

Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

February 2020

[covering 12/29/2019 – 1/27/2020] <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.



UUFANJ's FIRST ANNUAL ECO-GALA, held January 10, 2020, was a great success!

The UU FaithAction NJ Eco-Gala sold out a month in advance!



EJTF 2018-2019 Chair Nancy Griffitheth (far right)

EJTF Members Enjoying the UUFANJ Eco-Gala



OTHER EJTF ACTIVITIES

NJ.com Opinion Piece Published

Nancy Griffeth of EJTF co-authored a NJ.com Opinion piece with Valerie Griffeth – “**By turning to clean energy, we can fight the health impacts of climate change.**” The piece ties negative health impacts in New Jersey with continuing to burn fossil fuels and with climate change, and delineates how clean energy is needed to avoid further health costs. When health costs are accounted for, it will cost less to convert to renewable energy than to stay on the present course. New Jersey is in the process of implementing a new Energy Master Plan, and it is crucial that these factors are taken into account in formulating the healthiest possible future for all New Jerseyans. The piece may be viewed here:

<https://www.nj.com/opinion/2020/01/new-jersey-needs-clean-energy-to-fight-health-impacts-of-climate-change.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Jersey Environmental Youth Training

Saturday, February 8, 2020, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Reformed Church of Highland Park, 19 S. 2nd Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904

This is a daylong training event for youth environmental activists across the state to network with other young leaders and learn hands-on skills to help them pursue their activism more effectively. Training sessions will be facilitated by leaders in NJ’s environmental sphere. It’s free to attend, and lunch will be served at the event. Questions can be directed to April Nicklaus at aprilnicklaus@yahoo.com, call or text at 609-578-2878. Students can register for the event at tiny.cc/njeyt.

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) Public Meeting

February 25 – 27, 2020

Jacksonville, FL (TELECONFERENCE OPTION)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) will convene a public meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., which continues on February 26 and 27 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. NEJAC meetings are usually very informative, but since this one is in Florida, you can call in by phone. Registration is open through February 16, 2020. There is no fee, but due to a limited number of phone lines, registration for the teleconference will be on a first come, first-served basis, and pre-registration is required; visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/national-environmental-justice-advisory-council-public-meeting-teleconference-option-tickets-85626867265?aff=erelexpmlt>. Members of the public are encouraged to provide comments in writing or verbally during the public comment period on Tuesday evening. The meeting on Wednesday and Thursday will focus on topics that include environmental justice issues of communities in Florida and the southeastern US; discussion and deliberation of a charge related to the reuse and revitalization of Superfund and other contaminated sites; and the resiliency of communities following natural disasters, particularly communities in the southeastern US and the Caribbean. For more information on NEJAC, see <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>, and to learn about the Public Comment Guidelines, visit <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/national-environmental-justice-advisory-council-guidelines-public-comment>.

**Video Screening of “First Gigawatt Down”
and Q&A with Rezwan Razani, founder of Footprint to Wings**

**Sunday, February 23, 2020, 12:30 p.m.
Beacon (Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit)
4 Waldron Ave, Summit, NJ 07901**

The “First Gigawatt Down” campaign of the nonprofit Footprint to Wings is for climate activists who want to make sure their solutions ADD UP and work for everyone. Come and see the “First Gigawatt Down” video to see how issuing the Gigawatt Down challenge invites institutions, policy makers, educators, journalists...everyone, to get down to brass tacks and to put in motion the process of evaluating our options using a shared metric.

31st Annual Pinelands Short Course

**Saturday, March 14, 2020 - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Stockton University
101 Vera King Farris Drive, Galloway, NJ 08205**

The Pinelands Short Course is a daylong event at Stockton University featuring educational presentations that explore the ecology, culture and history of the Pinelands (<https://pinelandsalliance.org/event/31st-annual-pinelands-short-course/>). This event is sponsored by the state Pinelands Commission and Stockton University. Topics include Paddling and Camping in Wharton State Forest, Pinelands Frogs and Toads, a virtual tour of the Pinelands, Pinelands Weather and Climate and much more. Field trips include fire ecology and a visit to pygmy pine plains, and a Ghosts of the Wading River bus tour. You can choose from a number of various different available workshops (indicate preferences when you register). A detailed brochure, including registration instructions, is available at: <https://www.stockton.edu/continuing-studies/pinelandsshortcourse.html>. Cost is: Adult - \$50; Senior (65+) - \$45 Coupon code SAVEPINE; Student: \$45 Coupon Code SAVEPINE.

**Green Amendment Talk by Maya van Rossum,
author of “The Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to A Healthy Environment”**

**Sunday, March 22, 2020, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
Beacon (Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit)
4 Waldron Ave, Summit, NJ 07901**

Veteran environmentalist and original petitioner and leader of the Green Amendment movement, Maya van Rossum will be speaking to the Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation on her book, “The Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment,” followed by Q&A and signing. Come out and meet Maya, pick up a copy of the book, and learn about the future of environmental advocacy! The event is sponsored by Green Earth Ministry and UU FaithAction NJ.

Clean Water Action Annual Conference
“Resetting the Climate Clock: Leading Through Action in the New Decade”

Saturday, April 4th, 2020, 9 am - 3 p.m.
Wardlaw+Hartridge School, 1295 Inman Avenue, Edison, NJ 08820

Clean Water Action’s 34th annual statewide conference, “Resetting the Climate Clock: Leading Through Action in the New Decade” focuses on “empowering our community to make voting and civic participation a cultural responsibility and tradition in order to promote greater environmental, social and economic justice.” Register here: <https://cleanwater.salsalabs.org/conference-registration-2020/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=e9ac570e-cbd6-44b7-9a7c-of560e45ea67> Early bird (before March 20) is \$30 per person; regular (after March 20 and at the door) is \$35 per person.

Intergenerational Spring Seminar –
“All In For Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet”

April 16 – 18, 2020
Various locations in New York City

The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) 2020 Intergenerational Spring Seminar, “All In For Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet,” will take place in New York City April 16 - 18, 2020 (with programming for youth and Sponsors starting April 15). The UU-UNO’s Intergenerational Spring Seminar is an annual opportunity for a multi-generational community experience to collaborate with others while learning how to be a global activist through workshops, peer and expert-led panel discussions, skills-building, small-group work, community-building activities, and worship services.

Early Registration (Dec. 2 – Feb. 3) - \$375; Regular Registration (Feb. 4 – Mar. 2) - \$425.
<https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar>



50th Anniversary of Earth Day - April 22, 2020

Watch this space for Earth Day activities, including details about events related to a three-day general strike that has been called for April 22 – 24, 2020 by the global youth-led Climate Strike movement. Information is available at: <https://www.uumfe.org/act/global-climate-strike/> To sign up to host a strike, or receive updates, check out strikewithus.org.



UUFANJ Annual Meeting (formerly known as Plenary)

Saturday, April 25, 2020, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
UU Church of Cherry Hill
401 N Kings Highway, Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08034

The UU FaithAction NJ Annual Meeting (formerly known as Plenary) will be held at the UU Church in Cherry Hill. More information to follow at a later date!

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUMFE) “Spring for Change – A Season of Sacred Activism”

See www.uumfe.org/resources/spring-for-change-2020/whwn/ for a number of events and activities, related to “Spring for Change – A Season of Sacred Activism,” including:

- World Water Day – March 22, 2020
- Intergenerational Spring Seminar – April 16 – 18, 2020 (see above)
- Letter-writing National Advocacy Campaign on climate change - March-May
- Earth Day – April 22, 2020
- Biodiversity Sunday – May 17, 2020.

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.) Report on drinking water: <https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/JWW-Lead-Report.pdf>

THE FATE OF BILLS OF INTEREST TO EJTF FROM THE LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION

√ **APPROVED**; X **NOT APPROVED**; → **REINTRODUCED in 2020**

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

√ **S2252/(A4819)** – Establishes goals, initiatives, and programs to encourage and support use of plug-in electric vehicles. EJTF strongly supported this bill. In addition to providing subsidies for purchase of electric vehicles (EVs) and a network of charging stations, revisions added substantial requirements and deadlines for NJ Transit to purchase electric-powered buses and for the State to purchase EVs for non-emergency uses. By replacing diesel buses used in urban areas with buses powered by electricity, air pollution in those areas will be reduced. This bill (S2252) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/17/2020: https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S2500/2252_U2.HTM [See news items under “Electric Vehicles” on p. 10.]

√ **S721/(A1751)** – Authorizes use of electric school buses. EJTF supported this bill. It authorizes all-new electric and hybrid school buses to be 6 inches wider than the diesel buses they would replace. This will result in reducing the exposure of the students who need to ride a school bus to substantial amounts of polluted air. This bill (S721) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/21/2020: https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S1000/721_I1.HTM

X **S2421/(A1030)** – Concerns installation of electric vehicle charging stations in common interest communities. These bills intended to allow residents in such communities to have electric vehicle (EV) charging stations installed at or near their homes, thus giving those residents parity with other residents in the state. The EJTF had been asked to support these bills by UUs who live in condominiums or other types of common interest communities who might otherwise be prevented by the Home Owners Association from installing

them, although we were more concerned about passage of S2252/A4819 (which did pass). We did recognize that UU Principles would mandate our support of this bill, should S2252/A4818 become law. However, although this passed both Houses, Gov. Murphy did not approve it, and therefore it was “pocket vetoed”. So far, it hasn’t been reintroduced in the 2020 session:

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S2500/2421_R2.HTM

→ **S227 Reintroduced in 2020 legislative session-** Makes appropriation of \$3,000,000 to the NJ Department of Transportation (DOT for electric buses and \$3,000,000 to NJ Transit (NJT) for private carrier capital improvements from revenues and other funds of Transportation Trust Fund Authority. Last year’s bill didn’t make it out of the Senate Transportation Committee. It was reintroduced on 1/14/2020 and referred to the Senate Transportation Committee: <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bills/BillView.asp?BillNumber=S227>

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

√ **S4110/(A5854)** – Allows municipalities to adopt ordinance to enter properties to perform lead service line replacements. **EJTF’s Co-Chair Ray Nichols testified on the bill and recommended changes, which were included in the approved version** (text of the final version is available here, showing changes made: https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S4500/4110_R1.HTM) The bill (S4110) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/9/2020.

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

√ **S3985/(A5663)** - Amends "Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act" to add definition of "open access offshore wind transmission facility"

**FATE OF BILLS OF INTEREST TO EJTF
FROM THE LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION
(continued)**

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and revises law concerning "qualified offshore wind projects." The bill addresses the ability of independent companies to build transmission lines from offshore wind farms, with an eye to figuring out the most cost-effective and least environmentally disruptive ways to bring power from offshore wind farms to customers onshore (It was opposed by NJ Rate Counsel on the grounds that NJ customers may pay for facilities used for delivering power outside of NJ) The bill (S3985) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/21/2020:
https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S4000/3985_R1.HTM

√ **S4275/(A6088)** - Allows the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to increase the cost to customers of Class I renewable energy for energy years 2022 through 2024, under certain conditions. This was viewed as critical by the solar industry, as it addresses the issue of a cost cap included in the 2018 NJ Clean Energy Act that mandated replacing the existing incentives for solar developers. The bill (S4275) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/21/2020:
https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S4500/4275_I1.HTM

CLIMATE CHANGE

√ **S3215/(A4606)** - Requires State to use 20-year time horizon and most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Report when calculating global warming potential to measure global warming impact of greenhouse gases. EJTF supported this bill. The bill (S3215) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/13/2020:
https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S3500/3215_R1.HTM

√ **S4162/(A6014)** - Establishes NJ Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University; and appropriates up to \$500,000 "... to carry out interdisciplinary research activities that will help New Jersey adapt and prepare for climate change." The Center is to conduct a Statewide climate change vulnerability assessment, coordinate efforts of other academic institutions, form partnerships with economic sector entities vulnerable to climate change, provide science for planning and policy-making purposes, provide technical guidance, undertake pilot projects, provide education, etc. Note: Rutgers has already done some potential modeling of sea level rise impacts on NJ. This bill (S4162) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/31/2020:

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S4500/4162_R2.HTM

POLLUTION

√ **S3939/(A5681, A5682)** - Establishes Recycling Market Development Council. The Council is to produce a report, within a year, on existing recycling markets, and "... develop best management practices to reduce the contamination of collected recyclables; investigate how to stimulate the use of collected recyclables in newly manufactured products; investigate the feasibility of providing preferences for products with recycled content, including how to stimulate the use in public projects of products or materials with recycled content; and investigate methods to improve the competitiveness of the State as an exporter of recyclable materials. The council shall provide recommendations on changes needed to State laws or rules or regulations to stimulate the creation of domestic processing facilities, such as paper mills, and end-use manufacturers of products with recycled content. The bill (S3939) was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/21/2020:
https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S4000/3939_R1.HTM

**FATE OF BILLS OF INTEREST TO EJTF
FROM THE LAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION
(continued)**

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REINTRODUCED IN 2020

√ **SCR135/(ACR198)**– Urges cooperative approach among all levels of government to provide funding and other resources to clean up plastic pollution. EJTF supported this concurrent resolution, which urges (but, unfortunately, does not require) all levels of government to take cooperative action, including providing funding and other resources, to remove plastic from the State waters in order to decrease the amount of plastic entering into marine waters and ultimately into human food chains. The concurrent resolution (SCR135) was passed by both houses and filed with the Secretary of State on 1/13/2020:

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/SCR/135_I1.HTM

→ **A1978** Reintroduced in 2020 legislative session - Prohibits use of plastic carryout bags,

expanded polystyrene, and single-use plastic straws. Last year’s bill was passed by the Senate, but not by the Assembly, at the end of the legislative session. It was reintroduced on 1/14/2020 and referred to the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee:

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A2000/1978_I1.HTM

OTHER

→ **SCR30** Reintroduced in 2020 legislative session - Proposes constitutional amendment to make State trustee of public natural resources and guarantee to the people other environmental rights. EJTF continues to support this bill. **This is the “Green Amendment,”** which remained in the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee beginning 10/15/2018, during the last legislative session. It was reintroduced on 1/14/2020 and Referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/SCR/30_I1.HTM

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

SUMMARIES OF 2019 LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

- **NJ Gov. Murphy Signs Scores of Lame-Duck Bills and Pocket Vetoes Others. Here Are the Environmental Bills on Both Lists** - <https://enviropolitics.com/nj-gov-murphy-signs-scores-of-lame-duck-bills-and-pocket-vetoes-others-here-are-the-environmental-bills-on-both-lists/>
- **Governor’s Signature on Key Energy Bills Puts Cap on Last Legislative Session** – The bills signed by Gov. Murphy include: a bill (S4275) supported by solar developers that addresses the issue of a cost cap included in the 2018 NJ Clean Energy Act; and a bill (A5663, substituted by S3985) that addresses the ability of independent companies to build transmission lines from offshore wind farms (opposed by NJ Rate Counsel on the grounds that NJ customers may pay for facilities used for delivering power outside of NJ): <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/governors-signature-on-key-energy-bills-puts-cap-on-last-legislative-session/>
- **Environmentalists Score Big Win on Electric Vehicles, but Bag Ban Among Measures that Falter** – A summary of the final status of some of the major NJ environmental bills in the last

legislative session: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/environmentalists-score-big-win-on-electric-vehicles-but-lose-on-other-key-measures/>

- **2019’s Environmental ‘Highlights’: Climate Change, Algal Blooms, Lead Service Lines and More** – A summary of major NJ environmental issues in 2019 and those expected to be addressed in 2020, including the issue of lead in drinking water: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/2019s-environmental-highlights-climate-change-algal-blooms-lead-service-lines-and-more/>
- **What Matters in 2020 as State Tries to Shift to Clean Energy? Money, for a Start** – A summary of issues related to achieving NJ goals in the areas of renewable resources, energy conservation, greenhouse gas emissions, and a fossil fuel moratorium, honing in on costs: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/what-matters-in-2020-as-state-tries-to-shift-to-clean-energy-money-for-a-start/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES



- **Aggressive Program to Electrify NJ Transportation Ready to Launch Today** – Passing of this bill (S2252) is a great victory for environmental advocates, and will address the largest single source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in NJ, which is the transportation sector. The bill described in this article and the article below was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/17/2020. “With this, New Jersey will accelerate and catch up with other states and may pass them,” said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. “The important part to us is requiring NJ Transit to transition to electric buses.” <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/aggressive-program-to-electrify-nj-transportation-ready-to-launch-today/>
- **Key Day for Jump-Starting NJ’s Transition to Electric Vehicles** – The bill described in this article (A4819) was substituted by S2252, and was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/17/2020. It had the complete support of the EJTF and UUFANJ, and was the subject of a UUFANJ Action Alert initiated by the EJTF. It includes \$5,000 subsidies for purchase of new light duty Electric Vehicles (EVs) and support for installation of a network of public EV charging stations. The bill also includes \$500 million for NJ Transit for capital improvements – incrementally increasing electric bus purchases to 100% by 2032: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/key-day-for-jump-starting-njs-transition-to-electric-vehicles/>

- **Metuchen Discusses Implementing More Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** – In a Borough Council meeting last month, Greenspot Smart Mobility, a transportation start-up based in Jersey City, made a presentation of a pilot program to install a number of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the Borough. The possibility of additional EV charging stations met with excitement. According to the presentation, there would be no cost to the Borough, as the company utilizes various state programs through the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), e.g., “It Pays to Plug In” and incentives offered for municipalities. <https://centraljersey.com/2019/12/19/metuchen-discusses-implementing-more-electric-vehicle-charging-stations/>

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

- **No Green Initiatives from ‘Greenest’ Governor Other than Pledge to Deal with Lead Issue** – On 1/14/2020, Gov. Murphy gave his second State of the State speech, which didn’t include any new environmental initiatives, but in which he did again emphasize that funds are needed to replace old lead lines and remediate lead paint in homes, and NJ also will need “...to mobilize a veritable army of union workers” to address these problems. He also stated that “... in two weeks, I will unveil New Jersey’s new Energy Master Plan, our comprehensive roadmap for arriving at our goal of a 100-percent clean-energy economy by 2050.” <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/no-green-initiatives-from-greenest-governor-other-than-pledge-to-deal-with-lead-issue/>
- **Newark Leads Way on State Lead Service Line Legislation** – On 1/9/2020, Gov. Murphy approved a bill (S4110) similar to a Newark city ordinance passed last September by the Newark City Council. The NJ bill concerns entry onto property to perform lead service line replacements. **EJTF’s Co-Chair Ray Nichols testified on the bill and recommended changes, which were included in the approved version.** Text of the final version is available here, showing changes made: <https://legiscan.com/NJ/text/S4162/2018>; <https://www.newarknj.gov/news/newark-leads-way-on-state-lead-service-line-legislation>
- **Newark: Latest Test Results Show Lead Levels in Unfiltered Water Are Dropping** – Last May, an orthophosphate anti-corrosion program was begun to address the issue of lead in Newark’s drinking water. Since then, there has been a steady decline in lead levels, with the most recent tests of the water in December showing a decrease of 74% since last February. “The effectiveness of the orthophosphate is gradual, so we expect to see the lead levels continue to drop,” said Kareem Adeem, the City’s Acting Director of Water and Sewer. <https://www.newarknj.gov/news/latest-test-results-show-lead-levels-in-unfiltered-water-are-dropping>
- **In Trenton, a New Plan to Replace Lead Service Lines** – In 2017, the lead level in Trenton’s water exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lead in drinking water action level standard, and the city was also fined by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for not replacing service lines on time. The city has a new plan to replace service lines, but only has funding for 10% of those needing replacement. Homeowners are responsible for replacing part of the lines, but the city has programs to assist with the costs if needed: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/in-trenton-a-new-plan-to-replace-lead-water-service-lines/>

- **“The FRESH Report”** – This is the first issue of “The FRESH Report”, from the organization “FRESH Justice – The Foundation for Racial, Economic, Social, and Historical Justice, Inc.”, founded in 2017 and operating mainly in NY and NJ. This issue includes the following articles, all related to lead and other drinking water issues in NJ: “BERGEN COUNTY Dangerously High Lead levels in Your Water!!”, “Lead Testing Results in Hackensack and surrounding Communities: Are You the Next Newark?”, “What is Lead Doing to You and Your Family?”, “Community Member in Quest for Justice”, “The Case For Accountability – A Tax-payer’s Rant”: <https://www.freshjusticeinc.com/the-fresh-report-november-2019>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE



- **PennEast, Way Behind Schedule, Asks for Two More Years to Build Pipeline** – PennEast was dealt a blow when a federal court ruled last September that it could not use eminent domain related to state properties. PennEast has plans to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but will miss the date by which it was required to put the pipeline into service, so has requested a new date of 1/19/2022. Also still needed are permits from NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which have been denied previously, and for the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, stated “PennEast said they needed the pipeline in 2015 because of the shortage of gas in the region. Here we are five years later and there is still no shortage and PennEast is looking to delay the project even longer.” <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/penneast-way-behind-schedule-asks-for-two-more-years-to-build-pipeline/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **Amid Jitters over NJ Solar Program, State Looks for Best Way to Maintain It** - A number of issues - related to dealing with existing solar projects when a new financing system, mandated by the 2018 NJ Clean Energy Act, is put into place - were discussed at a NJ Board of Utilities (BPU) public hearing: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/amid-jitters-over-nj-solar-program-state-looks-for-best-way-to-maintain-it/>

- **BPU Begins New Decade by Revising Solar Subsidies, Hoping to Keep Sector Strong** – The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is moving to address issues caused by the 2018 NJ Clean Energy Act that mandated replacing the existing incentives for solar developers. In addition, a bill (S-4275) addresses the issue of a cost cap included in the 2018 law. [Note: that bill was approved by Gov. Murphy on 1/21/2020.] Although some of the issues related to transitioning to a new financing system are addressed, some issues related to projects funded under the old incentive system remain (see article described above): <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/bpu-begins-new-decade-by-revising-solar-subsidies-hoping-to-keep-sector-strong/>
- **FERC Report Confirms Renewables Provided a Majority of New Energy Generating Capacity in 2019** – The most recent Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) “Energy Infrastructure Update” monthly report (<https://www.ferc.gov/legal/staff-reports/2019/nov-energy-infrastructure.pdf>) shows that new and expanded U.S. generating capacity installed in 2019 for renewable sources was more than that for non-renewables, bringing the total available installed generating capacity for renewables to 22% of total capacity. <https://enviropolitics.com/ferc-report-confirms-renewables-lead-and-provided-the-majority-new-generating-capacity-in-2019/>
- **WEST MILFORD: School District Seeking DOE Approval of Solar Projects** – The West Milford Board of Education approved a plan to be submitted to the NJ Department of Education (DOE) that includes installing solar panels at seven of the buildings in the District, along with other energy-saving improvements. It is envisioned that the green energy produced in the 15-year plan would pay for the improvements and possibly also make money for the District. <http://www.westmilfordmessenger.com/news/local-news/school-district-seeking-doe-approval-of-solar-projects-XG796635>

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **NJ Unlikely to See Australia’s Climate Extremes, Can Still Learn From Raging Fires** – The NJ State Climatologist contrasts the situations in NJ and Australia related to climate change, and outlines lessons NJ can learn from what is happening in Australia now: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/nj-unlikely-to-see-australias-climate-extremes-can-still-learn-from-raging-fires/>
- **Federal Appeals Court Dismisses Youth Climate Lawsuit in 2:1 “Reluctant” Decision** – The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that, although the plaintiffs made a compelling case that action is needed, the plaintiffs did not meet all requirements of “standing” to sue the U.S. Government through the courts, because the courts do not have the constitutional power to provide the relief sought. (A summary prepared by court staff is available here: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/571d109b04426270152febe0/t/5e22101b7a850a06acdffb1579290663460/2020.01.17+JULIANA+OPINION.pdf>) One judge wrote a powerful dissent; now the plaintiffs plan to seek a full “en banc” review of the decision, which would be conducted by eleven Ninth Circuit Judges rather than the three that made this ruling: <https://mailchi.mp/ourchildrenstrust/breaking-ninth-circuit-court-of-appeals-decision-for-juliana-v-united-states?e=e8257169d2>

- **Bill Approved to Establish NJ Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University** – On 1/21/2020, Gov. Murphy approved a bill (S4162) to establish a the “New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center” at Rutgers University, “... to carry out interdisciplinary research activities that will help New Jersey adapt and prepare for climate change.” The Center is to conduct a Statewide climate change vulnerability assessment, coordinate efforts of other academic institutions, form partnerships with economic sector entities vulnerable to climate change, provide science for planning and policy-making purposes, provide technical guidance, undertake pilot projects, provide education, etc. The bill appropriates \$500,000 for the Center. Note: Rutgers has already done some potential modeling of sea level rise impacts on NJ. https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/S4500/4162_R2.HTM
- **Rep. Pallone Introduces Bold New Climate Change Legislation** – NJ Congressman Frank Pallone, and others, released the legislative framework of the draft “Climate Leadership and Environmental Action for our Nation’s (CLEAN) Future Act” – an ambitious new climate plan to ensure the United States achieves net-zero greenhouse gas pollution no later than 2050. The memorandum from Rep. Pallone’s office is available here: https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/CL_EAN%20Future%20Act%20Memo%2001.08.20.pdf and a description is here: <https://patch.com/new-jersey/matawan-aberdeen/rep-pallone-introduces-bold-new-climate-change-legislation>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)



- **DEP’s PFAS Directive to Chemical Companies Will Take ‘Years’ to Resolve** – After nine months, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is apparently still in discussions/litigation with five chemical companies to which it issued a Directive to test, treat, and remove PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) from water and soil. These are termed “forever chemicals” because they do not biodegrade; they are the chemicals that figure in the movie “Dark Waters”. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/deps-pfas-directive-to-chemical-companies-will-take-years-to-resolve/>

- **New Water Tests Confirm PFAS Contamination in Bergen County** – The environmental activist group Environmental Working Group (EWG) has released a new report (<https://www.ewg.org/research/national-pfas-testing/>), based on laboratory tests commissioned by EWG, that PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) “forever chemicals” have been found in Bergenfield, Bergen County: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/new-water-tests-confirm-pfas-contamination-in-bergen-county/>
- **Trump Repeals Key Elements of Clean Water Act** – The action taken to repeal key provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act went beyond rolling back Obama administration provisions, and ignored advice of the current administration’s Science Advisory Board. Federal protection may be eliminated for over half of the Delaware Watershed streams, potentially impacting the drinking water of millions in NJ. Litigation is expected: <https://environmentamerica.org/news/pae/analysis-repealing-clean-water-rule-would-be-devastating-delaware-river-watershed> <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/trump-repeals-key-elements-of-clean-water-act/>

POLLUTION

- **NJ Environmentalists Decry Lack of Action on Single-Use Plastic Ban** – The bill to ban single-use plastic and paper bags and polystyrene containers was passed by the NJ Senate, but was not voted on by the NJ Assembly before the end of the last session, so it could not be approved. NJ Sierra Club director Jeff Tittel reacted to the demise of the bill by stating “... we will redouble our efforts to get this comprehensive plastic bag ban passed in the next session. We will keep going until the Legislature acts and passes a full statewide ban.” [Note: a new version of the bill has been introduced in the new session]: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/nj-environmentalists-decry-lack-of-action-on-single-use-plastic-ban/>
- **New Jersey Passes Recycling Market Bill; Organics Diversion and Bag Ban Stalled** – On 1/21/2020, Gov. Murphy approved a bill (S3939) that establishes a Recycling Market Development Council in the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Council is to produce a report, within a year, on existing recycling markets, and “... develop best management practices to reduce the contamination of collected recyclables; investigate how to stimulate the use of collected recyclables in newly manufactured products; investigate the feasibility of providing preferences for products with recycled content, including how to stimulate the use in public projects of products or materials with recycled content; and investigate methods to improve the competitiveness of the State as an exporter of recyclable materials. The council shall provide recommendations on changes needed to State laws or rules or regulations to stimulate the creation of domestic processing facilities, such as paper mills, and end-use manufacturers of products with recycled content.” <https://enviropolitics.com/new-jersey-passes-recycling-market-bill-organics-diversion-and-bag-ban-stalled/>

OTHER

- **State Starts to Put Some Muscle Behind Push for Energy Efficiency** – Last December, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) issued a “Straw Proposal” for NJ’s Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand

Program Administration, for public comment. The proposal (available here: [https://www.bpu.state.nj.us/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/EE %26 Peak Demand Program Administration Straw Proposal 122019.pdf](https://www.bpu.state.nj.us/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/EE%26PeakDemandProgramAdministrationStrawProposal122019.pdf)) "... outlines the various program administration structures for the delivery of energy efficiency (EE) and peak demand reduction programs and proposes recommendations for the implementation of programs under a new administrative framework." It "suggests the process for implementing new pilot programs by the utilities" and "... is intended to provide an opportunity for stakeholder feedback..." Public comments were solicited, and a series of public stakeholder meetings have been held. A particular issue involves possible mechanisms for cost recovery (draft available here:

<https://www.bpu.state.nj.us/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/NJBPU EE Final Cost Recovery Mechanism Proposal 1.22.20.pdf>), including the decoupling of utility profits from energy sales. This article describes the straw proposal, including the role of utilities:

<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/state-starts-to-put-some-muscle-behind-push-for-energy-efficiency/>

- **FERC Changes to PJM Power Grid Drive Up Costs, Pollution — Critics Claim** – The NJ Board of Utilities (BPU) and the NJ Division of Rate Counsel have filed separate briefs with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) related to its decision last December that requires PJM (the regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in NJ and all or parts of 12 other states and the District of Columbia) basically to raise prices of wind and solar power to be in line with the cost of fossil fuels. The projected effects range from negative impacts on NJ's push for clean energy, to higher energy bills for consumers. The briefs ask that FERC clarify and reconsider its decision: <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/01/ferc-changes-to-pjm-power-grid-drive-up-costs-pollution-critics-claim/>
- **Rowan Prof Receives N.J. Conservation Award for Vast, Online Mapping Project** – You might want to check out some of these very interesting, very detailed interactive maps: (<https://www.njmap2.com/>), described in this article: <https://enviropolitics.com/rowan-prof-receives-n-j-conservation-award-for-vast-online-mapping-project/>

**REMEMBER - Make a quick phone call on “MORATORIUM MONDAYS”
to Stop New Fossil Fuel Development!**



UUFaithAction NJ - Environmental Justice Task Force - <https://uufaithaction.org/environment/>
Co-Chairs – Peggy Middaugh and Ray Nichols
Visit our website for Environmental links and resources / sign up for email alerts / join the EJTF