

Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter - January 2023

<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.



MANY NEW "GREEN" BEGINNINGS ENVISIONED THROUGHOUT NJ!

These news stories highlight the growing prevalence of "green" projects in NJ.

- **New Jersey Voters Choose 'Green' to Preserve Open Space** - forget about "red" or "blue;" "green" voting won big in NJ, with 9 of the 11 municipalities' open space ballot questions passing; all 21 NJ counties, and 250+ municipalities, now have voter-approved open space trust funds - <https://centraljersey.com/2022/12/05/new-jersey-voters-choose-green-to-preserve-open-space/>
- **Ciba-Geigy Site Settlement Would Preserve 1,000 Acres As Open Space** - proposed hiking trails, birdwatching platforms and blinds, and an educational center will benefit the residents of communities directly affected by the polluted site; NJDEP is accepting public comment until 2/3/2023 - <https://patch.com/new-jersey/tomsriver/ciba-geigy-site-settlement-would-preserve-1-000-acres-open-space>
- **Un-Pave the Parking Lot, Put up a Paradise!** - ideas for creating an urban park in the downtown Trenton Capitol Complex neighborhood - <https://www.njconservation.org/un-pave-the-parking-lot-put-up-a-paradise/>
- **"Green" Yards Recognized at Env. Commission's "Patchwork for Wildlife" Celebration** - Lake Como NJ Environmental Commission gave awards to residents with "environmentally-developed" yards - <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/belmar-slash-lake-como/articles/green-yards-recognized-at-env-commission-s-patchwork-for-wildlife-celebration>

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MANY NEW "GREEN" BEGINNINGS ENVISIONED THROUGHOUT NJ! (continued)

- **Green Acres Program Accepting Applications for Land Acquisition, Park Development, and Urban Parks Funding Projects** - the NJDEP funding for open space and parks projects, among others, will prioritize projects in neighborhoods identified as Adversely Stressed Overburdened Communities; see article on [p. 19](#) - https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2022/22_0048.htm
- **Mayor Bhalla Announces Historic Acquisition of Union Dry Dock Hoboken Waterfront Property** - Hoboken has acquired the last piece of property that will allow for a park at the Union Dry Dock site and connect the final piece of an entirely publicly accessible waterfront - <https://www.hobokennj.gov/news/mayor-bhalla-announces-historic-acquisition-of-union-dry-dock-waterfront-property>
- **Van Mater Farm in Marlboro Is Now Preserved as Farmland** - 28 acres located on the busy Route 79 corridor are now protected from development forever, resulting in a total of more than 282 preserved acres of farmland and open space in Marlboro Township - <https://patch.com/new-jersey/marlboro-coltsneck/van-mater-farm-marlboro-now-protected-open-space>
- **Jersey City Announces It'll Build 1-Acre Park Surrounding City Hall** - Jersey City plans to "green" the concrete hardscape in both the front and back of City Hall and replace it with tree plantings, flower gardens and other landscaping for beautification and stormwater absorption - <https://www.nj.com/hudson/2022/12/jersey-city-announces-itll-build-1-acre-park-surrounding-city-hall.html>
- **Toms River, NJ Council Introduces Ordinance to Permanently Preserve Downtown Park as Open Space** - the ordinance would eliminate the proposed possibility of an apartment complex on the current park site, as part of the Township's goal of preserving more open space as well as promoting recreation and conservation, and preventing overdevelopment - <https://wobm.com/toms-river-new-jersey-downtown-park/>
- **There'll Soon Be More to See and Do at Camden's Gateway Park. Here Is What to Expect** - plans include: a floating dock for fishing, boating, canoeing and kayaking; more trees to mitigate flooding and stormwater runoff; and lighting to make the park more welcoming - <https://www.courierpostonline.com/story/news/local/2022/12/20/gateway-park-nj-coming-attractions-pennsauken-camden/69722602007/>

EJTF ACTIVITIES

- **EJTF member Christine Dunbar** remains active with the coalition fighting the Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) Company's compressor expansion in North Jersey. Despite the coalition's efforts over the past two years (which include rallying, lobbying, marching, signing petitions, making phone calls, and speaking out at hearings to call on Gov. Murphy to stop this disastrous fracked gas compressor project and all new fossil fuel projects in NJ), nearly all required permits for the project have been approved and construction activities have begun in West Milford. However, the coalition is continuing its legal challenge to TGP's construction of the West Milford Compressor in the protected Highlands Preservation Area, and its appeal of the federal approval of the project for failing to analyze its climate impacts. The coalition continues to amplify its demands to Gov. Murphy. A recent opinion piece (available here: <https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2022/11/23/tgp-pipeline-nj-expansion-can-still-be-stopped-by-gov-phil-murphy/69673812007/>) and a video (available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxtyMG81CoM&t=40s>) describe the project and efforts to stop it. **You can send a message asking Gov. Murphy to stop the compressor expansion project here:** <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-governor-murphy-stop-the-compressors-before-its-too-late/>.

EJTF ACTIVITIES (continued)

- As Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator of the Foodshed Alliance, **EJTF member Christine Dunbar** is involved in a project to monitor salt levels in the Paulins Kill River, and is looking for volunteers to collect and test water samples along the river's 41.6 miles, from its source on a hillside in Fredon to its mouth in Knowlton. The goal is to learn about and monitor the amount of road salt that is getting into the Paulins Kill River, tributaries, lakes, and ponds. The program, funded by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), is managed by the The Watershed Institute, which is providing the Foodshed Alliance with this opportunity, including materials needed to test water quality for salt levels. An article describing the project is available here:
<https://www.njherald.com/story/news/environment/2022/12/20/road-salt-could-be-impacting-a-nj-river-heres-how-you-can-help-sussex-warren-newton/69731063007/>.
- **EJTF member Jo Sippie-Gora** attended a 12/8/2022 webinar on "Federal Funding Resources for Nonprofits and Houses of Worship," presented by Interfaith Power & Light (IPL), the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, the United Church of Christ, and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The briefing focused on the new U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) "Energy Efficiency Materials Pilot Program" and how to prepare to apply for these grants for congregations' energy efficiency work. The recording of the webinar is available here: <https://youtu.be/yFqic6O2qdc> and Jo has provided a summary of information from the briefing, shown in the box below.

"Energy Efficiency Materials Pilot Program" Grants

Did you know that the Inflation Reduction Act can provide Federal Funding Resources for Nonprofits & Houses of Worship? As people of faith and conscience, reducing the climate impact of our houses of worship is an opportunity to care for one another and for our common home. Information from a briefing on the "Energy Efficiency Materials Pilot Program," that will provide grants of up to \$200,000 to nonprofits to improve the energy efficiency of their facilities, is provided below:

Links that were shared during the briefing:

- **Native land digital map** (see <https://native-land.ca/>)
- **IPL federal resources website** (see <https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/federal-funding-for-energy-work-at-houses-of-worship/>)
- **Cool Congregations website** (see <https://www.coolcongregations.org/>)
- **Webinar presentation slides** (see <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10vr0EfbgOnI5oFK9S2F01Pybh8xvAymq/edit>)
- **DOE Energy Efficiency Materials Pilot Program for Nonprofits & Sign-up for email notifications from DOE** (see <https://www.energy.gov/bil/energy-efficiency-materials-pilot-program-nonprofits>)
- **ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager** (see <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/benchmark>)

Steps to prepare:

- **Form a green team (or reinvigorate your existing one)** (see: <https://www.coolcongregations.org/start-up-kit/>)
- **Benchmark your building** (see <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/benchmark>)
- **Get an energy audit from your utility (often they are free)**
- **Do some financing research within your denomination**

FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid

[EJTF members- also watch for email announcements of additional events!]

JANUARY 2023

(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 First Day Hike in Liberty State Park - 12:00 p.m.	2	3	4	5 Conversation with Madeline Ostrander & Bill McKibben - 7:00 p.m.	6 Comments Due: NJDEP Rule: Heavy-Duty New Engine & Vehicle Standards	7
8	9 "Rebuilding in an Age of Disasters – Insights from Hurricane Ian" - 1:00 p.m.	10 NJDEP Appliance Stakeholder Meeting - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> "What Isn't Measured, Isn't Managed" - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> "Community Solar Education" - 7:00 p.m.	11 "Will Nuclear Save the Green Transition?" - 11:15 a.m. <hr/> NJDEP Public Hearing on Inland Flood Protection Rules - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> NJ Green Amendment Advocate Training - 6:00 p.m.	12 "Report on COP27" - 8:00 p.m. <hr/> Rally on NJ 2023-2024 Budget - TBA	13	14
15	16	17 NJBPU Public Meeting "Medium & Heavy Duty EV Charging" - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> "Climate Adaptation for Forest-Dependent Wildlife" - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> Pasa 2023 Sustainable Agriculture Conference	18 <hr/> Pasa 2023 Sustainable Agriculture Conference	19 2023 National Community Solar Partnership Summit - 4:00 p.m. <hr/> "Building Electrification" - 7:00 p.m. <hr/> Pasa 2023 Sustainable Agriculture Conference	20 "American River: A Journey Down the Passaic" - 7:00 p.m.	21
22	23	24 "Why Methane Matters and What You Can Do" - 7:00 p.m.	25 Dartmouth New Energy Series Talk - 12:00 p.m.	26 NJBPU Energy Master Plan Hearing #1 - 10:00 a.m. <hr/> "Budget and Appropriations Briefing Series" - 2:00 p.m.	27	28
29	30	31 "The Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation (CMRA) Tool" - 9:30 a.m.		"Seeds of Survival: Botanic Gardens Honors the Black Experience" - Ongoing		

First Day Hike in Liberty State Park - In-person
Sunday, January 1, 2023, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Meet at Park Office, 200 Morris Pesin Drive, Jersey City, NJ 07305

Join the the NJ State Park Service on a 3-mile, leisurely hike from the Liberty State Park Office to Caven Point Beach. "Come explore the urban and natural shoreline of the Upper NY Bay, with breathtaking views of the Statue of Liberty and New York Skyline. We'll also explore the unique features of Caven Point Beach. Check in will be at the Park Office located at 200 Morris Pesin Drive, Jersey City, NJ 07305. Free parking is available in Lot #4. Please dress to be outdoors and wear sturdy footwear that can get wet/muddy. All ages welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the program. Pets are not permitted on the program unless they are service animals.

Pre-registration is required, and space is limited. For more information or to register, please contact the Nature Center at 201-915-3400 x503 or email LSPNatureCenter@dep.nj.gov. Hike will be cancelled in case of inclement weather such as snowy or icy conditions. Please check the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LibertyStateParkOfficial/>) for up-to-date information about the First Day Hike."

"Seeds of Survival: Botanic Gardens Honors the Black Experience" - Online
(or you can visit the garden in person at 124 Comstock Knoll Drive,
Ithaca New York, 14850, throughout the 2023 growing season)

The Cornell Botanic Gardens is hosting a fascinating exhibit "Seeds of Survival: Botanic Gardens Honors the Black Experience." It includes a garden display (during the growing season) and an exhibit (in-person and online) whose aim is to share the knowledge, skill, and resilience of enslaved Africans, their descendants, and today's Black community and their deep connections to plants and the cuisines they inspired. The exhibit especially aims to uncover narratives about the many ways African descendants have contributed to American foodways and farming practices, leading to a recognition and acknowledgement of the innovative agricultural creations and techniques developed by Black Americans and how this history connects to current cultural cuisines and injustice within our food system.

The online exhibit includes extensive history, displays, videos, audio files, photos of plants and foods (that also will be presented in the in-person garden exhibit during the growing season) along with their significance to African and now American culture and cuisine. It also provides a library guide with additional resources for these topics. **This excellent online exhibit may be viewed here:**

<https://cornellbotanicgardens.org/explore/exhibits/seeds-of-survival-and-celebration/>. A description of the background and overall aims of the exhibit is available in the "Cornell Chronicle" article and video available here:

<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2022/08/seeds-survival-botanic-gardens-honors-black-experience-0>. The exhibits - indoors, online, and in the garden - are all going to be expanded throughout 2023, and guest lectures may also be scheduled. The Cornell Botanic Gardens website is here: <https://cornellbotanicgardens.org>.

"In Conversation with Authors Madeline Ostrander & Bill McKibben" - Webinar
Thursday, January 5, 2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

In this webinar sponsored by the Elders Climate Action Network, science journalist and author Madeline Ostrander and author and environmental activist Bill McKibben will explore the questions: "How do we find our way home in a time of unprecedented upheaval and climate disruption?" and "How can older Americans help create a safer world for themselves, their families, and generations to come?" The answers may lie in rebuilding our connections to community and re-examining both history and identity in order to correct the mistakes that got us in this mess. Join them as they discuss what it means to live in America in a time of climate disaster and unruliness - and how we might build resilience and re-examine the nature of home. Valerie Schloredt, books editor of YES! Magazine, will moderate this virtual panel. Additional information and the registration link are available here:

https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/jan_conversation/.

"Rebuilding in an Age of Constant Disasters – Insights from Florida after Hurricane Ian" - Webinar
Monday, January 9, 2023, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

This webinar is sponsored by the Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF) and the George Washington University. "As climate impacts accelerate, adaptation decisions and financing adaptation become increasingly essential to all communities across the globe, whether in developed or developing countries. Florida is at the center of the climate crisis, being threatened by ever-increasing storms and super-charged hurricanes, sea level rise, and rising record-breaking heat days, among other climate impacts. The property devastation from Hurricane Ian topped \$250 billion and severely damaged or destroyed 100,000 homes. It killed 101 people. Impacts will escalate with climate change. Yet, Ian-ravaged property is being snapped up for high-end coastal redevelopment just like after past hurricanes. Florida is living on borrowed time, but still, development moves forward. What needs to change, and how should climate risks be considered in Florida from policy, insurance, and investment standpoints? Are there national and global lessons from Florida's development responses? Let's find out from insurance and financial experts. Some of their answers will surprise you." Additional information and the registration link are available here:

<https://ssfworld.org/rebuilding-in-an-age-of-constant-disasters-insights-from-florida-after-hurricane-ian/>.

NJDEP Appliance Standards Law Rulemaking: Stakeholder Meeting
Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Signed in 1/2022, the NJ Appliance Standards Law established minimum energy and water efficiency standards for several categories of residential and commercial appliances. Beginning on 1/18/2023 the sale, offer for sale, or lease of appliances in NJ that do not meet these specific efficiency standards will be prohibited. Additionally, products listed in the law, unless otherwise noted, will need to be labeled and certified that they meet the standards contained in the law. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will hold a

stakeholder meeting on 1/10/2023 to discuss and receive feedback on the drafting of a rule to implement the Appliance Standards Law. The rulemaking will seek to implement the minimum standards and establish requirements for testing, certification and marking of the products. Additionally, the DEP is interested in public input on ways to improve compliance and enforcement. Additional information and the link to register for the stakeholder meeting are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/appliancestandards/>.

**"What Isn't Measured, Isn't Managed: Improving Embodied Emissions Reporting" -
Webinar
Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

This webinar is sponsored by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES). "As clean procurement (or 'Buy Clean') policies and company-led efforts to reduce supply chain emissions gain traction, the need to accurately report on emissions from the various stages of a product's life cycle - also known as 'embodied carbon' - will only increase. However, environmental product declarations (EPDs) - the most common way to label embodied emissions, which form the backbone of private and public sector clean procurement efforts - often lack the detail and consistency needed to give the confidence that procurement decisions will lead to emissions reductions. In this webinar, an expert panel will explore the current state of the knowledge infrastructure around embodied emissions reporting, the challenges in developing a robust system of reporting, and what can be done to get there. It will draw on insights from C2ES's recent brief, 'A Building Block for Climate Action: Reporting on Embodied Emissions,' and will include an expert panel discussion." Additional information and the registration link are available here: <https://www.c2es.org/event/what-isnt-measured-isnt-managed-improving-embodied-emissions-reporting/>.

**"Community Solar Education" - Virtual
Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Join NJ League of Conservation Voter's Campaigns Team - James, Kathryn, Sunni, and Toyosi - for an informative session on Community Solar. The registration link is available here: <https://www.mobilize.us/njlcv/event/447252/>.

**"Will Nuclear Save the Green Transition?" - Webinar
Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**

This webinar is sponsored by the Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF) and the George Washington University. "At a time when technology is changing at the fastest rate in all human history, the role nuclear energy is called to play in the de-carbonization of electricity production is unclear, with voices for and against its expansion. After all, nuclear is a dense and constant energy source, so it addresses wind and solar's intermittency and density challenges. However, nuclear energy as we know it, i.e., large reactors, faces serious obstacles, including safety, waste disposal, cost, overruns, and its history of construction delays. Small and modular reactors might come to the rescue via in-house manufacturing and shorter deployment times. Also, in its several variants, fusion is claimed to be an option to be considered within the time scale imposed by climate change. In this lecture, Dr. Alfredo

Caro will provide a broad overview of nuclear technology at present, its challenges and opportunities as seen in different parts of the world, the most advanced examples being developed worldwide, and the news in this field that captures the attention of the public, the press, and the investors. Dr. Alfredo Caro, a GW Research Professor, was the Director of the Atomic Center and Balseiro Institute in Bariloche, Argentina; he worked for the European Fusion Program at the Paul Scherrer Institute in Switzerland and the DOE Fusion Program at Lawrence Livermore National labs." Additional information and the registration link are available here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4986686980759720717>.

**NJDEP Public Hearing on Proposed Inland Flood Protection Rules - Virtual
Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is holding a virtual public hearing on the proposed Inland Flood Protection Rule. After much back-and-forth between the Murphy administration and groups such as those representing business and those advocating for emergency rule issuance due to urgency related to climate change, the proposed Inland Flood Protection Rule was published on 12/5/2022. The rule requires that the latest precipitation data be used in certain cases, and "would establish design elevations that are reflective of New Jersey's changing climate and the more frequent and intense rainfall we are experiencing. The updated standards would apply to certain new and substantially reconstructed development in inland riverine areas that are subject to flooding, but they do not prohibit development in these flood hazard areas." Pending development applications that are administratively complete at the time of a future adoption of the rule would not be affected by these changes, major transportation projects are exempt from the new flood-zone requirements if they "have determined a preferred alternative or reached an equivalent planning and design milestone before the effective date" of the rules, and provisions are included "designed to ensure that infrastructure projects already in progress will continue to move forward." Environmental advocates have asked that pending projects be put on hold until the rulemaking process ends, whereas some in the business community are not in favor of some of the proposed requirements (see the news article: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/11/nj-flood-rule-relaunched-business-concerns-environmental-concerns-gov-phil-murphy-shawn-latourette-dep/>). **Additional information and links to the rule proposal and for submitting written comments are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/inland-flood-protection-rule/>. The comment period ends on 2/3/2023. The link to the 1/11/2023 public hearing, to be conducted through Microsoft Teams, as well as links to videos and presentations of two previous public meetings, are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/inland-flood-protection-rule/engagement-sessions/>.**

NJ Green Amendment Advocate Training - Virtual
Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. (2-part training)



**NEW JERSEY
GREEN AMENDMENT
ADVOCATE TRAINING!**

January 11th, 6-7:45 pm - 2 Part Series
ADVOCATING FOR A NJ GREEN AMENDMENT

6:00-6:45: PART 1 - INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW:
WHAT IS A GA & WHY DO WE NEED IT?

7:00-7:45: PART 2 - WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 2023 ACTION PLAN
- GETTING DECISIONMAKERS ONBOARD
- PASSING MUNICIPAL RESOLUTIONS

REGISTER HERE: bit.ly/NJGATraining

This Green Amendment advocacy training will be presented by Green Amendments for the Generations. "New Jersey is poised to become the fourth state in the nation to pass a Green Amendment – but we need your help! Want to learn how to become an advocate for the New Jersey Green Amendment? Join our NJ Green Amendment Advocate training on January 11th at 6:00 p.m.! If you're new to the concept or could use a refresher, tune in at 6:00 p.m. for an Introduction & Overview. If you're already well versed in the Green Amendment basics and just want to learn how you can help, tune at 7:00 p.m. to learn what you can do!"

The Google registration link is available here: [Bit.ly/NJGATraining](https://bit.ly/NJGATraining); for non-Google registration, please email GAFTG@ForTheGenerations.org using the subject line "NJ sign up."

Rally and Press Conference on NJ 2023 - 2024 State Budget - In-person
Thursday, January 12, 2023, (time is forthcoming)
NJ State House, 125 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08625

Join us for a Rally and Press Conference in front of State House in Trenton about the NJ State Budget for 2023-2024. We will focus on preventing any more diversions of Clean Energy Funds from the Society Benefit Charges Fund to fill gaps elsewhere in the budget. Plan now to join us in Trenton if possible, or to do something where you live to bring this issue to the public's attention (such as writing a letter to a newspaper and talking with your friends).

Here's why: everyone in NJ contributes to the Society Benefit Charges Fund as a surcharge on our electricity bills, although it may not be explicitly obvious. This annual diversion of many millions of dollars through the budget creation process has been occurring for several years, despite continued protests from the Environmental, Environmental Justice, Labor, Solar, and Mass Transit advocating communities, among others.

This year, even before Gov. Murphy introduces his proposed budget, we want to make the point that to achieve NJ's Clean Energy Goals, these budgetary diversions must stop! Since we are all contributing to this fund, we need to tell the Governor and the Legislature that they must create a budget without any diversions from the Clean Energy Fund. All of the money in this fund must be devoted to creating more clean energy, as well as conserving more energy, and reducing wasted energy.

Additional information will be provided on the UUFANJ calendar, available here: <https://www.uufaction.org/events/month/2023-01/>.

"Report on COP27" from UJEC Board Member Cindy Piester - Webinar
Thursday, January 12, 2023, 8:00 p.m.

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) Board member Cindy Piester will present a report on the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference - the 27th such conference, held from November 6 - 20, 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt - commonly referred to as COP27. Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://uujec.org/webinars>.

NJBPU Public Meeting on "Medium and Heavy Duty Electric Vehicle Charging Ecosystem" - Virtual
Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is holding a virtual Stakeholder Meeting regarding the development of a Medium and Heavy Duty ("MHD") Electric Vehicle ("EV") Charging Ecosystem. This Straw Proposal expands upon the Medium and Heavy Duty Straw Proposal released in June 2021, taking into account stakeholder input and further advancements in policy surrounding MHD EVs. Expansions to the June 2021 proposal include adding private fleet charging depots located in, or primarily operating in, Overburdened Municipalities to those eligible for Make-Ready Incentives. The BPU Notice, which includes this draft Straw Proposal, a link to the June 2021 Straw Proposal, a description of additions to it, and the registration link for the public meeting, is available here: https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/Notice_MediumHeavyDutyStraw_Dec2022v2.pdf. **Comments are due by 5:00 p.m. on 1/24/2023.**

Pasa 2023 Sustainable Agriculture Conference - Virtual
Tuesday, January 17 - Thursday, January 19, 2023

[Note: there is a SEPARATE in-person Conference February 8 - 11 in Lancaster, PA]

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (Pasa) is presenting two conferences on Sustainable Agriculture, one virtual (live and on-demand) and one in-person. **The virtual conference in January features over 25 sessions on farming and food systems; it is pay-what-you-can, but there are recommended rates.** Registration for the virtual conference provides access to all (virtual) live sessions, on-demand sessions, and recordings. There will also be a completely separate in-person conference in Lancaster, PA in February 2023 that will feature over 90 sessions plus networking events. The links for additional information about both conferences, and to register, are available here: <https://pasafarming.org/2023-sustainable-agriculture-conference/>.

2023 National Community Solar Partnership Annual Summit - Hybrid

Thursday, January 19, 2023

**In-person, 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Pacific Time at Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, CA
and Virtual, 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) is hosting the third National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP) Annual Summit on 1/19/2023, at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego, California. **There will also be a virtual option for those who cannot attend in person.** "This year's summit theme, 'Community Solar's Time to Shine,' reflects how the efforts of NCSP and our partners over the last year, as well as the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), have unlocked a new potential for community solar. We are excited to convene NCSP members, community solar stakeholders, and industry thought leaders to engage in conversations about the new landscape of community solar."

"The event will feature plenary sessions and interactive roundtable discussions on topics including new community solar markets, accessible financing, customer acquisition with an emphasis on low-income households, messaging, and access to capital. NCSP will also announce the winners of the Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar and new NCSP initiatives." The registration fee for in-person attendance is \$80. **There is no charge for virtual participation.** Additional information and the link to the overall registration page are available here: <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/2023-national-community-solar-partnership-annual-summit>. **Registration for the Virtual option is available here:** https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItceysqD8jG6Drri_TnjXLYZKBwHGFecA.

**"Building Electrification: Increase Energy Efficiency, House Value and Save Money"
- Webinar**

Thursday, January 19, 2022, 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

The Sierra Club NJ Chapter is presenting this webinar, which is part of a continuing series. "Home Energy Efficiency, Home Value, and Savings: the 5 Principles of Passive House" will be discussed by Ken Levenson, Executive Director of the Passive House Network. The registration link is available here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002NSBaAAO&mapLinkHref=>.

"American River: A Journey Down the Passaic" - In-person Film

Friday, January 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ 07102

"Join us for the Newark premiere of the independent documentary film 'American River.' The Passaic River flows right through our community, but for most of us it remains a mystery. Come with us on this epic, 80-mile kayak trip across New Jersey and get to know our historic river and the heroic efforts to save it. From its pristine beginnings in a wildlife preserve to its industrial end in Newark Bay, the Passaic will amaze you with its rich history, fascinating geology, breathtaking beauty and power that inspired artists and ignited the country's industrial revolution. 'American River' captures a mosaic of stories from people who live and

work along the Passaic and from the local heroes working to reclaim it." Additional information about the film, including the trailer, is available here: <https://www.americanriver.film/about/>. This film screening at NJPAC includes a special post-screening Q&A with filmmaker Scott Morris, author Mary Bruno ("An American River: From Paradise to Superfund") and river guide Carl Alderson. Tickets (**\$5.00**) may be ordered here: <https://www.njpac.org/event/american-river/>.

**"Why Methane Matters and What You Can Do" - Webinar
Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Cutting methane pollution is one of the greatest levers we have to quickly slow the impacts of climate change. Celerah Hewes from Moms Clean Air Force will talk about why cutting methane is such an important opportunity, how it impacts our health, and how you can participate in the current EPA methane emissions reduction guidelines comment period (until 2/13/2023). Additional information and the registration link are available here: https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc_jan23/.

**Dartmouth New Energy Series Talk - Christopher Callahan (Researches Economic and Social Consequences of Climate Change)
Wednesday, January 25, 2023, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

This webinar will be presented by Christopher Callahan, a PhD candidate and NSF Graduate Research Fellow at Dartmouth College in the Ecology, Evolution, Environment and Society (EEES) program, working with the Climate Modeling and Impacts Group. His research focuses on the economic and social consequences of climate change, using a wide range of tools, from simple and complex climate models to econometric regression techniques, to understand the relationship between extreme climate events and outcomes such as human health and economic growth. His work aims to inform policy discussions over climate mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage funding, as well as decisionmaking tools such as the social cost of carbon. Additional information, and the registration link, will be available here: <https://irving.dartmouth.edu/news-events/news-events/new-energy-series>.

This webinar is part of "New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers" an online series presented by Dartmouth College and "featuring graduate, postdoctoral, 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."

**NJBPU Energy Master Plan Hearing #1 - Virtual
Thursday, January 26, 2023, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

In 2018, Gov. Murphy signed Executive Order No. 28, which directed the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to develop an Energy Master Plan (EMP) to serve as the blueprint to achieve 100% clean energy by 2050; the 2019 EMP was released on January 27, 2020. This year, the EMP will undergo a required Update, which will incorporate progress information acquired

through interagency collaboration and stakeholder feedback to make recommendations on how to continue steering NJ toward its overall clean energy and climate goals. Three virtual public hearings have been scheduled, each addressing two or three of the EMP's seven goals, describing the progress on achieving those goals, and potential actions regarding the Update. At each public hearing there will be a panel of BPU Staff and representatives from other State agencies, to provide insights into these subjects. Stakeholders and members of the general public will be invited to comment on strategy, progress, and current actions, either orally at the time of the public hearing or in writing. **Public Hearing #1 will take place on 1/26/2023 and written comments related to that hearing are due by 2/9/2023 at 5:00 p.m. Information about all of the hearings, and the links to register, are available here:**

https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/Notice_of_PublicHearings_EnergyMasterPlan_Update_November22_etp2%20tm.pdf.

**"Budget and Appropriations Briefing Series: Congressional Climate Camp" -
Webinar
Thursday, January 26, 2023, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) invites you to join us for our start-of-the-new-Congress briefing series, 'Climate Camp.' We will go over the basics of the legislative process, highlighting key areas and opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation policy. Our first session in EESI's Congressional Climate Camp series will bring you up to speed on the budget and appropriations process already underway for fiscal year 2024. Panelists will draw on examples of funding for climate, energy, and environment programs to bring the process to life and show how it plays out in practice. Panelists will also describe how annual appropriations have been impacted by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/012623camp>.

**Comments Due on
DEP Rule Revision Regarding Year 2027 or Later Heavy-Duty New Engine and
Vehicle Standards and Requirements
Friday, January 6, 2023**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is proposing revisions to the State Implementation Plan. The primary component of this rulemaking is the incorporation by reference of California's emission standards and supporting requirements for new model year 2027 and later gasoline and diesel engines and vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) greater than 8,500 pounds. The Department proposes this rulemaking to ensure that any new gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles rated in excess of 8,500 pounds GVWR sold in NJ will be subject to the most stringent emission standards that are technically feasible for nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Information about additional areas covered, as well as a link to the proposed rule and instructions about how to provide written comments, are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/notices/20221107a.html>.

Written comments are due by January 6, 2023.

Rutgers Climate Institute Listing of 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 limited events listed for January 2023 (a sampling is listed below), but the site includes updated information over time; check the site periodically for an updated list: <https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/range.listevents/>.

"Climate Adaptation for Forest-Dependent Wildlife Webinar Series" - Webinars Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Register here.

This 12-part series, sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), tells a story about climate change and its impacts on forest ecosystems and forest-dependent wildlife species. It examines forest ecosystems and their composition and structure under a changing climate, and the influence on wildlife populations and carbon dynamics. Tools and management approaches to help facilitate forest and wildlife climate adaptation at both landscape and stand scales will be addressed. The webinar series, which began in March 2022, takes place on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. through April 2023. Attendance at all presentations is highly recommended, as each month's topic builds upon the prior webinar; however, videos of all previous presentations are available here: <https://training.fws.gov/topic/online-training/webinars/forest-ecology-and-management.html>. The link to access additional information and registration is available here: <https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/icalrepeat.detail/2023/01/17/7452/-/webinar-climate-adaptation-for-forest-dependent-wildlife-webinar-series>.

"The Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation (CMRA) Tool" - Webinar Tuesday, January 31, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Sponsored by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Northeast Regional Climate Center (NRCC), this webinar will discuss the "Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation" (CMRA) tool, which integrates information from across the federal government to help people consider their local exposure to climate-related hazards. People working in community organizations or for local, Tribal, state, or Federal governments can use the site to help them develop equitable climate resilience plans to protect people, property, and infrastructure. Citizens can use it to understand climate-related hazards that might affect their community. The website describing the tool is here: <https://resilience.climate.gov>. The site also points users to Federal grant funds for climate resilience projects, including those available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The link to register for the webinar is available here: <https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/icalrepeat.detail/2023/01/31/7444/-/webinar-the-climate-mapping-for-resilience-and-adaptation-cmra-tool>.

VIDEOS OF PAST EVENTS+

"One Hundred Thousand Beating Hearts" - 15-minute Film

This film by Peter Byck tells the story of a fourth-generation former industrial cattle farmer who made the transition to regenerative farming. In the beginning it discusses the introduction of industrial farming in Georgia after World War II. Long-term, that caused the demise of many local family farms and the demise of the local villages. The people who remain are poor. Then there is this farmer, who gambled on regenerative farming. He took on debt to invest in his farm, which is now thriving and providing employment to many people and housing to some. He delights in the symbiotic relationships between the critters on his farm. The video is available here:

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/170413226?wmode=transparent>.

NJDEP Atlantic County EJ Community Engagement Session - Video of Meeting

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invited Atlantic County residents to attend an EJ Community Engagement Session regarding Environmental Justice. This community engagement session provided residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet DEP and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) senior staff and discuss environmental justice issues in Atlantic County. It was one of a series being conducted by DEP in communities across NJ. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eq4QcO1nPYw>.

Climate Adaptation Forum - "Nature-Based Adaptation: Getting to Scale" - Video of Forum

"Flooding risks, sea level rise, storm surges, and extreme heat are accelerating with a changing climate. Ecosystems are also at risk, along with the social, economic, and environmental benefits they provide. Nature-based climate adaptation approaches offer opportunities to bring people into greater harmony with ecology, secure and enhance ecosystem services for future generations, and cost-effectively reduce some flooding risks. Funders, regulators, adaptation professionals, and the public now view nature-based adaptation as no longer an aspiration, but a priority or requirement. Pilot projects are being scaled up to billions of oysters, miles of shoreline, and hectares of wetlands. But how feasible and effective are they? And how do we effectively regulate and build the capacity to plan and implement them at scales that match the urgency of risks, speed of climate changes, and our own expectations?" This forum addressed the opportunities and barriers to scaling up nature-based approaches to climate adaptation, from planning to permitting to implementation. The video is available here: <https://climateadaptationforum.org/event/nature-based-adaptation-getting-to-scale/>.

Beyond Pesticides 2022 National Forum Series: "Meeting the Health, Biodiversity, and Climate Crises with a Path for a Livable Future" - Videos of Webinars

The Beyond Pesticides 2022 National Forum Series focused on both the existential problems associated with current public health and environmental crises and how to chart a path for a future that solves these urgent problems. The existential crises were classified into three categories: public health threats, biodiversity collapse, and the climate emergency, with a recognition that with all the existential threats there is disproportionate risk to communities of color and those with health vulnerabilities. While the current challenges result from a confluence of issues that are harmful to sustaining life, the need for carefully defined sustainable land management and building and household practices and products is urgent. The National Forum Series launches Beyond Pesticides' effort to eliminate fossil fuel-based pesticide use within the next decade, putting a stop to toxic emissions, exposure, and residues, while embracing an organic systems approach that is holistic and respectful of life.

The series includes three webinars, as follows:

- **Health** (including an indigenous farmer in Maui, Hawai'i, who is trying to bring back the abundant and thriving landscapes of the ancestors through traditional indigenous practices);
- **Biodiversity**; and
- **Climate**.

Additional information and links to the videos are available here:

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/programs/national-pesticide-forum/2022npf/home>.

"Carbon Utilization Infrastructure, Markets, Research and Development: Public Briefing" - Video of Webinar

According to a report to Congress from a National Academies committee chaired by Emily A. Carter of Princeton University, "recycling carbon emissions could be a key climate solution but won't be easy." The report evaluates market opportunities as well as infrastructure and research needs to help decisionmakers better understand how carbon dioxide utilization can contribute to a net-zero emissions future. During the briefing, members of the committee discussed the report's key findings and recommendations and took questions from the audience. A link to order a free PDF of the report, "Carbon Dioxide Utilization Markets and Infrastructure Status and Opportunities: A First Report" is available here:

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26703/carbon-dioxide-utilization-markets-and-infrastructure-status-and-opportunities-a>. The video is available here:

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/12-01-2022/carbon-utilization-infrastructure-markets-research-and-development-public-briefing>.

"In Conversation with Chef Christopher Galarza – Induction Cooking" **- Video of Webinar**

In this webinar sponsored by Elders Climate Action, Chef Christopher Galarza, "renowned for his work in commercial kitchen electrification," addressed the impacts our kitchen appliances are having on the environment and on our health. He provided information about sustainable cooking and kitchen electrification, including how electric induction cooking is much more energy efficient than top-of-the-line gas range appliances, and does not create harmful carbon monoxide emissions, resulting in cleaner indoor air. The video is available here: <https://youtu.be/jQA-Gek-G5g>.

"Climate Summit Recap: Key Outcomes and What Comes Next" **(from the EESI "What Congress Needs to Know About COP27" briefing series) -** **Video of Webinar**

Sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), this briefing reviewed what took place during the international climate negotiations in Egypt (COP27) and why it matters for Congress. "With dozens of events and negotiating sessions happening at any one time during the two weeks of a U.N. climate summit, it can be challenging to keep up with all the details." Panelists provided key takeaways from the federal government, U.S. states, philanthropy, and nongovernmental organization perspectives. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/120222cop>.

"Sixty Minutes with Danish Wind Innovator, Henrik Stiesdal" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was sponsored by the Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF). "Henrik Stiesdal, known for wind innovation, is an innovator in much more than wind energy. His firm, Stiesdal, is a diverse climate technology leader in offshore wind, energy storage, hydrogen, and carbon capture. In his 60-minute talk at the Environmental and Energy Management Institute at George Washington University's School of Engineering and Applied Science, Henrik took the audience on a compelling journey on how to accelerate the deployment of clean energy at a massive scale. His point is that the technology to scale exists now, and he succinctly addresses the technical, financial, and policy barriers – some real and some perceived." The video is available here: <https://ssfworld.org/sixty-minutes-with-danish-wind-innovator-henrik-stiesdal/>.

"Ditch the Guesswork in Verifying GHG Emissions" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was sponsored by the Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF). "Information on counting, tracking, and verifying greenhouse gas emissions is required for society to meet climate ambitions of keeping ambient temperature rise under 1.5 °C. ... The elephant in the carbon accounting room has been the lack of direct proof in verifying emissions. Verification has been done indirectly by tracking business operations, reading electricity meters, surveying changes in tree cover, etc., but not on direct measurements. However, firms like Floodlight use global remote sensing data to scientifically determine near real-time GHG

concentrations at the asset and area-wide levels. ... Learn how to use a combination of sensors, Internet of Things (IoT) devices, aerial assessments, and satellite-based assessments to measure and validate real data. This science-based approach can inform targeted compliance strategies for each asset and pinpoints problem areas, such as fugitive emissions or assets in high-risk storm zones." The video is available here: <https://ssfworld.org/ditch-the-guesswork-in-verifying-ghg-emissions/>.

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 11/27/2022 – 12/26/2022]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- **Murphy Administration Announces Winners of 23rd Annual Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards** - The NJ Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards are awarded each year to individuals and organizations that demonstrate commitment and leadership on a variety of environmental issues, including environmental justice, climate change, sustainability, education, and protection of natural resources. This year's winner in the Environmental Justice category was the New Jersey Tree Foundation, of which **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh is a Trustee**. A video recording of the awards, with an excellent presentation by the NJ Tree Foundation at minute 15:00, is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=PdhlURDIUtM&feature=youtu.be>. The writeup for the award is as follows: "The New Jersey Tree Foundation is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to planting trees in New Jersey's most underserved neighborhoods where the need is greatest. The organization turns streets into neighborhoods by working with communities to benefit their local environment to increase New Jersey's tree canopy. Through tree planting, volunteerism and partnerships, the New Jersey Tree Foundation assists communities in improving their environment and quality of life for residents. In addition, the organization provides green job training and seasonal employment to individuals under parole supervision." https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2022/22_0049.htm

- **Green Acres Program Accepting Applications for Land Acquisition, Park Development, Stewardship, Jake’s Law and Urban Parks Funding Projects** - Local governments and eligible nonprofit organizations interested in acquiring open space, creating or rehabilitating parks, completing stewardship projects, or creating inclusive playgrounds are invited to apply for NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Green Acres grant and loan funding. The funding for 2023 will be used to advance the DEP’s environmental justice and climate change priorities by prioritizing projects that offer equitable and meaningful public access and maximize social, environmental and health benefits to the public, particularly in neighborhoods identified as Adversely Stressed Overburdened Communities. Projects located in or easily accessible by these communities will be eligible for new funding incentives. The Green Acres Program is just one source for project funding; another source is the Urban Parks Program, which is funded by a state budget appropriation and will be offered again in 2023. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2022/22_0048.htm

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE



- **New Jersey’s Last Operating Coal Plant Demolished, Clearing Path for Clean Energy: Starwood Energy Announces Plans for Battery Storage Project on Demolished Site** - On 12/2/2022, the Logan Generating Plant in Swedesboro, NJ was demolished - a video of the demolition is available here: <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2022/12/boom-the-destruction-of-a-dirty-coal-fired-plant-should-lead-us-to-a-clean-energy-future-opinion.html>. The Logan Generating Plant was one of NJ’s last coal plants to retire; Starwood Energy, the plant's owner, plans to build grid-scale battery storage on the site, using existing interconnection rights from the old coal plant to connect new offshore wind transmission lines. <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2022/12/new-jersey-s-last-operating-coal-plant-demolished-clearing-path-clean>

LAND MANAGEMENT/AGRICULTURE/FOOD

- **How Native Americans Created 'a Vast Food Network'** - Recent archaeological studies suggest that prior to the arrival of Europeans, Native Americans manipulated and shaped entire ecosystems to maximize food yield and diversity. In the new book, "Wild Plant Culture: A Guide to Restoring Edible and Medicinal Native Plant Communities," restoration ecologist and author Jared Rosenbaum states that, "when the first Europeans arrived in the New World, they immediately noticed the great abundance of the land. But they had no idea that these food-rich landscapes were the result of deliberate efforts." Evidence from paleoecology and anthropology suggests that, "throughout the Americas, Indigenous peoples managed a vast food network via fire, plant introductions and other ecological management techniques." The book integrates "restoration practices, foraging, herbalism, rewilding, and permaculture, to provide a comprehensive guide to the ecological restoration of native edible and medicinal plant communities in eastern North America."
<https://www.njconservation.org/how-native-americans-created-a-vast-food-network/>
- **Governor Murphy Highlights Ongoing Efforts to Strengthen Food Security in New Jersey** - This press release describes numerous food security-related programs instituted by the Murphy Administration , through means such as the enactment of legislation, inclusion of funding in the State budget, and the creation of a first-in-the-nation Office of the Food Security Advocate. A few of them deal with urban agriculture and local farming.
<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20221130a.shtml>
- **DOE Announces \$8 Million to Integrate Solar Energy Production with Farming** - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has announced \$8 million for six solar energy research projects across six states and the District of Columbia that will provide new economic opportunities for farmers, rural communities, and the solar industry. The funding supports agrivoltaics - the co-location of agricultural production and solar energy generation on the same land - and aims to reduce barriers to utility-and community-scale solar energy deployment while maximizing benefits for farmers and local communities. The Foundational Agrivoltaic Research for Megawatt Scale (FARMS) funding program seeks to develop replicable models for agrivoltaics that can provide new economic opportunities while potentially reducing land-use conflicts. The projects selected for FARMS build on ongoing DOE-funded research, which is focused on conducting research, analysis, and dissemination of agrivoltaics best practices. Rutgers University was awarded \$1.6 million to conduct crop and grazing trials at two solar array testbeds, study community perceptions of agrivoltaics, and create a regional agrivoltaics network for agricultural extension staff in the Northeast, beginning with their partnership with Delaware State University, a historically black land-grant university. - <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-announces-8-million-integrate-solar-energy-production-farming>

[Also see: "One Hundred Thousand Beating Hearts" (15-minute film) in the Videos section on [p. 15.](#)]

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- **NJ's Massive Wind Port Is Taking Shape. Here's How** - The NJ Wind Port being built in Salem County, the "first purpose-built marshaling and manufacturing hub for the offshore wind industry in the country," is on track to be ready in early 2024 when Ørsted will need it to support the Ocean Wind 1 project.
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/11/new-jersey-wind-port-takes-shape-in-salem-county-offshore-wind-industry-hub/>
- **Rate Counsel Suggests NJ Slow Down the Pace of Offshore Wind Development** - Because of current "higher interest rates, supply chain disruptions and inflationary pressures," the NJ Rate Counsel Director is suggesting that NJ postpone the next (third) solicitation for offshore wind projects, proposed for early 2023.
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/offshore-wind-development-nj-raises-costs-rate-payers/>
- **Former Superfund Site in Mount Olive Is Now a Solar Farm** (4-minute news video) - Construction has been completed on the largest solar farm on a capped landfill in NJ (and one of the largest in the U.S.) with over 56,000 solar panels, on the former Combe Landfill North Superfund site in Mount Olive, NJ.
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/former-superfund-site-in-mount-olive-is-now-a-solar-farm/>



- **NJ Moves to Boost Solar Power** - The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) announced approval of the new Competitive Solar Incentive (CSI) Program, with the goal of providing incentives for solar-power generation on large "grid" scales, such as in non-residential settings like capped landfills (see article above). **EJTF member Lyle Rawlings**, president of the Mid-Atlantic Solar & Storage Industries Association, stated that, with respect to solar development, "enabling it to happen at scale is important."
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/solar-power-solar-grids-bpu-board-of-public-utilities-300-megawatts-new-capacity/>
- **Solar Developers Want More Time to Finish Projects** - This is related to one of the issues **EJTF member Lyle Rawlings**, president of the Mid-Atlantic Solar & Storage Industries Association, brought to the EJTF Task Force's attention in his presentation at EJTF's December monthly meeting. The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) issued an order 11/9/2022 (available here: <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/boardorders/2022/20221109/8B%20ORDER%20Transitio%20Incentive%20Second%20Bulk%20Denials.pdf>) denying 28 petitions from solar

developers requesting an extension of time to complete 199 projects begun under the previous solar incentive program, which had expired. The petitions requested extensions due to issues such as supply chain problems. The petitioners have now submitted another petition to the BPU asking for reconsideration of its decision. This petition states that the 11/9/2022 order "represents an existential threat to the viability of the solar industry in New Jersey."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/nj-solar-developers-want-extension-fear-loss-of-state-incentives/>

- **Murphy Administration Announces More Than \$8 Million to Build a Diverse, Inclusive Green Jobs Sector** - Gov. Murphy's Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy (OCAGE), in collaboration with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), announced \$5 million for the Building our Resilient, Inclusive, and Diverse Green Economy (NJ BRIDGE) initiative, "to fund scalable projects to support residents entering the green workforce or climbing the green career ladder, with a focus on engagement in overburdened communities." In addition, the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) is implementing a \$3.725 million Offshore Wind Workforce and Skills Development Grant Challenge, "a competitive grant program that will help New Jerseyans, particularly those in overburdened communities, develop skills for offshore wind careers." Together, these programs will provide more than \$8 million in funding "toward the cultivation of a green economy founded upon good-paying jobs and long-term career opportunities."
<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20221208.shtml>

CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Seeking Advantage, Oil Companies Want Climate Lawsuit in Federal Court** - Not surprisingly, the oil companies that NJ is suing, alleging they knowingly made false claims to deceive the public about the existence of climate change, have filed a request to move the lawsuit from state courts to federal district court. This repeats requests that have been made by oil companies related to similar lawsuits across the U.S. because of a perception that federal courts favor the defendants in such cases. In several such cases, the oil companies have petitioned the Supreme Court to rule on where these cases belong. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/climate-change-fraud-lawsuit-big-oil-state-federal-court-venue-change/>
- **NJ Explores Creation of New Regional Market for Clean Energy** - This article summarizes a report by staff of the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) that furthers longstanding discussions of NJ's possibly exiting the existing regional energy market, and considers several mechanisms for establishing a new market focusing on clean energy. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/nj-bpu-report-recommends-new-clean-energy-market/>
- **Legislation on Natural Gas Prompts Clash of Interests** - This article summarizes viewpoints for and against promotion of "renewable natural gas" in NJ. The views were expressed at an Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee session on the bill A577, which was then voted out of committee and referred to the Environment and

Solid Waste Committee. The bill, A577, "directs BPU to establish a program concerning renewable natural gas; and provides gas public utilities with a customer rate recovery mechanism for costs associated with the program." Provisions of the bill allow public utilities to buy renewable gas from their own affiliates, and it does not include a mechanism for setting a clear standard to limit costs to customers related to those deals. Ed Potosnak, Executive Director of NJ League of Conservation Voters, has stated, "This legislation is greenwashing at its worst. It will raise energy costs for consumers and double down on dirty fossil fuels at the very moment when New Jersey must lead the nation in transitioning to clean, renewable energy that will save working families and local businesses money even as we fight climate change." See <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/clash-over-green-energy-push-with-critics-nj/>. Comprehensive written testimony provided by a number of environmental groups is available here: <https://www.njlc.org/news/testimony-a577-bad-energy-tax-bill>.

- **33,000 = Employees in NJ Who Work on Decarbonizing Buildings** - A report (available here: <https://e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FINAL3.Building-Opportunities-NJ-Decarb-Report.pdf>) issued by the national nonpartisan business group Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) identified 32,880 workers who were engaged in building decarbonization in 2020. However, neighboring states have more such jobs per capita. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/33000-building-decarbonization-employees-nj/>



- **Boiler Ban Ditched, but Power Plant Rules Coming** - In 12/2021, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) proposed new air pollution control rules for "Control and Prohibition of Carbon Dioxide Emissions." At a subsequent public hearing, environmental advocates testified that it was a missed opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in NJ and move away from new fossil fuel infrastructure, because the rule fails to ban future fossil-fuel power plants, leaves loopholes for existing generating stations, does not include concrete and enforceable requirements, and does not address environmental justice impacts. On the business interest side, the rule was criticized as increasing costs to tenants of buildings in which boilers would need to be replaced as well as possible increases in property taxes related to school boiler replacement. The rule has now been revised to eliminate the provisions related to replacing boilers. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/nj-ditches-expected-gas-fired-boiler-ban/>

- **Environmental Groups Applaud Passage of Low Carbon Concrete Bill in New Jersey Legislature** - With nearly unanimous bipartisan support, a bill (S287) that provides "corporation business tax (CBT) credits and gross income tax (GIT) credits to concrete producers that deliver concrete associated with reduced greenhouse gas emissions for use in certain State funded projects" has passed both houses of the NJ legislature. <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/environmental-groups-applaud-passage-of-low-carbon-concrete-bill-in-new-jersey-legislature/>
- **Climate Change and the Pinelands** - Up until now, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), which has guided all activity in the Pinelands since 1980, has made no explicit reference to climate change, but the Pinelands Commission is currently identifying priority issues to be proposed for amending the CMP to do so. These issues include: rules to govern responsible solar development; a "no loss of trees" policy; and identifying flood hazards threatening management areas currently identified as suitable for development. <https://pinelandsalliance.org/climate-change-and-the-pinelands/>
- **Hazard NJ Episode 7: A Headache on the Hudson** (13-1/2-minute podcast) - Climate change-increased storm surges threaten to spread toxic chemicals from the Quanta Resources Superfund site in Edgewater, NJ, which is adjacent to the Hudson River and includes part of the river itself. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/podcast/hazard-nj-episode-7-a-headache-on-the-hudson/>
- **Op-Ed: The Sooner You Electrify Your Home, the More Money You'll Save** (by Barbara Blumenthal, research director with the NJ Conservation Foundation, and William Amann, chairman of the Somerset County Energy Council, and a former chairman of the NJ chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council) - The authors provide many reasons for switching from fossil-gas-powered to electric heating and cooling systems and appliances. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/op-ed-the-sooner-you-electrify-your-home-the-more-money-youll-save/>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

- **EPA Awards New Jersey Nearly \$169 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding for Water Infrastructure Improvements** - These funds include \$48 million to identify and replace lead service lines, and nearly \$17 million to address emerging contaminants like PFAS. <https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20221201a.shtml>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

- **Op-Ed: The Next Big Step in Fighting NJ's 'Forever Chemical' Problem** (by Eileen Murphy, the vice president of government relations at NJ Audubon Society and the NJ co-chair of the Keep It Green Coalition) - The author describes the problem of PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) "forever chemicals" in NJ, and

each of the five bills currently being considered in the state legislature to address them, which range from prohibiting them in the production of many products, to regulating them as a class rather than on a chemical-by-chemical basis.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/forever-chemicals-pfas-pfoa-pfna-maximum-contaminant-level-mcl-water-systems-lawmakers-legislature-bill-package/>

OTHER

- **Regulator Tightens Rules on Fracking Waste in Delaware River Basin** - The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) amended its rules related to wastewater from fracking activities that take place outside the Delaware River Basin. The amendments prohibit discharge of such wastewater onto land and water in the basin, but do not apply to storage and transportation of the wastewater, which are seen as serious loopholes by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/fracking-water-discharge-import-export-delaware-river-basin-commission-2020-moratorium-2021-fracking-ban-delaware-riverkeeper-network-new-jersey-delaware-pennsylvania-and-new-york/>



- **Wildfire Prevention Plan for Pinelands Sparks Resistance** (4-minute news video) - In this video, members of the NJ Pinelands Commission and others explain the rationale behind the plan to remove 2.4 million small trees in the interest of preventing major wildfires. Opposing viewpoints are also provided. See <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/wildfire-prevention-plan-for-pinelands-sparks-resistance/>. Also in this article, "Management Plan in Bass River State Forest is Necessary," (available here: <https://pinelandsalliance.org/forest-management-plan-in-bass-river-state-forest-is-necessary/>) the Pinelands Preservation Alliance provides more detail to explain its conclusions that, assuming the plan is followed as approved, it will have limited adverse impact on this forest and is a reasonable forest management strategy to protect people and the forest.
- **More Wildfires May Become a Budget Issue for NJ** - This article describes the results of a Pew Charitable Trusts report on how wildfires are impacting state budgets with increasing costs. It also describes NJ's funding and response to wildfires, as well as ways to try to prevent them, including removing small trees from the forest as has been slated for the Pinelands' Bass River State Forest (see article above).
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/nj-forest-fires-worsen-becoming-more-costly-for-state-government/>

- **NJ Set to Tackle Plant Invaders** - A bill (S2186), that "Prohibits sale, distribution, or propagation of certain invasive plant species without permit from Department of Agriculture" and "establishes NJ Invasive Species Council" has been unanimously approved by the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee, with amendments. An originally identical bill (A3677), without the amendments, has been introduced in the NJ Assembly and referred to the Agriculture and Food Security Committee. The Invasive Species Council would develop an invasive species management plan; a previous such council had been disbanded by Gov. Christie.
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2022/12/invasive-species-native-plants-corzine-chris-christie-new-jersey-forestry-association-invasive-species-task-force/>
- **Murphy Administration Awards \$9.95 Million in American Rescue Plan Funds for Water Quality Improvement Projects** - The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) "is awarding \$9.95 million in grants to local government agencies, nonprofit groups, universities, and others to fund projects that will improve water quality and reduce the impacts of nonpoint source pollution from stormwater on publicly accessible lakes throughout New Jersey." More than \$8 million will fund projects on lakes in or next to overburdened communities, resulting in improved water quality and increased recreational opportunities for residents of these communities. "These grants will help a diverse group of DEP partners implement projects that will reduce the harmful effects of stormwater, nonpoint source pollution and Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) that will only worsen due to the impacts of climate change," said DEP Commissioner LaTourette. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2022/22_0045.htm
- **NJ Legislature Pushing Forward Great Legislation: PFAS, Green Acres, Open Space, Food Labeling** - A number of bills released by the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 12/15/2022 directly relate to EJTF's areas of interest, including community solar, PFAS, invasive species, Green Acres, parks and recreation, and open space. <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/nj-legislature-pushing-forward-great-legislation-pfas-green-acres-open-space-food-labeling/>
- **NJ Churches Answer Call To Go Greener: 'Climate Change Is Real'** - The Archdiocese of Newark's Environmental Justice Task Force has established a subcommittee of parish liaisons "to foster environmental advocacy at the local level," including projects at churches and also actions that individuals can take. It issued a well-organized comprehensive Action Plan (available here: https://www.rcan.org/sites/default/files/files/Edited_Newark%20Archdiocesan%20Action%20Plan.pdf) that includes "a menu of options that parishes and parishioners can take to start the difficult spiritual work of reversing the threat of global climate change and environmental degradation, and existing more sustainably in harmony with God's creation," ranking the actions as "easy," "moderate," and "advanced." The actions support the following seven Goals: Goal 1 - Response To The Cry Of The Earth; Goal 2 - Response To The Cry Of The Poor; Goal 3 - Support Ecological Economics; Goal 4 - Sustainable Lifestyle; Goal 5 - Ecological Education; Goal 6 - Ecological Spirituality; and Goal 7 - Community Involvement And Participatory Action. The Plan provides an interesting presentation and organization of action items, some of which might be considered for fostering involvement of UU congregations in environmental/environmental justice activities. <https://patch.com/new-jersey/newarknj/nj-churches-answer-call-go-greener-climate-change-real>



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.

UU FaithAction NJ - Environmental Justice Task Force -
<https://uufaithaction.org/environment/>

Co-Chairs – Peggy Middaugh and Ray Nichols

Visit our website for Environmental links & resources / sign up for email alerts / join the EJTF
