



# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter - January 2022

<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.**

**Post-election environmental seesaw in State offices and legislature (see p. 3).**

## *UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES*

### *Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County (UUCMC)*

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County (UUCMC) just finished its installation of new solar panels! After COVID and supply-chain-related delays, the panels and all their mountings finally arrived and are now in place. They replace the earlier panels, installed in 2006.



These panels are significantly more efficient, and combined with an increase (about double) in the number of panels, now supply nearly four times the wattage of the previous system - about 40 megawatts.

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## ***Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF)***

The Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship's (MUUF) Green Earth Ministry (GEM), despite limitations of the pandemic, has still been proceeding with those activities that are possible during this time, including the following:

1. A Zoom discussion of "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants," facilitated by **EJTF member Jo Sippie-Gora**, was a well-received success. Of note was participation by two members of Earth Aware, a newly formed "green team" at the Morristown United Methodist Church, who had recently approached GEM for opportunities to collaborate.
2. Reverend Alison Miller, Senior Minister of MUUF, was an early endorser of the federal Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. Our Morristown chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby was very pleased that she attended and contributed an eloquent moral component to our lobby meeting on December 1, 2021 with Rep. Mikie Sherrill.
3. During January 2022, GEM will be encouraging its Fellowship members to deal with any post-holiday "blues" by smartly emptying their homes of unneeded furniture, other household goods and clothing, and recommending donating them to Restore in Morristown (including their book bin) and animal shelters.

## ***Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit (Beacon)***

On November 30, 2021, the Beacon UU Green Earth Ministry sponsored a fun and informative webinar on Habitat Gardening for Birds, Butterflies, and Wildlife. The webinar featured Randi Eckel of [Toadshade Wildflower Farms](#). Ms. Eckel talked about the whys and hows of backyard gardening with native plants, the importance of this kind of landscaping to local native wildlife, and where to find more information on the topic. Useful websites provided include Toadshade's own website, plus the [NJ Invasive Species Strike Team](#), and the [Native Plant Society of NJ](#). Happy Gardening!

The webinar was co-sponsored by the First Unitarian Fellowship in Hunterdon County and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills.

### ***EJTF ACTIVITIES***

- **The EJTF December monthly meeting** included a guest speaker, Andy Kricun, Co-chair of the Jersey Water Works Committee, Managing Director of Moonshot Missions (with its emphasis on underserved communities), Senior Fellow at US Water Alliance, and former Executive Director of the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA). With over 30 years with the CCMUA, including more than 20 years as its chief engineer, he was instrumental in transforming the CCMUA from an entity that fulfilled its wastewater treatment mission in the traditional way (i.e., "do no harm") without mitigating impacts such as odor emissions on surrounding communities, to being a good neighbor that did mitigate those impacts, and ultimately to becoming an anchor agency that implemented community improvements. He focused on insuring that improvements were both equitable and affordable for the environmental justice communities impacted. The improvements to Camden, including those involving the wastewater treatment plant, are described in the documentary "Heart of Camden: The Story of Father Michael Doyle."

**There have been some steps forward, and some backtracking, in environmental/ environmental justice matters in State offices (including the Governor's office) and the NJ legislature since the election.**

**STEPS FORWARD** (see the following articles):

- "Aggressive New Rule Will Phase Out Diesel Trucks in Favor of Electric Vehicles" (p. 13)
- "State Plans Sweeping New Climate-Change Regulations" (p. 15)
- "Some Lawmakers Want to Transform the Energy Master Plan into State Law" (p. 16)
- "Murphy Administration Advances Efforts to Sequester Carbon, Fight Climate Change with Release of Framework to Guide Management of Natural and Working Lands" (p. 16)

**BACKTRACKING** (see the following articles):

- "DEP Nixes Climate-Change Commitment Sought by Advocates" (p. 15)
- "Lawmakers Brush Back Green-Energy Push" (p. 16)
- "Murphy Wants New Names with Corporate Ties for Pinelands Commission" (p. 20)

You can email NJ Senators to urge them not to eliminate Pinelands Commission commissioners that have environmental backgrounds and replace them with corporate nominees, here:

<https://pinelandsalliance.salsalabs.org/opposemurphycommissionnominations/index.html>.

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Also, the NJ Clean Energy Equity Act bill, which had passed the NJ Senate 11/16/2020, is not to be brought up for consideration in the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee this session. Our partner "NJ Shines" issued a video describing how environmental justice and low-income New Jersey families would benefit the most from lower monthly electric bills, local jobs and a more resilient community that would result from passage of the bill. View the video here: <https://vimeo.com/537797375>. The bill will now need to be brought up in the next legislative session, which begins January 11, 2022. This may also be a good time to advocate for redrafting the bill to reflect even greater clean energy equity.

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**AN AREA TO WATCH** (see the following article)

- "Push to Defang Consumer Watchdog in Energy-Price Cases?" (p. 19)

## **FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual**

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

### JANUARY 2022 -

(with [hyperlinks](#) to details on the following pages)

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <a href="#">Electrifying NJ's School Bus Fleet and Other Vehicles</a> - 7:30 p.m.	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <a href="#">Innovation as Climate Action: Advances in Weather Forecasting</a> - 11:00 a.m.	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <a href="#">NJBPU Grid Modernization Stakeholder Meeting</a> - 9:00 a.m.	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <a href="#">NJ Clean Air Council Monthly Meeting</a> - 9:30 a.m.  <a href="#">New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers</a> - 12:00 p.m.  <a href="#">Energy Democracy and Empowerment</a> - 1:15 p.m.	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <a href="#">DRBC Advisory Committee on Climate Change Meeting</a> - 2:00 p.m.	<b>27</b> <a href="#">Lead-Free NJ January Membership Meeting</a> - 5:30 p.m.	<b>28</b> <a href="#">Registration due for DEP "Emissions" rule Public Hearing testimony/ comments</a> - by 5:00 p.m.	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>(Feb. 1)</b> <a href="#">Public Hearing on NJ DEP Proposed Rule "Control and Prohibition of Carbon Dioxide Emissions"</a> - 9:00 a.m.				

### **Electrifying NJ's School Bus Fleet and Other Vehicles - Webinar** Wednesday, January 5, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

"Bill Beren, Transportation Committee Chair for the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club, will present on the States efforts to convert diesel powered school buses and medium & heavy trucks to electric vehicles. Buckle your seat belts! The state is hitting the pedal when it comes to cutting back on gasoline and diesel consumption! Bill will answer questions about the States plans and the incentives offered to speed up this transition to electric school buses and trucks, and will discuss ways you can help." Presented by the Hunterdon Warren Group of the NJ Sierra Club. The link to RSVP is here:

[https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002GGTGAA4&mapLinkHref=.](https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002GGTGAA4&mapLinkHref=)

**"Innovation as Climate Action: Advances in Weather Forecasting: How Federal Agencies Partner with the Private Sector to Tackle Climate Challenges" - Webinar**  
**Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is presenting a briefing on federal policies and programs supporting innovation in weather forecasting, an essential capability to help communities prepare for and adapt to extreme weather. During this briefing, experts will discuss "the policies and programs that guide public-private partnerships, emerging weather forecasting technologies, and new business models enabling the government to more effectively tap into private-sector innovation across the weather forecasting value chain." Additional information and the link to join the webinar are here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/011222weather>.

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**NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Grid Modernization Stakeholder Meeting - Webinar**  
**Friday, January 14, 2022, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

This is the third in a series of public meetings being held by the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to collect stakeholder input on the current distribution grid interconnection policies and process, and potential improvements that will enable faster grid modernization and higher levels of distributed energy resource (DER) absorption. This session, "**EDC Readout - Collaborative Alignment**" will open with summary comments from each of the electric distribution companies (EDCs) on their current baseline process, historical data from key research questions, and then proceed to a structured conversation on any priority topics raised from previous stakeholder sessions. A draft report is due to be issued February 18, 2022, with a public comment session on March 1, 2022, and a final report presented on May 2, 2022. Register for this stakeholder meeting here:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3639667579817395983>.

[The previous stakeholder sessions were:

**"Grid Modernization Context"** (a recording of the webinar overlaid by graphics is here:

<https://njcefiles.s3.amazonaws.com/NJ+BPU+Grid+Modernization+Stakeholder+Meeting+1-Project+Overview.mp4>) and

**"Stakeholder Data/Comment Ingestion"** (a recording of the webinar including the graphics is here:

<https://njcefiles.s3.amazonaws.com/2021-11-16+09.00+NJ+BPU+Grid+Modernization+Stakeholder+Meeting+2-Stakeholder+Input.mp4>.)]

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**NJ Clean Air Council Monthly Meeting - Virtual**  
**Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 9:30 a.m.**

The meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams; information on joining the meeting is on the Clean Air Council website, available here: <https://nj.gov/dep/cleanair/cac-calendar.html>.

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**"Energy Democracy and Empowerment" - Webinar**  
**Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 1:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.**

"We need to reorganize the energy system to empower communities: What does that look like? How do we create benefits and support for communities, open up space for them to imagine and contribute to debates about energy futures, and find ways to diversify ownership of energy? How can we scale it nationally?" The Security and

Sustainability Forum and Arizona State University "LightWorks" are presenting this webinar to address these questions. The panel includes:

Clark Miller, Moderator, Professor and Director of the Center for Energy & Society, College of Global Futures, Arizona State University;  
Chéri Smith, Founder & CEO, Indigenized Energy Initiative (formerly Covenant Tribal Solar Initiative);  
Emily Schapira, Board Member, President & CEO, Philadelphia Energy Authority; and  
Cecilio Ortiz-Garcia, Chair, Department of Public Affairs & Security Studies, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

The registration link is here: <https://register.gotowebrinar.com/register/8180288864113463310>.

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**"New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers" Vivek Srikrishnan -  
Webinar  
Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

"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 gives anyone interested in energy the opportunity to learn from the rising stars in the field. This webinar will be presented by Vivek Srikrishnan, Assistant Professor of Biological and Environmental Engineering, Cornell University. Dr. Srikrishnan works on climate risk management, at the interface of systems engineering, climate dynamics, economics, data science, and decision science. The topic is to be announced; additional information and the registration link will be available here: <https://irving.dartmouth.edu/engagement/new-energy-conversations-early-career-energy-researchers>.

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**DRBC Advisory Committee on Climate Change Meeting - Virtual  
Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

Additional information will be available here: <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/advisory/>.

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**Lead-Free NJ January Membership Meeting - Virtual  
Thursday, January 27, 2022, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

"Lead-Free NJ" is an inclusive and equitable collaborative focused on removing lead from NJ's environment. Participate in their January Membership Meeting to network and discuss lead policy with others, learn more about Lead-Free NJ's recent work to get the lead out, and find out how we can work together to make change. Register here: [https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEpcu2hrD4pH9EumM\\_6hG8gLgGTjZOOMyPA](https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEpcu2hrD4pH9EumM_6hG8gLgGTjZOOMyPA).

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**Rutgers Climate Institute Listing of Virtual Climate Seminars**

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. Currently there are no events listed for January 2022, but the site includes updated information over time; **check the site periodically for an updated list:**  
<https://climatesociety.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/range.listevents/>.

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**February**

**Public Hearing on NJ DEP Proposed Rule "Control and Prohibition of Carbon Dioxide Emissions" - **Virtual**  
Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 9:00 a.m.**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has proposed new air pollution control rules for "Control and Prohibition of Carbon Dioxide Emissions," with three major components that are intended to focus on reductions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from stationary sources. The rules would affect close to 100 natural-gas power plants and thousands of commercial and industrial boilers. A copy of the proposal is available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/proposals/20211206a.pdf>. Additional information, including instructions for testifying at a public hearing to be held 2/1/2022, and/or submitting written comments, are here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/notices/20211206a.html>. **If you are interested in providing oral testimony or submitting written comments at the virtual public hearing, email [heidi.jones@dep.nj.gov](mailto:heidi.jones@dep.nj.gov) no later than 5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 28, 2022**, with your contact information (name, organization, telephone number, and email address). **Written comments are due by March 7, 2022.** Also see the news article on p. 15.

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**VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS**

**"The Future of Electric Cars: How Do We Charge Them Up? Do They Really Bring Benefits?" - **Video of Webinar****

The shift to more electric cars and transportation brings opportunities for control, extreme performance, energy reduction and flexibility, cheaper operation, and lower emissions. Customers see limited range, battery performance limits, slow refueling, and lack of charging facilities as big drawbacks. This presentation by Philip Krein of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, who has been working on electric and hybrid cars for almost 30 years, showed how the energy needs of most electric and plug-in hybrid cars can be met with the conventional electrical outlets most of us have. This webinar was a Princeton University Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment highlight seminar. The video and presentation slides are available here: <https://acee.princeton.edu/events/highlight-seminar-philip-krein/>.

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**"The New Era of Extreme Weather – Implications for Vulnerable and Marginalized Communities" - **Video of Webinar****

In this webinar, J. Marshall Shepherd, the Georgia Athletic Association Distinguished Professor of Geography and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Georgia and a leading expert in weather, climate and remote sensing, examined the emerging scholarly and real-world evidence that climate change is currently impacting extreme weather events. He then turned his attention to how this "new normal" is disproportionately affecting communities of color, the poor and the elderly. Shepherd drew extensively from his recent research, personal perspectives and work on major National Academies studies. This event was cosponsored by Princeton's High Meadows Environmental Institute and other Princeton departments. The video is available here: <https://environment.princeton.edu/videos/the-new-era-of-extreme-weather/>.

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## **“How Might Controlled Fusion Fit into the Emerging Low-Carbon Electricity Markets of the Mid-21st Century?” - Video of Webinar**

In this presentation, George Tynan, Distinguished Professor of Engineering Physics, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department, Jacobs School of Engineering, UC San Diego, examined the characteristics that fusion-based generation technologies will need to have if they are to compete in the emerging low-carbon energy system of the mid-21st century. This webinar was a Princeton University Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment highlight seminar. The video is available here: <https://acee.princeton.edu/events/highlight-seminar-george-tynan/>.

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## **"Columbia Energy Tech Revolution Forum – Wind Energy: How Did We Get Here and What’s Next?" - Video of Webinar**

The Center on Global Energy Policy presented the first webinar in the Columbia Energy Technology Revolution Forum, a new webinar series hosted by Paul Dabbar, CGEP Distinguished Visiting Fellow and former Under Secretary for Science at the U.S. Department of Energy. "The series will focus on frank, practical, scientific and technological discussions on the prospects of new technologies in the energy world. Each session will bring together experts to focus on a different energy technology." This discussion examined how wind technology evolved from the technology failures and bankruptcy era of 2000 to the industry we see today. Speakers explored the evolution of U.S. wind policy and technology over the last twenty years, the future of wind technology, and policies that would support further deployment. The video is available here: <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events-calendar/columbia-energy-tech-revolution-forum-wind-energy-how-did-we-get-here-and-what-s-next>.

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## **"Carbon Capture and Storage in Wyoming: Fill 'er Up" - Video of Webinar**

Profound changes in state and federal policy are shaping the landscape for carbon capture, use, and storage in real time. Throughout the United States, these changes may be felt most in Wyoming, where extractive industries have long contributed to the economy, the culture, communities and tax base. This webinar was the fourth event in the Center on Global Energy Policy’s Women in Energy program "Women in Energy carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS) Roadshow" series. This initiative aims to highlight the extraordinary accomplishments of women in the CCUS field and empower a workforce that is equitable, diverse, and strong by advancing equality and opportunity. This webinar featured a discussion of the changes in federal and state laws concerning CCUS and how those changes might affect investment, development, climate, and communities in Wyoming. The conversation featured energy experts from Wyoming who also discussed ways to grow the women’s share of the energy workforce and what organizations in the public and private sectors are looking for in new recruits. The video is available here: <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events-calendar/carbon-capture-and-storage-wyoming-fill-er>.

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## **"How Can Carbon Mineralization Help Fight Climate Change" - Video of Webinar**

Carbon mineralization is a process in which carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) becomes bound in rocks as a solid mineral. This happens naturally at a slow rate as certain rocks are exposed to carbon dioxide,



permanently removing small amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere each year. A new report co-authored by Columbia University scholars finds the climate change benefits of enhancing carbon mineralization processes could be enormous. The Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy presented this webinar featuring several co-authors of the report, who presented their recommendations for using carbon mineralization processes to help achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The video is available here: <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events-calendar/how-can-carbon-mineralization-help-fight-climate-change?>.

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### **"The Hydrogen Revolution and the Energy Transition" - Video of Webinar**

The Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy hosted an exploration of the role of hydrogen in the energy transition. The discussion focused on the role of low-carbon hydrogen in meeting the world's climate goals and energy needs, as well as why hydrogen presents a profound business, social, and health opportunity (and how green hydrogen may be cheaper than many fossil fuels within five years). The event featured opening remarks from Marco Alverà, CEO of Snam, and served as the U.S. release of his book, *The Hydrogen Revolution*. The video is available here: <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events-calendar/hydrogen-revolution-and-energy-transition>.

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### **Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) Briefing Series: Reduce and Reuse How to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Building Materials, Plastics, and Food Videos of Webinars**

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) presented a briefing series about the climate impacts of producing building materials, plastics, and food. Panelists explained the upstream greenhouse gas emissions generated from the production of these materials and discussed solutions designed to reduce those emissions at scale.

- **"Building Materials: From Production to Reuse"** - the video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/120821waste>.
  - **"The Climate Consequences of Plastics"** - the video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/120921waste>.
  - **"Reducing Emissions by Reducing Food Waste"** - the video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/121021waste>.
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### **National Adaptation Forum "Tribal & Indigenous Climate Adaptation Series" - Videos of Webinars**

This four-part series was sponsored by the National Adaptation Forum, and focused on advancing discussions about climate adaptation in Tribal and Indigenous communities. The series highlighted promising adaptation practices, and showcased the diversity of approaches to climate adaptation. The series would be of interest not only to Tribal and Indigenous professionals, but also their neighbors, allies, and other adaptation professionals interested in innovative approaches.

This series touched on themes including Tribal climate and health, community-led adaptation, and Indigenous sustainability practices. The sessions have diverse formats and include panels, individual speakers, and a documentary film. Videos of all four sessions are available here: <https://www.nationaladaptationforum.org/other-adaptation-events/webinars>.

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### **"Thinking About Adaptation: Exploring the Resist-Accept-Direct (RAD) Framework" Video of Webinar**

The Resist-Accept-Direct framework allows managers to choose from three management responses:

- 1) Resist the direction of change, by working to maintain or restore function, structure or composition, based on historical or table current conditions;
- 2) Accept the direction of change, by allowing the change to occur without intervening; or
- 3) Direct the change, by actively managing processes, function, structure or composition toward a new desired condition.

The video is available here: <https://noaabroadcast.adobeconnect.com/p66cqrradour/>.

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### **"Balancing Environmental Stewardship With Economic Development" - Video of Webinar Thursday, December 9, 2021, 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Presented by Richard W. Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator and sponsored by NOAA. Dr. Spinrad has identified one of his top priorities for NOAA to be to advance economic development without sacrificing environmental stewardship, with a particular focus on advancing the New Blue Economy; this seminar examined that priority. NOAA has also emphasized that all work towards environmental stewardship and economic development will be done through a strong lens of equity. In this discussion, participants learned more about the direct relationships between economic development, environmental stewardship, and equity. Additional information and the video are available here:

<https://libguides.library.noaa.gov/c.php?g=978979&p=7105239>.

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### **Virtual 2021 Climate Leadership Series -Videos of Webinars and Workshops**

"The annual Climate Leadership Conference is North America's premier event dedicated to addressing the climate crisis through policy, innovation, and business solutions. Hosted by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) and The Climate Registry, the conference brings together forward-thinking leaders from business, government, academia, and the non-profit community to explore energy and climate solutions and opportunities, and to showcase climate leadership." All sessions of the series are now available to view; they are:

**"The Global Race to Net Zero"** including:

- **"Driving Capital and Innovation Towards Global Decarbonization;"**
- **"Governor Jay Inslee Shares the Important Work of Fellow 'Supernationals' in Battling the Climate Crisis;"** and
- **"America Is All In Presents Breakthrough Policies and All-In Approach for Achieving U.S. Climate Goals."**

**"Business Leaders Driving Climate Action" including "Decarbonizing the U.S. Power Sector."**

**"Climate Change Rises to Become a National Priority" including:**

- **"The Moment is Now: Prioritizing Climate Action;"**
- **"Confronting the Threat of Climate Change and Building Resilience throughout the U.S.;"**
- **"Environment, Economy and Equity: A Conversation with EPA Administrator, Michael Regan;"** and
- **"The Road to Zero Emissions and the Future of Transport."**

**"The Critical Role that Natural Climate Solutions Play in Meeting Corporate Commitments" including Keynote interview with Lisa Jackson, VP of Environment, Policy, and Social Initiatives at Apple and formerly Commissioner of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency including:**

**"Climate Risk, Opportunity, and Disclosure: Insights and Trends from TCFD (Task Force for Climate-Related Financial Risk) Leaders"**

**"Transforming the Built Environment through Smart Technology and Innovation"**

**"Investing in our Cities: Pursuing Smart, Resilient Infrastructure"**

**"Pathways to Net Zero: The Fundamentals of Getting to Zero" including:**

- **"Part 1: Science Based Targets and New Criteria Considered for Net Zero Goals;"**
- **"Part 2: Leveraging Quality Offset Projects to Meet Net Zero Targets;"** and
- **"Part 3: Where it all Comes Together: Best Practices and the Net Zero Portal (NZP)."**

Videos of all sessions in the conference are available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN4N2hXHjScMzyTJOKiV18w/playlists>.

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### **"Futuristic Solar Energy Innovations" - Recording of Radio Show**

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI (co-hosted by **EJTF member Sally Gellert**) presented a program in which DV Venkataraman from the University of Massachusetts Amherst discussed new, more efficient, cutting-edge innovations in solar technology. It is also expected that the new solar cells will be cheaper and manufactured in the U.S. A link to the recording is here:

<https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=27106>.

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**EJTF's GOALS FOR 2021**  
**[We'll decide on next year's goals early in 2022]**

**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 pp. 13-14.

**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 p. 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 p. 14.

***NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES***

**[covering 11/27/2021 – 12/27/2021]**

- **Leading American Naturalist EO Wilson, Dubbed ‘Darwin’s Heir’, Dies at 92** - E.O. Wilson, the Pulitzer Prize-winning former Harvard University biologist who was called the "Father of Biodiversity" and who founded the field of sociobiology, died 12/26/2021. He had a profound impact on our understanding of how nature works, the interdependence of human life and the ecosystems that support it, and the dire impact on human life of mass extinctions that are bound to result if human interference with the environment continues at its current pace. <https://enviropolitics.com/leading-american-naturalist-eo-wilson-dubbed-darwins-heir-dies-at-92/>

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

- **Murphy Touts Environmental Justice at Camden Landfill-Turned-Park** - A former municipal landfill that had become more derelict over the years has become Camden's largest park, providing access to underserved communities to a newly-remediated waterfront, hiking and biking paths, a restored wildlife habitat, playground, and amphitheater. According to Gov. Murphy's press release (available here: <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20211130a.shtml>), the "Camden landfill transformation into waterfront park will help residents safely access outdoors, address lingering pollution, (and) public health issues." <https://newjerseydailypress.com/murphy-touts-environmental-justice-at-camden-landfill-turned-park/>

- **DEP Commissioner Latourette Launches Additional Environmental Justice Initiatives** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced an expansion of its Office of Environmental Justice, a revamping of the DEP EJ website (available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/>), and the beginning of a year-long set of community engagement sessions "designed to help inform DEP policy and actions with the goal of better protecting the environment and public health in overburdened communities." The first of these on-the-ground sessions took place in Burlington City in November and was also available on Zoom. Information about DEP's 2022 "Community Engagement Tour" will be available on the DEP EJ website. [https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2021/21\\_0036.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2021/21_0036.htm)
- **Mayor Ras J. Baraka Announces Public Involvement in “Newark360: Shaping Our City Together,” the City’s 10-Year Master Plan** - Pledging that "Newark’s next master plan will be a national model for how residents can consciously shape the future of their cities," Newark Mayor Baraka launched "Newark360, Shaping Our City Together." It includes an interactive website (available here: <https://www.newark360.org>) that allows users to share what they like about their neighborhoods, what they want to change, and how they envision their neighborhoods 10 years from now. <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/mayor-ras-j-baraka-announces-public-involvement-newark360-shaping-city-together-citys-10-year-master-plan/>

## ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- **Aggressive New Rule Will Phase Out Diesel Trucks in Favor of Electric Vehicles** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced adoption of the Advanced Clean Truck (ACT) regulations similar to those first adopted in California. Part of the NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (PACT) initiative, the rules require manufacturers of vehicles more than 8,500 pounds to participate in a credit/deficit program intended to increase the percentage of zero-emission vehicles sold. While these vehicles account for only 4 percent of all vehicles, they make up nearly 25 percent of transportation-sector greenhouse emissions. (Additional information is included in the DEP press release, available here: [https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2021/21\\_0043.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2021/21_0043.htm).) However, according to Melissa Miles, executive director of the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (and **EJTF partner**), the rule still does not do enough to "guarantee marked improvements in pollution-burdened and diesel-impacted communities." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-diesel-trucks-electrical-vehicles-murphy-new-rule-greenhouse-gas-emissions-advanced-clean-truck-rule/>



- **NJEDA Opens NJ ZIP Pilot Applications to Greater Shore Area** - The New Jersey Economic Development Authority is opening applications for its expansion of an electric truck state subsidy program geared toward businesses in dozens of cities up and down the state - now including the Jersey Shore and some of the state’s most impoverished urban centers. State officials say the goal of the New

Jersey Zero-Emission Incentive Program is to entice businesses that rely on commercial trucking to phase out their gasoline-powered vehicles and replace them with the cleaner electric alternatives.

<https://www.njeda.com/njeda-opens-nj-zip-pilot-applications-to-greater-shore-area/>

- **New Electric Vehicle Toolkits for Local Governments Show How to Act Locally on Electrifying Transportation** - The Environment NJ Research & Policy Center released two toolkits to assist local governments in transitioning to electric vehicles. They are: "An Electric Vehicle Toolkit for Local Governments" (available here: <https://environmentnewjerseycenter.org/sites/environment/files/reports/NJE%20EV%20Toolkit%20Oct21.pdf>) and "Charge Local: A Guide to Installing EV Charging Stations for Municipalities in Morris County" (available here: <https://environmentnewjerseycenter.org/sites/environment/files/reports/NJE%20EV%20Toolkit%20Morris%20Oct21%201.4%20.pdf>). The toolkits highlight tools and policies that leading towns have adopted to make it easier to buy and own an EV. <https://environmentnewjerseycenter.org/news/njc/new-electric-vehicle-toolkits-local-governments-show-how-act-locally-electrifying>
- **Opinion: Electric Trucks, the Smart, Healthy Answer to Dirty Diesel** (by Scott Campbell, president of the New Jersey State Electrical Workers Association representing 20 IBEW Locals and Councils, and Debra Coyle, the executive director of the New Jersey Work Environment Council "a coalition of 70 labor, community and environmental organizations working for safe, secure jobs and a healthy sustainable environment") - The authors strongly advocate that NJ become one of the first states to adopt Advanced Clean Truck (ACT) regulations like those in California, which NJ has just implemented (see article on p. 13). They describe benefits including reduced air pollution, job creation, increases to charging infrastructure, and grid upgrades. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/op-ed-electric-trucks-the-smart-healthy-answer-to-dirty-diesel/>

## LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

- **NJ Gets Ready to Upgrade Water Infrastructure with \$169M in Federal Funds** (3-1/2 minute news video) - NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette describes the amount and uses of the Federal infrastructure funds slated to come to NJ, focusing on replacing lead service lines and on addressing PFAS "forever chemicals" in drinking water. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-gets-ready-to-upgrade-water-infrastructure-with-169m-in-federal-funds/>
- **Jersey WaterCheck Data Show New Jersey Water Systems Actively Identifying and Eliminating Lead Service Lines** - "Jersey WaterCheck" is an online dashboard created by the Jersey Water Works organization that includes data about NJ's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. The latest update to the data shows that "Almost 10% of water systems with lead lines reported fewer lead service lines in 2020 than they did in 2019, indicating that lead service line replacement efforts were well underway. A handful of systems are close to eliminating all their identified lead service lines already." <https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/latest-news/jersey-watercheck-data-show-new-jersey-water-systems-actively-identifying-and-eliminating-lead-service-lines/>
- **Opinion: Lead Pipe Fix for NJ Nearer as Newark Finishes** (by *The Press of Atlantic City*) - This piece describes Newark's success in replacing its lead service lines, and touts the recent NJ law requiring replacement of all lead pipes within 10 years. Interestingly, though, while it pointedly raises the question of how this will be paid for, nowhere does it describe the part of the law that potentially allows utilities to recoup costs from customers. [https://pressofatlanticcity.com/opinion/editorial/lead-pipe-fix-for-nj-nearer-as-newark-finishes/article\\_50d89ada-52ee-11ec-a932-570c85a8dd50.html](https://pressofatlanticcity.com/opinion/editorial/lead-pipe-fix-for-nj-nearer-as-newark-finishes/article_50d89ada-52ee-11ec-a932-570c85a8dd50.html)

## GREEN AMENDMENT

- **Opinion: Let's Make Sure a Green Amendment Is on the 2023 Ballot** (by EJTF member **R. William Potter**, a partner in the Princeton-based law firm Potter and Dickson) - In the wake of NY voters approving a Green Amendment (GA), this opinion piece provides a very comprehensive description of what a Green Amendment would do for NJ. In a previous message to the EJTF, Bill Potter stated: "...the GA provides a kind of 'floor' below which government cannot go. It will require each level of government to ask "how can we go any cleaner? can we impose even more conditions on this permit applicant" be it a housing developer or landfill operator or whatever. In short we will have to see how the courts and regulatory agencies answer the question of "how 'clean' is 'clean [enough]?" But that said, it's a big step in the right direction." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/green-amendment-bipartisan-governor-environment-protect-global-warming/>

## RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **N.J. Offshore Wind Port Project Wins National Award** - The New Jersey Wind Port, which began construction in Salem County in September, won the Strategic Infrastructure Project of the Year award, as the best new infrastructure project in the U.S., at the North America Infrastructure Leadership Forum. It will be an assembly point for the offshore wind structures, portions of which will be built at another port close by. The wind port has received offers to locate there from six of the largest offshore wind developers and turbine manufacturers. <https://www.nj.com/news/2021/12/nj-offshore-wind-port-project-wins-national-award.html>
- **Opinion: Three Myths About Renewable Energy and the Grid, Debunked** (by Amory B. Lovins, an adjunct professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University, and co-founder and chairman emeritus of Rocky Mountain Institute, and M. V. Ramana, the Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security and director of the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada) - The authors make the case for their following conclusion: "Electrical grids can deal with much larger fractions of renewable energy at zero or modest cost, and this has been known for quite a while. Some European countries with little or no hydropower already get about half to three-fourths of their electricity from renewables with grid reliability better than in the U.S." <https://e360.yale.edu/features/three-myths-about-renewable-energy-and-the-grid-debunked>

## CLIMATE CHANGE



- **DEP Nixes Climate-Change Commitment Sought by Advocates** - In 7/2021, EmpowerNJ (a coalition of which UUFANJ is a member) and a number of other environmental advocate groups filed a formal Petition for Rulemaking by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The petition was for DEP to adopt rules that: 1) set a 50% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target for NJ by 2030 from 2005 levels; 2) specifically map out and implement how that reduction is to be achieved; and 3) restrict the issuance of operating permits for new fossil fuel infrastructure projects. DEP just responded by denying the petition, stating that statutory rules by one department would not be the mechanism that could bring about the comprehensive and coordinated approach between all sectors that would be needed, and also that interim benchmarks should not be codified in statute because they need to be continually reassessed. In addition, DEP stated that fossil fuel-fired electric generation will be needed until clean-energy sources are adequate to meet demand. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-climate-change-dep-nixes-advocates-commitment-fossil-fuel/>

- **State Plans Sweeping New Climate-Change Regulations** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has proposed new air pollution control rules for "Control and Prohibition of Carbon Dioxide Emissions." The rules would affect close to 100 natural-gas power plants and thousands of commercial and industrial boilers. While industry representatives predict the rules would have a large economic impact, some environmentalists such as Jeff Tittel, former director of the NJ Sierra Club, stated that it will only affect a small number of power plants and will effectively maintain the status quo. Additional information, including instructions for testifying at a public hearing to be held 2/1/2022, and/or submitting written comments, are here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/notices/20211206a.html>. Also see "Future Events" section, p. 7. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-climate-change-environmenta-fossil-fuel-regulations-power-natural-gas-plants-building-boilersew-climate-change-regulations/>
- **Lawmakers Brush Back Green-Energy Push** - Two separate bills that represent potential hindrances to NJ's transitioning away from fossil fuels, one in the Senate and one in the Assembly, were voted out of their respective committees in early December. The Senate bill (S4133) would prohibit the State from mandating electric heating or water heating systems. The Assembly bill (A5655) would direct the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to establish a renewable natural gas program, and also provides public gas utilities with a customer rate recovery mechanism for costs associated with the program. Environmentalists opposed both bills as prolonging the use of fossil fuels and encouraging natural gas companies to build more fossil fuel infrastructure. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-lawmakers-brush-back-gov-murphys-green-energy-agenda-would-prohibit-electrification-mandates-promote-renewable-natural-gas/>
- **Some Lawmakers Want to Transform the Energy Master Plan into State Law** - Legislation (S3667/A5720), which has passed the NJ Senate and reported out of two Assembly committees with amendments, would codify in state law a number of the goals and aspects of the NJ Energy Master Plan (EMP) and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) "Global Warming Response Act 80x50 Report." These include goals related to electric vehicles and the transportation sector, the use of clean energy, and further updates of the EMP. Business spokesperson Ray Cantor objected to "unattainable goals" being set into law, and others' objections centered on potential higher costs for renewable energy. Environmental groups have expressed favor for the bill. If it is approved by the Assembly as a whole, it will need to go back to the Senate for approval of the Assembly's amended version. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/energy-master-plan-state-law-assembly-senate-bill/>
- **Can NJ's Clean Energy Push Really Make a Climate Change Difference?** - The Environment New Jersey Research & Policy Center issued a report "Renewables on the Rise" that compares NJ to the rest of the U.S. in growth of five renewable energy sources (i.e., solar power, wind power, electric vehicle (EV) sales, energy efficiency, and battery storage) over the past ten years. NJ ranks in the top ten states for solar power, EV sales and battery storage, and is poised to rise dramatically in wind power in the future when the wind farm off the coast is developed. NJ ranks 28th in expanding energy efficiency, however. <https://nj1015.com/can-njs-clean-energy-push-really-make-a-climate-change-difference/>
- **Murphy Administration Advances Efforts to Sequester Carbon, Fight Climate Change with Release of Framework to Guide Management of Natural and Working Lands** - DEP Seeks Public Input on Scope of Lands Management Initiative Intended to Reduce and Sequester Carbon Dioxide, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Fueling Climate Change - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued a press release announcing "an outline of a strategy for managing natural and working lands that is intended to reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere contributing to global warming." Termed the "Natural and Working Lands Strategy" (NWLS), it is being released for public input. "The Strategy will ultimately present a set of statewide policies and recommendations for the management of natural and working lands, the actions necessary to implement those recommendations within a proposed timeframe, and the associated carbon sequestration benefits." See the article below for additional information, comment timeline, links, and initial reactions. [https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2021/21\\_0041.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2021/21_0041.htm)



- **Will Land Management Help Meet Climate Goals?** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the NJ Department of Agriculture (DA) jointly issued a scoping document for a Natural and Working Lands Strategy (NWLS - see DEP press release, above). "The NWLS will build off the work already done by state entities to reduce and respond to climate change. Specifically, the Strategy will bring together recommendations, modeling, and planning efforts to holistically center statewide land use management decisions on carbon sequestration, climate resilience, and other complimentary environmental and economic benefits." NJ's carbon emissions can be reduced by an estimated 10.8 million tons by following enhanced land management practices, which can help to meet the state's carbon emissions reduction goal. Business sector spokesman Ray Cantor saw no conflict with business interests, but environmentalist Jeff Tittel expressed skepticism that political will exists to implement such practices. **Public comments on the scoping document are due by 2/11/2022**; the NWLS website at <https://nj.gov/dep/climatechange/mitigation-nwls.html> includes forms to comment and to sign up for targeted stakeholder sessions, as well as links to the document and additional information. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/land-management-scoping-document-sequestered-carbon-farmland-grasslands-coastal-marshes/>
- **"9" = NJ's Ranking on List of States with Least Carbon-Intensive Economies** - A recent report from Commodity.com, "Which States Have the Least Carbon Intensive Economies" (available here: <https://commodity.com/blog/states-carbon-emissions/>), ranks NJ as 9th-least in the country. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-co2-carbon-emissions-ranking/>
- **Opinion: N.J. Needs the Most Ambitious Climate Bill in History. And Here It Is** (by the *Star Ledger* Editorial Board; also, a ~4-minute news video) - The editorial describes ways the "Build Back Better" bill addresses NJ climate change and other environmental concerns, such as Superfund site cleanup, coastal resiliency, lead pipe replacement, offshore drilling, and clean energy goals. The bill passed the House of Representatives but still needs to pass the Senate; one of the issues in contention is the state and local taxes deduction cap (SALT cap) - the House bill raises it from the current \$10,000 to \$80,000. (<https://www.nj.com/opinion/2021/11/nj-needs-the-most-ambitious-climate-bill-in-history-and-here-it-is-editorial.html>)

## POLLUTION



- **How a Lawsuit against TerraCycle Shows the Limits of Recycling Trash in the US** - The company TerraCycle was founded to recycle waste that otherwise wouldn't be recycled by municipalities. However, a lawsuit was filed by a nonprofit that wanted to send items to TerraCycle for recycling but instead was put on waitlists. They sued, stating that the labeling was misleading; the company has agreed to change it to state that there are limits to how much can be sent and that not everything can be totally recycled. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/terracycle-recycling-lawsuit-argued-labels-were-misleading-trenton-material-recovery-facilities/>

- **Red Bank: Film Recycling in Spotlight** - The town of Red Bank has entered the second month of a one-year pilot program to encourage recycling of plastic film waste. Under the program, plastic bags and plastic film products are collected once a month by public utilities department workers; this article includes a description of what's accepted and how the program works. The town declared the first month "a success." <https://www.redbankgreen.com/2021/11/red-bank-plastic-film-recycling-begins-120121/>

## DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

- **Willingboro Residents Fear PFAS in Drinking Water. Township Shut Down the Offending Well and Says Water is Safe to Drink** - One of the water supply wells for Willingboro, NJ in Burlington County was found to have levels of the "forever chemical" PFAS above NJ standards, and was subsequently shut down; the water supply from the remaining wells was stated by the township to be safe to drink. Standards instituted by NJ are the most stringent in the U.S. and beyond the Federal advisory limits. Municipalities have a year after discovery of levels exceeding the limits to reduce such chemicals through filtration systems. <https://pfasproject.com/2021/12/16/willingboro-residents-fear-pfas-in-drinking-water-township-shut-down-the-offending-well-and-says-water-is-safe-to-drink/>
- **Utility Tells Customers It Shut Down Water Wells That Contain 'Forever Chemical' above Health Limit** - In the latest development in a saga that began in October, and after a lawsuit by residents (see the two articles below), the Middlesex Water Company has stated that it has changed water sources, and the current sources meet NJ standards. In October, the company had sent letters to some customers that their water contained PFOA a "forever chemical" at a level above NJ standards, but - according to the company - did not represent a public health emergency because the standards were exceedingly stringent. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-middlesex-water-toxic-forever-chemical-pfoa-department-of-environmental-protection-alternative-water-sources-south-plainfield-edison-metuchen-woodbridge-clark-rahway/> [Additional details about the lawsuit and the timeline are in articles [here](#) and [here](#).]

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- **NJ Senate Advances Bill to Establish Energy Efficiency Standards** - A bill that would establish minimum water- and energy-efficiency standards for a number of commercial and household products, has passed the NJ Senate. The energy and water efficiency standards in the bill would be based on federal programs such as ENERGY STAR and definitions and criteria in the California Code of Regulations. The bill (S3324, substituted by A5160) had previously passed the NJ Assembly but passed the Senate with amendments. <https://enviropolitics.com/nj-senate-advances-bill-to-establish-energy-efficiency-standards/>

## EDUCATIONAL and YOUTH-RELATED

- **Stevens Wins the Race for Renewable Energy, Meeting an Increasingly Popular Student Demand** - In response to increasing focus by incoming students on the renewable energy status of colleges they are applying to, the Stevens Institute of Technology became the first college in NJ to voluntarily source 100% of its electricity from renewable sources. Many other NJ colleges and universities have instituted energy conservation and clean energy learning programs. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/weather/topstories/stevens-wins-the-race-for-renewable-energy-meeting-an-increasingly-popular-student-demand/ar-AArenvb>

- **South Jersey Students Recognized for Innovative Approaches to Addressing Climate Change** - Winners have been named in the first year of the "NJ Student Climate Challenge" program (see box below). The program is free for schools and students, and provides both educational aspects for students as well as teachers, and hands-on opportunities for students to become involved in climate change solutions. <https://news.yahoo.com/south-jersey-students-recognized-innovative-100016288.html>

### NJ Student Climate Challenge

This marked the inaugural year of the "NJ Student Climate Challenge" program designed for "engaging students to be climate leaders." It included a virtual Climate Summit and a hands-on team portion in which students developed projects and competed for grants for their schools. The Climate Summit included both student sessions and teacher sessions. The nine student sessions included topics such as: "Climate & Sustainability Goals for NJ," "Climate Justice, Social Justice," "Local Climate Action at Work," and "Careers in Energy." Videos of the sessions are available here: <https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/events/nj-student-climate-challenge/2020-2021-session-recordings/>. The team portion recently concluded, and the winners' videos are available here: <https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/events/nj-student-climate-challenge/2020-2021-finalists/>. They were recognized at a virtual awards ceremony with NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy, a major champion of environmental education in NJ schools.

The 2021/2022 "NJ Student Climate Challenge" brochure is available here: [https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/fileadmin/media/Events\\_and\\_Trainings/NJ\\_Student\\_Climate\\_Challenge/NJSCC\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/fileadmin/media/Events_and_Trainings/NJ_Student_Climate_Challenge/NJSCC_Brochure.pdf).

The program is hosted by Atlantic City Electric, Exelon, Sustainable Jersey and the Drumthwacket Foundation, and is designed to highlight the role youth can play in addressing the climate crisis.

- **New Watershed Ambassador Offers Free Education and Guidance on Environmental Conservation Activities** - Union County has a new Watershed Ambassador who is available to conduct free classes on watershed protection and help create new cleanup and restoration projects in Union County and the surrounding area. The AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassadors Program, administered by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), sends trained presenters to classrooms and civic groups, to help teachers, students, and community members discover how human behavior can impact the land and water around them. NJ currently has 20 Watershed Ambassadors (additional information about the program is available here: [https://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bears/docs/amicorps\\_flyer\\_2019-2020.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bears/docs/amicorps_flyer_2019-2020.pdf)), one for each of the 20 Wildlife Management Areas. <https://ucnj.org/press-releases/public-info/2021/12/08/new-watershed-ambassador-offers-free-education-and-guidance-on-environmental-conservation-activities/>

### OTHER

- **Push to Defang Consumer Watchdog in Energy-Price Cases?** - A bill introduced in the NJ Senate (S4214) would require the NJ Division of Rate Counsel to consider environmental impacts as well as economic impacts when determining whether to bring cases against utility rate or service measure changes (see box on p. 19 for a synopsis). The bill is opposed by the newly-appointed Rate Counsel Director Brian Lipman, who stated that "Diluting our ability to protect ratepayers by mandating that our focus shift from increasing costs and those who pay those costs to the reduction of carbon eliminates an important part of the conversation and potentially leaves millions of ratepayers without a voice." Clean-energy advocates, who have in the past criticized the Division as fighting high priority climate issues, have stated approval of the bill. It is not expected to be voted on in the Lame Duck session, however, but will

bear watching in the next legislative session. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/division-rate-counsel-lawmakers-consider-defang-consumer-watchdog-focus-less-cost-more-climate-environment/>

### **A Bill to Watch - S4214**

#### **"Requires Division of Rate Counsel to consider environmental impacts of proposed rate or service measure when representing public interest in certain proceedings and appeals."**

This bill, introduced 12/4/2021 and currently in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee, reflects the inherent conflict between consumer costs and NJ's progress toward its clean energy goals. Currently, the Division of Rate Counsel is charged with "protecting the public interest" in cases related to utilities' rates. This bill would clarify that, in determining the "public interest," it must consider both the affordability and equity of the proposed rate or service measure AND the actual and potential effects on climate and the environment, including but not limited to: 1) the social cost of carbon that will result; 2) the effect on NJ's decarbonization goals; and 3) the impact on cumulative environmental or public health stressors that are higher in an overburdened community than in other communities.

- **After Protests, Murphy Drops Pinelands Nominee** - As described in the article below, Gov. Murphy had put forth three nominees with corporate backgrounds to replace three long-term incumbent Pinelands Commission commissioners who have environmental backgrounds. After protests from environmental groups, Murphy's administration met with the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and the NJ League of Conservation Voters and agreed to remove one of the proposed nominees who works for the Chemistry Council, which has a reputation for resisting environmental regulation. [If Gov. Murphy did nothing, as is recommended in [this editorial](#) by the *Star-Ledger Editorial Board*, the current commissioners would remain.] <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-gov-murphy-nominee-environmental-pinelands-commission-preservation-alliance-league-of-conservation-voters-chemistry-council/>
- **Murphy Wants New Names with Corporate Ties for Pinelands Commission** - In a move that is out of character with the rest of Gov. Murphy's focus on environmental protection, he put forth three nominees with corporate backgrounds to replace three long-term incumbent Pinelands Commission commissioners who have environmental backgrounds. According to Ed Potosnak, executive director of the NJ League of Conservation Voters, "This slate of nominees amounts to a massive corporate giveaway of one of New Jersey's greatest environmental treasures in a move so brazen that not even Chris Christie would have attempted it." Environmentalists protested loudly against this move with some success; see article above. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-pinelands-commission-nominations-gov-phil-murphy-criticism-controversy-development/>
- **NJ Sierra Club Fills Vacant Top Slot** - Anjuli Ramos-Busot has been named director of the Sierra Club's NJ chapter, filling the position formerly held by Jeff Tittel, who retired last May. She has been a climate-change research scientist at the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), an environmental researcher at Rutgers, and the volunteer air-issues coordinator at the NJ Sierra Club. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-sierra-club-anjuli-ramos-busot-climate-change-forever-chemicals-jeff-tittle/>
- **Did South Jersey Celebrate Departure of Oyster Creek Nuclear Energy Plant Too Soon?** - The company that is decommissioning the former Oyster Creek nuclear plant (Holtec International) has partnered with a subsidiary of Hyundai to build a "small nuclear reactor" prototype that the companies are saying is safer than older nuclear reactor designs. The former Oyster Creek site is among others being considered. <https://enviropolitics.com/did-south-jersey-celebrate-departure-of-nuke-plant-too-soon/>
- **Water Experts Look To Prevent Algal Blooms** - The NJ Drinking Water Quality Institute (DWQI), established under the NJ Safe Drinking Water Act to develop standards for hazardous contaminants in

drinking water and recommend those standards to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has begun a year-long process to develop recommendations for treating water for the toxins produced by harmful algal blooms (HABs). According to Jeff Tittel, former director of the NJ Sierra Club, focus should be more on preventing nutrients from entering water bodies than on treating water once it's polluted with the toxins. A detailed description of the role of the DWQI is described [here](#).  
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-waterways-lakes-algal-bloom-harmful-dep-water-quality-toxins/>



- **Natural Gas Prices Set to Increase** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) approved rate increases for NJ's four gas utilities. Industry representative Ray Cantor blames some of the intensification of spikes in gas prices on a drop in supplies from fracking in PA, due to pipelines not being approved. According to Doug O'Malley, director of Environment NJ, "These gas investments are trying to crowd out our investments in clean energy." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/11/nj-natural-gas-prices-increase-electricity-costs-winter-heating-bill/>
- **Opinion: Ex-gov. Whitman: Protect Liberty State Park So We All Can Enjoy This Gem** (by Christine Todd Whitman, NJ governor from 1994 to 2001 and administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from 2001-2003) - The author extols the virtues of Liberty State Park and advocates strong support for the Liberty State Park Preservation Act, which has not advanced from committees in either the NJ Senate or the NJ Assembly. <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2021/12/ex-gov-whitman-protect-liberty-state-park-so-we-all-can-enjoy-this-gem-opinion.html>
- **Opinion: Why a Public Bank Could Accelerate NJ's Clean-Energy Ambitions** (by Dr. Thomas Marois, a Senior Research Fellow of Patient Finance and Public Banking at the University College London Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose and a Reader of Development Studies at SOAS University of London, whose newest book is titled Public Banks: Decarbonisation, Definancialisation, and Democratisation") - The author states that NJ should take the Federal investment funds it is to receive and put them into a public bank, and underwrite a green legacy. "A green public bank is New Jersey's best hope for accelerating the state's energy transition in a way that is just and fair for the people of New Jersey and without paying the high cost of Wall Street's private capital debt financing." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/nj-public-bank-green-clean-energy-replace-wall-street-private-capital-markets/>



### **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 (609-292-6000). 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.**

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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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