



Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

November 2020

[covering 9/26/2020 – 10/26/2020] <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.

GREAT NEWS!! We did it! After over a year and a half of grassroots pressure, including from EJTF, Gov. Murphy and NJ Transit have agreed to stop working on their proposal for a fracked gas power plant, and move forward with a new plan to develop the TRANSITGRID project with solar and battery storage! (see articles on p. 11 and p. 12)

**Announcing the UUFANJ Fall 2020 Issues Conference via Zoom
Saturday, November 7, 2020, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

This is when we will select EJTF's goals for the next year, so bring your ideas!

Once a year, near the beginning of the NJ legislative session, UUs from across the state gather to focus on the burning political and justice issues of the day. We worship together, listen to expert speakers, then break into smaller Task Force groups. Each Task Force considers and then votes on the issues it will champion over the coming year. The issues often center on pending legislation, and include many ways to get involved: public witness (rallies, demonstrations, marches, vigils), outreach to other UUs and congregations, and working closely with many coalition partners such as the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance.

This year the conference theme is: Youth and Justice. We UUFANJ is making a special effort to invite and integrate (and listen to) UU youth and young adults as well as relevant student groups from NJ high schools, colleges and universities.



**Keynote Speakers on:
"Prevention of Gun Violence"**

Kelly Sampson (photo at left), senior counsel and director of racial justice of "Brady," and **Jai Patel** (photo at right), Student Activist and National Advisory Board member of "Students Demand Action," a part of the Everytown for Gun Safety organization.



For more information and to

register: <https://uufaithactionnj.salsalabs.org/2020issuesconference/index.html>

UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF SUSSEX COUNTY (UUFSC)



On October 17, 2020, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sussex County (UUFSC) Social Action Team supported this noontime Newton Green Women's March hosted by Action Together Sussex County. The speakers included UU friend Leslie Boen, who as a mom urged everyone to vote on behalf of the kids whose lives we hold in our hands. The photos show the event venue (left) and Leslie Boen speaking (below).

Leslie Boen, a climate activist, asked Women's March attendees to “vote for people who respect science and give scientists a prominent seat at the table...people who embrace logic, evidence, and reason as the cornerstone of public policy. We can select leaders who will work to find ways every day to stop the fossil fuel lobbies and interests in their tracks. We can elect representatives on every level who will prioritize the development of a cleaner, greener economy - people who will dare to create the programs and champion the policies that allow us to innovate our way into climate solutions.”



MORRISTOWN UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP (MUF)

The Morristown Unitarian Fellowship (MUF) has found a novel way to repurpose leftover latex paint. Latex or water-based paints have the environmental advantage of not giving off harmful volatile organic compounds. Over many years, though, more than 20 rusty, partially-filled cans of latex paint had accumulated in the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship basement. Water-based paints must be dried out or solidified with an absorbent prior to being put in the trash, so before clearing the store shelves of kitty litter, Jim Stevenson of MUF saw on the internet that contractors pour unwanted latex paint onto a large plastic sheet supported along the edges and let it dry. After layering paint from the first two cans, it became clear that this technique yielded some possibilities for interesting designs, as shown in the picture at right. The picture below is a photo of the paint with the saturation increased to 80 in Photoshop. Many other versions can be generated by changing saturation and hue in Photoshop.



What creatures do you see in the photo? Have fun!



EJTF ACTIVITIES

- **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh** joined other UU Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) members Barbara Diamantopolous and Cynthia Light (in photo at right) to drop off letters at Sen. Sweeney's office in support of the Senate voting to affirm Gov. Murphy's nominees to the Pinelands Commission. The Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) is leading a campaign to drop letters in person to Sen. Sweeney's office(s) in West Deptford and Salem every work day until the confirmations take place. Pinelands Commission nominations made by Gov. Murphy have lingered without the required Senate action for almost two years. Vacant seats on the Pinelands Commission have made it very difficult for the Commission to take action on important measures to keep the Pinelands protected. Additional information is available here: <https://pinelandsalliance.org/protecting-the-pinelands/take-action/>



- **EJTF member Nancy Griffeth** was invited to speak on behalf of UU FaithAction NJ at the League of Women Voters of New Jersey "RBG's Legacy Rally" on October 17, 2020 as a part of the national Women's March 2020. Organizers estimated that 300 were in attendance to hear from speakers defending gender, racial, environmental, and economic justice. Nancy described the EJTF and UUFANJ, and talked about the background and potential of the new cumulative impacts law and the importance of showing up for the rulemaking process, which began October 22, and which will ultimately determine how effective the law will be.



An article and a **video** of the rally is here:

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/plainfield/articles/advocacy-groups-speak-at-league-of-women-voters-rbg-s-legacy-rally-in-plainfield-video>. **Nancy's presentation starts at minute 14 of the video.**

- **EJTF member Nancy Griffeth** co-authored a powerful and thought-provoking nj.com Op-Ed with Reverend Ronald Tuff of GreenFaith, "Fossil Fuels Endanger Communities of Color." This in-depth and well-researched piece (providing a wealth of background information in the links included) documents the impacts of fossil fuels on communities of color and low-income communities, and presents ways to reverse the current state of environmental damage and ensure that costs and benefits are distributed equally (see p. 10).

EVENTS

***(some in person, most online - some upcoming, and some past but viewable as videos -
Note: advance registration for events is often required)***

[EJTF members - also watch for email announcements of events with short lead times!]

Rally Against the Roseland Compressor Station - **In-Person Event
563 Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ
Monday, November 9, 2020 - 5:00 p.m.**

Join the "Roseland Against Compressor Station" group at a rally in Roseland, NJ to demand a halt to construction of the Williams/Transco compressor station expansion. Social distancing will be in effect - standing 6 feet apart, face masks required, gloves recommended. Park at the Essex County Environmental Center, next to the compressor station. When Williams/Transco submitted their proposal for the second compressor in 2017, they said that it wouldn't begin operating until the winter of 2020/2021, which will soon be here, so rallies have started again to let them know that citizens are on the alert, are watching, and will continue to organize to shut down the whole compressor operation as part of a shift away from gas. Additional information is here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1038662643233966/>

Other actions you can take action to stop this project:

1. Send an email to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner McCabe at jennifer.tamasi@dep.nj.gov. Tell the commissioner to "stop construction of the Gateway Expansion Project and expansion of the Roseland compressor. DEP permits have been appealed and are 'under review' by the Office of Legal Affairs."
2. Call Governor Murphy through EmpowerNJ at 866-586-4069 and say, "Governor Murphy must order his DEP to stop construction of the Gateway Expansion Project in Roseland right now."

Maya van Rossum Speaking on "The Green Amendment" **via Zoom
Hosted by UU Ocean County Congregation
Sunday, November 1, 2020, 10:20 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.**

Green Amendments Founder and leader, Maya van Rossum, will be speaking about the power that a Green Amendment would have in protecting people from pollution, holding corporations accountable for destroying the environment and government institutions for enabling them. The discussion will also cover the current status of the Green Amendment bill in NJ and ways people can fight to protect their environmental rights. Additional information and Zoom link is here:

<https://forthegenerations.org/events/uu-ocean-county-congregation/>

The Watershed Institute 4th Annual Watershed Conference – **Virtual
Monday, November 2, 2020 & Wednesday through Friday, November 4, 5, & 6, 2020**

The Watershed Conference is an annual educational and networking event. Over the past three years, the conference has welcomed state and municipal officials, nonprofit organizations, environmental professionals, and members of the general public to discuss and learn more about NJ's water resources. A line-up of experts will lead sessions on climate change impacts in NJ, ongoing efforts to

address climate change, environmental justice and how it relates to those climate change impacts, stormwater management utilizing green infrastructure, academic studies, and more. Ben Strauss, the CEO and Chief Scientist of Climate Central, will be the conference's keynote speaker. He will share the oldest stories in history to illustrate what climate change means for humanity. Optional safe, socially-distanced hikes will take place on The Watershed Reserve on Friday afternoon.

Click here to register and read session descriptions: <https://thewatershed.org/4th-annual-watershed-conference/>. Registration is \$20 and is open until Sunday, November 1, 2020.

If you have any questions, about available scholarships or any other conference related questions, contact Pri Oliveira, the Watershed's Outreach Specialist, for assistance at poliveira@thewatershed.org.

2nd Annual Northwest New Jersey Rivers Conference **Virtual**
Thursday, November 12, 2020, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. &
Friday, November 13, 2020, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The Northwest New Jersey Rivers Conference invites anyone who cares about this region, clean water and the Delaware River watershed in northern NJ to learn how we can best work to protect its resources: to conserve, restore, protect, educate, inform and bring communities together to defend and share what we love best. Enjoy a day of speakers, workshops and community, then take home what you learn to share with others. Information and links to the agenda, presenters' biographies, and (free) registration are here: <https://www.northwestnewjerseyrivers.org>

New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers

"Understanding the Energy-Poverty Nexus: A Transdisciplinary Approach for Designing Sustainable Energy Transitions" **Webinar**
Wednesday, November 4, 2020, 12:00 p.m.

This presentation is part of the series "New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers" (see p. 6 for more information about the series). Historically, energy systems tend to create classes of "haves" and "have-nots." Thus, some groups gain net positive benefits while others face exacerbated poverty and deepening socio-cultural externalities, diminishing any gains in well-being from modern energy services. Such divides are usually along ethnic, racial and indigenous contours, in rural communities or among the urban poor. This complex relationship can be termed as the energy-poverty nexus. Therefore, while pursuing universal access to clean and affordable energy as part of the global sustainable development agenda, concerns about their outcomes remain in terms of fair and equitable development, freedom of choice and restorative justice, even in a potentially energy sufficient future. This talk (by Saurabh Biswas, Arizona State University, with Clark Miller as moderator) utilizes increasing evidence from literature and several field investigations of off-grid energy systems which show that a scant understanding of the energy-poverty nexus undermines sustainable energy transitions. More information is here:

<https://irving.dartmouth.edu/engagement/new-energy-conversations-early-career-energy-researchers>. Register here: https://dartmouth.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yE-fm6lYQaWdkcq-M7UX_Q

"An Incandescent Truth: Spatial, Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in Residential Energy Efficiency" Webinar
Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 12:00 p.m.

This presentation by Tony Reames, University of Michigan, is part of the series "New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers" (see below for more information about the series). The inability of households to afford adequate energy services, such as heating, is a major energy justice concern. Temporary utility bill assistance and improving residential energy efficiency remain the primary strategic interventions. However, program implementation often occurs in piecemeal, individual-based approaches, with little attention to the importance of place. This presentation focuses on the distribution injustices in residential energy consumption and illustrates how disparities intersect with policy and pervasive residential segregation by race/ethnicity and class, common in many U.S. urban areas. More information is here:

<https://irving.dartmouth.edu/engagement/new-energy-conversations-early-career-energy-researchers>. Register here:

https://dartmouth.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_iWw7xTm9T5ua6vwokoWeoA

New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers is an online series featuring graduate, post-doctoral, and other early-career researchers sharing their discoveries and perspectives on energy-related topics. From policy to analysis to emerging research, this bi-weekly series will give anyone interested in energy the opportunity to learn from the rising stars in the field. For more information about the program, future talks, and for links to past talks, see <https://irving.dartmouth.edu/engagement/new-energy-conversations-early-career-energy-researchers>.

Rutgers Climate Institute Listing of **Virtual 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 EPA, NOAA, and others. Listed below is a small sampling of webinars taking place in November 2020. Further information about these seminars, **including registration information**, and a complete listing of the seminars, both virtual and in-person, for November 2020 is here:

<https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/month.calendar/2020/11/20/->

"Climate Displacement Forum Series - Policy Considerations at Multiple Scales"
Thursday, November 5, 2020, 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Climate displacement and its associated adaptation strategies require effective policies across multiple governance scales. This webinar will feature recent policy recommendations for the Federal, state, and local levels. It will discuss equity, justice, and human rights aspects to consider in policy-making and look ahead at policy solutions for communities that are recipients of climate migration. More information is here: <http://www.nationaladaptationforum.org/other-adaptation-events/webinars/climate-displacement-forum-webinar-series-part-5-policy>

**"New York Clean Energy Transition: Insights for New Jersey"
Thursday, November 12, 2020, 1:00**

New York wants to decarbonize rapidly, with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act committing to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and carbon-free electricity by 2040. Achieving these goals requires rapid action to transform the entire economy. Are there any implications for New Jersey? As New Jersey thinks through its climate goals and how to implement the Energy Master Plan, what are the lessons learned? More information is here:

https://ruei.rutgers.edu/images/EPSS_FALL_2020/2020-11-12_EPSS_Burcin_Unel.pdf

**"Environmental Justice as a Concern for Climate Change"
Friday, November 13, 2020, 3:00**

The three speakers have backgrounds in: the roots of contemporary environmental conditions in the U.S. South, specifically in black towns dating back to the post-Bellum era; the legal dimensions of environmental justice and equity in food systems; intersections between climate change adaptation, environmental protection and development; how racialized peoples and landscapes are devalued in capitalism and the possibilities for abolition through collective struggle; and, how race and waste are interwoven in contemporary racial capitalism and capitalist entanglements with the state and science. More information is here: <https://geography.rutgers.edu/news-events/upcoming-events/icalrepeat.detail/2020/11/13/489/-/speaker-series-environmental-justice-panel>

**"New Jersey Tidal Marshes and Sea Level Rise"
Monday, November 16, 2020, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Join Dr. Nicholas Procopio, Chief, Bureau of Environmental Assessment, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Dr. Judith Weis, Professor Emerita, Rutgers University as they discuss the status of how New Jersey tidal marshes are doing with respect to sea level rise and remedial actions that could be taken. Registration required. More information is here:

https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/images/Fall_Climate_Academy_2020_FINALflyer_10_5_20_1.pdf

**"Should a Carbon Tax Be Part of the Strategy for Achieving 100% Clean Energy?"
Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

This webinar, presented by the Clean Energy States Alliance, will explore how a carbon tax could feature in state and national efforts to advance clean energy and will compare its benefits to those of other potential policies. More information is here: <https://www.cesa.org/event/should-a-carbon-tax-be-part-of-the-strategy-for-achieving-100-clean-energy/>

**"Measuring Climate Adaptation Success and Progress: System-wide Introduction to the Resilience Metrics Toolkit"
Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

How do we know whether adaptation to climate variability and change is occurring, and whether the adaptive actions taken are good, useful, and effective? For how long, and for whom, does adaptation “work”? And because the ultimate desired outcome of climate change adaptation may not be apparent for many years, and environmental conditions continue to change, how do we assess progress? The Successful Adaptation Indicators and Metrics (SAIM) project (under the National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative funded by the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) aims to address these challenging questions. This webinar will provide an overview of the decision support "Resilience Metrics Toolkit" (website is here: <https://resiliencemetrics.org>) that has been developed. More information is here: <http://www.nerrsciencecollaborative.org/webinar-series>

"Leading the Way: Global Universities as Living Labs and Agents of Change for Climate Action & Sustainability"

Thursday, November 19, 2020, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

This webinar will explore the approaches that several global universities are taking to transform their campuses and position themselves as change agents in society with respect to climate action and sustainability. More information is here: <https://secondnature.org/webinars-2/>

"Environmental Sciences Centennial Panel Discussion: Past, Present, and Future Trends In Environmental Issues"

Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

This discussion will be moderated by Kelly Ann Cicalese from WCVB-TV, Boston, and will feature four panelists, representing a broad perspective on the environmental disciplines and issues at the core of the Rutgers Environmental Sciences department's mission, as well as the role Rutgers will play in addressing those issues now and in the future. More information is here:

<https://alumni.rutgers.edu/get-involved/events/environmental-sciences-centennial-panel-discussion-past-present-and-future-trends-in-environmental-issues/>

"Are Cities and Utilities Ready for Deep Decarbonization?" **via Zoom
Princeton University Andlinger Center for Energy + the Environment**

Monday, November 16, 2020, 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

This talk by Dr. Anu Ramaswami will explore deep decarbonization plans at the city-scale, discussing how cities are measuring progress toward a low-carbon future, and highlighting unique opportunities that cities offer toward decarbonization, that are not reflected in the national discourse.

Anu Ramaswami, Ph.D., is a professor at Princeton University in the departments of India studies, civil and environmental engineering, and at the Princeton Environmental Institute. She is an interdisciplinary environmental engineer recognized as a pioneer and leader on the topic of sustainable urban infrastructure systems. Her work explores how key sectors – that provide water, energy, food, buildings, mobility, connectivity, waste management and green/public spaces – shape human and environmental wellbeing, from local to global scales. Ramaswami's work integrates environmental science and engineering, industrial ecology, public health and public affairs, with a human-centered and systems focus. Register here:

https://princeton.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_floPRzEUTya-63TSoMJJoog

Other seminars are described here: <https://acee.princeton.edu/events/>

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>

Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI) **Video of Webinar re: "Ensuring Environmental Justice and Equity in a Regional Low-Carbon Transportation Program"**

The TCI is a regional collaboration of 12 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and the District of Columbia that "seeks to improve transportation, develop the clean energy economy and reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector." It would establish a regional cap on carbon emissions and auction emission allowances to suppliers of fuel, which would ultimately be paid for by motorists. The proceeds would be sent back to the states. Dedicated investments could generate up to \$2 billion for overburdened and underserved communities.

During a public webinar on September 29, 2020, states collaborating as part of the TCI provided updates on the public input they have received this year and shared their proposed commitments intended to advance goals of equity and environmental justice in a regional low-carbon transportation program. A summary is here: <https://www.transportationandclimate.org/tci-shares-proposals-ensure-equity-public-webinar>. Under the current schedule for the TCI, a final Memorandum of Understanding is expected in the fall of 2020, at which point each jurisdiction will decide whether to sign the MOU and participate in the regional program.

The video of the webinar is here: <https://vimeo.com/464038056/53a7c6f6c6>. The first hour+ includes presentations by TCI and officials from several states, who share examples of what their states are doing to advance equitable transportation policies. Beginning at point 1 hour, 14 minutes, input from environmental justice and community leaders begins, as well as Q&A.

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>.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Cumulative Impacts EJ Bill Rulemaking Process Has Started: On 9/18/2020, Gov. Murphy signed into law a landmark environmental justice bill (the "cumulative impacts" bill) that makes NJ the first state in the nation to require mandatory permit denials if an environmental justice analysis determines a new facility will have a disproportionately negative impact on overburdened communities. However, the law won't take effect until rules are developed by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and then are approved. DEP has committed to involve the public in the rulemaking process, and the first stakeholder meeting was held virtually on 10/22/2020. The DEP is requesting input on topics covered in the law related to: Environmental Justice Impact Statements, Environmental and Public Health Stressors, Permit Application Evaluation, and Outreach and Engagement. **Comments may be submitted to DEP at ejrulemaking@dep.nj.gov.** For more detailed information on the initial public stakeholder meeting and the specific areas DEP is addressing, you may email EJTF at environment@uufaithaction.org.

- **Governor Murphy Directs That State Agency Decisions Be Guided by Environmental Justice Principles** - As required by a previous Executive Order, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued guidance ("Furthering the Promise: A Guidance Document for Advancing Environmental Justice Across State Government" - available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/docs/furthering-the-promise.pdf>) that requires agency assessments and action plans, and establishes the Environmental Justice Interagency Council (EJIC). The EJIC will collaborate with the DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Council, of which **EJTF's Nancy Griffeth is a member**. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2020/20_0040.htm
- **Op-Ed: Fossil Fuels Endanger Communities of Color** (by Rev. Ronald Tuff of GreenFaith, a former director of the Paterson Task Force, a community-based weatherization agency, and **Dr. Nancy Griffeth**, Professor Emerita of Computer Science at the Graduate Center of CUNY, **EJTF member and former chair**, and member of the Environmental Justice Advisory Council of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)) - This in-depth and well-researched piece (providing a wealth of background information in the links included) documents the impacts of fossil fuels on communities of color and low-income communities, and presents ways to reverse the current state of environmental damage and ensure that costs and benefits are distributed equally. <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2020/10/fossil-fuels-endanger-communities-of-color-opinion.html>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- **Next Step for a Green NJ: Electric Trucks** - In 2018, ChargeEVC issued a report on costs and benefits of light-duty electric vehicles in NJ. That report was instrumental in the development of NJ's "EV Law" that passed in January 2020. Now, ChargeEVC has issued a report on "Full Market Vehicle Electrification" in NJ - opportunities, impacts and net benefits for light-, medium-, and heavy-duty electric vehicles. The study (available here: <http://www.chargevc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ChargeEVC-Full-Market-Electrification-Study-FINAL-Oct-7-2020.pdf>) recommends an increase in electric medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, and found that there is a powerful synergy that emerges from simultaneous de-carbonization of the overall energy supply mix and widespread vehicle electrification. The new study examines impacts and net benefits from both a business-as-usual energy supply mix scenario and a high-renewable energy case. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/electric-transportation-sector-light-duty-trucks-medium-duty-trucks-greenhouse-gases/>

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

- **EPA Announces \$7.5 Million Grant to Reduce Lead Exposure in Newark, New Jersey, Schools** - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the Newark, NJ Board of Education to receive nearly \$7.5 million in federal funds to combat lead in Newark schools. This grant will help fund the Newark Safe Water Initiative, which improves public health by reducing sources of lead in school drinking water to benefit more than 36,000 students in pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade and nearly 6,000 employees in 64 schools. This award is one of EPA's first-ever selections under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act's Reduction in Lead Exposure via Drinking Water program. The Newark Board of Education will use the EPA grant funding to remove sources of lead in drinking water in schools, including addressing lead pipes and fixtures. The project will also include outreach and public education to raise awareness of the health effects of lead in drinking water and ways to reduce lead exposure. <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-75-million-grant-reduce-lead-exposure-newark-new-jersey-schools-1>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

NJ Transit Going Back to the Drawing Board to Replace Plan for Fracked Gas Power Plant

EJTF has been involved in the fight to stop the planned fracked gas power plant in Kearny, NJ for the past year and a half. EJTF comments were made at NJ Transit Board Meetings by Co-Chair Ray Nichols and EJTF members Sally Gellert and Nancy Griffith (see the July 2020 EJTF Newsletter article about Nancy waiting 4 hours on the phone to give comments - <https://www.ufaithaction.org/blog/>) and many other EJTF members have called Gov. Murphy, so all of our work paid off! NJ Transit officials now have outlined a plan to have the system designed in as green a way as possible. However, NJ Transit hasn't withdrawn the air permits for the natural gas-fueled power plant. According to NJ Transit CEO Kevin Corbett, "We're looking to make it as green as possible, we want to get to the 100% goal....It does not preclude the use of a gas power plant." So we will need to remain vigilant and stay involved in the process!



- **NJ Transit Opts for Green Energy, Ending Plan for Gas-Powered Plant** - During the Christie administration, the NJ TRANSITGRID project was developed, "to provide a resilient energy supply for a targeted portion of rail infrastructure...capable of supplying highly reliable power during storms or other times when the centralized power grid is compromised." NJ TRANSITGRID included a central, natural gas-fired power plant, and transmission lines to traction power substations that electrify the tracks and operating controls on portions of the NJ Transit and Amtrak systems. However, the gas-fired power plant has been fought by environmental groups and local communities based on health reasons and the fact that it was in direct conflict with NJ's clean-energy goals. NJ Transit has shelved the gas-fired power plant plan and is now going to provide \$3 million in incentives for developers to provide plans for renewable energy alternatives. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/nj-transit-drops-kearny-natural-gas-plant-chooses-renewable-energy-option/>

- **Here's NJ Transit's Plan for Power Plant to Go Green** - This article details what is known so far about NJ Transit's plans to switch from a gas-fired power plant for its NJ TRANSITGRID to soliciting plans for power from renewable energy sources. A gas-fired power plant isn't totally out of the question, based on the feasibility of designs that result from the solicitations. A process for developing a request for qualifications, and evaluating the responses, was planned to begin with a 10/28/2020 meeting with potential contractors and engineering companies. NJ Transit also plans an outreach process to solicit input and update the public. <https://www.nj.com/news/2020/10/heres-nj-transits-plan-for-power-plant-to-go-green.html>
- **NJ Transit Shelves Fracked Gas Power Plant Proposal** - Food & Water Action, an affiliate organization of Food & Water Watch, "spearheaded a coalition of more than 60 organizations that held in person and virtual educational forums, organized rallies on land and water, lobbied their elected officials, and spoke out at NJ Transit board meetings in opposition to the proposed fossil fuel power plant....16 municipal governments have passed strong resolutions opposing the fracked gas power plant and supporting a renewable energy alternative, including Newark, Kearny, Jersey City and Hoboken.13 state legislators signed onto a letter calling on the governor to reject the power plant and replace it with a clean energy solution." This article describes the victory of NJ Transit's shelving the power plant and provides reactions from some of the coalition organizations. <https://foodandwaterwatch.org/news/nj-transit-shelves-fracked-gas-power-plant-proposal>
- **Op-Ed: Retire NJ's Two Remaining Coal Plants Now** (by Jeff Tittel, the director of the NJ Sierra Club) - The author puts forth a plan for a deal between the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and the owner of NJ's last two coal plants to retire the plants as soon as possible. Such a deal would save the customers money, and also reduce health- and climate-damaging pollution, as these two plants were responsible for more than 10% of climate pollution from NJ's power plants. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/09/op-ed-retire-njs-two-remaining-coal-plants-now/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **Renewables Make up 63.3% of New U. S. Generating Capacity** - Analysis of data from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) August 2020 "Energy Infrastructure Update" report (available here: <https://cms.ferc.gov/media/energy-infrastructure-update-august-2020>) shows that 63.3% of new utility-scale electrical generating capacity added in the first eight months of 2020 was from renewable energy sources This summer (i.e., June, July, and August) all of the new generating capacity added was provided by solar, wind, and hydropower.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **NJ to Push for Public Backing on Climate Action with New Regulations** - As part of a suite of NJ Executive Orders, laws, and programs related to climate issues, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been tasked with adopting "Protecting Against Climate Threats" regulations within two years of an Executive Order issued by Gov. Murphy in January 2020. As part of this process, DEP has been holding stakeholder meetings throughout the year. A summary of the PACT program, as well as slides used at the presentations, written comments received to date, and a survey where you can share feedback and suggestions, are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/njpact/index.html>. A summary of the process and some of the stakeholder comments from the recent public meeting with the industry sector, are described in this article. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/updating-nj-climate-change-regulations-developers-builders-fear-officials-advocates-say-necessary/>

- Murphy Administration Calls for Transformative Actions to Reduce Emissions Fueling Climate Change by 80% by 2050** - The biennial status report assessing NJ's progress in meeting the 2006 legislative mandate to reduce emissions by 80% by the year 2050 (the "80x50 Report") was just issued. This report, mandated by the state's Global Warming Response Act, projects higher emissions and increased climate risks if a business-as-usual scenario is followed, and outlines pathways for steep emissions reductions required to meet the state's goals. The report (available here: <https://www.ufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/nj-gwra-80x50-report-2020.pdf>) provides a status of progress to date, and presents pathways for new emissions-cutting initiatives across seven emissions "sectors": transportation; residential and commercial buildings; electric power generation; industrial emissions; waste and agriculture; short-lived climate pollutants; and carbon sequestration. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2020/20_0042.htm
- No Gas-Powered Cars, No Heating Oil for Homes. Climate Report Calls for Major Action** - Every two years, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is required to report on NJ's progress in meeting the goals of the state's Global Warming Response Act. This 16-page Executive Summary of this year's report, "New Jersey's Global Warming Response Act 80x50 Report - Evaluating Our Progress and Identifying Pathways to Reduce Emissions 80% by 2050," is available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/docs/nj-gwra-80x50-report-2020.pdf#page=5>. The report states that major reductions in emissions will be needed to meet the goals, including such changes as increasing the rate of increase in electric vehicles from the current rate of 8,000 per year to 110,000 per year, phasing out the use of residential propane and heating oil, and making all electricity generation fossil-fuel-free by 2050. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/electric-vehicles-fossil-fuels-greenhouse-gases-reduction-carbon-footprint-air-pollution-nj/>



- NJ on Sidelines as City Goes After Big Oil** - This article describes the lawsuit filed by the City of Hoboken last month against ExxonMobil, Shell, Conoco, Chevron, Phillips66, and the American Petroleum Institute, for the companies' misleading the public about harmful climate-related impacts they knew would be caused by burning fossil fuels. A copy of the lawsuit (highly recommended reading) which provides an excellent and comprehensive illustrated description of the environmental issues, the impacts on Hoboken, the duplicitousness of the oil companies including copies of misleading advertisements, and the charges against the companies, is available here: https://assets-global.website-files.com/58407e2ebca0e34c30a2d39c/5f4f96db3326ed53317d5150_Hoboken%20v.%20Exxon%20et%20al.%20Complaint%209-2-20.pdf. The lawsuit also makes reference to racial issues, saying, "Like in other cities, the effects of climate change caused by Big Oil companies have had greater impacts on low-income communities and communities of color." <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/hoboken-first-nj-city-files-lawsuit-charging-major-oil-companies-decades-deceit-contributing-climate-change/>

- **Initiatives on Climate Change, Transit Ok with Most in NJ — Poll** - The Nature Conservancy polled 650 NJ voters on climate change-related issues in NJ, and 70% said they support Gov. Murphy's actions on climate change that have been taken so far. <https://nj1015.com/climate-change-and-transit-initiatives-ok-with-most-in-nj-poll/>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- **Want Lower Utility Bills? Companies to Push Customers to Use Less Gas, Electricity** - The NJ Clean Energy Act of 2018 required utilities to achieve specific reductions in customers' energy use; a NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Order issued in 6/2020 provided an administrative framework for the energy efficiency programs, including establishing mechanisms for recovery of costs associated with delivery of programs, and requirements to ensure equity throughout energy efficiency. Six of NJ's utilities have filed their proposed plans with the BPU; they include items like incentives for energy efficiency upgrades, rebates on energy efficiency appliances, and targeted assistance for low- and moderate-income households. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/09/nj-utilities-energy-efficiency-hundreds-millions-dollars-clean-energy/>
- **NJBPU Launches Campaign Promoting Opportunities from New Jersey's Clean Energy Program™ that Save Residents Money and Reduce Energy Use** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has begun a multimedia campaign, running ads to educate the public and businesses about opportunities for savings and environmental benefits available through the "New Jersey Clean Energy Program" (NJCEP). <https://www.tapinto.net/categories/press-releases/articles/njbpu-launches-campaign-promoting-opportunities-from-new-jersey-s-clean-energy-program-that-save-residents-money-and-reduce-energy-use>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

- **Experts Want New Health Standard for Likely Carcinogen in NJ Drinking Water** - The NJ Drinking Water Quality Institute (DWQI), which is responsible for developing Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) for hazardous contaminants in drinking water and for recommending those standards to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has recommended one of the strictest drinking water standards in the U.S. for 1,4 dioxane. This chemical is termed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as likely carcinogenic, and is used in solvents, paint strippers, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, making its way into drinking water via wastewater treatment plant output, and spills or leaks. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/14-dioxane-new-standard-urged-nj-drinking-water-likely-carcinogen/>
- **South Jersey Company Confirms Use of Unregulated Replacement for Toxic Chemical** - After concerns were raised about PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) "forever chemicals," some - such as PFNA (perfluorononanoic acid) - have been regulated in NJ, and companies have developed replacements which are unregulated and kept as trade secrets. One class of such chemicals contains ClPFPECA (chloro perfluoro polyether carboxylate) compounds. According to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) the replacements are "expected to have toxicity" and other properties similar to currently regulated PFAS compounds. The ClPFPECA compound has been registered to Solvay Specialty Polymers, and the company has stated that it is using unnamed "process aids" at its West Deptford facility to replace PFNA, which was previously used. However, DEP has not stated whether it has been found in drinking water. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/solvay-west-deptford-gloucester-county-nj-using-unregulated-replacement-toxic-chemical-pfna-pfas-forever/>

POLLUTION

- **Big Win! Plastic Bag Bill Passes – Heads to Gov’s Desk** - Both the NJ Assembly and Senate passed S864 to ban single-use plastic bags, polystyrene foam food containers, and paper bags in large grocery stores, as well as limit single-use plastic straws to “on demand”. **However, as of 10/26/2020, Gov. Murphy has yet to sign the bill.** What makes New Jersey’s single-use disposable ban special is that it goes beyond banning just plastic bags to include single-use paper bags in large grocery stores as well as foam containers. S864 aims to permanently change consumer behavior on a large scale and encourage the use of truly reusable bags and products. In combination, this can reduce the carbon and pollution footprint that these single-use disposable plastic, foam and paper products have on our communities, health and environment. **Please call Governor Murphy at 609-292-6000, and tell him to sign S864 without delay making New Jersey a leader in the fight against plastic pollution.** <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/big-win-plastic-bag-bill-passes-heads-govs-desk/>



- **Multiple Changes Ahead for NJ Recycled Content Bill** - The recycled content bill introduced in July in the NJ Senate (S2515) will be overhauled after a meeting between lawmakers and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Sen. Bob Smith, committee chair and primary bill sponsor, said the new legislation will be "much more towards the California model than the way we started." Last month, California instituted a program making it "the first state in the nation to establish minimum recycled content requirements for plastic beverage containers" which "make California’s standards the strongest in the world" according to the press release (available here: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/09/24/governor-newsom-signs-legislation-strengthening-californias-climate-leadership/>). A substitute NJ bill is hoped to be ready in time for the next Senate Energy and Environment Committee meeting in December, which will likely move final action into 2021. <https://enviropolitics.com/multiple-changes-ahead-for-nj-recycled-content-bill/>
- **How Much Help on Waste and Recycling Problems Can Two NJ Advisory Panels Recommend without Any Members?** - A law signed by Gov. Murphy in January created a recycling market development council, with a March deadline for appointments, but no appointments have yet been made. The council is supposed to study the recycling process and issue a report on how to address issues by January 2021. In addition, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Advisory Council on Solid Waste Management has been inactive for years, with terms of previous members having expired. <https://enviropolitics.com/how-much-help-on-waste-and-recycling-problems-can-two-nj-advisory-panels-recommend-without-members/>

OTHER

- **Environment and Business Groups Calling for Sustainable Green Recovery Agenda; Give Budget Mixed Reviews** - Although the FY 2021 budget signed by Gov. Murphy caused dismay by increasing the amount previously proposed to be diverted from the Clean Energy Fund, it did include some items applauded by some in the environmental community. Lead service line replacements are funded, although at \$60 million (rather than the \$80 million previously proposed), and State Park stewardship and funding for the State Recycling and Clean Communities Funds are funded in full. <https://www.njlc.org/news/environment-and-business-groups-calling-sustainable-green-recovery-agenda-give-budget-mixed>
- **PSEG Applies to Keep \$300M Annual Subsidies for South Jersey Nuclear Plants** - In 2018, NJ instituted a zero emission certificate program for nuclear power plants, which provided \$300 million a year in subsidies to the Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) for three years. The three-year period is coming to an end, and PSEG has applied to the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) for the subsidies to continue for three more years. Unlike the initial approval of subsidies, which was fixed at \$300 million, the BPU now has the authority to reduce the subsidies if warranted. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/pseg-applies-to-keep-300m-annual-subsidies-for-south-jersey-nuclear-plants/>
- **Power-Buying Policy Still an Open Question in NJ** - In December 2019, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a ruling that the nation's biggest electric grid operator, PJM, must include electricity from state subsidized renewable sources in its "capacity market," a move designed to bring the price of clean power in line with that generated by fossil fuels. The change was seen as a threat to NJ's meeting its clean energy goals. The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has been considering several approaches to address this, with a decision expected by the end of the year. However, the results of the election may have a major impact. [Note: A previous article described how the Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) and Exelon Generation Company (Exelon), two of NJ's largest energy companies, have submitted a complicated proposal to the BPU for a Fixed Resource Requirement (FRR) approach to address this issue, in which they would give up the previously-approved \$300 million annual subsidy for South Jersey nuclear power plants (<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/06/these-power-companies-fought-for-a-300-million-nuclear-subsidy-now-they-want-a-new-deal/>). That article includes reactions on several sides of the issue.] <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/10/power-buying-presidential-election-clean-energy-consumer-prices-ferc/>

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
