on the “State of the Water” in Newark became a platform for officials to defend their response to the problem of lead contamination in the city’s drinking water. Mayor Ras Baraka and other officials came with a vigorous defense against criticism that they had failed the test of timeliness and transparency. At the meeting (see video by NJTV News, at the link below), Baraka called the criticism unwarranted and pernicious, in that it was eroding public trust in government. “What I will never concede is that the mayor purposefully and deliberately lied,” he said, “purposefully and deliberately hid something that we told you about a full year before.” Before the town hall, the city hosted a health fair at NJPAC, offering tips on installing water filters, taking sign-ups for replacement of service lines, and giving out mops, pails and cleaning solution for homeowners to use to remove any lead dust in their homes: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/at-town-hall-newark-officials-defend-response-to-lead-in-water/>
- Toxic Chemical in Bellmawr Well Topped State Health Limit for a Year, Officials Say** - Residents of Bellmawr spent the last year drinking water from a public well that was contaminated by a perfluorooctanoic acid (PFNA) — one of the PFAS family of chemicals — at levels beyond state health limits. The Borough of Bellmawr has ordered the well shut down until more tests are done and a permanent solution to the contamination can be found; customers are now being supplied from another well. Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, said the DEP should ensure that Bellmawr residents have clean water to drink, and should investigate the source of the contamination. “The fact that Bellmawr’s drinking water has exceeded safe drinking standards for PFNA should be an alarm bell going off,” he said. The federal EPA says exposure to different kinds of PFAS chemicals can lead to cancer (in the case of PFOA), thyroid hormone disruption (for PFOS), as well as low birth weights and immune system effects: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/toxic-chemical-in-bellmawr-well-topped-state-health-limit-for-a-year-officials-say/>

- **NJ Drinking Water Contaminants Have Increased, Survey Says** – The advocacy organization Environmental Working Group (EWG) used data from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on drinking water quality between 2012 and 2017 at NJ’s 579 utilities, and found 107 contaminants, 26 more than in their last report. The report found 10 contaminants at levels that exceeded health limits as recommended by other states or by EWG, and two that exceeded standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EWG bases many of its health recommendations on standards set by California, or its own research. EWG said the data shows that the EPA should set stricter standards on drinking water contaminants: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/nj-drinking-water-contaminants-increase-survey-says/>

## OTHER

- **NJ Makes Small Gains in Energy Efficiency, but Is No Longer a Leader Among States** - NJ, once a leader in energy efficiency, ranked 17th in the State Energy Efficiency Scorecard by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, rising one place in the rankings, to 17th. Most states are turning to energy efficiency as the most cost-effective way to reduce their carbon footprint, the analysis found, at a time the federal government is rolling back regulations at the national level, such as tougher vehicle emission standards and mandates to transition to electric vehicles. A NJ law signed by the governor last year mandates that the state’s electric utilities reduce electricity use by their customers by 2% a year; a proceeding is just beginning to adopt the regulations to achieve the new energy savings in that law, with the hope of implementing the program in July 2021: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/nj-makes-small-gains-in-energy-efficiency-but-is-no-longer-a-leader-among-states/>



- **BPU Caved When Awarding Nuclear Subsidies to PSEG, the NJ Division of Rate Counsel Argues** – The state awarded subsidies to PSEG Nuclear’s three power plants in South Jersey based on threats from the company that they would shut them down prematurely, rather than whether they were economically profitable, according to the NJ Division of Rate Counsel. In a 61-page brief filed in conjunction with its challenge of the granting of subsidies amounting to \$300 million a year, Rate Counsel argued that the decision this past April to award the ratepayer subsidies ignored expert testimony from the staff of the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU), its own consultant, and the Independent Market Monitor for PJM, the operator of the regional power grid. In other words, the decision was not based on the extensive record or the criteria in the statute, but on a high stakes game of ‘chicken,’ Rate Counsel argued in its brief, citing commissioners’ own comments at the hearing: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/bpu-caved-when-awarding-nuclear-subsidies-to-pseg-rate-counsel-argues/>
- **Clean Water Action Says NJ Legislature is Failing to Protect People and Environment** - In a news release announcing the release of its 2018-2019 Scorecard, the environmental group Clean Water Action charged state lawmakers with failing to meet key environmental challenges. (The report is

available here: [www.CleanWaterAction.org/NJscorecard2019](http://www.CleanWaterAction.org/NJscorecard2019)). Clean Water Action scored the legislature on the 22 most significant actions and found the following: 13 key pro-environment actions that are stalled in the legislature; 6 significant bills that were anti-environment, by design or by process, that quickly passed both houses; 3 pro-environment bills that did pass and become law; and 19 legislators who stood up for the environment even when the majority of the legislature would not stand with them. Rather than giving each legislator a score based on their individual votes, as it has in the past, the organization graded the legislature as a whole because of what it called the "near-total failure of the legislature to pass substantial environmental bills so far this term." Clean Water Action would like to see the following legislation advanced this year: plastic bag ban, electric vehicle bills, an environmental justice bill, and a package of bills and funding sources to address lead service lines: <https://enviropolitics.com/clean-water-action-says-nj-legislature-is-failing-to-protect-people-and-environment/>

### **List of New Jersey v. Federal Government Environmental Lawsuits**

NJ Attorney General Gurbir Grewal's office has been or is involved in some 50 multistate lawsuits against actions taken by the Federal government. The cases fall into a host of categories, including the environment, immigration, consumer protection, civil rights and health care. The environmental lawsuits are listed below (the entire list of 50 lawsuits is available here:

<https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/the-list-new-jersey-v-trump-on-a-case-by-case-basis/>)

- New Jersey is a plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging issuance of permits that would allow companies to engage in seismic testing in the Atlantic despite harm to marine mammals (Maryland v. Ross).
- New Jersey sued the Department of the Interior demanding answers for why Florida, but not New Jersey, received an exemption from offshore drilling (New Jersey v. Interior). The Secretary of the Interior agreed to postpone offshore drilling in the Atlantic indefinitely.
- New Jersey is a plaintiff in multistate lawsuits challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to loosen fuel-efficiency standards and weaken penalties (California v. EPA; New York v. NHTSA).
- New Jersey is a plaintiff in a multistate suit over the EPA's refusal to impose tough emissions standards on upwind states that are home to coal-burning power plants (New York v. EPA).
- New Jersey is a plaintiff in a multistate lawsuit over an EPA decision to suspend a rule limiting the production of super-polluting trucks known as "gliders" (California v. EPA.). The agency has since backed down.
- New Jersey is a plaintiff in a multistate challenge to the EPA's efforts to rescind the Obama-era "Waters of the United States" rule that better defined Clean Water Act programs (New York v. Pruitt).
- New Jersey is acting as amicus curiae to challenge the EPA's limits on the use of outside science advisers.
- New Jersey joined with 21 other states to challenge the EPA's Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule, which relaxes federal greenhouse gas emission standards and other regulatory controls for existing coal-fired power plants (New York v. EPA).
- New Jersey is part of a coalition of attorneys general suing the federal government to challenge new rules that would significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act, the nation's decades-old conservation law protecting threatened and endangered wildlife (California v. Interior).

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