



# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

## January 2021

[covering 11/24/2020 – 12/28/2020] <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.**

**Another WIN! NJ did NOT join the TCI - thanks to all who called Gov. Murphy in response to Rev. Gregson's request, to support our EJ partners! (see article on p. 16)**

### SOME GOOD NEWS FROM 2020

**In spite of unforeseen obstacles, 2020 saw a number of major accomplishments in NJ environmental and environmental justice activities, many of which EJTF worked on; there is much more work to be done, - hoping for 2021 to usher in a better era!**



### EXAMPLES of NJ ENVIRONMENTAL/EJ VICTORIES in 2020

- **Landmark EJ Cumulative Impacts Act (first in the U.S.!)**
- **Single-use Plastics Act (strongest in the U.S.!)**
- **Electric Vehicle Legislation**
- **NESE Pipeline/Compressor Station projects stopped**
- **Fracked -gas-fired NJ transit power plant project stopped**
- **NJ taking a lead on offshore wind, with a wind port and wind turbine towers manufacturing site in the works**
- **Climate Change added to NJ K-12 education standards (first state to do this!)**
- **NJ issued standards on 2 PFAS chemicals (some of the strongest in the U.S.)**
- **NJ issued: the revised Energy Master Plan (EMP) calling for a 100% clean energy economy by 2050; Executive Order 100 implementing the EMP and directing DEP to adopt PACT (Protecting Against Climate Change) regulatory reforms; and DEP Administrative Order 2020-01 detailing the PACT process, with deadlines within two years**

## **EJTF's GOALS FOR 2021**

### **1) Reduce fossil fuel emissions, especially in EJ neighborhoods, with focus on transportation**

Follow the lead of our Environmental Justice partners including the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance, the Ironbound Community Corporation, and Clean Water Action. This will have direct impact on health of residents in EJ neighborhoods. See articles on pages 11-12.

### **2) Reduce lead in households, both in drinking water and lead paint**

Following the lead of our EJ partners (see #1, above), help promote outreach to residents about avoiding or reducing lead in drinking water and lead paint in their households. See articles on pages 13-14.

### **3) Promote the Green Amendment**

Support the Green Amendment: conduct outreach, especially through UU Congregations, to build understanding and support for the NJ pending legislative resolutions (SCR30/ACR80), which promote the right to clean air, clean water and a healthy environment. Follow the lead of "Green Amendments for the Generations." The Green Amendment is supported by our EJ partners. See articles on page 14.

## ***UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES***

### ***MORRISTOWN UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP (MUF)***

The Green Faith Ministry of the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship (MUF) hosted a Zoom discussion of the excellent documentary film "A Life on Our Planet" narrated by David Attenborough.

The film, which traverses all ends of the Earth, shows wildlife and the effects of climate change up close - it is highly recommended!

The film is available on Netflix, and also may be viewed on the free documentary website "Documentary Mania" at

<http://documentarymania.com/player.php?title=David+Attenborough%3A+A+Life+on+Our+Planet>



## ***EJTF ACTIVITIES***

- The **EJTF December meeting featured guest speaker Maria Lopez-Nuñez**, Deputy Director, Organizing and Advocacy, of the Ironbound Community Corporation (in the bottom row, far right in the Zoom meeting photo). Maria was instrumental in getting the Cumulative Impacts EJ bill that EJTF worked on passed by the legislature.



The next key step is for regulations implementing the law to be developed. Maria outlined several loopholes that the industry sector may advance : 1) proposing offsets, where pollution in one place is "traded" for something like "green space" or funding of a neighborhood benefit - these have often been false promises as the offsets don't end up in the affected communities or promised funding is reallocated elsewhere; 2) stating that the "best available science" can't determine cumulative impacts with certainty and that industry shouldn't be asked to determine them; and 3) seeking changes in definitions, such as "pollution" and "overburdened communities."

Maria also provided a thorough discussion of the environmental-justice-related issues with the Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI) (see article on p. 16).

Note: Maria also features prominently in the film "The Sacrifice Zone," which follows her through the Ironbound, "as she leads a group of environmental justice fighters determined to break the cycle of poor communities of color serving as dumping grounds for our consumer society." You can watch the trailer here: <https://thesacrificezone.org> and you can rent the film from vimeo for \$4 here: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/thesacrificezone>.

- An excellent Op-Ed by **EJTF member Nancy Griffeth**, "Repower NJ's 'Sacrifice Zones,'" was published in NJ Spotlight News (see article on page 11).

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### **Support EJTF's "Green Amendment" 2021 Goal**

NJ legislators have proposed a constitutional Green Amendment (more information is here: <https://forthegenerations.org/resources/states-pursuing-green-amendments/new-jersey/>) that will recognize and protect the rights of all the people of the state, including future generations, to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments. The proposed Green Amendment language also ensures preservation of the natural, scenic and historic qualities of the environment, and will impose a constitutional duty on all government officials to proactively protect the people's environmental rights and the state's natural resources.

It's vitally important that all NJ legislators understand the values of having a constitutional Green Amendment and are prepared to support the constitutional amendment in this upcoming legislative session. Seven things you can do, including writing, calling, and signing a petition, are described here: <https://forthegenerations.org/resources/states-pursuing-green-amendments/new-jersey/>.

The NJ Green Amendment already has 43 sponsors in the Assembly and 12 sponsors in the Senate. Now we need the full Legislature to act for the constitutional right to advance to the people (you!), who will make the ultimate decision on the ballot. That means that legislators need to be informed and compelled to act during the 2021 legislative session starting in January!

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***ONLINE and IN-PERSON EVENTS***  
***All times shown as EST***

***Some upcoming, and some past but viewable as videos***

***Note: advance registration for events is often required. Check in-person events for current status.***

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

**Stakeholder Meeting for EJ Cumulative Impacts Law Rulemaking - **Virtual****  
**NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**  
**January 20, 2021 (more details will be forthcoming\*)**

On 10/22/2020, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) held the first public information meeting on NJ's new, groundbreaking EJ Cumulative Impacts Law. The meeting included a description of the law and requirements for the rulemaking, which are summarized well in the presentation slides, available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/docs/ej-pres-20201022.pdf>.

The next EJ Rulemaking Stakeholder Meeting will be held on 1/20/2021, with a time to be determined. **This meeting will focus on a discussion about Geographic Points of Comparison/Facility & Permit Definitions.**

The website for DEP's Environmental Justice Rulemaking (including links to the law, and to the presentation slides and video from the first public information session) is here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/policy.html>. You can subscribe to the EJ Rulemaking Mailing List, to receive notices of upcoming meetings, here: [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NJDEP/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=NJDEP\\_251](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NJDEP/subscriber/new?topic_id=NJDEP_251).

Note: See some potential areas of concern raised by Maria Lopez-Nuñez, our environmental partner at the Ironbound Community Corporation, on p. 3, above.

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**"New Jersey Leading the Way on Climate Change Solutions Part III" **In Person****  
**New Jersey Climate Change Alliance Statewide Conference**

**Friday, January 22, 2021, 8:30 a.m. - Friday, January 22, 2021, 5:00 p.m.**  
**Location: Traves Hall, Rutgers University**

The New Jersey Climate Change Alliance (the "Alliance") is a Rutgers University-facilitated network of diverse organizations from multiple sectors that share the goal of advancing science-informed climate change strategies at the state and local levels in NJ, both with regard to adapting to changing climate conditions and addressing the emissions that cause climate change. The Alliance hosts an annual statewide conference, with this year's conference taking place in three parts: Parts I and II were held virtually (videos can be accessed here: <https://njadapt.rutgers.edu/news-events/past-events-and-conferences>); Part III is an in-person statewide conference to be held on 1/22/2021 - **a complete agenda for the conference will be forthcoming. Additional information will be available here:** <https://njadapt.rutgers.edu/news-events/upcoming-events>.

Equity is a critically important principle of the Alliance. Each topic workgroup is expected to consider the implications of its efforts on communities and populations that are most affected by changing climate conditions both with regard to sources of climate emissions and impacts of changing climate impacts.

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**"Time for Turbines 2021: Building a New Green Workforce Training and Access for Offshore Wind Jobs" **Virtual** Conference**  
**Tuesday, January 26, 2020 and Wednesday, January 27, 2020, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Time for Turbines is an annual conference convened by Jersey Renewables that brings together policymakers, labor and environmental advocates to discuss current issues and opportunities in NJ's rapidly expanding offshore wind program. Speakers will focus on workforce development and equity in the offshore wind industry, with an emphasis on identifying access barriers to good jobs in this field and offering policy solutions. The conference will cover the launch of the cutting-edge NJ Wind Institute, which will coordinate offshore wind R&D and workforce development, the NJ Wind Port, the state's progress toward 7500 megawatts by 2035, and commitments made to ensure that this new industry benefits local NJ communities. The panelists - state lawmakers, labor and environmental leaders, policy experts and activists - will respond to these developments in conversations on how to create long-term renewable manufacturing jobs, mitigate the environmental impacts of wind energy, and more. More information, the agenda, and FREE registration are available here: <https://njwec.salsalabs.org/time4turbines4/index.html>

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**Delaware River Basin Commission Advisory Committee Meeting - **Virtual****

**Toxics Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 28, 2021, 1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.**

Draft Meeting Topics (final agenda to come):

- Status of Stage 2 PCB TMDLs for the Delaware River Estuary and Bay
- 1,4 dioxane monitoring in Delaware River
- PFAS monitoring in Delaware River
- Delaware Estuary microplastics monitoring

Details about the meeting are here: <https://nj.gov/drbc/meetings/advisory/index.html>



**Discussion of the PBS NOVA Documentary: "Decoding the Weather Machine" - **Virtual** with the NJ State Climatologist, Dr. David Robinson (view the film online beforehand) Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

The NJ State Climatologist, Dr. David A. Robinson, will lead an online discussion of the PBS NOVA documentary, "Decoding the Weather Machine" (you can watch the movie in advance at: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/decoding-the-weather-machine/>). PBS describes the documentary as follows: "Disastrous hurricanes. Widespread droughts and wildfires. Withering heat. Extreme rainfall. It is hard not to conclude that something's up with the weather, and many scientists agree. It's the result of the weather machine itself—our climate—changing, becoming hotter and more erratic. In this two-hour documentary, NOVA will cut through the confusion around climate change. Why do scientists overwhelmingly agree that our climate is changing, and that human activity is causing it? How and when will it affect us through the weather we experience? And what will it take to bend the trajectory of planetary warming toward more benign outcomes? Join scientists around the world on a quest to better understand the workings of the weather and climate machine we call Earth, and discover how we can be resilient—even thrive—in the face of enormous change." This is a Virtual Option Green program funded by the American Library Association's "Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change" pilot program and sponsorship from the Friends of the East Brunswick Environmental Commission and East Brunswick Public Library, and other area libraries. More information and reservations are here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/option-green-documentary-discussion-on-decoding-the-weather-machine-tickets-128858859317>.

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**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 sampling of webinars taking place in January 2021. Further information about these seminars, **including registration information**, and a complete listing of the seminars, both virtual and in-person, for January 2021 is here: <https://climatesociety.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/range.listevents/>-

**"Centering Native Voices In Indigenous Sciences to Address Climate Change"  
Tuesday, January 5, 2021, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Since contact, Indigenous Nations of Turtle Island and beyond have been trying to teach colonists and settler colonists about how to live among all our relations of place. They have shared their knowledges and wisdoms of all the places and beings they have deep relationships with and responsibilities to. It has been over 500 years of teaching and still today they are working towards progress and finally seeing positive results. The question becomes then, "Is it too late? Have we gone past the tipping point too far?" In this discussion, Paulette Blanchard, of the University of Kansas, will share what she has learned from her work in the spaces of convergent and convergence science with Indigenous and Earth sciences and the people doing the work to address climate change. The webinar is sponsored by NCAR/UCAR. More information is here: <https://staff.ucar.edu/for-staff/daily/announcement-calendar-event/cgd-seminar-series-paulette-blanchard-centering-native>.

**"Sixty Minutes with Ditte Juul-Jørgensen, Director General for Energy of the European Commission"**

**Friday, January 8, 2021, 11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.**

Ditte Juul-Jørgensen became Director General for Energy of the European Commission in August 2019. She will discuss the EU's Energy Union after the adoption of the European Green Deal, with the EU's goal to become climate neutral by 2050, and the contribution of the Next Generation EU (NGEU) recovery plan to the energy transition, as well as EU-US energy cooperation and the role of U.S. LNG in the European energy security. The webinar is sponsored by George Washington University and the Security and Sustainability Forum, as part of the "Leadership in Our Time" webinar series. More information and registration is here:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5582003241959625483>

**"Teaching Advocacy: Planting the Seeds of Change"**

**Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Students today are inundated with depressing information about environmental problems and the failure of governments to act. How do we teach them to work towards solutions and maintain hope? How do we teach advocacy in academic environments skeptical of political involvement? In this webinar, four professors of environmental studies will discuss how they have managed teaching advocacy in the classroom in higher ed. They will provide examples of advocacy lessons, experiential learning, and incorporating civic engagement into teaching of environmental issues. They will examine the pitfalls of teaching advocacy and how to avoid them. This webinar, sponsored by Antioch University New England Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience, will be presented by Neil Leary, Dickinson College; Mary Ellen Mallia, the University at Albany; Eban Goodstein, Bard College; and Abigail Abrash Walton, Antioch University New England. More information and registration is here:

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eh7ehpdq561692c9&llr=lhqojumab>

**"Building Climate Resilience During COVID-19 Recovery"**

**Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. EST**

In celebration of its 25th anniversary, the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group is hosting a webinar in which experts on climate impacts science and policy will discuss how we can leverage the period of economic and social recovery following COVID-19 to build resilience to climate change. Register here (by January 25, 2021 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time):

<https://www.cvent.com/c/express/eb1dab49-45de-4ad8-b7f3-2a15acc8525e>.

**"Reducing Health Impacts of Reactive Nitrogen in Ground and Surface Water from Agricultural Sources: Defining the Problem (Workshop Session #1)"**

**Thursday, January 28, 2021, 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

As part of the Environmental Health Matters Initiative, and sponsored by The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, this is the first in a series of workshop sessions, and will focus on answering the following question: "What is the nitrogen problem?" Nitrogen is used widely in crop production to enhance farm productivity and profitability, but in many regions of the U.S., nitrogen from farms has leaked into drinking water and caused adverse health impacts. These health impacts include methemoglobinemia, a condition that inhibits the blood's ability to carry oxygen around the body. This workshop will explore what actions can be taken on several levels to address the nitrogen contamination problem.

Workshop sessions will take place every Thursday from 2:30–5:30 PM from January 28 – February 25, 2021. More information is here: [https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/01-28-2021/reducing-health-impacts-of-reactive-nitrogen-in-ground-and-surface-water-from-agricultural-sources-an-environmental-health-matters-workshop-to-identify-opportunities-for-leadership-workshop-series-1?mc\\_cid=189ff1519d&mc\\_eid=bb5010d06c](https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/01-28-2021/reducing-health-impacts-of-reactive-nitrogen-in-ground-and-surface-water-from-agricultural-sources-an-environmental-health-matters-workshop-to-identify-opportunities-for-leadership-workshop-series-1?mc_cid=189ff1519d&mc_eid=bb5010d06c).

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### **Security and Sustainability Forum Webinar**

Several EJTF members recommend the webinars of the Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF). The SSF "convenes global experts to address the impacts to society from climate and other disruptions to natural systems." The main SSF products are free webinars on energy, food and water security, public health, urban resilience, economic vitality, infrastructure, governance and other impacts that must be solved in meeting climate security challenges. The following webinar may be of interest:

#### **"How Parks Can Make Communities More Sustainable and Resilient"**

**Thursday, January 28, 2021, 1:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.**

Parks and recreation systems have evolved over the past two decades from being just playgrounds and ballfields, to becoming recognized as essential green infrastructure with the potential to contribute to community resiliency and sustainability. To capitalize on this potential, the parks and recreation system planning process must evolve as well. In his book, "Parks and Recreation System Planning," landscape architect David Barth provides a new, step-by-step approach to creating parks systems that generate greater economic, social, and environmental benefits. The Security and Sustainability Forum and Island Press are presenting this webinar describing how to work within a community to use parks to increase sustainability and generate multiple community co-benefits. Register here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1374650529752403983>

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**SAVE the DATES**

**UUFANJ JUSTICE GALA - Virtual**  
**Friday, March 5, 2021, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

**This is UUFANJ's major, most important, fundraiser of the year, and this year's Gala will be particularly special to EJTF, because OUR nominee for UUFANJ's award won! She's one of our EJ partners, Kim Gaddy!**

Kim is the environmental justice organizer for Clean Water Action of NJ, vice chair of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and coordinator of the South Ward Environmental Alliance in Newark. Additional information about the Gala will be available here: <https://www.uufaithaction.org>.

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**UU@UN Spring 2021 Seminar - Virtual**  
**"All In for Climate Justice: Food Equity and Sustainability"**  
**April 9 - 11, 2021**

Are you passionate about food justice, global justice and climate justice? Next year's UU@UN seminar builds off of last year's climate justice theme to focus on the connections between food and climate justice. More information is here: <https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar>.

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**2021 Delaware Estuary Science and Environmental Summit - Virtual**  
**[including a one-day Forum on "Climate Change and the Delaware River Basin"]**  
**Monday, March 1, 2021, 9:00 a.m. - Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 5:00 p.m.**

Since 2005, the goal of this biennial Summit has been to bring together scientists, managers, restoration practitioners, and educators from different sectors to share the latest scientific information, network, and make ecological linkages that promote a better understanding of the watershed as a whole. The central format is that of a conventional scientific meeting with abstracts, presentations and peer review Q&A. While the focus is on the watershed of the Delaware River and Bay, presentations from other areas are included if they help to inform our understanding of this system. **Registration is \$100 for regular attendees and \$25 for students.** More information and registration are here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-delaware-estuary-virtual-science-environmental-summit-registration-100003575386?ref=ecount>.

The 2021 Summit will feature a one-day Forum on "Climate Change and the Delaware River Basin." This addition to the Summit's program is being hosted by the Delaware River Basin Commission's Advisory Committee on Climate Change.

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**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>

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***VIDEOS OF PAST CONFERENCES AND WEBINARS***

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**"Environmental Justice: Housing and Energy" - Video of Webinar**  
**Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy**

The Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia SIPA hosted a discussion on energy and environmental justice in the context of real-world issues related to urban housing and energy efficiency retrofits to improve performance and livability. Panelists were: Ariel Dreho, Local Policy Manager, Energy Equity, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy; Sage Green, Technical Project Officer on the State Energy Planning team in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the US Department of Energy; and John Washington, People's Action #HomesGuarantee Organizer. The video is available here: <https://youtu.be/f4-N1P8l1Vo>.

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## **"Securing a Sustainable Energy Transition" - Videos of 2020 Annual Meeting Princeton University Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment**

The Princeton University Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment's 2020 annual meeting brought together industry, government, and academic experts to speak on the opportunities, threats, and challenges to decarbonizing the U.S. power sector and building a secure, environmentally sustainable, and resilient 21st century grid. The meeting included excellent presentations by the keynote speaker and two panels. **All videos and more information are available here:** <https://acee.princeton.edu/2020-annual-meeting/videos/>.

Keynote: **"In the service of sustainability: The case for an integrated energy, climate, and security agenda"** - the Honorable Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, a national security expert and energy leader and former Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy.

Panel: **"Security challenges for a grid in transition"** - panelists explored how the evolution of the traditional electro-mechanical electric grid to a cyber-enabled smart grid brings with it many security challenges, as an increased reliance on cyber infrastructure creates vulnerabilities to a wide range of cyber-enabled attacks. The panel brought together experts to discuss these challenges and potential solutions. Panelists included:

Anuradha Annaswamy – Founder and Director of the Active-Adaptive Control Laboratory, Department of Mechanical Engineering, MIT

Prateek Mittal – Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, Princeton University

David Nicol – Director of the Information Trust Institute and Herman M. Dieckamp Endowed Chair in Engineering, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Martin Otto – Head of Cybersecurity Research Group, Siemens Corporate Technology.

Panel: **"Leading the way to a 100% clean electricity system: A conversation with electric utility CEOs"** - Key executives leading the way to a 100% clean electricity future discussed the challenges they face, the decision-making process that led them to embrace decarbonization goals, and their interactions with state and federal policy making. Panelists included:

Ben Fowke – Chairman and CEO, Xcel Energy

Ralph Izzo – Chairman, President and CEO, PSEG

Gil Quiniones – President and CEO, New York Power Authority.

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## **"A Climate Convergence: United for Victory in 2021" - Videos of Symposium**

An extensive symposium convened by Climate Crisis Policy focused on "What is the strategy for national climate legislation? How can we unite in common cause for success?" Six two-hour panels each brought together representatives from a different sector involved in addressing climate change and attempted to reach a consensus on moving forward in a coordinated manner to address it.

"Congress is gearing up to take real action on Climate in 2021. And it is strategically vital that civil society be prepared to work together to secure meaningful legislative victories. There are thousands of climate groups and millions of activists waiting for coordinated leadership and direction." A listing of the panelists is available here: <https://climatecrisispolicy.org/action-campaigns/>, and videos of the symposium sessions are available as shown below and on the next page:

Climate Convergence Session 1: Congress & Legislation: [https://youtu.be/iqWwYK1\\_pUA](https://youtu.be/iqWwYK1_pUA)

Climate Convergence Session 2: Major Environmental Organizations: <https://youtu.be/lAgrZBPyhYQ>

Climate Convergence Session 3: Nationwide Coalitions: <https://youtu.be/o3bfMXmoHHo>  
Climate Convergence Session 4: Policy Sector Coalitions: <https://youtu.be/VTINd2tWIA>  
Climate Convergence Session 5: Faith & Indigenous Organizations: [https://youtu.be/LLBCs\\_9-020](https://youtu.be/LLBCs_9-020)  
Climate Convergence Session 6: Mass Mobilization & Direct Action: [https://youtu.be/-JTUmOmB\\_io](https://youtu.be/-JTUmOmB_io)

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### **"Delaware 2020 Watershed Congress " - Videos of Conference**

Sixteen videos of sessions from the 2020 Delaware Watershed Congress, sponsored by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, are available here:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3yVloq9sFIziQ\\_yN89x36H7UY3mBz6F](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3yVloq9sFIziQ_yN89x36H7UY3mBz6F).

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### **"UCS Conversations: Connecting Faith, Climate, and Justice" Video of Webinar**

In this discussion, sponsored by the Union of Concerned Scientists, five faith leaders shared how their beliefs inform their environmental advocacy and action. The panelists included an Episcopal priest, a Muslim author and consultant, a Senior Rabbi, a Baptist Pastor Emeritus, and a Buddhist philosopher and teacher. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noDfABKYuTU>.

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## ***NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES***

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

- **Op-Ed: Repower NJ's 'Sacrifice Zones'** (by EJTF member Nancy Griffeth) - The Op-Ed describes the limitations of existing renewable-energy and energy efficiency programs for addressing problems of low-income households in NJ's "sacrifice zones," as well as the regressive aspects of the societal benefits charge that funds such programs. Nancy urges support of the Clean Energy Equity Act legislation, which EJTF has strongly supported. It has passed the NJ Senate, and the next step is for it to be passed by the Assembly and then go to the governor's desk. (You can support the bill by clicking here: <https://www.njshines.org/take-action/>.) The bill would create and fund an agency within the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) whose goal would be to make energy efficiency and renewable energy programs more accessible and more beneficial to households in overburdened communities. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/sacrifice-zones-clean-energy-equity-act-low-income-communities-of-color-renewable-energy-energy-efficiency/>



- Murphy Administration Honors Leaders in Environmental Justice, Recycling, Climate Action with 2020 Environmental Excellence Awards** - The 2020 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards include the Richard J. Sullivan Award, which honors New Jersey resident(s) who demonstrate exceptional leadership and outstanding accomplishment in safeguarding public health, protecting and enhancing New Jersey's diverse natural resources and creating vibrant, sustainable communities that provide economic opportunity for all. This year's recipients "recognized five individuals who helped champion the nation's most protective environmental justice legislation. Not only has their work improved the future of their communities and blazed new trails for environmental justice advocates everywhere, it also demonstrates the power of collaboration between advocates and lawmakers." They are **EJTF's environmental justice partners** Ana Baptista, Melissa Miles and Nicky Sheats (all of the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance), Kim Gaddy (Clean Water Action NJ), and Maria Lopez-Nuñez (Ironbound Community Corporation).  
[https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2020/20\\_0048.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2020/20_0048.htm)
- Column: The Biden-Murphy Environmental Justice Partnership** (by Alan Steinberg, former Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 during the administration of former President George W. Bush, and former Executive Director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission) - The columnists states that "Governor Murphy has achieved an historic legacy in both environmental protection and race relations. Yet that is not the only good environmental justice news for New Jersey. With the election of President-elect Joe Biden, Governor Murphy now has a presidential partner well-disposed to extend legal and financial assistance to overburdened communities in their struggle to provide a safe and clean environment to their citizens." The environmental justice assistance included in Biden's climate change platform is also described in the column.  
<https://www.insidernj.com/biden-murphy-environmental-justice-partnership/>

## ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- NJBPU Announces Successful Conclusion of First Phase of Charge Up New Jersey Electric Vehicle Incentive Program** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) completed Phase One of the "Charge Up New Jersey" electric vehicle (EV) incentive program on 12/15/2020. In order to qualify for incentive, residents must have purchased or leased an eligible EV between 1/17/2020 and 12/15/2020, and will have until 3/15/2021 to submit an application to receive the incentive. Nearly 4,500 applications and \$21.6 million in incentives have been approved. Phase Two is expected to begin when NJ's fiscal year begins in the summer of 2021. Prior to the launch of Phase Two, the BPU will engage in a public process to evaluate the program, with a goal of maximizing the funding for FY 2022 and beyond.  
<https://www.bpu.state.nj.us/bpu/newsroom/2020/approved/20201214.html>





## FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Gov. Murphy Now Says He Will Try to Block Transport of LNG at New Gibbstown Dock**  
Although NJ voted affirmatively for approval of the Gibbstown, NJ liquified natural gas (LNG) export terminal project, Gov. Murphy stated that the approval related only to dredging for construction of the dock and that - in line with the administration's goals for clean energy - his administration would be exploring ways to keep the dock from being used to transport LNG.  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/nj-governor-phil-murphy-says-will-try-block-lng-transport-gibbstown-though-recently-voted-for-key-element-controversial-project/>
- **Enviros Say They Will Fight On Despite Approval of LNG Project** - Environmental advocates have long opposed the Gibbstown, NJ liquified natural gas (LNG) export terminal project, both on environmental impact grounds and because of its inconsistency with the rest of NJ's climate policies. In response to a reporter's question about NJ's affirmative vote, Gov. Murphy stated in his 12/7/2020 COVID-19 briefing that "My big focus is we need more port capacity, especially in South Jersey, and especially we need more alternatives given the development - which will be enormous - of the offshore wind energy. I'm not in any way, shape, or form a proponent of the liquid natural gas element, but I do need, and we do need as a state, more port capacity and that is important across a whole range of interests" (see article above). Additional permits needed for the project are being appealed by environmental advocates, and they have also pledged to appeal DRBC's approval in federal court.  
<https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/hurdle-lng-draft/>
- **DRBC Votes to Approve Gibbstown Fracking Terminal - Shameful Move Comes After Tens of Thousands Speak up in Opposition** - In this press release, Clean Water Action (CWA) reacts to the Delaware River Basin Commission's (DRBC) vote to approve a permit for the highly controversial fracked gas terminal to be built in Gibbstown, NJ, despite a flood of public comments opposing the project. Reactions of a number of environmental groups are cited, including: "The disastrous approval of this massive fracked gas export terminal is a lovely parting gift to the Trump administration and their fossil fuel allies," said Eric Benson, NJ Campaigns Director for Clean Water Action. "Governor Murphy and the other DRBC commissioners are trading the health of the Delaware River, the safety of the surrounding communities, and our planet's climate future for the profits of a private company. This does not serve the people of New Jersey, but it's a huge handout to special interests." EJTF had also sent out "Action Alerts" asking UUFANJ members to sign on to letters opposing the Gibbstown proposed LNG Transfer facility, and also supported efforts by our partners in Empower NJ, led by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, to oppose this project. <https://cleanwateraction.org/releases/drbc-votes-approve-gibbstown-fracking-terminal-shameful-move-comes-after-tens-thousands>

## LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

- **4,800 New Cases Of Childhood Lead Poisoning Reported in New Jersey Annually** - The article quotes a press release from Isles, Inc., a community development and environmental organization based in Trenton, NJ stating that NJ registers more than 4,800 new cases of lead poisoning in children annually, and that most cases come not from lead in water but from exposure to lead dust in homes — "from cracked, chipped or deteriorated paint." Cases of lead poisoning are rising as children spend more time at home due to COVID-19. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/11/4800/>
- **Fulop Announces Expansion of Efforts to Ensure Safe Drinking Water for Jersey City Students, Staff** - Jersey City Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced that a lead remediation project to overhaul the water infrastructure of the Jersey City Public Schools will enter its second phase. Phase 1 retrofitted four school buildings with clean water systems, including extending new copper lines from the street to the buildings. The second phase, totaling approximately \$1.6 million, will replace the water



supply lines at four additional school buildings. In addition, water coolers are being replaced with ADA-compliant water fountains that are touch-free and have bottle-filling capacities, and new water fountains will be added within each building where they never existed before, as determined necessary for ample fresh drinking water supply. <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/jersey-city/sections/government/articles/fulop-announces-expansion-of-efforts-to-ensure-safe-drinking-water-for-jersey-city-student-staff>

## THE GREEN AMENDMENT

- **Should the Right to a Clean Environment Be in Constitution?** - This news article describes a recent presentation given to the Manchester Township Environmental Commission (of which **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh** is the Chairperson) by Green Amendments Founder and leader, Maya van Rossum. Following the presentation, the commissioners discussed a possible township resolution to support The Green Amendment, and stated that they would like more time to research it. <https://www.jerseyshoreonline.com/manchester/should-the-right-to-a-clean-environment-be-in-constitution/>
- **Pennsylvania's Long Ignored Green Amendment Inspired a Leader, a State & a Movement: Success in Marple Township, PA** - The Board of Commissioners of Marple Township, PA voted unanimously to reject a proposed residential development plan that would clear-cut 89 acres of forest of the Don Guanella woods, which is a 178-acre forest that has provided many environmental, health and recreational benefits to Delaware County, PA for years. In rejecting the plan, the township Board of Commissioners cited Article 1 Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution—its Green Amendment. Decisions like that of Marple Township not only protect the environmental rights of PA communities but also demonstrate the power of a Green Amendment. In presenting his argument to reject the proposal, Board Member Michael Molinaro said, "I personally believe this [Article 1 Section 27] trumps everything else, any code you may have, any by right you say you may have, anything else. This is the role of us as municipal government to protect our natural resources as best we can, especially when there's not that many left...So I believe this is our duty to protect these woodlands for not only us, not only Delaware County, PA, but also for future generations, so they can look back and say, 'You know, this board stood up to this builder, and they did what was right.'" Link to video of his statement at the meeting is here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SeHlhb\\_zzM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SeHlhb_zzM&feature=youtu.be) and a news story is here: [https://www.delcotimes.com/news/marple-commissioners-unanimously-reject-plan-for-don-guanella-site/article\\_1f18c070-3f0c-11eb-a529-2bc0b2e7e24c.html](https://www.delcotimes.com/news/marple-commissioners-unanimously-reject-plan-for-don-guanella-site/article_1f18c070-3f0c-11eb-a529-2bc0b2e7e24c.html).

## RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **Developers Bid to Build More Wind Farms off NJ Coast, Tripling Capacity** - NJ's second solicitation for offshore wind farms resulted in bids being submitted by two firms: Ørsted, the firm that won the first solicitation in 2019,; and Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind, which is a joint venture between EDF Renewables North America and Shell New Energies US LLC. The projects will depend on subsidies, and both included pledges for support of development of the NJ Wind Port project, the first port on the East Coast devoted to the offshore-wind energy sector. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/more-offshore-wind-farms-proposed-jersey-shore-triple-capacity-electricity-orsted-atlantic-shores-offshore-wind/>



- **Paulsboro Port to Host \$250m Plant for Building Offshore Wind Towers** - Gov. Murphy, along with representatives from the EEW Group (offshore wind foundation pipe production company), Ørsted, legislators, and members of the building trades gathered at the site of the future Paulsboro Marine Terminal in Gloucester County to announce a \$250 million investment in a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility to build steel components, known as monopiles, for offshore wind turbines that will serve the entire United States offshore wind industry. (A video of the announcement is here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJG\\_iAadnxg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJG_iAadnxg&feature=youtu.be) and the Governor's press release is here: <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562020/approved/20201222a.shtml>.) The facility, which will be located at the Paulsboro Marine Terminal in Gloucester County, is the largest industrial offshore wind investment in the United States to date and will create more than 500 high-paying jobs. Construction on the facility will break ground in January 2021, with production beginning in 2023. Gov. Murphy pointed out the irony of this facility for renewable energy being built on the remediated former BP terminal site. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/nj-offshore-wind-gets-new-plant-build-offshore-wind-towers-paulsboro-south-jersey-eww-orsted/>
- **PSEG Says It Will Take 25% Stake in Ørsted Ocean Wind Project** - Last summer, the Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) announced its intention to divest itself of its power generation division's fossil and solar generation portfolio, while retaining its nuclear power plants and exploring an expansion into offshore wind. Proceeding in that direction, PSEG announced a plan to invest in a 25% interest in the Ørsted Ocean Wind project, a 1,100-megawatt facility 15 miles off Atlantic City, which is the first offshore-wind project in NJ. The acquisition is subject to the approval of the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU). <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/pseg-offshore-wind-25-stake-ocean-wind-project/>
- **State Drags Feet on Releasing Clean-Energy Costs — Again** - For over a year, various entities ranging from the NJ Division of Rate Counsel director to the NJ business community have been asking that a cost analysis be completed on the Energy Management Plan (EMP). The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) had the first quarter of 2020 as a target date for completion, but it has not been completed, and now the BPU states that it needs to be redone to take the impacts of COVID-19 into effect. The delay in completing the analysis will likely result in decisions being made on components of the clean-energy program before knowing what the costs will be for ratepayers and businesses, who will subsidize many of those efforts. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/bpu-clean-energy-transition-costs-unknown-consumers-businesses-worry-about-impact/>
- **Op-Ed: How Fishing and Offshore Wind Can — and Should — Coexist** (by Capt. Paul Eidman, who owns and operates Reel Therapy Fishing Charters in Monmouth County) - The author, a NJ-based recreational angler and fishing-charter business-owner, maintains that recreational fishing and wind turbines can coexist. He states that, "... the turbine structures will provide hundreds of fishable artificial reefs and current breaks that will attract numerous fish species. We have seen from Europe the synergies between the recreational fishing industry and the offshore-wind industry, where fishermen and boats not only coexist with offshore-wind turbines, but thrive. At the first U.S. wind farm off the coast of

Rhode Island, the Block Island Wind Farm, we have seen that the areas at the base of the turbines have created artificial reef structures that almost instantly attract mussels first and then fish, and other species from the seafloor to the surface." <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/recreational-fishing-offshore-wind-wind-turbines-nj-coexist-thrive/>



- **Op-Ed: Electrification Is Key to Creating Thousands of Jobs and Clean, Healthier Homes** (by Jeff Tittel, the director of the NJ Sierra Club) - Jeff Tittel warns against intimidation by misinformation about electrifying NJ's homes and businesses, including upgrading buildings with innovative electric appliances powered by renewable energy. He states that NJ's Energy Master Plan (EMP) goals can't be met without phasing out fossil fuel appliances. Further, studies have shown that fossil fuel appliances produce dangerous toxins. Electrification also will provide jobs and save ratepayers money through energy efficiency and possible rebates for efficient retrofits. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/electrification-energy-master-plans-key-element-jeff-tittel-new-jersey-sierra-club/>

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- **NJ, Other States Pass on Climate-Change Plan for Transportation** - Only three states (Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) and the District of Columbia signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to participate in Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI), but eight other states, including New Jersey, signaled that they will not sign now, but will continue to work on the development of the details of the TCI program while pursuing state-specific initiatives to reduce emissions and provide clean transportation solutions. They have the opportunity to join the program in the future. The TCI was planned to be a regional collaboration among 12 Northeastern states and the District of Columbia, in which each would tax transportation fuels with the intention of funding programs to reduce carbon emissions in the transportation sector, with proposed "minimum investments" of 35% of proceeds earmarked for "underserved and overburdened communities." EJTF had joined with our EJ partners Clean Water Action (CWA), the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA), and Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) to urge NJ not to participate. The opposition to TCI is based on concerns including the possibility that such a program is likely to disproportionately impact environmental justice communities, and that funds raised could be diverted for other purposes, as has occurred in NJ in the past. TCI also represents a regressive tax on low- and moderate-income households. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/nj-declines-regional-global-warming-fossil-fuels-cap-pump-price-increase/>

- **Big but Affordable Effort Needed for America to Reach Net-Zero Emissions by 2050, Princeton Study Shows** - A new study led by Princeton University, "Net-Zero America: Potential Pathways, Infrastructure, and Impacts" provides five different technologically and economically plausible energy system pathways for the U.S. to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, and refines the modeling results "to provide highly-resolved mapping, sector-by-sector, of the timing and spatial distribution of changes in energy infrastructure, capital investment, employment, air pollution, land use, and other key outcomes at a state and local level." A summary is available here: <https://environmenthalfcentury.princeton.edu/research/2020/big-affordable-effort-needed-america-reach-net-zero-emissions-2050-princeton-study> and a podcast with a discussion is here: <https://acee.princeton.edu/acee-news/listen-larson-and-jenkins-discuss-net-zero-america-study-in-podcast/>. The study finds that net-zero emissions by 2050 is an achievable goal, but will require a massive, nationwide effort. The study concludes that a successful net-zero transition could be accomplished with annual spending on energy that is comparable or lower as a percentage of GDP to what the nation spends annually on energy today, but major investment decisions need to start now. The Interim Report is available here: <https://environmenthalfcentury.princeton.edu>

## POLLUTION

- **Plastic Pollution Is Everywhere. Study Reveals How It Travels** - From the Princeton University Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment: "Plastic pollution is ubiquitous today, with microplastic particles from disposable goods found in natural environments throughout the globe, including Antarctica. But how those particles move through and accumulate in the environment is poorly understood. Now a Princeton University study has revealed the mechanism by which microplastics, like Styrofoam, and particulate pollutants are carried long distances through soil and other porous media, with implications for preventing the spread and accumulation of contaminants in food and water sources" (article by Molly A. Seltzer). <https://acee.princeton.edu/acee-news/plastic-pollution-is-everywhere-study-reveals-how-it-travels/>

## OTHER

- **Whether NJ Bolts Regional Power Grid Could Depend on Offshore Wind — and Biden Rules** - 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, including leaving the PJM regional power grid, and a decision had been expected by the end of the year. However, delays in offshore wind permit approvals may result in time to take advantage of a Federal administration that will likely be more favorable towards renewable energy resources, hopefully resulting in a change in the policies that resulted in NJ considering leaving the PJM grid. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/nj-clean-energy-offshore-wind-pjm-interconnection-grid-biden-rules-more-favorable-pseg-exelon-critics/>
- **Scientists Seek Evidence That 'Forever Chemicals' Hinder COVID-19 Vaccines** - There is a preprint (not yet peer-reviewed) study that found that PFAS (perfluorinated alkylate substances) in the blood may aggravate the course of COVID-19, and another report that found a decreased immune response to other vaccines among children exposed to PFAS. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are assessing the intersection between PFAS exposure and COVID-19. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/covid-19-pfas-epa-vaccine-efficacy-study-environmentalists/>



- **Pandemic Has Been Tough on Employment in N.J.'s Green Energy Sector** - 16% of NJ's energy efficiency jobs, which is the state's largest energy jobs sector, have been lost since last December, according to a recent analysis. This is reflective of a national trend in this jobs sector. Investment in energy efficiency programs could result in job creation, air pollution reduction, and utility bill savings, according to industry and representatives as well as environmental advocates such as Jeff Tittel, director of the NJ Sierra Club. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/nj-energy-efficiency-pandemic-jobs-climate-change-thousands-jobs-lost/>
- **NJ Environmental Commissioner McCabe to Retire** - Catherine McCabe has been the Commissioner of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for three years, in which her key initiatives have been related to climate change, environmental justice, and natural resources damages. Some environmental advocates have praised her for moving DEP in these directions, but others, such as Jeff Tittel, director of the NJ Sierra Club, have faulted her for not acting strongly enough to mitigate damage caused by regulatory rollbacks in the Christie administration. <https://www.njspotlight.com/2020/12/nj-dep-department-of-environmental-protection-commissioner-to-retire-jan-15-mixed-reviews/>



**MORATORIUM MONDAYS CONTINUE**

**Please continue to contact Gov. Murphy every Monday and urge him to declare a climate emergency moratorium on fossil fuel projects! These efforts have been successful in that a number of projects have been stopped or delayed in the past year. 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**

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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

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