

# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

## October 2019

[covering 8/27/2019 – 9/25/2019] <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.**

### UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES - CLIMATE STRIKE 9/20/2019



**MORRISTOWN CLIMATE STRIKE -** Members of “Kinnelon Conserves,” including EJTF member Jo Sippie-Gora (in yellow t-shirt), Morrystown Unitarian Fellowship



**RED BANK CLIMATE STRIKE–** EJTF member Peggy Middaugh and Rev. Julie Newhall of UUOCC, UU Ocean County Congregation



**PRINCETON CLIMATE STRIKE**

**REMINDER – UUFANJ FALL ISSUES CONFERENCE 10/19/2019 – SEE p. 3**



# CLIMATE STRIKE 9/20/2019



**MORRISTOWN CLIMATE STRIKE - Members of Morristown Unitarian Fellowship's Green Earth Ministry in the photo include Bob Califore, Steve Gruber, EJTF member Jo Sippie-Gora, and others**



**RED BANK CLIMATE STRIKE - UUCMC (Lincroft) had 40 people in attendance!**



**NEW BRUNSWICK CLIMATE STRIKE**



**MONTCLAIR CLIMATE STRIKE**





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **UUFANJ FALL ISSUES CONFERENCE 10/19/2019**

Each year, the UU FaithAction NJ Fall Issues Conference is when each Task Force considers goals for the next year. The EJTF will choose two of the following goals:

1. Mandatory emissions reductions in EJ communities, including transition to electric buses and alternate fuel trucks
2. Reduce single use plastic bags
3. Maintain adequate water infrastructure - no lead in NJ water

This year, the Fall Issues Conference will focus on the issue of racially driven mass incarceration in NJ. Hear Andrea McChristian, Law & Policy Director of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, Dr. Sara Wakefield, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University and Tia Ryans, formerly incarcerated and founder of FORTE (Force Out Recidivism Through Education) discuss the most pressing issues facing our criminal justice system.



# UU FaithAction NJ

## ISSUES CONFERENCE 2019



**Andrea McChristian** is the Law & Policy Director at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. She oversees the programmatic function of the Institute's three pillars of social justice: civic engagement, economic mobility, and criminal justice reform. She is the primary author of *Bring Our Children Home: Ain't I A Child*, which forms the basis of the 150 Years is Enough campaign.

**Tia Ryans** is a political advocate for social justice and criminal justice reform. She is a direct witness to the insidious and detrimental impact of the criminal justice system and uses her platform to elevate stories of people impacted by sexual abuse including her experiences both as a child and while serving a decade long prison sentence.

**Sara Wakefield** is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University, Newark. Her research interests focus on the consequences of mass incarceration for the family, with an emphasis on childhood wellbeing and racial inequality. She is the author of *Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequality*.

**Saturday, October 19**  
**10:00 am to 3:30 pm**

**CENTRAL UNITARIAN CHURCH**  
156 FOREST AVENUE  
PARAMUS, NEW JERSEY

Register at [www.uufaithaction.org](http://www.uufaithaction.org)

## **WEBINAR - Tools to Guide Congregations through the Energy Transition**

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 1:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

The Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF), the Arizona State University SEEK Project, and the EPA are hosting a webinar on guiding faith-based organizations through the Energy Transition.

This webinar will introduce "The Sustainability Education and Energy Knowledge-sharing (SEEK) Project," an action research project of the Spirituality and Sustainability Initiative at ASU, and demonstrate the EPA's ENERGY STAR® for Congregations program.

SEEK provides a framework and tools to help congregations accelerate their energy transitions using a novel model for leveraging existing assets and in-kind resources from multi-sectoral partners (universities, congregations, commercial energy professionals, federal programs and local leaders). SEEK provides tailored mentoring and technical assistance in various online and face-to-face formats that facilitate learning and action while building a peer-mentored community. Register here:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2923556738704287489>

### ***EJTF ACTIVITIES***

#### **EJTF Testimony at NJ Draft Energy Master Plan Meetings**

UUFANJ/EJTF did an extensive review of the Draft NJ Energy Master Plan (EMP), gave testimony at hearings, and provided written comments. We followed the seven strategies of the EMP, but added two additional categories, implementation and food. You can find a link to the EMP at <https://nj.gov/emp/>, along with additional information about it.

All of the written comments are now available here: <https://nj.gov/emp/comments/>. Specific comments by EJTF members who testified or submitted comments, and comments of the EJTF as a whole, are available as noted:

- **EJ Task Force Comments on overall EMP:**  
[https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft\\_emp/UUFaith%20Action%20NJ%20EJ%20Task%20Force%20comments.pdf](https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft_emp/UUFaith%20Action%20NJ%20EJ%20Task%20Force%20comments.pdf)
- Peggy Middaugh: [https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft\\_emp/Peggy%20Middaugh%20comments.pdf](https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft_emp/Peggy%20Middaugh%20comments.pdf)
- Ray Nichols: [https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft\\_emp/Ray%20Nichols%20comments.pdf](https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft_emp/Ray%20Nichols%20comments.pdf)
- Jo Sippie-Gora: [https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft\\_emp/Jo%20Sippie-Gora%20comments.pdf](https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/draft_emp/Jo%20Sippie-Gora%20comments.pdf)

#### **Clean and Renewable Power Discussion Points:**

- EJ Task Force Comments (Nancy Griffeth):  
<https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/cleanrenewablepower/Nancy%20Griffeth%20CleanAndRenewableEnergyFinal.pdf>

#### **Reducing Energy Consumption Discussion Points:**

- EJ Task Force Comments (Nancy Griffeth):  
<https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/reducingenergy/Nancy%20Griffeth%20ReducingEnergyUsageFinal.pdf>

#### **Clean and Reliable Transportation Discussion Points:**

- EJ Task Force Comments (Nancy Griffeth):  
<https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/cleantransportation/Nancy%20Griffeth%20CleanAndReliableTransportationFinal.pdf>

## **Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure Discussion Points:**

- EJ Task Force Comments (Nancy Griffeth):  
[https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/sustainable/Nancy%20Griffeth%20UU%20Faith%20Action%20ResilientAndSustainable\\_Final.pdf](https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/sustainable/Nancy%20Griffeth%20UU%20Faith%20Action%20ResilientAndSustainable_Final.pdf)

## **EJTF Draft NJ Energy Master Plan Educational Outreach to Congregations**

An educational program on the Draft NJ Energy Management Plan (EMP) was prepared by EJTF Chair Nancy Griffeth. Her presentation of this program, “New Jersey's Energy Master Plan - Overview for Busy People” can be viewed on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHbRGz2EfCM&feature=youtu.be>, and the slides are available here: [https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019\\_EMP\\_Presentation\\_v2-copy.pdf](https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019_EMP_Presentation_v2-copy.pdf). This presentation shows how the EMP will provide a framework for energy decisions that affect all of us, and our planet, into the future.

### **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 4), 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

### FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Another Rebuff for PennEast: Court Halts Bid to Seize State Lands** - In another legal setback for the PennEast pipeline, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit has blocked the company's bid to condemn state-owned lands to build its hotly contested 120-mile project. This reverses an earlier decision by a district court that allowed PennEast to exercise eminent domain to condemn 131 properties, including over 40 owned by the state that had been previously preserved for agricultural, recreational or conservation purposes. While opponents of the project hailed the decision as a victory, it most realistically means the much-litigated project will face new delays in what has been a five-year quest by PennEast to build a \$1 billion pipeline that would move cheap natural gas from Pennsylvania into New Jersey and the metropolitan markets. "I look it as a big speed bump for PennEast and the rest of the other pipeline projects pending in the state and region," said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. "It's a long way from a final win."  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-10-another-rebuff-for-penneast-court-halts-bid-to-seize-state-lands/>
- **NJ DEP Voices More Concerns Over PennEast Pipeline Project** – Once again, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has found permit applications by PennEast Pipeline to be deficient, giving PennEast 30 days to rectify the omissions. The 120-mile project has encountered numerous delays in review of its proposal, which involves a \$1 billion new pipeline beginning in Luzerne County, PA, crossing the Delaware River in Hunterdon County and ending just outside of Trenton, crossing more than 100 waterways. PennEast stated that it will quickly provide the data requested: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-05-state-agency-voices-more-concerns-over-penneast-pipeline-project/>

### ELECTRIC VEHICLES



- **NJ Needs More Places to Power-up E-cars** - New Jersey now has about 25,000 electric cars, but plans are moving forward to dramatically increase that number over the next several years. Doug O'Malley, the director of Environment NJ and president of ChargeVC, an electric vehicle coalition, said the Garden State's network of 350 electric vehicle charging stations must be dramatically increased in order to expand the number of electric vehicles. Legislation advancing in the state Senate and Assembly, S2252 and A4819, would establish goals and programs to support the expansion of electric vehicles in New Jersey. The measures call for the creation of an Electric Vehicle Working Group, which would develop and update a Statewide Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan in order to minimize what's known as "consumer range anxiety." The proposed legislation also calls for the creation of a New Jersey Light Duty Plug-in Electric Vehicle Rebate Program to encourage Garden State residents to purchase electric vehicles: <https://enviropolitics.com/nj-needs-more-places-to-power-up-e-cars/>



- **Advocates Call for NJ Transit to Electrify Its Bus Fleet by 2040** - NJ Transit's board of directors awarded more than \$50 million in contracts on 9/12/2019 to help implement the Positive Train Control system, as environmental advocates pressed them for a commitment to totally transform the agency's bus fleet to electric power. NJ Transit is buying eight electric buses for a Camden pilot program in 2021, the agency says, noting that electric vehicles costs roughly \$700,000 more than a diesel bus. Advocates say the state would reap savings in maintenance and health-care costs: <https://enviropolitics.com/advocates-call-for-nj-transit-to-electrify-its-bus-fleet-by-2040/>

## **NJ DRAFT ENERGY MASTER PLAN**

- **BPU Urged to Delve into Cost Impacts of the Energy Master Plan** - Consumer advocates and business interests asked the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to extend the public comment period until more is known about the costs of transitioning to clean energy. The energy master plan (EMP) aims to transition the state to a 100 percent clean-energy economy by 2050, but some business interests have questioned how New Jersey will smoothly shift away from fossil fuels when 85 percent or more homes are now heated with gas, propane, or oil, and 40 percent of the state's electricity is produced by gas-fired power plants, and clean-energy advocates have called for a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure. Both consumer advocates and business interests urged agency officials to hold off adopting the plan until more detailed cost impacts are ascertained: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-12-bpu-urged-to-delve-into-cost-impacts-in-energy-plan/>
- **Business Groups Say Energy Master Plan Could Cause Job Losses, Rate Hikes** - In an unusual sign of solidarity, 17 different business organizations told the state Board of Public Utilities (BPU) in a joint letter that the draft energy master plan (EMP), if adopted without changes, may have negative implications for New Jersey's future, driving up energy costs, jeopardizing reliability of the energy systems, and driving jobs out of NJ. They argued that the plan should include both longer-term aspirational goals and shorter-term implementable strategies. The blowback from the business community suggests the administration may have a difficult time winning approval of its draft plan, especially since a broad swath of environmental groups also are unhappy over its hesitance to enact a moratorium: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-11-business-groups-say-states-energy-master-plan-could-cause-job-losses-rate-hikes/>
- **NJ is Urged to Consider Costs for All Utility Customers in the Energy Master Plan** – The NJ Division of the Rate Counsel's filing with the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) emphasizes the importance of a rate impact analysis for the state's residential, commercial and industrial customers. As NJ finalizes its energy master plan (EMP), it needs to gauge how transitioning to a 100 percent clean energy economy will impact all utility customers, according to the Rate Counsel's comments, which included concerns that new projections on how the goals would be achieved do not include a rate impact analysis: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-08-state-urged-to-consider-costs-for-all-utility-customers-in-clean-energy-plan/>

## **RENEWABLE RESOURCES**

- **Linden Awards Ground Lease for Proposed Community Solar Project** - Hathaway Solar, in partnership with CS Energy, who has built over 150 MW of solar landfills in the US, has been awarded a ground lease by the City of Linden, New Jersey, for the development, construction, and operation of a 5 MWdc solar facility on the former city landfill. The solar project plans to participate in the NJ Community Solar Pilot Program and, if accepted into the Program, the solar facility will provide

approximately 1,000 local residents with clean electricity at reduced rates. The community solar program is designed to enable New Jersey residents to reduce their utility costs and support clean energy generation by participating in solar energy projects that are remotely located from their properties:

<https://www.prweb.com/releases/the-city-of-linden-set-to-build-solar-power-generator-on-undevelopable-landfill-space-project-will-provide-clean-energy-to-the-community/prweb16572922.htm> The first community solar facility already planned for NJ is “Sussex Solar Gardens”, to be located in Sussex County, within the Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative. It is a co-op, limited to current subscribers, and is not part of the NJ Community Solar Pilot Project: <https://sussexsg.com/>

- **Ørsted OK'd to Bring Offshore Wind Power Ashore at Oyster Creek** - Ocean Wind LLC, (owned by Ørsted), the developer of the state's first offshore wind farm, has secured the rights to bring power ashore at the former Oyster Creek nuclear station, a move advocates say could reduce the project's costs to connect to the region's transmission system. The precise cost of the transmission grades and how much ratepayers will kick in are undecided, because the exact nature of the improvements to the transmission system have not been determined. However, obtaining the rights to the existing system has the potential to yield significant economic benefits for New Jersey ratepayers through lower transmission system upgrades: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-15-216-oredsted-okd-to-bring-its-offshore-wind-power-ashore-at-oyster-creek-facility/>



- **BPU Straw Proposal Unnerves Developers of Residential Solar Systems** - Developers warned that the Board of Public Utilities' (BPU) lowball incentives of \$10 to \$30 will drive out investors, decimating New Jersey's solar sector. The state is moving closer to deciding how to fund new solar projects, but raising fears its model may disrupt a big segment of the sector — putting solar panels on single-family homes — representing up to 45 percent of the estimated 7,000 employees in the industry work in the residential sector. **EJTF member Lyle Rawlings**, founder of Advanced Solar Products and president of the Mid-Atlantic Solar & Storage Industries Association, said the incentives in the straw proposal are far too low to finance not only residential projects, but also grid-supply and ground-mounted large commercial projects (that are net metered): <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-02-bpu-straw-proposal-unnerves-developers-of-residential-solar-systems/>
- **RMI Report Sees a Tipping Point for the Economics of Clean Energy Portfolios** - A report from the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) foresees a world that, by the year 2035, has wind and solar energy positively crushing natural gas. Natural gas has largely priced coal and nuclear out of the electricity market, but fracking has brought previously-unheard-of problems with methane releases, not to mention rampant use of water, sand, and a mix of chemicals. The RMI “bridge backward” study, focuses on “the risky economics of new natural gas infrastructure in the United States.” Another report, by the UN Environment Programme, charted a quadrupling of clean energy investment in the past decade. China leads the world in such investment, with the U.S. a distant second: <https://enviropolitics.com/are-you-ready-for-some-good-environmental-news/>



- **US Fishermen Demand to Be Heard on Offshore Wind Energy Projects** - While they support efforts to fight climate change, the fishing industry says wind farms could dramatically impact how and where they fish. Fishermen should have been brought into the planning process from the start, Peter Hughes, of Atlantic Cape Fisheries, told U.S. House members from New Jersey and California who held a hearing at the Jersey Shore in order to gather input from the fishing industry and its advocates, to be considered in future regulation of the nascent wind energy market. Frederick Zalcman, head of government affairs for Orsted, the European wind farm operator currently planning projects on the U.S. East Coast, said the company has met with fishing interests and will continue to do so: <https://enviropolitics.com/us-fishermen-demand-to-be-heard-on-offshore-wind-energy-projects/>

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Scientists Link Climate Change to Coming Public-Health Crisis** – In a new study from the Natural Resources Defense Council and the University of California at San Francisco, researchers have put health-related costs of 10 climate-sensitive events in 2012, including Superstorm Sandy, at \$10 billion, and warn that failure to address climate change could lead to ‘irreversible damage’ to public health. The study analyzed 10 climate-sensitive events from 2012 and estimated health-related costs across the country totaled \$10 billion (in 2018 dollars). In the past, the public-health costs tied to climate-sensitive events were rarely tallied in government analyses of extreme weather, which more often focused on property and crop losses and damages to infrastructure, like roads, bridges, and utilities: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-18-scientists-link-climate-change-to-coming-public-health-crisis/>
- **NJ is Advised to Target Climate Change Policies Toward Poorer Communities** - A Rutgers University study, described in the report “Equity & State Climate Policy” (which can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mB-12SYJHQV4VjFe4OItZFfvQPdLB-cz/view>) finds that, if states ignore the disproportionate burdens global warming imposes on disadvantaged communities, they are unlikely to achieve their climate-change policy goals. The study found that many states are already targeting climate-change policies to low-income households and communities, environmental justice communities and those living in areas likely to be flooded by sea-level rise and more frequent and intense storms. Climate change has disproportionate impact on low-income individuals, communities of color and indigenous residents, and these communities also pay a disproportionate amount for energy. In NJ, advocates have long pushed for the state’s climate policies to focus on the disproportionate amount of pollution in environmental justice communities, from power plants emitting greenhouse gases and other emissions to incinerators and hazardous waste sites. A key finding of the study was that local advocates prefer earmarked commitments of resources to disadvantaged communities, as well as mandates to achieve specific pollution reductions in those areas: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-05-target-climate-change-policies-toward-low-income-communities-nj-advised/>
- **Is Global Warming Stalling Hurricanes Like Dorian?** - Hurricane Dorian’s slow, destructive track through the Bahamas fits a pattern scientists have been seeing over recent decades, and one they expect to continue as the planet warms: hurricanes stalling over coastal areas and bringing extreme rainfall. Recent research shows that more North Atlantic hurricanes have been stalling as Dorian did, leading to more extreme rainfall. Their average forward speed has decreased by 17 percent—from 11.5 mph, to 9.6 mph—from 1944 to 2017, according to a study published in June by federal scientists at NASA and NOAA. The researchers don’t understand exactly why tropical storms are stalling more, but they think it’s caused by a general slowdown of atmospheric circulation (global winds), both in the tropics, where the systems form, and in the mid-latitudes, where they hit land and cause damage: <https://enviropolitics.com/is-global-warming-stalling-hurricanes-like-dorian/>

## DRINKING WATER and OTHER WATER-RELATED ISSUES

- **Connecting the Dots Between Race and Unsafe Drinking Water** - If you live in a community of color, the drinking water provided to your home is more likely to come from systems with a history of repeated violations of federal safe water regulations, according to a new report. The study (by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Coming Clean, and Environmental Justice Health Alliance) analyzed three years of federal data involving violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act, and suggested it reinforces long-standing arguments by environmental justice advocates that there is unequal access to clean drinking water. Drinking water systems that constantly violated the law for years were 40 percent more likely to occur in places with higher percentages of residents who were people of color, according to data from the Environmental Protection Agency from 2016 to 2019: [https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/connecting-the-dots-between-race-and-unsafe-drinking-water/?ct=t\(EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_09\\_25\\_2019\)&mc\\_cid=5e88f6ced3&mc\\_eid=6e1ea8ca22](https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/connecting-the-dots-between-race-and-unsafe-drinking-water/?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_09_25_2019)&mc_cid=5e88f6ced3&mc_eid=6e1ea8ca22)



- **Expanded Testing of Newark Water Shows Lead Filters Are Working** - Follow-up testing of Newark's water shows that tap filters installed in properties known to have lead service lines are working in the vast majority of cases to keep levels below a key federal benchmark. The tests were ordered after results from two of three properties showed lead readings well beyond the federal "action" level despite the presence of the filters. News of the contamination roiled the state's largest city, bringing national news crews to its streets as officials distributed bottled water in the areas where the problematic service lines are concentrated: [https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/expanded-testing-of-newark-water-shows-lead-filters-are-working/?ct=t\(EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_09\\_24\\_2019\)&mc\\_cid=3bee6328f3&mc\\_eid=6e1ea8ca22](https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/expanded-testing-of-newark-water-shows-lead-filters-are-working/?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_09_24_2019)&mc_cid=3bee6328f3&mc_eid=6e1ea8ca22)
- **Rutgers to Study Health Effects of PFAS Contamination in Gloucester County** - The federal government is awarding \$1 million each to Rutgers University and six other institutions to study the health effects of PFAS chemicals at seven U.S. sites including Paulsboro and West Deptford in Gloucester County, where high levels of the chemicals have been found. The study is the second phase of a project to look at how public health has been affected by the PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) that were once used in consumer products like Teflon, and are linked to a range of illnesses including immune system problems, high cholesterol, and some cancers. The first phase collected data on the prevalence of the chemicals in light of increasing detections in public and private water supplies at locations including industrial sites and military bases — where the chemicals were used for decades in firefighting foam: [https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/rutgers-to-study-health-effects-of-pfas-contamination-in-gloucester-county/?ct=t\(EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_09\\_24\\_2019\)&mc\\_cid=3bee6328f3&mc\\_eid=6e1ea8ca22](https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/rutgers-to-study-health-effects-of-pfas-contamination-in-gloucester-county/?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_09_24_2019)&mc_cid=3bee6328f3&mc_eid=6e1ea8ca22)

- **Water Systems Across NJ Face Infrastructure Woes** - Experts say it will take \$8 billion over the next decade to fix NJ's water problems, which does not include a similar sum that officials say is needed to fix sewer systems that overflow during heavy rains and allow runoff to drain directly into state waterways. Newark and its lead-leaching water service pipes may dominate the headlines, but infrastructure problems in aging drinking-water systems are pervasive across NJ. The the Water Quality Accountability Act of 2017 requires all sizable water purveyors to improve the safety, reliability, and oversight of their systems, and applies to the 300 water systems in NJ with at least 500 hookups — ranging from small, community operations to big public systems, like Newark's, and the even bigger private companies that serve the most customers in the state: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-19-water-systems-across-nj-face-infrastructure-woes/>
- **Will Trump's Clean-Water Rollback Imperil NJ's Small Streams, Wetlands?** - Experts are divided on possible NJ impacts of a rollback of a key provision of the Clean Water Act. NJ has authority over both federal programs governing water quality and wetlands, imposing, in most cases, more stringent protections than afforded by the federal government. And unlike other states and the federal government, NJ also regulates transition areas near wetlands and riparian lands. But there is concern where pollution from neighboring states with less stringent regulations could degrade water quality downstream. "It allows for more flooding and pollution," said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. "It could have a big impact on places like the Delaware River," he said. It is an argument state officials have made in the past when opposing the proposed rollback: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-16-will-trumps-clean-water-rollback-imperil-njs-small-streams-wetlands/>
- **Op-Ed: Who's Profiting from Repairs to Aging water and Sewer Systems?** — by Peggy Gallos (executive director of the Association of Environmental Authorities, an association for local, regional and county public agencies that provide water, wastewater and solid waste service in NJ) - The investor-owned utilities (IOUs) (e.g., American, Aqua and Suez in NJ) have recognized that the backlog of capital upgrades and repairs in aging water and sewer systems presents an opportunity to make huge profits for shareholders. Shareholder primacy seems to have guided many of the activities of IOUs, underpinning aggressive efforts to privatize public water and sewer systems through sales and lease/concession agreements, and successful efforts to change regulations and laws. IOUs serve about 40 percent of NJ residents and businesses and a smaller but growing percentage of sewer customers. These ratepayers tend to pay as much as 10, 20, 50 — even 100 — percent more than customers of most publicly owned and operated systems: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-11-op-ed-whos-profiting-from-repairs-to-aging-water-and-sewer-systems/>
- **Proposed \$120M Bond Will Speed Newark's Push to Get Lead Out of Drinking Water** - Under a plan that has won final approval, \$120M in bonds will be issued by the Essex County Improvement Authority, with the proceeds to help fund the ongoing replacement of lead service lines that have been blamed for helping to contaminate drinking water in many Newark homes. The bond should enable the city to cut in half the time it will take to finish replacing the service lines. In addition to receiving the bond funds, Newark is also advancing a local measure that would make the city the first in the nation to require the replacement of all lead service lines with or without cooperation from property owners: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-11-proposed-120m-bond-will-speed-newarks-efforts-to-get-lead-out-of-drinking-water/>
- **Mandatory Replacement of Lead Water Lines Pushed by Mayor in Newark** - Newark Mayor Ras Baraka has asked the city council to approve an ordinance allowing the municipal government to replace the estimated 18,000 lead water service lines in the city, with or without the permission of property owners. This would make Newark the first in the nation to require a complete replacement of all lead service lines. Under the proposed ordinance, property owners can either sign up to have city work crews replace service lines at no cost, or replace them at their own expense within 90 days of the measure's effective date. The city will move legally to replace service lines on properties where owners fail to respond or cannot be found: <https://enviropolitics.com/mandatory-replacement-of-lead-water-lines-pushed-by-mayor-in-newark-nj/>



- **Slow Progress on NJ's Water Quality Management Law Frustrates Legislators -** Compliance with the 2017 Water Quality Accountability Act has been uneven; at a hearing in Trenton, advocates told lawmakers that enforcement is necessary. The Act directed water companies to devise asset management plans that tally and test their systems, everything from valves and hydrants to cybersecurity and responses to safety violations, but compliance thus far has been uneven, members of the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee were told:  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-10-slow-progress-on-njs-water-quality-management-law-frustrates-legislators/>
- **Edison Referendum Keeps Local Control of Water System -** In a special referendum election, Edison voters overwhelmingly approved a plan to continue municipal ownership of the township's drinking water and sewage treatment operations that effectively blocks an \$855 million deal to allow Suez North American to run Edison's water system. The referendum was placed on the ballot by petition as part of a grass-roots effort to block the deal proposed by Mayor Thomas Lankey that has been several years in the making. Nearly 5,000 residents signed the petition:  
<https://newjerseyglobe.com/local/edison-referendum-keeps-local-control-of-water-system/>

## OTHER

**Energy Storage Key to Clean Energy, Finding Cash Is Key to Energy Storage -** Energy storage, widely viewed as a cornerstone of the clean-energy economy, faces huge financial and regulatory challenges to fully realize its promise, according to a diverse panel of experts. In a wide-ranging discussion at a NJ Spotlight roundtable on clean energy, a utility executive, energy-storage executives and a prominent lawmaker agreed that finding the money to jump start a nascent but crucial sector is one of the biggest hurdles to expanding energy storage in NJ. With NJ heavily relying on intermittent, but cleaner, renewables sources of energy like solar and wind, it will never achieve its goal of a 100% clean-energy economy without cost-efficient energy storage, panelists agreed:  
[https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/energy-storage-key-to-clean-energy-finding-cash-is-key-to-energy-storage/?ct=t\(EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_09\\_24\\_2019\)&mc\\_cid=3bee6328f3&mc\\_eid=6e1ea8ca22](https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/energy-storage-key-to-clean-energy-finding-cash-is-key-to-energy-storage/?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_09_24_2019)&mc_cid=3bee6328f3&mc_eid=6e1ea8ca22)



- **NJ Joins Challenge to Trump Administration over Air Pollution Rule -** NJ is joining twelve other states in challenging the Trump administration on its repeal of a key air pollution rule. The action by the administration would end California's long-standing authority to establish more stringent emission controls for greenhouse gas emissions and pollution from vehicle tailpipes. In NJ, as is true in most of the rest of the country, the transportation sector is the biggest single source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for roughly 46 percent of carbon pollution. "It is a one-two punch to our lungs and our wallets," said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, referring to the administration's actions. And, he added, "What it means is New Jersey will never meet its goals under the Global Warming Response Act," the 2007 law mandating significant reductions in pollution contributing to climate change: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-22-nj-joins-challenge-to-trump-administration-over-air-pollution-rule/>

- **Even the Fossil-Fuel Industry Doesn't Like the EPA's Methane Rollback** – The Environmental Protection Agency's lifting of limits on potent greenhouse gas emissions from the drilling and transportation of natural gas would be bad for the environment, but also it might well do more harm than good for the fossil-fuel industry. Natural gas is mostly methane. When allowed to escape into the atmosphere uncombusted, methane is an extremely potent greenhouse agent. So some utilities have opposed the new rules. In fact, several major fossil-fuel players had embraced the regulations. For relatively inexpensive upgrades and procedures that enable natural gas producers to capture and sell more product, the rules allowed the industry to argue that methane leakage across the industry would be minimized and that natural gas could be, at least for a time, part of a serious climate strategy: <https://enviropolitics.com/even-the-fossil-fuel-industry-doesnt-like-the-epas-methane-rollback/>
- **PSEG Joins Battle Against Repeal of Obama-Era Curb on Power Plant Pollution** - A coalition of nine of the nation's largest power companies, including Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG), are challenging the Trump administration's repeal of an Obama-era rule to limit global warming pollution from power plants. They argued a new rule put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency will result in fewer reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions and higher costs to industry and consumers. Similar lawsuits have been filed by NJ and 21 other states which argued the new program, dubbed the Affordable Clean Energy Rule, would allow coal units to operate indefinitely into the future without installing controls to reduce pollution that contributes to climate change. PSEG, the owner of Public Service Electric & Gas, the largest gas and electric utility in New Jersey, has embraced the clean-energy policies, investing hundreds of millions of dollars in solar energy and energy efficiency: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-17-pseg-joins-battle-against-repeal-of-obama-era-curb-on-power-plant-pollution/>
- **PSE&G's Scaled-Back Proposal for Upgrading Gas and Power Grids OK'd by BPU** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) approved a scaled-back proposal by Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) to upgrade its gas and power grids, accepting a \$842 million, four-year program that is considerably less than the \$2.5 billion originally sought. The BPU also approved four new gas tariffs that will essentially keep home heating costs flat for NJ's gas utilities this winter, and eliminated a proposal by the utility to invest another \$863 million in 14 new gas pipelines to back up supplies in the event of disruptions in interstate pipelines: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-11-pse-gs-scaled-back-proposal-for-gas-and-power-grid-upgrades-is-approved/>
- **Op-Ed: The \$14 Billion Key to Clean Energy in New Jersey (i.e., Energy Efficiency)** – by Franklin Neubauer (a consultant in energy resource planning and energy modeling, specializing in energy efficiency) – NJ should act decisively on initiatives in energy efficiency which could pay big dividends. One of the pillars of NJ's transition to clean energy and the best way to keep energy affordable is energy efficiency. The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) needs to rule on how it will implement energy efficiency provisions in the 2018 Clean Energy Act. As summer months have passed with no related announcements from the BPU, prospects for decisive action are unclear: [https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-05-op-ed-the-14-billion-key-to-clean-energy-in-new-jersey/#disqus\\_thread](https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-05-op-ed-the-14-billion-key-to-clean-energy-in-new-jersey/#disqus_thread)
- **36,200 New Jerseyans Are Employed by Energy-Efficiency Businesses** - A new report, "Energy Efficiency Jobs in America," indicates that 36,200 of the state's energy workers (25%) are employed by energy-efficiency businesses. That sector grew 7.1% in 2018. According to the analysis by E4TheFuture and the national, nonpartisan business group E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs), 41 states, including New Jersey, employ more workers in energy efficiency than in fossil fuels: [https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/36200/?ct=t\(EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_09\\_24\\_2019\)&mc\\_cid=3be6328f3&mc\\_eid=6e1ea8ca22](https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/36200/?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_09_24_2019)&mc_cid=3be6328f3&mc_eid=6e1ea8ca22)

- **Nuclear Subsidies Under Review Just Months After Contentious Approval -**

In April, the Board of Public Utilities awarded \$300M in annual surcharges on utility customers' bills to aid three PSEG nuclear plants; officials are taking a fresh look at the subsidies, beginning to explore whether the subsidies should be extended, or perhaps reduced. The decision has had huge implications for NJ's long-term energy policy. Controversy over the subsidies led the Legislature to approve the incentives only after approval was tied to a companion bill promoting clean-energy initiatives, including measures to boost energy efficiency, offshore wind, and solar:

<https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/09/19-09-04-nuclear-subsidies-under-microscope-just-months-after-contentious-approval/>

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

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