



Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter - July 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.

EJTF ACTIVITIES

- In furtherance of EJTF's goal to advocate for NJ's Green Amendment, **EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols** spoke in Trenton at a June 16, 2022 press event including NJ justice organizers, legislators, environmental leaders, and local residents, to urge the state legislature to grant a hearing for the proposed NJ Green Amendment. It's been five years since it was first introduced in the NJ legislature, and a hearing is not even scheduled for this legislative session. **EJTF member Sally Gellert** also attended the event, covering it for the "Eco-Logic" radio program that she co-hosts on WBAI. **You can help by taking an action shown here:** <https://njgreenamendment.org/act-now/>.



"Green Amendments For The Generations" founder Maya van Rossum and EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols at the Green Amendment press event



EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols speaking at the Green Amendment press event in Trenton

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EJTF ACTIVITIES (continued)

- As part of the urban tree planting programs hosted by the NJ Tree Foundation, **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh** joined others from the Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) and the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH) to plant trees in Camden, NJ on June 4, 2022. The NJ Tree Foundation is a state-wide non-profit organization dedicated to planting trees in NJ's most underserved neighborhoods, in order to improve air quality, manage stormwater, and provide shade.



Tree-planters from UUCCH and UUOCC, including EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh and fellow UUOCC member Linda Kay



- EJTF member Bonnie Rowan** achieved an extremely noteworthy victory - taking the initiative and saving the trees on her street that were slated for removal for a street paving and curb- and sidewalk-replacement project in Dunellen, NJ (see p. 3)!

EJTF Member Bonnie Rowan's Tree Victory!

In early June, a flyer was taped to **EJTF Member Bonnie Rowan's** door on her beautiful tree-shaded street in Dunellen, announcing that paving work was to be done on the road in front of her home. Curbs and sidewalks



The dreaded street markings for tree elimination

would also be replaced, and **"the work would necessitate removal of some trees."** Upon calling for details, Bonnie was told all four of the mature trees around her house would go, as well as those of her neighbors! This included three 15-year-old yellow poplars and a large healthy ash that is probably as old as her house - 95 years. It didn't seem to Bonnie that their removal was necessary, so she immediately wrote to the head of the Borough's shade tree commission and also spoke to the mayor. She enlisted all of her neighbors, who made phone calls as well. Initially, the Borough agreed to "postpone the work and give it more consideration." However, Bonnie checked with more sources, including **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh**, who is a Trustee on the NJ

Tree Foundation, and who provided talking points and advice based on previous experiences. Using this information, Bonnie sent the following text to the mayor explaining why it was so important to save the trees:

..."Thank you for recognizing our concern. I have reached out to the Board of NJ Tree Experts and the Rutgers Department of Community and Urban Forestry for their input on a few questions. I also spoke with a personal friend who is a Trustee on the NJ Tree Foundation. She reminded me of some important considerations:

The value of mature shade trees extends beyond the obvious of shade, beautifying the neighborhood and providing habitat for wildlife. It's a force for cooling the atmosphere when we have major summer heat. They mitigate flooding. They absorb carbon from the atmosphere helping with our climate issues. My neighbor pointed out that the poplar roots have not caused damage to the sidewalks. The sidewalks are 90 years old. The damage that exists was caused by the maples that were there previously. My question is whether or not the tree will recover if the roots are somewhat damaged if they have to cut them while laying the curb. Thank you for considering all of this. Please save any or all of the trees that you possibly can."



The beautiful yellow poplar - one of three that was on the chopping block

The result was that the mayor, the head of the shade tree commission, the town engineer, and a representative of the company doing the work all went out and looked at each tree individually, and agreed there was **no need to remove Bonnie's trees or most of the trees** along the entire proposed work route! **The best news is that they are changing their policy - in the future any work done in town will make preserving trees a priority.**

Bonnie credits a whole team for this success, including **EJTF members Carol Hemington and especially Peggy Middaugh**, and also Bonnie's neighbors, but she was the one who took the ball and ran with it. Kudos to Bonnie for speaking up and getting such good results!



The magnificent, healthy ash tree (which is getting regular treatment) that was slated for removal

FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid

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

JULY 2022 (with hyperlinks to details on the following pages)						
<i>Sun.</i>	<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
					1	2 Woodbridge, NJ: Stop The Power Plant - 11:00 a.m.
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 NJDEP Public Hearings on proposed implementing regulations for EJ Law - 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. <hr/> Votes Due on: RGGI Input on NJ Climate Change Solutions	12	13 Jersey Water Works Annual Membership Meeting - 12:00 p.m. <hr/> Green Amendment Day Panel - 6:00 p.m. <hr/> NJDEP Public Hearings on proposed implementing regulations for EJ Law - 6:30 p.m. (In-person) <hr/> 2nd Annual Green Amendment Day	14 BOEM "Ocean Wind 1" DEIS public hearing - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> Discussion on "Ecological Civilization: Earth, Religion & the Human Future" - 8:00 p.m.	15	16
17 Clean Water Action NJ Member Meet-Up - 4:00 p.m.	18	19 Comments Due on: BPU Grid Modernization Process	20 NJ Clean Air Council - 9:30 a.m. <hr/> BOEM "Ocean Wind 1" DEIS public hearing - 5:00 p.m.	21	22	23
24	25 Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy Forum (EXPO 2022) - 1:00 p.m.	26 BOEM "Ocean Wind 1" DEIS public hearing - 5:00 p.m.	27 NJDEP Public Hearings on proposed implementing regulations for EJ Law - 6:00 p.m.	28	29 NJDEP Public Hearings on proposed implementing regulations for EJ Law - 6:00 p.m.	30
31						

Woodbridge, NJ: Stop The Power Plant (Food & Water Watch) - Virtual Meeting
Saturday, July 2, 2022, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

At this virtual meeting, you can learn "how to get involved in the campaign to stop another dirty gas power plant from polluting our air and exacerbating the climate crisis." The meeting is open to anyone who wants to participate in online and in-person actions to stop the power plant planned for the Keasbey section of Woodbridge Township. The link to sign up is available here:

<https://www.mobilize.us/fww/event/445180/>.

Votes Due on RGGI Input on NJ Climate Change Solutions
July 11, 2022

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a multi-state cap-and-trade program designed to reduce emissions from power plants, while at the same time generating hundreds of millions of dollars for states to invest in clean energy and other technologies. NJ releases a Strategic Funding Plan every three years that identifies how the state will invest its share of RGGI funding. To ensure that the next Strategic Funding Plan (to be released in 2023) reflects the needs and priorities of New Jerseyans in an equitable way, the RGGI program wants to hear from NJ residents about how the state should invest these funds. You can vote on which climate change solutions are most important to you, and the climate change solutions that receive the most votes will be given priority consideration in the draft of the next RGGI Strategic Funding. In addition, there will be a series of public meetings in the fall to gather public feedback and input on the draft plan. **Votes must be cast by July 11, 2022.**

Additional information and the link to vote are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/rggi/ideas.html>.

"Green Amendments: Transforming Environmental Rights from Rhetoric to Reality"
2nd Annual Green Amendment Day
Wednesday, July 13, 2022 (Panel at 6:00 p.m. - Virtual)



The second annual Green Amendment Day will take place on July 13, 2022. This year's theme is "Green Amendments: Transforming Environmental Rights from Rhetoric to Reality," with the focus on "the transformation of environmental change from rhetoric on signs and documents, to a viable reality for the people!" The day promises to be full of inspirational narratives and action opportunities to fight global climate injustices, from unequal access to clean water, oil and gas industry exploitation, sacrifice zones, and more. There will be an evening panel event, planned for 6:00 p.m. (registration is available here: <https://bit.ly/GADay22Panel>). Additional information will be available here: <https://forthe generations.org/events/green-amendment-day/>.

Jersey Water Works Annual Membership Meeting - In-person
Wednesday, July 13, 2022, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Kean University - New Jersey Center for Science, Technology & Mathematics
1000 Morris Ave, Union, NJ 07083

Jersey Water Works (JWW), "a collaborative effort of many diverse organizations and individuals who embrace the common purpose of transforming New Jersey's water infrastructure," is holding a free in-person Membership Meeting open to all: "Critical Connections for Critical Conversations - Transforming New Jersey's Water Infrastructure Together." JWW's annual Membership Meeting provides participants with the chance to collaborate with other water leaders, advocates, and decision makers during this pivotal time of funding opportunities and legislative changes for water infrastructure. Pre-registration is required, lunch is provided, and capacity is limited. Additional information, including links to the agenda and to pre-register, are available here:

<https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/events/annual-membership-meeting/2022/>.

Follow-up Discussion on UUA General Assembly Workshop
"Ecological Civilization: Earth, Religion & the Human Future" - Webinar
Thursday, July 14, 2022, 8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Hosted by UUs for a Just Economic Community and UU Ministry for Earth, presenters Lucy Hitchcock, David Korten, Michael Cox, and Aly Tharp will participate in a follow-up discussion to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly program "Ecological Civilization: Earth, Religion & the Human Future" (the "on demand" video of the GA program is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGNf1FHOnjM&t=3s>). This webinar will provide an opportunity to reflect with David Korten on his vision for an Ecological Civilization and how we, as people of faith, can bring it into being. Additional information, including a link to a Discussion Guide and the registration link, are available here: <https://uujec.org/webinars>.

U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Public Hearings on
"Ocean Wind 1 Project" Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Virtual
Thursday, July 14, 2022, 1:00 p.m.
Wednesday, July 20, 2022, 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 26, 2022, 5:00 p.m.

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the proposed Ocean Wind 1 project, Ørsted's 1,100-megawatt offshore wind farm off the coast of NJ. The BOEM is holding three virtual public hearings on the DEIS; **the public comment period closes at 12:59 p.m. on August 8, 2022**. Additional information, including links to the DEIS and meeting registration, are available here: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/ocean-wind-1>.

Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy Forum (EXPO 2022)
Monday, July 25, 2022, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Virtual

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the House and Senate Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Caucuses invite you to the 25th Annual Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy Forum (EXPO 2022), to be held online. "Building on the more

than 20 years of experience hosting clean energy leaders from various sectors, we will once again showcase technology and policy solutions to today's climate and energy use challenges. Presenting before Congress and the public, top-level speakers will share findings and innovations on the impacts they are having to mitigate climate change, improve the economy, build resilience, and protect our security interests." Additional information, including the agenda and the link to RSVP, are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/expo2022>.

NJDEP Public Hearings on proposed implementing regulations for NJ's Environmental Justice Law - **In-person and Virtual**

These are the regulations needed in order for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement the landmark Environmental Justice Law enacted by NJ in 2020. "The proposed rule will require certain facilities seeking certain permits in overburdened communities to prepare an environmental justice impact statement and conduct a public hearing to ensure meaningful public participation ... the Department will apply permit conditions where necessary ..."

- **Monday, July 11, 2022 - in-person** - from **3:00 p.m. through 5:00 p.m.** and **6:00 p.m. through 7:00 p.m.** at the Department of Environmental Protection's Public Hearing Room, 401 E. State Street, Trenton.
- **Wednesday, July 13, 2022 - in-person** - at **6:30 p.m.** at the Ray and Jon Kroc Corps Community Multi Purpose Room; 1865 Harrison Ave., Camden, NJ 08105.
- **Wednesday, July 27, 2022 - in-person** - at **6:00 p.m.** at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), Campus Center Atrium, First Floor 150 Bleeker Street, Newark, NJ 07102. Parking is Available at the NJIT Summit Street Garage, 154 Summit Street: <https://www.njit.edu/about/maps-directions>.
- **Thursday, July 28, 2022 - Virtual** - at **6:00 p.m.** through the DEP's video conferencing software (Registration is available here: <https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlde2trzkrEupuztqasfJ72EJAkr6OyJY>.) If you are interested in providing oral testimony or submitting written comments at the virtual public hearing, please email the DEP at ejrulehearings@dep.nj.gov no later than 5:00 P.M. on July 27, 2022, with your contact information (name, organization, telephone number, and email address).

The Notice of Rule Proposal, links to the proposed rulemaking, and instructions for submitting written comments (due by September 4, 2022) are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/notices/20220606a.html>.

The specific evaluation process DEP plans to use is described in a "Press Briefing on the EJ Rule Tool" (1-1/4 hour webinar) available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnBBEL9Q6WE>.

A 25-minute tutorial of the new DEP "EJMAP" tool to be used in the evaluation process is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAUgfYkkWpc>.

Also see the news articles under "Environmental Justice" on p. 13.

Clean Water Action New Jersey Member Meet-Up - In-person
Sunday, July 17, 2022, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Kula Urban Farm, 115 Atkins Ave, Asbury Park, NJ 07712

Clean Water Action (of which **EJTF partner Kim Gaddy** is the National Environmental Justice Director) is holding a free "meet-up" at which you can meet some of the NJ team and connect with other members of the Clean Water community. The meetup is at Kula Urban Farm, "a social enterprise that provides on-site job training, educational programs, farm-to-table dinners, and free fresh produce to neighbors in need. They also transform vacant lots into community gardens and manage a hydroponic greenhouse. Their produce is sold to the public as well as to local restaurants." Additional information and a sign-up link are available here: <https://cleanwateraction.org/events/new-jersey-member-meet-ups-summer-2022>.

Comments Due on NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU)
Grid Modernization/Interconnection Process
Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Four public meetings were held on the topic of the New Jersey Grid Modernization/Interconnection Process, and at the last meeting the Draft Report of findings and recommendations was presented - the report is available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/DRAFT%20Grid%20Modernization%20Report%206-20-22.pdf>). **Written comments can be submitted to the BPU at**

https://publicaccess.bpu.state.nj.us/CaseSummary.aspx?case_id=2109704 **until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19, 2022.**

NJ Clean Air Council - Virtual
Wednesday, July 20, 2022, 9:30 a.m.

The Council meets via Microsoft Teams. Information to join the meeting is to be provided by clicking on the date on the calendar, available here: <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/cleanair/cac-calendar.html>.

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 the only events shown for July are one for localities to access financing and one for teachers to access climate change evidence for students. However, 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/>.

VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

"Pathways to Regenerative Agriculture: Farm Policy for the 21st Century" **Video of Webinar**

This briefing on regenerative agriculture was sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). "Regenerative agriculture, or farming in sync with the local environment and climate, produces multiple economic, climate, and societal benefits. Examples of these practices include reducing or eliminating synthetic pesticide and fertilizer use and soil tillage." The briefing featured findings from NRDC's new report, 'Regenerative Agriculture: Farm Policy for the 21st Century,' which was informed by conversations with farmers and ranchers from 47 states and Washington, D.C. As Congress begins to craft the 2023 Farm Bill, the briefing covered how federal policies can incentivize and invest in regenerative agriculture, including by making reforms to scale up regenerative agriculture stewardship, supporting the next generation of farmers and ranchers, and funding regenerative agriculture research and education programs. Panelists described how these steps can lead to a more resilient and productive agricultural system. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/061622ag>.

We Don't Have Time: "Stockholm +50 Climate Hub" Video of Webinars

"We Don't Have Time" is a platform for climate solutions that presents conferences and webinars with participants from around the world. They held a number of events during the week of Stockholm +50 leading up to World Environment Day 2022, all of which are available online, here: <https://www.wedonthavetime.org/events/sthlm50>. Topics included "Green Energy," "Transport," "Food & Land," and "Securing Global Food Systems - the Circular Way." Several of the sessions dealing with "Food & Land" seem particularly relevant to EJTF's interests, including a session on **"Regenerative Agriculture."** That session is available here (starting at the 1:23:30 point of the video): <https://www.wedonthavetime.org/events/exponential-race-to-zero-food-land>.

NJ Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) - Public Information Session **Video of Webinar**

This webinar explained NJ's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and how NJ residents can have a say in how NJ will invest millions to fight climate change over the next three years. RGGI is a program that caps emissions from fossil fuel power plants and raises funds to fight climate change; NJ releases a Strategic Funding Plan every three years that identifies how the state will invest its share of RGGI funding. To ensure that the next Strategic Funding Plan (to be released in 2023) reflects the needs and priorities of New Jerseyans in an equitable way, the RGGI program wants to hear from NJ residents about how the state should invest these funds (see "Future Events" on p. 5 for information on how you can vote). Additional information about RGGI is available here: <https://nj.gov/rggi/engage.html>. The webinar was jointly hosted by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU). The video of the webinar is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byFaLY1-FSU>.

"Collaborating for Climate Resilience" - Video of Webinar

Sponsored by the Security and Sustainability Forum, and "drawn from Ann Goodman's and Nilda Mesa's new book, 'Collaborating for Climate Resilience' (Routledge, 2021), this webinar was designed to spark participants' thinking—and, eventually, doing--on how to deal with one of the most challenging issues of climate adaptation: collaborating better with partners from disparate fields and walks of life - from cities, states, business, academia, community-based organizations, the military and more - to create real-life solutions to climate change." The video is available here: <https://ssfworld.org/collaborating-for-resilience/>.

"Building Out Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure" - Video of Webinar

This briefing on building out electric vehicle charging infrastructure was sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI). The \$7.5 billion allocated to charging infrastructure in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and existing programs like the Rural Energy Savings Program present a significant opportunity to deploy widespread and equitable electric vehicle charging infrastructure. In this webinar, panelists discussed the following questions and the policy solutions that can help scale up electric vehicle charging infrastructure to drive down emissions: "How can charging infrastructure be rapidly expanded? What are the considerations for ensuring that charging infrastructure is accessible, equitable, and efficient? How can innovation improve charging infrastructure?" The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/060222tech>.

"Living with Climate Change: Wildfires" - Video of Webinar

This briefing on policies and practices to address wildfires was sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI). "Billions of dollars are spent fighting wildfires every year, and the cascading economic, health, and societal impacts of wildfires are enormous. Compounding these challenges, wildfires also release greenhouse gases and harmful aerosols into the atmosphere. Over the last century, battling wildfires after they have started has been the main approach to address this threat. Yet, with record-setting fire seasons happening almost every year, more proactive and preventative steps are needed." In this webinar, panelists discussed policies and practices that would allow the U.S. to reduce the overall risk of wildfires, including how innovations in community-centered wildfire protection can improve resilience for humans and ecosystems. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/061322climatechange>.

"Living with Climate Change: Extreme Heat" - Video of Webinar

This briefing on policies and practices to address extreme heat was sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI). "Across the country, the number of days per year with temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit is increasing, and heat causes more deaths than any other type of weather event. In April 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration announced the first Department of Labor program to protect workers from the impacts of extreme heat. Additional steps are needed to reduce the risk of dangerously hot conditions and increase community resilience to heat." In this webinar, panelists discussed ways that built and natural infrastructure can reduce temperatures, steps to protect outdoor and warehouse workers, and how communities and cities are designing and implementing heat action plans. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/062422climatechange>.

"The Condition of Cornbelt Streams and a New Path Forward" - Video of Webinar

In this webinar sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), Dr. Chris Jones, a Research Engineer with IIHR Hydrosience and Engineering at the University of Iowa, discussed how his career experience led him to view clean water as an issue of justice, and his ideas for a new agricultural production system to achieve desired environmental outcomes. The video is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/uujec/videos/1391760521271476>.

Isles, Inc. Virtual Forum 2022 - Videos of Forum Sessions

Isles' second annual virtual forum was a weeklong series of webinars, workshops, and panels focused on community development, urban sustainability, and more. Topics were: Equity and Access; Health, Wealth, and the Green Economy; Safe and Sustainable Cities; Resilient Communities; and Future-Focused Opportunities. Videos are available here: <https://isles.org/forum>.

"Climate Change As Spiritual Practice" - Video of Webinar

In this webinar sponsored by the Purpose Guides Institute, Joanna Macy, author of "Active Hope," and Jonathan Gustin, founder of the Purpose Guides Institute, addressed transforming climate change anxiety into empowerment. "A powerful and unlikely spiritual teacher has arrived, sweeping everyone into the shadows of its cloak. This teacher has begun to interrupt life as we know it, showing us the impermanence and fragility of our lifestyle and our way of seeing the world. This teacher goes by the name of Climate Change." Topics included: "Climate Change as Spiritual Practice;" "Meeting our Climate Change Fears Together;" "From Disheartenment to Empowerment;" "Personal Action Exploration: Guided Soul-Inquiry Meditation;" and "Collective Action Debrief - Share What You are Called to Do." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TBgH8pjD1Q&t=489s>.

"Demystifying Plastics" - Recordings of Radio Shows

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI (co-hosted by EJTF member Sally Gellert) presented two programs with Alexis Goldsmith, "Beyond Plastics" National Organizing Director. In the first program, she discussed why recycling does not work; in the second program she described the definite connection between climate change and plastics. The recording of Part I regarding recycling is available here: <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=31617>, and the recording of Part II regarding climate change is available here: <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=32136>.

EJTF's GOALS for 2022

- 1. Advocating for the adoption of the Green Amendment in New Jersey through work in our congregations and as a Task Force;**
- 2. Working toward resolving the many challenges in NJ related to food-insecurity, including but not limited to promoting regenerative agriculture, increasing accessibility of healthy food, reducing food waste, and encouraging community and family gardens;**
- 3. Supporting 100% renewable energy and energy conservation through measures such as the Clean Energy Equity Act, and those affecting transportation and Electric Vehicles (EVs).**

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

[covering 5/27/2022 – 6/26/2022]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

NJ Is Suing Ford Motor Co. to Restore Ramapough Lenape Nation Community Land

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has filed a Natural Resource Damages (NRDs) lawsuit (available here: [https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases22/2022-06-16-COMPLAINT-NJDEPvFord-\(Ringwood-Mines\).pdf](https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases22/2022-06-16-COMPLAINT-NJDEPvFord-(Ringwood-Mines).pdf)) against the Ford Motor Company, seeking compensation for damages caused by its contamination of hundreds of acres of soil, water, wetlands and other natural resources in the Ringwood Mines area in the Borough of Ringwood, an "overburdened community" as defined by NJ's Environmental Justice Law. Among other things, the 500-acre Ringwood Mines area encompasses the historic homeland of the Turtle Clan of the Ramapough Lenape Nation, a Native American Tribe formally recognized by NJ. The area is also a Federal Superfund site, but this lawsuit is in addition to the Superfund cleanup-related settlements; it seeks compensation for the lost natural resources, plus the cost of returning those natural resources to a pristine condition, and also punitive damages and penalties due to Ford's "wanton and willful disregard for the people of New Jersey." The following news stories, video, and podcast detail the history of the area, impacts of the contamination on the land and people, and the basis and objectives of the lawsuit.

- **Acting AG Platkin, DEP Commissioner LaTourette Announce Lawsuit against Ford Motor Co. over Hazardous Waste Dumping in Native American Tribal Community -** <https://www.njoag.gov/acting-ag-platkin-dep-commissioner-latourette-announce-lawsuit-against-ford-motor-co-over-hazardous-waste-dumping-in-native-american-tribal-community/>.
- **Ford Must Pay For Polluting Ringwood, NJ Says -** <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-sues-ford-motor-company-toxic-contamination-upper-ringwood-native-american-turtle-clan-ramapough-lenape-hazardous-chief-vincent-mann-cancer-road/>
- **Hazard NJ: For Generations Now, a Tribe Fights Legacy Left by Polluter -** <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/hazard-nj-toxic-contamination-ford-motor-company-turtle-clan-ramapough-lenape-nation-superfund-paint-sludge-solvents-ringwood-mines-cancer-road/> [A companion 40-minute podcast, "**Hazard NJ Episode 3: Heart of Ringwood**," is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/podcast/hazard-nj-episode-3-heart-of-ringwood-superfund-site-ford-motor-company-toxic-waste-ramapough-lenape-tribal/>.]

- **DEP Spells Out New Permitting Standards for ‘Overburdened Communities’** - After a comprehensive series of stakeholder meetings, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has published the proposed regulations that are needed in order for the groundbreaking Environmental Justice Law enacted by NJ in 2020 to be implemented. A full copy is available on the DEP's webpage at: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/proposals/proposal-20220606a.pdf>. Four public hearings are scheduled for July, and comments are due by September 4, 2022 - see "Future Events" on p. 7 for additional information, including a link to a video of a press briefing describing the specific evaluation process the DEP plans to use. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-dep-overburdened-communities-environmental-justice-new-permitting-standards/>
- **Experts Explain New Environmental Justice Rule Impacting NJ Businesses** - This summary of a NJ Business & Industry Association seminar, "Permitting & Compliance: the New Environmental Justice Paradigm," gives some highlights of areas businesses will need to consider in order to comply with the NJ Environmental Justice Law. <https://njbja.org/experts-explain-new-environmental-justice-rule-impacting-nj-businesses/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION



Electric School Bus event for legislators
at the NJ Statehouse in Trenton on 6/16/2022

- **Doubling of Funding for Electric School Buses Just Needs Murphy’s OK** - A bill (A1282/S759) to provide funds to school districts for electric buses has passed both houses of the NJ legislature and, as of 6/26/2022 was awaiting Gov. Murphy's signature. It calls for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to select at least six school districts or bus contractors each year to participate in the program, with \$15 million available each year for three years. The funding would be provided for the purchase or lease of electric school buses, the acquisition and installation of charging infrastructure, and training for bus maintenance personnel, bus drivers, and inspectors. At least half of the grant funding would go to low-income, urban, or environmental justice communities. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-senate-approves-45-million-electric-school-bus-investment-gov-phil-murphy-diesel-powered-fumes-childrens-health-environment/>
- **Commissioner LaTourette Attends Facility Opening for All-Electric Ambulances Coming to New Jersey** - A prototype of the electric ambulances to be housed in the DEP-defined "overburdened" City of Paterson was unveiled at a 6/15/2022 event attended by NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette. The ambulances are to be purchased with Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) funds. Because ambulances spend a considerable amount of time idling, in order to always be ready to go out on calls, electric ambulances will result in a significant reduction of air pollutants. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2022/22_0029.htm

LAND MANAGEMENT/AGRICULTURE/FOOD

- **Registry to Help NJ Minority Farmers Advances** - A bill (S772/A1929) that would direct the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA) to establish a "New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry" has been passed by the Senate and approved by Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee. The bill would establish a registry in NJ that would parallel the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Minority Farm Registry, and is intended to strengthen the participation of minorities, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, and historically underserved farmers in available NJ and federal loan and assistance programs for farmers. <https://enviropolitics.com/registry-to-help-minority-farmers-advances-in-nj/>
- **Bill Directs NJ Counties to Cut Food Waste in Half** - A bill (S2730/A1439) that would require each solid waste management district to develop and implement a strategy for reducing, by the year 2030, the amount of food waste generated annually in the district by at least 50 percent of the amount which is generated in the year this bill is enacted into law, has been approved by the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee. The bill would require the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to develop, and publish on its website, a list of measures solid waste management districts can take in order to achieve these food waste reduction requirements, including actions to prevent food waste and increase the donation of surplus edible food, the source separation and recycling of food waste, composting and anaerobic digestion of food waste, and public awareness campaigns. <https://enviropolitics.com/bill-directs-nj-counties-to-cut-food-waste-in-half/>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Environmental Groups Urge Governor Murphy to Reject Williams Transco's Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE)** - The Williams Transco Regional Access Expansion Project (REAE) "would involve the construction and operation of 22.3 miles of 30-inch-diameter lateral pipeline and 13.8 miles of 42-inch-diameter loop pipeline in Pennsylvania; one new compressor station in New Jersey; modifications to five existing compressor stations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey; modifications to existing pipeline tie-ins, valves, regulators, and meter and regulating stations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland; the addition of ancillary facilities such as regulation controls, valves, cathodic protection, communication facilities, and pig launchers and receivers in Pennsylvania; and abandonment of certain existing compression facilities." It would lead to a projected 18% increase in greenhouse gas emissions for NJ, and a study has found that it is not necessary for NJ's energy supply. A draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) found that "impacts would be less than significant." A coalition of nearly 40 environmental groups and community organizations has written to Gov. Murphy urging him to reject this project. <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/environmental-groups-urge-governor-murphy-to-reject-williams-transcos-regional-energy-access-expansion-project-reae/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **Biden Administration Launches New Federal-State Offshore Wind Partnership to Grow American-Made Clean Energy** - On 6/23/2022, Gov. Murphy participated in a White House event with President Biden, Governors and senior officials from 11 East Coast states, and leaders from labor unions and the offshore wind industry, to launch a new "Federal-State Offshore Wind Implementation Partnership." At the event, the White House and governors announced "commitments to collaborate on expanding key elements of the offshore wind supply chain, from manufacturing facilities to port capabilities to workforce development." The Administration also announced "steps to advance a National Offshore Wind Supply Chain Roadmap and designating offshore wind vessels as Vessels of National Interest to facilitate more offshore wind construction." <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/23/fact-sheet-biden-administration-launches-new-federal-state-offshore-wind-partnership-to-grow-american-made-clean-energy/>

- **Offshore Wind Advocates Urge Court to End Challenge from LBI Residents** - In 1/2022, the Save Long Beach Island (Save LBI) nonprofit group filed a lawsuit stating that the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Management (BOEM) should have completed a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) rather than an Environmental Assessment (EA) prior to offering leases for offshore wind farms. Three renewable energy advocacy groups have requested the court's leave to file an amicus brief showing why the lawsuit should be dismissed. They point out that the EIS process does not apply to decisions such as delineating where the leases may take place, but only becomes relevant when actual project planning is being done by the leaseholders. The full EIS process is being undertaken by the companies that were selected (see article below). The results of this lawsuit could have implications for the entire offshore leasing program. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/offshore-wind-supporters-lawsuit-long-beach-island-residents-turbine-height-environmental-impact-birds-marine-mammals-ocean-views/>
- **Ocean Wind 1 Reaches Critical Milestone in Federal Review Process** - The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the proposed Ocean Wind 1 project, Ørsted's 1,100-megawatt offshore wind farm off the coast of NJ. See "Future Events" on p. 6 for information about virtual public hearings to be held on the DEIS. Gov. Murphy's press release is available here: <https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20220617b.shtml>
- **Offshore Wind Offers Boost to Poor Town** - This article describes the potential for positive impacts on Paulsboro, NJ from jobs to be created by the offshore wind industry, including from a new factory that will be making foundations for offshore wind turbines. The town had recently lost hundreds of jobs when a refinery cut back on its operations. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/new-factory-making-offshore-wind-monopiles-paulsboro-gloucester-county-hundreds-jobs-replace-lost-jobs-poverty-rate/>



- **Green Energy Will Boost Jobs, Nonprofit Group Says** - The Applied Economics Clinic, a non-profit consulting group that focuses on economic and policy analysis of energy, environment and equity, has issued two reports analyzing economic and job-related effects of NJ's accelerating the transition to clean energy by 2050: "Economic Impacts of a Clean Energy Transition in New Jersey" (link available here: <https://aeclinic.org/publicationpages/2022/06/07/economic-impacts-of-a-clean-energy-transition-in-new-jersey>) and "Barriers and Opportunities for Green Jobs in New Jersey" (link available here: <https://aeclinic.org/publicationpages/2022/06/07/barriers-and-opportunities-for-green-jobs-in-new-jersey>). The reports show increases both in economic activity and jobs, but also describe barriers for BIPOC and women to join the clean-energy workforce. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-green-energy-jobs-transition-from-fossil-fuel-2050-economy/>

- **Lawmakers Want Fewer Delays Connecting Solar Systems to Power Grid** - A bill (S431) was approved by the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee that would direct the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to update interconnection standards for Class I renewable energy sources and develop a fixed fee structure for interconnection costs. These measures are designed to address the need to upgrade and modernize the grid; lack of such measures are holding back the ability of renewable energy projects to access the grid. Costs would be divided between developers, utilities, and ratepayers, and the director of the NJ Division of Rate Counsel has opposed the bill. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/interconnection-solar-system-power-grid-clean-energy-transition-sen-bob-smith/>
- **Crucial Part of Green Future Gets Legislative Push** - A bill (S2185) that would require the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to provide incentives for energy storage systems was unanimously approved by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee. A 3-year pilot program, to be funded up to \$60 million per year from the ratepayers' societal benefits charge, would "reserve at least one third of the upfront incentives for customer classes or deployment scenarios that face greater economic hurdles, including, but not limited to low-to-moderate income customers, customers sited in overburdened communities, and owners of stand-alone energy storage systems who do not qualify for federal investment tax credits." The bill is opposed by the NJ director of Rate Counsel because of the cost to ratepayers. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-energy-environment-legislation-storage-systems-subsidies-incentives-offshore-solar-power/>
- **Opinion: Without Energy Storage, New Jersey's Clean-Energy Future Is in Question** (by Scott Elias, director of State Affairs, Mid-Atlantic, at the Solar Energy Industries Association) - The author urges approval of a bill (S2185) that would require the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to provide incentives for energy storage systems (see article above). A description is included of the types of incentives as well as their benefits. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/05/nj-energy-environment-storage-technology-senate-bill-2185-clean-energy-future-wind-solar/>
- **Opinion: We'll See No More Solar Power Developments on Landfills Unless Lawmakers Act Fast** (by Steven P. Gouin, an attorney with Giordano, Halleran & Ciesla in real estate, land use and redevelopment, energy and utilities) - The author points out issues with the transition from the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) previous solar incentive program (TREC), which provided favorable incentives for redevelopment of landfills and brownfields for solar energy, to the new program (SuSI). There is a bill in the legislature (A4089/S2732) that has been passed by the Assembly and that would address some of these issues. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-solar-power-arrays-landfills-contaminated-sites-trec-susi-problems-mount-olive/>

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **NJBPU Approves \$820,000 in Grants for 46 Municipalities to Create Community Energy Plans to Combat Climate Change** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has approved Community Energy Plan Grants to 46 municipalities to support their development of climate action plans at the local level based on their assessment of which strategies in the NJ Energy Master Plan (EMP) are most applicable in their communities. The basic grant is \$10,000, with communities designated as Overburdened Communities receiving \$25,000 as well as additional technical support; of the 46 awardees, 24 are Overburdened Communities. <https://nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2022/approved/20220608a.html>

- **Hazard NJ Episode 2: ‘America’s Biggest Crime Scene’** (25-minute podcast) - The second episode of the NJ Spotlight limited podcast series detailing climate change impacts on Superfund sites in NJ is available. It describes the impacts on Newark's Ironbound community of years of the Diamond Alkali company's dumping of chemical waste into the Passaic River, the obstacles to implementing cleanup, and the potential for climate change-fueled storms to stir up the toxic mud, potentially resulting in renewed impact on the community. [A 5-minute news video describing the ongoing cleanup planning process and legal obstacles related to obtaining funding from the polluters is available here: "**Hazard NJ: Passaic River Superfund Cleanup Stalled by Legal Wrangles**" (5-minute news video) - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/hazard-nj-passaic-river-superfund-cleanup-stalled-by-legal-wrangles/>.] <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/podcast/hazard-nj-episode-2-passaic-river-industrial-pollution-dioxin-agent-orange-diamond-alkali-americas-biggest-crime-scene/>

Potential Delay in NJDEP Plans for Emergency Flooding Rule Issuance

As part of the NJ PACT ("Protecting Against Climate Threats") process, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) revealed plans in late May to issue an emergency amendment to NJ Flood Hazard Area Control Act rules and Stormwater Management rules. The Administrative Procedures Act provides that an agency can make emergency amendments to administrative code upon a finding of imminent peril to public health, safety and welfare. The new would rules become effective upon filing with Office of Administrative Law and would be valid for 60 days, followed by a 30-day comment period. By comparison, the regular rulemaking process can take a year or more from proposal to adoption. DEP presented the plans to business and environmental groups in late May, using "imminent peril" to justify them. Since then, letters have been sent to Gov. Murphy from the business groups (asking for a delay in rule issuance) and environmental groups (asking that the rules be issued now). It appears that the issuance of the rule will, in fact, be delayed and additional stakeholder meetings will take place. See the following articles:

- **Enviros Urge Murphy to Implement Emergency Flood Rule Now** - Thirty environmental organizations signed on to a letter (available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2022/06/letter-to-gov-on-emergency-njpact-revised-6-21-22.pdf>) to Gov. Murphy, asking him to issue the emergency rules now, citing numerous delays in implementing previously-promised changes to regulations to reflect the impact of climate change. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/nj-energy-environment-enviros-urge-gov-murphy-implement-emergency-flood-rule-land-use-regulations-ida-dep-stakeholder-meetings/>
- **Murphy Urged to Halt DEP Plan for Emergency Rule on Flooding** - The groups asking for delay in the rule issuance, including the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, New Jersey Association of Counties, and Engineers Labor-Employer Cooperative (ELEC 825), sent a letter (available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2022/06/Letter-to-Governor-coalition-FINAL-1.pdf>) to Gov. Murphy, asking him to reject the DEP's claim that the public is under imminent peril as shown by the devastation from Tropical Storm Ida, and for DEP to propose these rule changes under the regular process. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/imminent-peril-flood-plain-two-feet-flooding-climate-change-dep-department-of-environmental-protection-business-new-jersey-business-industry-association-nj-bia/>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

- **Rep. Norcross Announces \$1 Million to Remove “Forever Chemicals” from Brooklawn Drinking Water** - The Borough of Brooklawn in Camden County has received a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development grant program. The grant funds will be used to make improvements to a water treatment plant by adding a system to remove perfluorinated compounds ("forever chemicals") from well water.
<https://www.southjerseyobserver.com/2022/06/13/rep-norcross-announces-1-million-to-remove-forever-chemicals-from-brooklawn-drinking-water/>

EDUCATIONAL and YOUTH-RELATED

- **Six New Jersey Schools Recognized For Innovative Climate Action** - This marked the second year of the "NJ Student Climate Challenge" program designed for engaging students to be climate leaders. As noted in a press release from Gov. Murphy's office, "Atlantic City Electric, Exelon, the Drumthwacket Foundation, and Sustainable Jersey honored six student teams for their NJ Student Climate Challenge action projects, which offer innovative approaches to help address the ongoing issue of climate change. Student teams, from high schools and middle schools across New Jersey, were tasked with developing and executing a school or community-based climate action project and creating a digital story or video to capture the approach and impacts of their climate project. Student team winners and their teacher mentors were recognized on June 8, 2022 at an awards ceremony hosted by the Drumthwacket Foundation with New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy." [Videos of the winning projects are available here: <https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/events/nj-student-climate-challenge/>.] The press release is available here: <https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20220608b.shtml>.

OTHER



- **Lake Communities Hope for No Algal Blooms This Summer** (4-1/2 minute news video) - In this video, state and local officials describe the various approaches being taken to try to avoid a repeat of past occurrences of harmful algal blooms (HABs) that closed lakes in NJ.
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/lake-communities-hope-for-no-algal-blooms-this-summer/>

Changes in the Offing for Liberty State Park?

- The "**Liberty State Park Protection Act**" bill, first introduced in 2019, **was withdrawn from consideration** by the NJ Senate on 6/9/2022.
- A new "**Liberty State Park Conservation, Recreation, and Community Inclusion Act**" bill (S2807/A4264) **was unanimously approved** by both the NJ Senate and Assembly committees within one week of introduction, despite a contentious public hearing.
- **The new bill does not protect the Park from privatization and would open it to commercial development; it does not call for protection of any specific areas such as Caven Point;** it adds "economic" and business opportunities to the list of goals; and it eliminates specifics related to informing and involving the public as planning progresses over time. It calls for a 17-member panel and the appropriation of \$250 million to achieve its purposes.
- The sponsor of the NJ Assembly's "Liberty State Park Protection Act" bill has pushed for it to be merged with the "Liberty State Park Conservation, Recreation, and Community Inclusion Act;" however, this does not seem likely to happen.
- **The new bill is scheduled for budget committee hearings in both houses on 6/27/2022 and approval is expected before the legislature's summer recess starting on 7/1/2022.**
- Jeff Tittel, former director of the Sierra Club's New Jersey chapter, called the new bill "a wolf in sheep's clothing."
- **If the bill is approved by the legislature as expected, Liberty State Park environmental advocates' only recourse would be to hope that Gov. Murphy would conditionally veto the bill at least to add protections for areas such as Caven Point; Gov. Murphy has not indicated his position on the bill.**

The following news stories highlight the potential future for the Park under the new bill:

- "**Liberty State Park Legislation Keeps Rolling, Despite Enviro's Objections to Privatization**" - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/06/liberty-state-park-legislation-250-million-privatization-assembly-senate-dep-ny-nj-baykeeper/>

- "**Bill Advances That Would Allow Commercial Development at Liberty State Park**" - <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2022/06/16/bill-advances-that-would-allow-commercial-development-at-liberty-state-park/>

- "**Bait-And-Switch Plan Puts LSP Future at Risk | Jersey Journal Editorial**" - <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2022/06/bait-and-switch-plan-puts-lsp-future-at-risk-jersey-journal-editorial.html>

- "**Flier Hits Mailboxes, Boasting That Liberty State Park Bill Will Deliver Concert Hall, Stadium and More**" - <https://www.nj.com/hudson/2022/06/literature-supporting-new-liberty-state-park-legislation-echoes-anti-protection-act-messaging.html>

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



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.