



Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter July 2020

[covering 5/29/2020 – 6/24/2020] <https://www.uufaithaction.org/blog/>

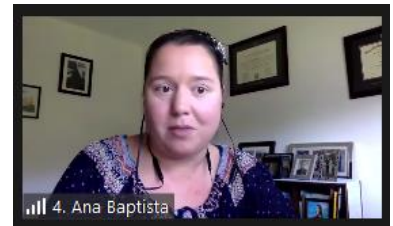
UU Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Environmental Justice (EJ): Addressing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects in communities of low-income residents or persons of color.

UU FaithAction NJ Annual Meeting Held Virtually on June 6, 2020

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: Kudos to UU FaithAction NJ for the very successful Annual Meeting (via Zoom) with the wonderful keynote speakers Dr. Nicky Sheats, Esq. and Dr. Ana Baptista from the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance. Here are examples of their excellent and very timely presentation, "Prioritizing Environmental Justice in a Time of Pandemic":

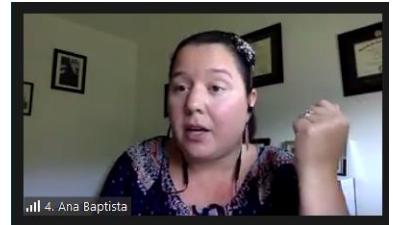
HOW DO WE GET TO CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

Remedying injustice is not simply a matter of lifestyle changes, but of commitment to changing the institutional structures that underpin and serve to reproduce the injustice (Dobson)



- ▶ Obligation Structures of Charity v. Justice
- ▶ Relations of justice are relations of equals
- ▶ Justice requires constant vigilance and political commitment.

- ▶ Responsibility to work towards a sustainable society
- ▶ Activity with public implications
- ▶ From an environmental point of view, every act has public implications.

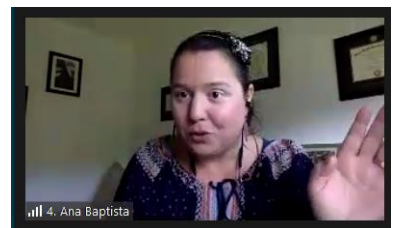
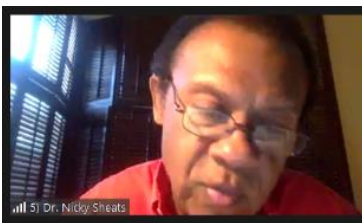


HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- ▶ SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PASS A STRONG, INCLUSIVE DEFINITION OF EJ COMMUNITIES IN SINGLETON EJ BILL
- ▶ SUPPORT PRIORITIZATION OF EJ IN ALL CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICIES
- ▶ CONSULTATIONS WITH EJ COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS
- ▶ VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH ADVOCACY ON POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance

Website: <http://www.njeia.org/>
 Contact: njeainfo@gmail.com



UUFANJ ANNUAL MEETING - EJTF BREAKOUT SESSION SPEAKER:



Photo courtesy of Delaware Riverkeeper Network

The EJTF was fortunate and very pleased to have Maya K. Van Rossum join us at our Breakout Session, (via Zoom) and present an inspiring talk and Q&A on "The Green Amendment." Maya is the author of "The Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to A Healthy Environment." Her presentation emphasized that existing environmental protection laws take pollution and environmental degradation as a given - their purpose is to permit and manage pollution, but they don't prevent it. A self-executing amendment to the NJ Constitution's "Bill of Rights," with immediate power, would have the effect of preventing the harm and protecting everyone's rights

equitably. The ways a Green Amendment can advance environmental justice is described here: https://forthe generations.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FTG_EnvironmentalJusticeFactSheet-2020-04.pdf. There is a Green Amendment Concurrent Resolution pending in the NJ State Senate and Assembly (SCR30/ACR80), and the Green Amendment website "For the Generations" lists seven actions you can take to move it forward (<https://forthe generations.org/actnow/actionnj/>). Also on that website, two PBS/NJTV videos on the Green Amendment are available for viewing: "Here's the Story: The Green Amendment" Part 1, focusing on Pennsylvania's Green Amendment, and Part 2, focusing on New Jersey. If you would like to arrange for your congregation to view the videos and discuss them with Maya, or would like her to give a presentation, she would be happy to participate.

UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

MORRISTOWN UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

Early this year, members of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship's Green Earth Ministry confronted the climate crisis raging on our Earth Home. They believed there was a growing need to step up protection of the independent web of life - to alleviate some of the causes of the climate crisis and reduce its impact. They began having informal, one-on-one chats with other members and solicited them to sign their "climate crisis" letter, which they then submitted to the Board of Trustees. At the Fellowship's annual meeting, they presented a "Resolution to Launch Climate Change Action" (see below) to the whole congregation, where it was approved unanimously. The Resolution directs the creation of a Climate Crisis Task Force whose purpose is to implement the Resolution.

Resolution to Launch Climate Change Action

WHEREAS, as Unitarian Universalists, grounded in reason and justice and guided by science and by our UU Principles, we have a moral responsibility to protect the interdependent web of all existence by our witness and actions;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship declares the global climate crisis to be a humanitarian and spiritual emergency requiring the Fellowship's full commitment to do whatever we can to help alleviate the causes of the climate crisis and reduce its impact.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Congregation of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, call on the Board of Trustees to direct the creation of a Climate Crisis Task Force which will continually identify ways we can help reduce contributions to climate disruption individually and as a community and which will provide recommendations consistent with the spirit of this resolution.

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF RIDGEWOOD

Here is a nostalgic look at the pre-pandemic 2019 Earth Day commemoration where the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood celebrated the famous quote by Jacques Cousteau, "We protect What We Love", by hosting an art show in their lovely gallery space. They played the soundtrack of birds chirping in the rainforest as well as the soulful moans of whales and, of course, "Blackbird" by the Beatles, as visitors connected with their love of nature through art.

EARTH DAY 2019 AT THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF RIDGEWOOD



(photos: Doug Goodell (bird); Marcy Cagan)

EJTF ACTIVITIES

- EJTF member Nancy Griffeth has been appointed as one of the fifteen members of the Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC), which serves as an advisory body to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). According to the DEP website, "EJAC is committed to the basic tenet set forth by the Environmental Justice Movement that all communities, regardless of their racial, ethnic, or economic composition, are entitled to equal protection from the consequences of environmental hazards. Accordingly, EJAC provides a valuable forum for discussions about integrating Environmental Justice into DEP's programs, policies, and activities. EJAC members represent broad-based constituents and geography. This statewide, diverse representation provides guidance, builds DEP's capacity and improves its support of the state's Environmental Justice constituents and stakeholders." It should be an excellent group for EJTF to partner with, and to get in touch with other environmental justice advocates.

- After making attempts at two monthly NJ Transit online Board Meetings, intrepid EJTF member Nancy Griffeth finally succeeded in giving comments on the natural-gas-fired power plant proposed by NJ Transit for Kearny, NJ. At the first meeting, callers waited over four hours, and then not all of them were called on to give comments (see news article on p. 14). At the second meeting, Nancy was finally able to give comments, four hours after the meeting started. She was kind enough to abbreviate her initially planned comments somewhat (see below), out of sympathy for all attending! EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols also made comments.



Nancy waiting to comment, at 2 hours and 2 minutes into the call

"Thank you, and good afternoon to the board members. I am Nancy Griffeth, with Unitarian Universalist FaithAction New Jersey. We're a faith-based group that subscribes to the principles of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

I am commenting on agenda item 2006-34 pertaining to New Jersey Transit's purchasing of materials and services to support the resilience program. UU Faith Action is opposed to spending any money on the planned gas power plant in Kearny.

We say this even though we agree that resiliency of New Jersey Transit is important and we are also pleased to see development of microgrids to provide resiliency in local areas.

However, we oppose using a gas-fired power plant. First, it violates the Energy Master Plan, and second, it will increase emissions in an already overburdened area.

Finally, no alternatives using renewables were even considered, so I call on the Board and on Governor Murphy to stop the New Jersey Transit Gas-Fired Power Plant proposal and to direct New Jersey Transit to replace the power plant with a Renewable Energy Rail alternative.

Thank you."

EVENTS AVAILABLE ONLINE *(some upcoming, some past but viewable as videos)*

"Urgent: Federal Climate Bills & Strategy" - Webinar **July 1, 2020, 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

This webinar will focus on development of a clear set of policy demands for Congress and a strategy to achieve U.S. climate victory in 2021. Learn about 9 specific bills in Congress that will shape the future of our planet - if they can be passed.

The Federal Climate Bills covered include:

1. Agriculture Resilience Act
2. Climate Stewardship Act
3. Food & Agribusiness Merger Moratorium Act
4. American Innovation & Manufacturing Act
5. Break Free from Plastics Pollution Act
6. Climate Leadership and Environmental Action for Our Nation's Future Act (CLEAN Future Act)
7. American Energy Innovation Act
8. Ban Fracking Act
9. Carbon Action Rebate Act

There will also be an overview that includes other bills, such as The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act.

Bill summaries of the nine bills listed above are available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V9nI8ytlHV8dm3PUAcnr3B1X75oerNeINQv8KSGmCsQ/edit?fbclid=IwAR3erCrEGodvXN3KtRLG9fnKoArsjgsOZzSGPffBuObYLsPZOzOsH8_v23A

Register for the Webinar at: <https://bit.ly/ClimateJuly1>



URGENT: FEDERAL CLIMATE BILLS & STRATEGY
JULY 1, 2020. NOON-1:30 PM EST.
ZOOM: <https://bit.ly/ClimateJuly1>

TOPICS
★ Federal Climate Bills: What's Good & What's Missing?
★ Organizing for Power: A "Climate Bill Package"?

PRESENTERS
★ Adam Zipkin - Office of Senator Cory Booker
★ Alex Hillbrand - Natural Resources Defense Council
★ Chad Frischmann - Project Drawdown
★ Della Ridge Creamer - Center for Biological Diversity
★ Etelle Higonnet - Mighty Earth
★ Jake Davis - Family Farm Action
★ Karena Gore - Center for Earth Ethics
★ Michael Gerard - Columbia Sabin Center for Climate Change Law
★ Todd Fernandez - Climate Crisis Policy

CO-HOSTS Climate Crisis Policy ★ Columbia University Sabin Center for Climate Change Law ★ Columbia University Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy ★ Center for Earth Ethics ★ Family Farm Action ★ Drawdown New York City ★ 350NYC ★ Action Corps NYC ★ The Climate Reality Project NYC ★ Mighty Earth ★ Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community ★ Sierra Club New York City Group ★ Sallan Foundation ★ Environmental Investigation Agency ★ March for Science

8th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum (Virtual)

"From the Headwaters to the Bay and the Tribs In-Between: Staying Connected Amidst a Pandemic" **September 14 through September 17, 2020**

EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols highly recommends this forum. While it's focused on protecting the Delaware River Watershed, many of the sessions will be relevant to environmentalists from throughout the East-central U.S. Each day is planned to feature 3-4 hours of sessions that include engaging speakers, facilitated discussions, and workshops. Links to the detailed schedule, list of sessions, and registration are available at <http://www.delriverwatershed.org/2020-forum> (registration before 7/31/2020 - \$75; after 7/31/2020 - \$100).



Summer Virtual Lecture Series

**Hosted by Mercer County Park Commission and Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ
July 16, 2020 and August 20, 2020**

Wildlife takes center stage in a summer series of webinar presentations from the Mercer County Park Commission Naturalist Department. This online programming focuses on wildlife that affects our lives, even in an urbanized environment. These programs are free, but registration is required (see links below).

Thursday, July 16, 2020, 7:00 p.m. – "Wild New Jersey: Nature Adventures in the Garden State"
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7JTtMK3GRrKq0LsobqkcSQ

Thursday, August 20, 2020, 7:00 p.m. – "Bats: Creatures of the Night"
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_iMJcuSExTwic8ZoRZrNVQQ

In case you missed the first lecture in the series "Protecting New Jersey's Pollinators", the Mercer County Park Commission has a You Tube page where you can find the video:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLacgAT-O6_h2G-IPXoRzqabnb1Z2TWrxx

Rutgers Climate Institute Listing of Climate Seminars Multiple dates

Multiple online events are listed on this site, including those from the Rutgers Climate Institute and also many climate-related events sponsored by various groups such as George Washington University, NOAA, and others. A listing for July 2020 is here:
<https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/month.calendar/2020/07/23/>.

Some of the events for July are: "ecoAmerica's Webcast Series: LET'S TALK CLIMATE,"
https://ecoamerica.org/introducing-ecoamericas-webcast-series-lets-talk-climate/?mc_cid=c4db8082dc&mc_eid=72f25bod99 including:

- July 9, 2020 - "Climate Change and the 2020 Presidential Election"
- July 16, 2020 - "Moving Your Community to Climate Action"
- July 23, 2020 - "Successful Public Health Campaigns: How to Win on Climate"

You can also watch previous webcasts (here:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfYbm8qPg1eZ05g6aITRGW2Oo--wnd6D\)p](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfYbm8qPg1eZ05g6aITRGW2Oo--wnd6D)p)) such as the following: "Environmental Racism, Climate Justice, and Health" and "Communities, Climate, Equity and Policy."

"Effects Of Fossil Fuels on Public Health" - Webinar July 16, 2020, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

On July 16, 2020, Pay Up Climate Polluters will host a webinar on the "Effects of Fossil Fuels on Public Health" with the air pollution expert and clinician Dr. Bob Laumbach of Rutgers University. Contact Lauren O'Brien at payupnjpolluters@gmail.com or on Facebook or Twitter @climatecosts.

New Jersey Clean Energy Conference: "Charting the Path to 2050" - **POSTPONED**

The Conference was originally scheduled for April 6-7, 2020 in Atlantic City, NJ. Register for email updates about the rescheduling of the conference here:

<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/about/contact/subscribe.html>

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 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>*

EJTF's 2020 Spring Annual Report (October 2019 – May 2020) is available here:
<https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EJTF-Annual-Report-Spring-2020.pdf>

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- **Video: Governor Murphy Announces Support for Key Environmental Justice Legislation -**
On Juneteenth 2020 in Trenton, Gov. Murphy, Lt. Gov. Oliver, Sen. Troy Singleton, and NJ environmental justice advocates Kim Gaddy from Clean Water Action, and Ana Baptista and Nicky Sheats from the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, announced their commitment to pass S232 (Singleton/McKeon), potentially "the most protective environmental justice law in the country." A link to a video of the event is here: <https://youtu.be/pcsW3YN1UiI>. The bill would give The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) the authority to deny permits due to cumulative impacts of pollution in environmental justice communities. <https://cleanwateraction.org/releases/environmental-justice-leaders-join-state-leaders-support-s232-new-jersey>.
- **Getting Real About Bringing Solar Programs, Benefits to Lower-Income New Jerseyans -**
The President of the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) announced creation of an Office of Clean Energy Equity that would be responsible for overseeing the equitable deployment of clean energy technologies and energy efficiency programs in NJ's low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities, as well as serving as a liaison to those communities. Such an office is also proposed in Sen. Singleton's "Clean Energy Equity Bill" (S2484, described here: https://www.senatorsingleton.com/bill_would_direct_50m_annually_for_clean_energy_to_low_income_areas), which is supported by EJTF as part of the NJ Shines coalition. The bill proposes funding from NJ's clean-energy fund, however, and \$80 million in unspent balances was just diverted from the fund by Gov. Murphy to address the estimated \$10 billion NJ budget shortfall due to the coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/getting-real-about-bringing-solar-programs-benefits-to-lower-income-new-jerseyans/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- **NJ Transit Misses the Mark by Committing Just \$15M to Electric Buses Through 2026, Critics Say** - NJ Transit has issued a 10-year Strategic Plan and an accompanying 5-year Capital Plan (plans available here: <https://njtplans.com/downloads.html#strategic-plan>). According to this article, the plans fall short of achieving the targets for electrifying the bus fleet in legislation establishing statewide goals for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure signed by Gov. Murphy in January. The law calls for at least 10% of all NJ Transit bus purchases to be zero-emission vehicles by the end of 2024, with additional goals of 50% by 2026 and 100% by 2032. The 5-year Capital Plan only allocates \$15 million through 2026. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/nj-transit-misses-the-mark-by-committing-just-15m-to-electric-buses-through-2026-critics-say/>
- **Utilities Need to Play Bigger Role in Electrifying Transportation Sector, Industry Officials Say** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) held an almost six-hour public stakeholder webinar meeting on the "NJ Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Ecosystem 2020 Straw Proposal." The proposal will ultimately provide a framework for transitioning the transportation sector to electricity. The major area of disagreement was how big a role utilities should play versus the private sector. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/utilities-need-to-play-bigger-role-in-electrifying-transportation-sector-industry-officials-say/>

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

- **Newark's Lead Service Line Replacement Program Is a Model for the Nation** - Early progress by the City of Newark kept work on track during the pandemic, and the halfway mark of 9,000 lead service lines (LSLs) replaced was reached in April 2020. On May 6, the City announced that it had replaced 10,000 LSLs, putting the City well on its way to replace all its LSLs within 24 to 36 months of its start date on March 13, 2019. <https://www.newarknj.gov/news/newarks-lead-service-line-replacement-program-is-a-model-for-the-nation>



- **Another Shot at Addressing NJ's Crisis of Lead in Drinking Water** - In February, NJ Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin created the Assembly Special Committee on Infrastructure and Natural Resources. It is to hold hearings throughout the state on issues concerning water, such as beach erosion, water integrity and security, dams and reservoirs, algae blooms, lead contamination, waste water infrastructure, stormwater challenges, and the effects of climate change. The Committee held its first meeting, at which the issue of lead in drinking water was the primary topic. The major roadblock discussed was funding, and a variety of both long- and short-term funding mechanisms were put forward by those in attendance at the meeting. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/another-shot-at-addressing-njs-crisis-of-lead-in-drinking-water/>

- **Replacement of Unsafe Lead Service Lines Delayed by Pandemic's Economic Fallout** - Gov. Murphy had proposed \$80 million in his February budget address, and an additional \$500 million from a bond issue proposed last October for replacing lead service lines, but both potential sources of funding were overtaken by the events of the pandemic. Therefore, it appears that the issue of replacing lead service lines will not be addressed in the short term, with the exception of those in the City of Newark, which has a \$130 bond issue from the Essex County Improvement Authority, and plans to replace its lead service lines within three years. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/replacement-of-unsafe-lead-service-lines-delayed-by-pandemics-economic-fallout/>
- **Trenton Water Works Has Replaced More Than 500 Lead Services Since February** - In February, the Trenton Water Works (TWW) started the construction phase of its Lead Service Line Replacement Program, which is designed to help homeowners replace water-service lines made from lead that run from the shutoff valve in the street (the curb box) to the water meter in the home. Although TWW's COVID-19 response temporarily suspended this program for homeowners, more than 500 lines have been replaced, and full operations are expected to resume in the next several weeks. <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/trenton-water-works-replaced-500-lead-services-since-february/>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **DRBC Urged to Withdraw Its Approval for South Jersey LNG Terminal** - UUFANJ joined with 125 other environmental groups from four states in signing a letter sent to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to reiterate the many issues that DRBC has not considered in its previous approval of the Gibbstown, NJ LNG export terminal, and to ask that it rescind that approval. The letter describes issues brought up at a hearing held in May (see articles on p. 11 of EJTF's June 2020 newsletter: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EJTF-Newsletter-June-2020-FINAL.pdf>), which are based on information that has come to light since DRBC's initial approval, and which also underscore the hasty and incomplete process that led to the approval. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/drbc-urged-to-withdraw-its-approval-for-south-jersey-lng-terminal/>
- **Delaware River Basin Commission Faces Pressure to Reject PennEast Pipeline** - The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) held a listening session as part of the first board meeting it had held virtually. For an hour after the meeting officially adjourned, public commenters, including Delaware Riverkeeper Network, the New Jersey Sierra Club, the Clean Air Council, and the New Jersey Forest Services, as well as local residents and a retired Lehigh University chemistry professor, spoke about the environmental threat of the PennEast pipeline that would carry Marcellus Shale gas 116 miles from Luzerne County, PA, crossing the Delaware River and ending in Mercer County, NJ/ The commenters requested a more robust review process. "The decision you render on PennEast is setting the precedent for all future pipelines that pass through the Delaware River watershed," Maya K. van Rossum, leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, told the commission. <https://why.org/articles/delaware-river-basin-commission-faces-pressure-to-reject-penneast-pipeline/>
- **NJ Investigates Whether It Has Enough Natural Gas Capacity for the Next Decade** - The 2020 NJ Energy Master Plan's Strategy 5 ("Decarbonize and Modernize NJ's Energy System") includes a commitment for the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to commission a study to assess if and where the gas system is approaching capacity limits, and where the system is being underutilized. A first step in this process is described in the BPU document "In the Matter of the Exploration of Gas Capacity and Related Issues" (<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/boardorders/2020/20200520/5-20-20-9A.pdf>). This document cites a previous report commissioned by New Jersey Natural Gas ("NJNG") as well as comments by the Environmental Defense Fund and the New Jersey Conservation Fund (collectively "EDC/NJCF") that disputed some portions of that report. The disputed portions include results of an analysis conducted on behalf of EDF/NJCF that reached different conclusions about the medium and long-term capacity needs;

however, neither report identified a near-term capacity shortfall (absent an unforeseen, catastrophic disruption of the interstate pipeline network). The BPU document describes the scope of work for the study it will commission, and directs BPU staff to issue a Request for Quotation (RFQ).

<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/nj-investigates-whether-it-has-enough-natural-gas-capacity-for-the-next-decade/>

- **Homeowner Had 2 Minutes to Grab Her Belongings after N.J. Pipeline Project Wrecked Her Home** - Drilling work has been halted after a crew doing horizontal drilling for New Jersey Natural Gas' (NJNG) Southern Reliability Link underground pipeline project damaged a house in Monmouth County, and leaked sludge into a stream. The controversial \$180 million pipeline would run for 30 miles through Monmouth, Ocean and Burlington counties, and is intended to provide an alternate delivery route for gas used by NJNG customers. The project has been opposed by environmentalists, homeowners and some local governments, but has been approved by multiple agencies, including the Pinelands Commission, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU). Jeff Tittel, executive director of the NJ Sierra Club, pointed out that, "What we have been warning against has now happened," Tittel said. "They destroyed somebody's house and polluted wetlands and a stream." The NJ Sierra Club and others, including municipalities, have filed a lawsuit to overturn the approvals by the BPU and Pinelands Commission.

<https://www.nj.com/monmouth/2020/06/homeowner-had-2-minutes-to-grab-her-belongings-after-nj-pipeline-project-wrecked-her-home.html>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES



- **Murphy Unveils Plan to Make NJ Hub of East Coast's Offshore Wind Industry** - Gov. Murphy announced plans for a "New Jersey Wind Port" in Salem County for assembling wind turbines, making it the first port in the U.S. solely intended as a location to serve the offshore wind sector. According to Liz Burdock, CEO and president of the Business Network for Offshore Wind, "By providing a location that can accommodate the industry's manufacturing and marshalling needs, the New Jersey Wind Port would make New Jersey an international leader in offshore wind and a hub of the East Coast wind industry." The site was selected after a 22-month assessment process, including discussions with industry officials, government and environmental groups, according to the governor's office. The site is more than five miles from the nearest residential area, has no interfering bridges or electric wires between it and the ocean, and has ample space to grow operations over time. It is expected to support up to \$500 million of new economic activity within NJ and the region each year. At full build-out, the New Jersey Wind Port is projected to support up to 1,500 manufacturing, assembly, and operations jobs. Construction, which is targeted to start in 2021, will create hundreds of additional union jobs. Gov. Murphy calls it "a once-in-a-generation opportunity." <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/murphy-unveils-plan-to-make-nj-hub-of-east-coasts-offshore-wind-industry/>

- **Gov. Murphy Signs Bill to Establish NJ Fuel Cell Task Force** - On 6/19/2020, Gov. Murphy signed a bill (A741, approved as Approved P.L.2020, c.38) that establishes a Fuel Cell Task Force in the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU). The task force is to develop a plan to increase the use of fuel cells in NJ and to provide information, education, and resources for that purpose. It will consist of 15 members, and will provide annual reports to the Governor and the Legislature detailing the plan to increase the use of fuel cells, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action that are necessary to effectuate the plan. The Bill's sponsors stated: "As the applications of fuel cell technology continue to grow, we are looking at an ever-increasing capacity to shift away from fossil fuels and toward better, cleaner power sources. By creating a central task force comprised of cross-sector experts, this measure takes the first step in accelerating New Jersey's implementation of fuel cell technologies." Text of bill: https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A1000/741_I1.HTM

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Op-Ed: Clean Air or a Thriving Economy? We Can Have Both** (by Joseph L. Fiordaliso, the president of the NJ Board of Public Utilities) - "This is a pivotal moment in history, as we collectively start down the path to the 'new normal.' This bittersweet opportunity to rebuild our lives with longevity and resiliency in mind should not be wasted. Now, more than ever, by investing in renewable energies like offshore wind and community solar, maximizing our energy efficiency, and electrifying transportation, we can ensure a healthier future exists alongside a thriving clean-energy economy." <https://www.njspointlight.com/2020/06/op-ed-clean-air-or-a-thriving-economy-we-can-have-both/>



- **New Jersey Curriculum To Feature Climate Change Education** - NJ is set to become the first state in the country to make climate change education a part of the K-12 public education standards. In announcing this initiative, NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy stated that, "The adoption of these standards is much more than an added educational requirement; it is a symbol of a partnership between generations." Climate change education will be incorporated across seven content areas, including 21st Century Life and Careers, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, Technology, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages, and climate change standards have also been added to the appendices of the math and English language arts guidelines, which are up for review in 2022. <https://patch.com/new-jersey/wyckoff/new-jersey-curriculum-feature-climate-change-education>

- **Op-Ed: Follow-Up Needed on NJ's Renewed Commitment to Climate Change Education** (by Glenn Branch, deputy director of the National Center for Science Education, a nonprofit organization that promotes and defends accurate and effective science education) - NJ just took steps to become the first state to include climate change in multiple areas of K-12 education, besides being included in the science curriculum as it was previously (see article above). However, funding is needed for educating teachers in these disciplines. A national survey found that less than half of the teachers surveyed reported taking any college courses that included even a single class session on the topic of climate change - and these were middle and high school science teachers. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/op-ed-follow-up-needed-on-njs-renewed-commitment-to-climate-change-education/>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- **New Mandate Throttles Back Amount of Energy that Utility Customers Can Use** - The NJ Clean Energy Act of 2018 required utilities to reduce customers' electric use by 2% a year in 5 years, and reduce gas use by 0.75% a year. To address this requirement, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has held 15 public meetings and issued several straw proposals, and has issued a final Order based on that process, which is summarized in their press release: https://www.bpu.state.nj.us/bpu/pdf/Energy_Efficiency_Press_Release_610.pdf. The Order addresses an issue the utilities had, related to a potential negative effect on their revenue, by allowing them to earn as much return on equity (ROE) on helping consumers buy energy-efficient appliances as they would in replacing an aging gas main or substation. It also addresses the issue of potential cost spikes to ratepayers, by lengthening the utilities' amortization schedule for their investments. A demographic study (<https://www.njcleanenergy.com/files/file/Library/New%20Jersey%20Demographics%20Report.pdf>) of the ability of the utilities' residential and commercial customers to participate in the energy efficiency program, including potential barriers and mitigation measures, has been completed. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/new-mandate-throttles-back-amount-of-energy-that-utility-customers-can-use/>
- **Op-Ed: Energy Efficiency Will Save Money and Create Jobs** (by Ed Potosnak, Executive Director of the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters) - "Energy experts... agree that energy efficiency is the best way to save customers money and help low-income families. The U.S. Department of Energy found that energy efficiency can help a typical U.S. family lower their energy bills by up to 25%. Such savings are particularly meaningful to low-income households, who often spend a disproportionately high portion of their income on energy bills... New Jersey can create a prosperous future for all by focusing on energy efficiency and a green jobs recovery. These good, local jobs cannot be outsourced and will provide a fair wage that can sustain a middle-class lifestyle." NJ has been lagging behind other states in energy efficiency (i.e., "electric savings"). <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/op-ed-energy-efficiency-will-save-money-and-create-jobs/>

POLLUTION

- **Mandate to Require Recycled Materials in Containers Gets Mixed Reception** - A bill (S-2515) has been introduced in the NJ Senate that "Establishes recycled content requirements for plastic containers, glass containers, paper carryout bags, reusable carryout bags made of plastic film, and plastic trash bags; prohibits sale of polystyrene loose fill packaging." It would apply to almost all such items (with some exceptions) sold, offered for sale, or used in association with the sale or offer for sale of a product in NJ. It is designed to address the issue of lack of a market for recycled containers, since overseas markets have disappeared. The NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee hearing on the

bill is available for viewing here: <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/media/mp.asp?M=V/2020/SEN/0617-0100PM-MO-1.mp4&S=2020>. Environmental groups would want to be sure that this bill does not adversely affect the single-use plastic bag ban bill (S-864) that was passed by the Senate in March but not yet addressed by the Assembly. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/mandate-to-require-recycled-materials-in-containers-gets-mixed-reception/>

- **Millburn Township Enacts Ordinance Prohibiting Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bags and Polystyrene Containers** - Millburn Township's ordinance went into effect on 6/12/2020. A summary of the ordinance and a link to a Q&A about it are here: <https://www.twp.millburn.nj.us/491/Single-Use-Plastics-Ordinance-Information>. It bans single-use plastic carryout bags and polystyrene containers in all retail establishments, mandates that single-use straws be available only upon request, allows paper bags to be offered to customers for a fee of five-cents per bag, and allows reusable bags to be offered to customers for a fee of at least ten-cents per bag. Customers may bring their own bags, of any type, with them to carry out their purchases. Retailers keep the bag fees, and the only plastic bags and polystyrene containers banned by this ordinance are those used to carry out purchases. <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/millburn-slash-short-hills/sections/green/articles/millburn-township-set-to-enact-single-use-plastic-ordinance-next-month-what-you-need-to-know>
- **Are Reusables Safe in the Time of Coronavirus? - A Q&A from ANJEC** - One of the many coronavirus fears circulating is about the safety of using reusables such as reusable bags. ANJEC (the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) has an Action Alert "Are Reusables Safe?" (Short Answer: "Yes, if washed") with a list of questions and answers, and links to backup resources to share in your community: <https://anjec.org/action-alerts/>.

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

- **Affirming National Leadership Role, New Jersey Publishes Formal Stringent Drinking Water Standards for PFOA and PFOS** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) officially published its rules limiting PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) toxic chemicals in drinking water. These rules are some of the strongest in the U.S. In addition, DEP added PFOA and PFOS to its list of hazardous substances, so site remediation activities and regulated discharges to groundwater will now have to comply with these standards. These chemicals are termed "forever chemicals" because they do not biodegrade; they are the chemicals that figure in the movie "Dark Waters." These rules are some of the strongest in the U.S., and are much stronger than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) advisory guideline; EPA has yet to set enforceable standards for these chemicals. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2020/20_0025.htm
- **Op-Ed: Now More than Ever, Our Health Depends on Access to Clean Water** (by Jane Kenny, former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator for Region 2, and Mark Mauriello, former Commissioner of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection; they are co-chairs of the Jersey Water Works collaborative Steering Committee) - "Strengthening our water infrastructure can spur economic activity during COVID-19 recovery, prevent compounded crises, and keep residents safe." The authors describe recommendations that a Jersey Water Works committee sent to Gov. Murphy to help address the inequitable public health, safety, economic and social impacts of COVID-19 throughout NJ. They have joined nationwide groups in support of four guiding principles to secure the nation's water future: ensure water is reliable and affordable for all; strengthen water utilities of all sizes; close the water access gap for those without running water or wastewater services; and fuel economic recovery by investing in water systems. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/op-ed-now-more-than-ever-our-health-depends-on-access-to-clean-water/>

OTHER



- **As Tolls Set to Rise, Trade Unionists and Environmentalists Split Over Turnpike Expansion** - EJTF, along with a number of elected officials and advocacy groups, opposed this \$24 billion spending plan of the NJ Turnpike Authority (NJTA), with \$16 billion of that dedicated solely to the expansion of the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike. Funding is to come from a toll hike. **EJTF member Nancy Griffeth provided comments on the plan**, which are included on p. 2 of EJTF's May 2020 newsletter, along with numerous links describing the project and possible alternatives (<https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EJTF-Newsletter-May-2020-updated-2.pdf>). Despite the opposition, Gov. Murphy decided not to oppose the NJTA plan, so the tolls will increase in September. In explaining his decision, Governor Murphy stated, "I'd say two things on the environment... No. 1, there's a whole lot of idling that goes on of cars and, over time, once this plan is executed, that will go down dramatically. There are untold emissions that are coming out as a result of that idling and congestion... And secondly, the Turnpike Authority — and this is not by accident — (is) going to put a lot of electric vehicle charging infrastructure into their rest areas." <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/05/as-tolls-set-to-rise-trade-unionists-and-environmentalists-split-over-turnpike-expansion/>
- **Enviros Decry Fed Rule Change that Limits States' Say over Energy Projects** - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued "updated" regulations that govern Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), related to state certification of water quality compliance for federal permits or licenses for discharges into U.S. waters. CWA Section 401 has been used by states to block proposed energy projects like new natural-gas pipelines and other fossil-fuel projects. For example, both NY and NJ cited it in their denial of the NESE project (see p. 4 of EJTF's June newsletter: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EJTF-Newsletter-June-2020-FINAL.pdf>). The revised regulations give states and tribes a only one-year deadline for reviewing projects, and narrow the scope of what they can consider to only water issues. This precludes states from blocking projects because they would contribute to climate change. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/enviros-decry-fed-rule-change-that-limits-states-say-over-energy-projects/>
- **Waiting 4 Hours to Speak Isn't OK. Public Meetings in N.J. Need to Be Overhauled, Expert Says** - The NJ Transit Board scheduled public comments at the end of its online meeting, after going into lengthy Executive Session, which resulted in people waiting on the phone for hours - sometimes over four hours - to make comments (see description of EJTF member Nancy Griffeth's experience on p. 4). Some never got the opportunity to speak. As a reference for future NJ Transit Board meetings, information is available at <https://www.njtransit.com/board>, where there will be a phone number for online meetings with an entry code, and a link to a form for registering for the meeting. The deadline for registering for these meetings has been given as 9 a.m. of the day before the meeting. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/waiting-4-hours-to-speak-isn-t-ok-public-meetings-in-n-j-need-to-be-overhauled-expert-says/ar-BB15CUVC>

- **DEP Provides Enhanced Guidance on Harmful Algal Blooms with Development of Color-Coded Public Health Alert Index** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has developed a color-coded index that provides guidance on what recreational activities are appropriate for waterways impacted by harmful algal blooms (HABs). The index provides descriptions and definitions of five levels: Watch, Alert, Advisory, Warning, and Danger; printable signs are available on the DEP Harmful Algal Bloom website (<https://www.nj.gov/dep/hab/>) for the "Warning" and "Danger" levels, that can be posted at affected water bodies. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2020/20_0023.htm
- **Summer's First Algae Blooms Highlight Need for Stormwater Utilities, Advocates Say** - Harmful algal blooms (HABs) that impacted 39 NJ lakes last summer, causing recreational closures in some cases, have impacted two lakes to date this year. Runoff containing lawn fertilizer, farm runoff and septic-system leakage, along with rising temperatures, all factor into formation of the HABs. Last year, Gov. Murphy provided \$13.5 million for programs related to this problem, including grants to upgrade sewer and stormwater systems, demonstration projects dealing with treatment and prevention, and nonpoint source pollution including fertilizer runoff; these programs have not been cut in the latest round of COVID-19-related budget reductions. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/summers-first-algae-blooms-highlight-need-for-stormwater-utilities-advocates-say/>

MORATORIUM MONDAYS CONTINUE



Please continue to contact Gov. Murphy every Monday and urge him to declare a climate emergency moratorium on fossil fuel projects! Either call through the EmpowerNJ number (866-586-4069) to get coaching on the topic of the week, emphasizing what is in the news, or call directly to the governor's office (609-262-6000). Over 50 environmental, citizen, faith, and progressive groups in NJ are calling on Governor Murphy to enact a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in New Jersey until there are rules in place to achieve 100% clean energy goals.

UU FaithAction 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
