

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 and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES



On 4/15/2023, members of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH) participated in the NJ Tree Foundation's (NJTF) tree planting in Camden, NJ. The

NJTF is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to planting trees in NJ's most urban neighborhoods, where the need is greatest, in order to improve air quality, manage stormwater, and provide shade. Participants in the tree planting included: Ryan, Kourtney, Ari, RJ and Cas LaGesse; Val Sadwin; Lisa Nagasuru; Sue Van Alstyne; and David and Evan Lechner.

UUFANJ ANNUAL MEETING 5/20/2023 - see [p. 4](#)

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

EJTF and Congregational Activities	1	- Renewable Resources	16
Future Events	3	- Climate Change	19
Videos+ of Past Events	9	- Forest Health	20
EJTF's Goals for 2022/2023	13	- Lead Reduction in Households	20
News Related to EJTF Issues	14	- Drinking Water (other than lead)	21
- Environmental Justice	14	- Pollution	21
- Electric Vehicles/Vehicle Emission Reduction	14	- Educational and Youth-related	22
- Fossil Fuel Infrastructure	15	- Other	22
- Land Management/Agriculture/Food	16	Moratorium Mondays	23

EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

• **EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh** (pictured)

provided testimony on behalf of UUFANJ at the NJ Assembly Budget Hearing on the FY2024 State Budget held on 3/29/2023 (see box below and in next column). EJTF Co-Chair Ray Nichols, Beth Nichols, and EJTF member Mike Skelly also attended the hearing, and noted that UUFANJ's testimony was later cited by several other groups that testified.



UUFANJ/EJTF Testimony by EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh at the NJ Assembly Budget Hearing on the FY2024 Budget

Good afternoon Chair Marin, Vice-chair Wimberly, Committee members. Thank you for taking my testimony. My name is Peggy Middaugh, and I represent Unitarian Universalist Faith Action NJ, a faith-based organization that coordinates grassroots social justice advocacy with our 20 member congregations, and individual Unitarian Universalists and allies across the state. While we speak on behalf of all people and living things in New Jersey we are especially concerned for the almost 3 million residents living in overburdened communities, as well as the forests, waters, and living ecological systems that we all depend on in our daily lives.

According to the recently released UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, "Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe". We're feeling the effects right here in New Jersey, from flooding to heat waves, more intense storms, and many other biological and physical impacts. We support Governor Murphy's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035, and suggest the following four funding priorities in the budget we are reviewing today to help New Jersey build a strong and just society. (cont.)

UUFANJ/EJTF Testimony by EJTF Co-Chair Peggy Middaugh at the NJ Assembly Budget Hearing on the FY2024 Budget (continued)

1. Funding for clean, renewable energy sources – solar, wind, thermal, and most especially energy conservation. The Clean Energy Fund must remain intact, and not be raided, as has been the case in previous years, to make up for shortfalls in other parts of the state budget. Rapidly growing clean energy jobs throughout the State will help restructure our economy in a way that is safe, healthy and vibrant for both NJ residents and ecosystems.
2. New Jersey Transit must have its own dedicated source of funding, as is the case with many other transit agencies throughout the country. Over 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in NJ come from the transportation sector. We must move away from a car-centric commuter culture and encourage more people to live and work locally, and travel easily, comfortably and safely on public transportation.
3. Adequate funding for education, marketing and development of organic products. The Organic Farming Board established through legislation last year will lead to healthy food and soil rich in nutrients which will sequester significant amounts of carbon.
4. Funding should be provided to NJDEP to address the impacts of invasive, non-native species including insects, animals, plants and pathogens that have such a devastating impact on our public forests. Our mature forests must be recognized and vigilantly protected for the significant clean air and climate benefits they provide through carbon sequestration and other means.

FYI, the videos on the YouTube channel "Just Have a Think - the climate and sustainable energy channel," which summarize and clarify a different complex issue dealing with Climate Change each week, may be of interest. For example, here is a comprehensive video on fossil fuels subsidies:
<https://www.youtube.com/@JustHaveaThink/videos>
[worth watching.](#)

FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid

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

MAY 2023						
(with hyperlinks to details on the following pages)						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	1 "Climate Risk: Historical Roots of a Vulnerable Science" - 2:45 p.m.	2 "Carbon Utilization and Other Needed Technologies for the Transition to Net Zero" - 2:30 p.m. "Offshore Wind Energy Lecture" - 7:00 p.m.	3 Public Hearing on Amendments to the Pinelands Management Plan - 9:30 a.m. "JPMorgan Chase & the Climate Crisis" 12:00 p.m. "The Path to Fusion Energy" - 7:00 p.m.	4 NJ WasteWise Business Network Meeting - 10:00 a.m. "Punching Out Plastic" - 7:00 p.m.	5 NJ 2023 Sustainability Summit - 9:00 a.m.	6 12th Annual Green Festival - Secaucus - 11:00 a.m.
7	8 "Exploring Sustainability in Agriculture and Food Security With Land Modeling" - 2:45 p.m. "No Faith in Fossil Fuels: A Climate Finance Summit"	9 "No Faith in Fossil Fuels: A Climate Finance Summit"	10 "Climate, Energy, and Economic Win-Wins in the Farm Bill" - 1:30 p.m. DRBC 20 Public Hearing - 1:30 p.m. "No Faith in Fossil Fuels: A Climate Finance Summit"	11 "No Faith in Fossil Fuels: A Climate Finance Summit"	12 Comments Due NJDEP Draft Model Tree Ordinance	13
14	15 "The Role of Plant Genetics in Soil Health" - 1:00 p.m. Comments Due: NJBP Permanent Community Solar Program Proposal	16	17 NJ Clean Air Council Meeting - 9:30 a.m. Pinelands Commission Climate Committee Meeting - 9:30 a.m.	18 "Building Electrification: Moving toward NetZero" - 7:00 p.m.	19	20 Intro to Fly Fishing (NJSOC) - 9:00 a.m. Searching for Salamanders (NJSOC) - 10:00 a.m. UUFANJ Annual Meeting - 10:00 a.m. 11th Annual Brick Township Green Fair - 10:00 a.m.
21	22 "NRCS Support for Organic Transition" - 2:00 p.m.	23 "Powering Toward a Sustainable Future: 100% Clean Electricity by 2035" - 7:00 p.m.	24 "Unlocking Rural Economies: Farm Bill Investments in Rural America" - 2:00 p.m.	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 "No LNG in South Jersey" Event - 4:00 p.m.			

UU FaithAction NJ
Annual Meeting  **MAY 20th**
10-11:30 AM | Virtual on Zoom

The UU FaithAction NJ (UUFANJ) Annual Meeting will be May 20, 2023, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be conducted on Zoom, and all NJ UUs are encouraged to attend! Additional information, including the agenda, is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yfkb66dm>.

"Climate Risk: Historical Roots of a Vulnerable Science"

5/1/2023, 2:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Webinar

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" series, will be presented by Dr. Deborah Coen, Professor and Chair of the History of Science & Medicine Program at Yale University. In her presentation she "uses history to illuminate a profound misalignment between today's science of climate change and the goals of climate justice. A fundamental ambivalence lies at the heart of the science of human 'vulnerability' to climate change. As psychoanalysts concerned with climate change have recently observed, the culture of industrial capitalism tends to breed individuals who cannot tolerate evidence of their dependence on other people, nor on the physical environment. The sciences of the atmosphere have alternately critiqued and contributed to this idealization of invulnerability. To illuminate this dynamic, this presentation outlines a history of scientific efforts to measure the dependence of living things on the atmosphere." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

https://events.cornell.edu/event/deborah_coen_climate_risk_historical_roots_of_a_vulnerable_science.

"Carbon Utilization and Other Needed Technologies for the Transition to Net Zero"

5/2/2023, 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Princeton, NJ - In-person and via Zoom

"What happens if conventional carbon dioxide sequestration (CCS) isn't broadly accepted by society? What happens if we reach an irreversible climate change tipping point? Solutions, with or without CCS, will include carbon dioxide utilization, carbon-emission-free electrification of everything possible, and solar radiation management. Professor Emily A. Carter will speak to these issues and describe efforts she is leading for the National Academies and in her research within the Princeton University/national lab ecosystem to address them. Dr. Carter is the Gerhard R. Andlinger Professor in Energy and the Environment and a Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE) at the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment (ACEE), and Applied and Computational Mathematics at Princeton University. The link to register for either in-person or Zoom attendance is available here:

<https://environment.princeton.edu/event/carbon-utilization-and-other-needed-technologies-for-the-transition-to-net-zero/>.

"Offshore Wind Energy Lecture"

5/2/2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Toms River, NJ - In-person

The Sierra Club NJ Ocean County Group is presenting an Offshore Wind Lecture followed by a Q&A. "Hear from the NJ Chapter's Communications Coordinator, Jackie Greger, about the benefits of offshore wind to New Jerseyans and local benefits to Ocean County. We need offshore wind support on the ground at the coast as fossil-fuel-funded groups try to slow NJ's clean energy transition, so bring friends, family, and neighbors to join us and have the chance to ask questions!" Additional information and the registration link are available here:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001QTaUAAW&mapLinkHref=https://maps.google.com/maps&daddr=Offshore%20Wind%20Energy%20Lecture@39.950735,-74.166775>.

Public Hearing on Proposed Regulatory Amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan
5/3/2023, 9:30 a.m. - Virtual

"Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-7, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed regulatory amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The Pinelands Commission previously proposed amendments to the CMP related to water withdrawals (wells) from the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer in the Pinelands Area. Those amendments provided clearer, quantifiable standards for water withdrawals and strengthened protections for the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer and the ecology of the Pinelands. After accepting and reviewing public comment on the proposed amendments, the Commission identified the need for substantial and non-substantial changes. The proposed substantial changes recognize the non-consumptive use of water by resource extraction operations in the Pinelands Area and provide new application requirements by which an applicant could demonstrate that a proposed new or increased withdrawal meets a newly proposed definition of non-consumptive use." Additional information, including a link to the proposed regulatory amendments and the link to the public hearing, are available here:

<https://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/home/hearings/index.shtml>.

"JPMorgan Chase & the Climate Crisis—How 2023 Shareholder Action Can Advance Corporate Accountability"
5/3/2023, 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Virtual

"The Union of Concerned Scientists, Follow This, Majority Action, Sierra Club Foundation, and Stop the Money Pipeline invite you to a virtual conversation with shareholder advocates, environmental justice leaders, and UCS analysts about corporate accountability at JPMorgan Chase. The webinar will inform shareholders and the public about important climate-related resolutions that will be voted on at the bank's annual general meeting in May." Additional information and registration are available here:

<https://secure.ucsusa.org/a/2023-5-3-jpmorgan-chase-shareholder-action>.

"The Path to Fusion Energy"
5/3/2023, 7:00 p.m.
Clinton, NJ - In-person and via Zoom

The Hunterdon Warren and the Central Jersey Groups of the NJ Chapter Sierra Club are hosting this hybrid event in which "Dr. Andrew Zwicker of Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL) will guide us through the research and breakthroughs in the scientific basis for producing fusion energy. If fusion becomes a power one day, it would provide us with an endless source of carbon-free energy. We will learn about the challenges and the progress that has been made in recreating the same energy that powers the sun and stars and the research that is being done to reproduce it here on earth." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001QPdSAAW&mapLinkHref=https://maps.google.com/maps&daddr=The%20Path%20to%20Fusion%20Energy%20with%20Andrew%20Zwicker@40.643507,-74.912382>.

NJ WasteWise Business Network Meeting - 5/4/2022, 10:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - Virtual

The New Jersey WasteWise Business Network is a free educational program designed to help businesses and other organizations learn how waste reduction, recycling, and recycled product procurement not only help the environment, but also their bottom line. Some of the topics to be presented at this webinar/meeting are "Introduction to the DEP's Plan for Sustainability" and "'Compostable,' 'Degradable,' 'Recyclable,' 'Recycled content,' and Other 'Green' Product Claims That Confuse the Public - The Federal Trade Commission Green Guides and their Impact on Waste Management." Links to the agenda and to register are available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/webinars.htm>.

"Punching Out Plastic - Learn What You Can Do to Keep NJ Litter-Free"
5/4/2023, 7:00 p.m. - Webinar

In this webinar celebrating the one-year anniversary of NJ's plastic pollution reduction law, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and invited guests will discuss plastic pollution in NJ, including "Successes of the first year of the Plastic Pollution Reduction

Act; "NJ Plastic Advisory Council Recommendations;" and "NJ Clean Communities Programs & Initiatives." There is no charge for ANJEC members and a \$15 charge for non-members. Registration is available here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdaoKh7bTR0GaJ5MSnIJ21UM_bVTvM7hD-7BAdH77sC1iwMpg/viewform.

**NJ 2023 Sustainability Summit
5/5/2023, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Holmdel, NJ - In-person**

"The New Jersey Sustainability Summit is a momentous event in our state, drawing change-makers from across the political, private, and public sectors. This exceptional one-day forum spotlights the successes and lessons learned from the people and projects that are helping New Jersey realize a more sustainable future. 2022 Summit attendees walked away with tangible resources and strategies to assist with their own community initiatives. This is your opportunity to do the same. We invite all who are interested to be ready to deepen their understanding and expand their network." Registration fees (including breakfast and lunch) are as follows: \$40 - elected & appointed officials, green team volunteers, and public & nonprofit employees; and \$125 - all other attendees. Links to additional information, the agenda and to register, are available here: <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/index.php>.

**12th Annual Green Festival - Secaucus
5/6/2023, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
(rain date 5/7/2023)
Secaucus, NJ - In-person**

Secaucus' 12th annual free Green Festival will include environmentally conscious vendors, exhibits, environmental education presentations, children's activities, and more. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) electric vehicle and anti-idling teams will bring their expertise, to showcase the benefits of driving electric, talk about valuable incentives, put idling misconceptions to rest, and answer clean transportation questions. Additional information is available here: <https://secaucusnj.gov/resident/calendar/2414>.

**"Eating Our Cake Without Losing It:
Exploring Sustainability in Agriculture and
Food Security With Land Modeling"
5/8/2023, 2:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" series, will be presented by Dr. Sonali McDermid, an Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Studies at New York University. "Global agriculture has transformed ~40% of Earth's land surface, consuming copious inputs including water, fertilizer, and land. ... Land systems modeling is a crucial tool for understanding agriculture as both a driver of global environmental change as well as its vulnerabilities to these changes. Both must be better understood - and better modeled - in order to meet the combined goals of global food security and global environmental change mitigation into the future." This talk will provide a brief overview of agriculture-Earth systems interactions and identify key questions for modeling agriculture in a land and Earth systems framework, flagging key outstanding uncertainties on which future research is needed and highlighting important efforts for coordinated and cross-disciplinary Earth system modeling centered around agriculture and land use. Additional information, including the agenda, and the link to register are available here: https://events.cornell.edu/event/sonali_mcdermid_eating_our_cake_without_losing_it_exploring_sustainability_in_agriculture_and_food_security_with_land_modeling

**"No Faith in Fossil Fuels: A Climate Finance
Summit" - Virtual
5/8/2023, 12:00 p.m.
to 5/11/2023, 1:30 p.m.**

At this Summit, sponsored by GreenFaith, "people of faith will gather to learn about how banks and asset managers continue to invest in the fossil fuel industries that are destroying communities in the U.S. and around the world - and then find out how to hold these financial institutions accountable. ... This summit is for you if you're just making the connections between faith, finance, and climate, if you're a money manager rooted in just climate values, or if you are part of a community wrestling with these questions." Additional information and the registration link are available here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/no-faith-in-fossil-fuels-a-climate-finance-summit/>.

**Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)
Second Quarter 2023 Public Hearing
5/10/2023, 1:30 p.m. - Virtual**

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) will hold its second-quarter public hearing on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, beginning at 1:30 p.m. The public hearing is open to the public and will be held virtually via Zoom Webinar. Additional information will be available here:

<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/upcoming/>.

**"Climate, Energy, and Economic Win-Wins
in the Farm Bill"
5/10/2023, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. - Webinar**

For those interested in learning more about the Federal Farm Bill, which will undoubtedly impact NJ, the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is having a series of webinars about it. This webinar will address potential win-wins made possible by Farm Bill provisions. "During this briefing, panelists will explain how the Farm Bill helps agricultural producers and communities drive down greenhouse gas emissions while also building climate and economic resilience, with discussions of the role of agroforestry, urban agriculture, distributed energy resources, and agricultural research and innovation." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/051023farmbill>.

**Comments Due on NJDEP's Stormwater
Program Draft Model Tree Ordinance
5/12/2023**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is accepting informal comments on its draft model tree ordinance, which DEP intends to provide to municipalities that are required to adopt and enforce a community-wide ordinance covering tree removal/replacement. This ordinance is a requirement of revised Tier A Master Stormwater Permit requirements that took effect 1/1/2023. To assist municipalities with this requirement, the DEP Stormwater Program has developed a draft model tree ordinance, which is now out for information and public comment. The draft ordinance is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/njpdcs-stormwater/draft-tree-removal-replacement-v2.pdf>. Comments may be submitted on or before 5/12/2023 to: stormwatermanager@dep.nj.gov.

**Comments Due on NJBPU's Straw Proposal
for the Permanent Community Solar Energy
Program
5/15/2023**

"Pursuant to the Clean Energy Act, the Board is converting the Community Solar Energy Pilot Program (Pilot) to a permanent program. The Board conducted solicitations for the Pilot in 2019 and 2021. The experience gained in these solicitations has laid the groundwork for the development and implementation of a full-scale program. P.L. 2021, c. 169 (Solar Act of 2021) directs the Board to aim to provide incentives to at least 150 MW per year as part of the SREC-II Program, and the permanent Community Solar Energy Program serves as part of Governor Murphy's goal of 100% clean electricity by 2035, balances ratepayer impacts, and supports a thriving and stable solar industry." Comments on the Straw Proposal are due by 5:00 p.m. on 5/15/2023. Additional information, including a link to the Straw Proposal, and to the video and presentations from a stakeholder workshop, are available here: <https://nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/public/>.

**NJ Clean Air Council Meeting
5/17/2023, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Salem, NJ - In-person**

The meeting will be held at PSEG's Energy & Environmental Resource Center (EERC) in Salem, NJ. Additional information is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/event/clean-air-council-meeting-20230517/>.

**Pinelands Commission Climate Committee
Meeting
5/17/2023, 9:30 a.m.
Location is forthcoming**

Additional information on location, agenda, and other details will be available here: <https://nj.gov/pinelands/>.

**"Building Electrification: Moving toward
NetZero"
5/18/2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.**

Presented by the Sierra Club NJ Chapter, this webinar will review "best in class" data and money-saving opportunities from over a year of building electrification webinars, for example, showing the savings achieved over a year by

substituting a heat pump to replace a broken outdoor air conditioner condenser. Additional information and the registration link are available here:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001QLKmA0&mapLinkHref=>.

11th Annual Brick Township Green Fair
5/20/2023, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Brick, NJ - In-person

The 11th Annual free Brick Township Green Fair, sponsored by the Township Environmental Commission, Green Team, Recreation Department and Tourism Development Commission, is termed an "environmental and sustainability showcase," which will feature vendors, exhibitors and student groups representing environmental and social responsibility, locally-sourced products and zero waste. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) electric vehicle and anti-idling teams will bring their expertise, to showcase the benefits of driving electric, talk about valuable incentives, put idling misconceptions to rest, and answer clean transportation questions. Additional information is available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1176862576328785/>.

**"Powering Toward a Sustainable Future:
Learning How We Can Reach 100% Clean
Electricity by 2035"**
5/23/2023, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. - Virtual

In this webinar sponsored by the Elders Climate Action Network, Sam Ricketts from Evergreen Action will discuss the pathway to a 100% Clean Power transition and how we can get involved in supporting the transition in our communities. "Clean electricity combined with electrification could ultimately cut 70 to 80 percent of current U.S. GHG [greenhouse gas] pollution. Electricity represents the best opportunity to achieve the United States's near-term international pledge of a 50–52 percent reduction in GHG pollution by 2030." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc_may23/.

**"Unlocking Rural Economies: Farm Bill
Investments in Rural America"**
5/24/2023, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. - Webinar

For those interested in learning more about the Federal Farm Bill, which will undoubtedly impact NJ, the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is having a series of webinars about it. This webinar will address policies and programs that help farmers, ranchers, small businesses, and rural communities drive down greenhouse gas emissions, generate jobs, and stimulate the economy through means such as improving energy efficiency, accessing electrification retrofits, upgrading water systems, and building out broadband capabilities. Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/052423farmbill>.

"No LNG in South Jersey" Event
5/31/2023, 4:00 p.m.
National Park, NJ - In-person

This event is part of the EmpowerNJ-sponsored "Week of Action - Our Planet, Our Future: NJ Call To Action On Climate." EmpowerNJ is working to stop 7 new fossil fuel projects in NJ, including power plants in environmental justice communities, pipelines through watersheds, major highway expansions, and a massive fracked gas export terminal on the Delaware River. With several of these projects facing critical decisions in the months ahead, they are organizing a week of actions from May 30th - June 8th in various locations across NJ. Additional details will be provided to those who RSVP here:

<https://actionnetwork.org/events/our-planet-our-future-nj-call-to-action-on-climate>.

**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 May 2023 (a sampling is listed below), but the site includes updated information over time; check the site periodically for an updated list:

<https://climatesociety.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/range.listevents/>.

"The Role of Plant Genetics in Soil Health: Selecting Crop Cultivars for Organic Production"

5/15/2023, 1:00 p.m. - Webinar

This webinar, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will present recent advances in cultivar development for healthy soils and successful organic production. "Organic farmers need crop cultivars that perform well in organic production systems, and several farmer-participatory plant breeding networks are beginning to meet that need. Breeding priorities for the organic sector include disease and pest resistance, weed competitiveness, nutrient and water use efficiency, rapid emergence and establishment, overall vigor, and resilience to drought and other weather extremes as well as market traits such as flavor and nutritional value. Cultivars that perform well in low-tillage organic production systems, partner effectively with beneficial soil microbes, utilize nutrients and moisture efficiently, require less cultivation for weed control, and generate extensive root systems and abundant above-ground residues while maintaining good yields can contribute directly to soil health." A link to additional information including how to register/join is available here: <https://climatesociety.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/icalrepeat.detail/2023/05/15/7754/-/conservation-webinar-the-role-of-plant-genetics-in-soil-health-selecting-crop-cultivars-for-organic-production>. [Note: this event uses Adobe Connect.]

"NRCS Support for Organic Transition"

5/22/2023, 2:00 p.m. - Webinar

This webinar, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will present new opportunities for NRCS to support producers in the

transition to organic, including the USDA's Organic Transition Initiative and NRCS's role in supporting producers in transitioning to organic. "The new Organic Management Interim Conservation Practice Standard (823) will be highlighted, including technical and financial assistance for producers transitioning to organic and wanting to improve soil health, reduce erosion, improve plant productivity and health, reduce plant pressure, and more." A link to additional information including how to register/join is available here: <https://climatesociety.rutgers.edu/events/all-climate-events/icalrepeat.detail/2023/05/22/7755/-/conservation-webinar-nrcs-support-for-organic-transition>. [Note: this event uses Adobe Connect.]

Friends of the NJ School of Conservation (NJSOC) Programs

Sandyston, NJ - In-person

EJTF has been following the NJ School of Conservation's (NJSOC) situation over the past several years, and it is good to see that the NJSOC is continuing and providing programs. Programs at NJSOC in May are listed below.

"Come Fly With Us! Intro to Fly Fishing for Adults (Ages 16+)" - 5/20/2023, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Additional information and the link to register (\$79 fee) are available here: <https://friendsofnjsoc.org/event/come-fly-with-us-intro-to-fly-fishing-for-adults-ages-16/>.

"Searching for Salamanders" - 5/20/2023, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Additional information and the link to register (\$10 - \$28) are available here: <https://friendsofnjsoc.org/event/searching-for-salamanders-2/>.

VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

Eco-Logic Earth Day Special - "Energy, Transport, Labor"

Recording of Radio Show

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI (co-hosted by **EJTF member Sally Gellert**) presented a special Earth Day program that covered the origins of Earth Day, Green Amendment news, NJ Department of

Environmental Protection (DEP) and Friends of Liberty State Park vs. Gov. Christie and billionaire oligarch Paul Fireman, and good news for Horseshoe Crabs and Red Knots. Also included were: the latest on the East Palestine, Ohio derailment; Holtec's radioactive wastewater dumping into the Hudson River; the Cop City deforestation and police militarization in Atlanta; the victory with the North Brooklyn pipeline and

NY Gov. Hochul's retreat on methane; and the Corporate greenwashing of Earth Day. Additional information and a link to the recording are available here:

<http://www.comicbookradioshow.com/eco-logic.html>.

"Climate Justice: Why We Can't Wait" **Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Cornell "Perspectives on Climate Change Challenge" series, was presented by Dr. Gregory S. Jenkins, Professor of Meteorology and Atmospheric Science, Geography, and African Studies at Penn State. A form of injustice "is occurring all around the globe, with new burdens placed on future generations in terms of climate injustice - which includes the hazards of climate change, environmental injustice, and social injustice." In this talk, Dr. Jenkins discussed the reasons why we need a climate justice movement and why we can't wait any longer. The video is available here: <https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/media/climate-justice-why-we-cant-wait/>.

"A Roadmap for Climate Action - Investing in Technology, Nature and Policy for a Sustainable Planet" **Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Cornell "Perspectives on Climate Change Challenge" series, was presented by Stephan Nicoleau, a General Partner at FullCycle (a sustainable infrastructure fund that is accelerating climate solutions globally) and a member of the Board of Directors for Project Drawdown. "While the solutions for effective climate action are largely known, it is the speed of implementation that will matter greatly, as will our ability to see the many dimensions of the scaling problem." This talk described technological and nature-based solutions, financing mechanisms, and effective policy. It highlighted the key levers for action, such as methane mitigation, climate finance mobilization, and natural systems restoration. The video is available here: <https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/media/a-roadmap-for-climate-action-investing-in-technology-nature-and-policy-for-a-sustainable-planet/>.

"Building a Net-Zero America" **Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Cornell "Perspectives on Climate Change Challenge" series, was presented by Dr. Jesse D. Jenkins, an assistant professor at Princeton University with a joint appointment in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and the Andlinger Center for Energy and Environment. He also leads the ZERO lab at Princeton University. "For the first time in history, the full financial weight of the United States federal government is aligned behind a transition to clean energy. A trio of energy, infrastructure, and science laws passed by the last Congress will deploy over half a trillion dollars of public funding over the next decade to wean the United States off fossil fuels and make cleaner alternatives cheap and ubiquitous. The challenge now: to build new clean energy infrastructure at an unprecedented pace and scale and take full advantage of this historic opportunity." This talk discussed how far the U.S. has come on the path to net-zero emissions, how much work remains, and the many non-financial barriers that will slow the pace of transition unless proactively addressed. The video is available here: <https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/media/building-a-net-zero-america/>.

"Bouncing Back From the Climate Crisis" **Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Cornell "Perspectives on Climate Change Challenge" series, was presented by Dr. Veerabhadran "Ram" Ramanathan, who discovered the greenhouse effect of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) in 1975 and showed that a ton each of CFC-11 and CFC-12 has more global warming effect than 10,000 tons of CO₂. This discovery established the now-accepted fact that non-CO₂ gases are a major contributor to planetary warming. In this talk, Dr. Ramanathan described "a new approach for bouncing back from the crisis cleaner, healthier, and stronger. It will target climate resilience, built on three pillars: Mitigation, Adaptation, and Societal transformation. ... Alliance with local to regional faith leaders should be explored to unpack climate change from all the other issues that have divided our Nation." The video is available here: <https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/media/bouncing-back-from-the-climate-crisis/>.

"Changing Narratives about Growing Food" - Video of Webinar

"The soil that we need to grow food and fiber is in more danger than people realize! The steady degradation of soil worldwide is almost invisible due to widespread practices of tillage that we now understand makes the life of the microbes that support plants very miserable. Who knew? Fortunately renewal and resilience is possible, necessary, and urgently needed." This discussion focused on "action steps everyone can take immediately to work the levers of change." This webinar, sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), was presented by Dr. Jean Eels, proprietor of E Resources Group, LLC, which provides "educational outreach on ag and the environment, program evaluation, and fun, funky projects with research and interpretation." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFzcfCfZH9U>.

"Fundamentals of Food Labels: Organic, Certified Naturally Grown, Salmon Safe, Bee Better" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), covered the basic objectives, principles, and requirements of several food labels and certification programs: Organic, Certified Naturally Grown, Salmon Safe, and Bee Better. The webinar covered how these programs work to support conservation on crop and livestock operations, and how a producer becomes certified. A link to register to view the video is available here: <https://forestrywebinars.net/webinars/fundamentals-of-food-labels-organic-certified-naturally-grown-salmon-safe-bee-better/>.

"The State of Play for Nuclear Energy in the United States" - Video of Webinar

This Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) webinar focused on the Department of Energy's (DOE's) nuclear energy programs. "Through provisions in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and \$1.8 billion in fiscal

year 2023 funding for nuclear energy research, development, and demonstrations, the [Biden] Administration and Congress have strongly supported the existing reactor fleet and invested in next-generation technologies." This briefing highlighted nuclear energy programs underway from basic research to demonstration projects, including work happening across DOE's national labs. The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/041923nuclear>.

NJ Clean Air Council 2023 Public Hearing "Air Toxics: How Far Has New Jersey Come in Almost a Quarter Century?" Copies of Presentations

The goal of the 2023 NJ Clean Air Council public hearing was to determine the amount of progress NJ has made in almost a quarter century of emission control and regulation of air toxics. The Clean Air Council last held a public hearing on the specific impact of air toxics in NJ in 2000. Copies of speakers' presentations are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/cleanaircouncil/previous-public-hearings/public-hearing-2023/>.

"Unlocking the Potential of Digital Climate Entrepreneurship"- Video of Webinar

"Digital tools are being used now to optimize the performance of renewable energy and integration into the power system. Data analytics, machine learning, and advanced sensors optimize agriculture, the routing, and scheduling of vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and emissions, and monitor and reduce the energy consumption of buildings." In this webinar, LightWorks at Arizona State University (ASU) and the Security and Sustainability Forum explored how the digital climate tech landscape is evolving and how institutions like ASU are bringing leading-edge policy, technology, and social science research to the digital climate tech field to accelerate the transition. The video is available here: <https://vimeo.com/819911050>.

"In this Together: Connecting with Your Community to Combat the Climate Crisis" **Video of Webinar**

In this webinar sponsored by the Elders Climate Action Network, Dr. Marianne Krasny, a professor in the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, and Director of the Civic Ecology Lab at Cornell University, described "network climate action" as described in her latest book: "In This Together: Connecting with Your Community to Combat the Climate Crisis." Drawing on new social sciences research, she described how we can influence our close friends and family to take climate actions alongside us. In this way, and by living up to our "role-ideals," we can scale up what we can do as individuals to have a greater impact. The video is available here:
<https://youtu.be/nH0bsmqgPTg>.

WGO Climate Course for Global Gastroenterology - Videos of Webinars

The World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) presented a series of nine webinars related to climate change and digestive health. Those that may be of especial interest include "Food, Water Security and Vulnerable Populations" and "Adaptation, Resilience, and Industry Partnership." Links to the videos are available here:
<https://www.worldgastroenterology.org/education-and-training/webinars/wgo-climate-course-for-global-gastroenterology>.

Sustainability In Motion Conference - Copies of Presentations

On March 8 - 10, 2023, the New Jersey Clean Communities Council and Association of New Jersey Recyclers presented an inaugural statewide Sustainability conference. The conference focused on sustainability, recycling, litter abatement, materials management and more. Copies of the presentations are available here:
<https://www.njsustainabilityconference.com/index.php/presentations>.

"Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Strategic Funding Plan Webinars" **Videos of Webinars**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the NJ Economic Development Agency (EDA), and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) jointly held three public webinars and one hybrid event throughout the month of April to support the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiatives (RGGI) Strategic Funding Plan development. Each webinar was topically focused, discussing each of the potential funding initiatives outlined in the RGGI Auction Proceeds Scoping Document and the hybrid event was all-encompassing, providing a summary of all potential funding initiatives. Topics covered were as follows: "Clean Transportation;" "Buildings, Grid and Refrigerants;" "Carbon Sequestration;" and "All Topics Hybrid Event." Links to the videos and presentation slides, along with a link to the scoping document, are available here:
<https://nj.gov/rggi/engage.html>.

"America's Energy Gamble: People, Economy and Planet" - Video of Webinar

In this webinar, Dr. Shanti Gamper-Rabindran, a Professor at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, discussed the major points from her new book, "America's Energy Gamble: People, Economy and Planet," which "dissects the Trump administration's energy policy and how the country can return to an energy transition that benefits both the economy and the environment. How did the pro-fossil Trump administration entrench America's oil and gas dependency to the detriment of America's economy, public health and the environment? Its actions ran counter to even traditional bipartisan values of fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship and rule of law. Despite the damage done, this book lays out how Americans can still change course and transition away from oil and gas dependency, while protecting workers and communities." Dr. Gamper-Rabindran also discussed her ongoing work on community solar in rural northcentral Appalachia and the just energy transition in the Ohio River Valley. The video is available here:
<https://cpree.princeton.edu/events/2023/americas-energy-gamble-people-economy-and-planet>.

Columbia University Global Energy Summit 2023 - Videos of Conference

Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy (CGEP) "brought the foremost experts and leaders in energy and climate policy to talk about current trends in energy security, geopolitics, and the energy transition with a focus on actionable solutions" for its 10th Anniversary Global Energy Summit. The following is a partial list of session topics:

- "Power Play: The State of Energy Geopolitics Amidst Tensions and Transitions"
- "Building America's New Energy Future"
- "Mobilizing Global Climate Action: Accelerating The Path to Net Zero by 2050"
- "Innovating to Net Zero: The Role of Technology in the Energy Transition"
- "Financing the Clean Energy Revolution: A Conversation with Larry Fink, Chairman and CEO, BlackRock, Inc."
- "The Role of Today's Largest Companies in Tomorrow's Energy Landscape"
- "The Big Green Machine: Advancing the Energy Transition at Scale"
- "The Global State of Play: Energy Markets, Geopolitics, Policy, and What's Next."

Links to videos of each session are available here:

<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/celebrating-10-years-of-the-center-on-global-energy-policy/>.

i-Tree Open Academy Videos of Webinars

"i-Tree is a state-of-the-art, peer-reviewed software suite from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service that provides urban and rural forestry analysis and benefits assessment tools. The i-Tree tools can help strengthen forest management and advocacy efforts by quantifying forest structure and the environmental benefits that trees provide. Since the initial release of the i-Tree Tools in August 2006, thousands of communities, non-profit organizations, consultants, volunteers and students around the world have used i-Tree to report on individual trees, parcels, neighborhoods, cities, and even entire states. By understanding the local ecosystem services that trees provide, i-Tree users can link forest management activities with environmental quality and community livability. Whether your interest is a single tree or an entire forest, i-Tree provides data that you can use to demonstrate value and set priorities for more effective decision-making." The i-Tree Open Academy sessions provided a broad introduction to the i-Tree suite of tools including "Introduction to i-Tree," "Online with MyTree, i-Tree Design, and i-Tree Planting," "The view from the top: i-Tree Canopy and OurTrees," "i-Tree Landscape: Your data, maps, and equity portal," and "i-Tree Eco - the flagship tool" Links to videos of the sessions and to the presentation slides are available here: <https://www.itreetools.org/support/i-tree-open-academy-spring-2023>.

EJTF's GOALS for 2022/2023

- 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 New Jersey 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).**
- 4. Advocating for better health and reducing climate change for all by protecting and expanding New Jersey's public and urban forests.**

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

[covering 3/27/2023 – 4/26/2023]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

After Years of Fighting, Communities Get New Tools to Combat Pollution

Two and a half years after it was signed into law in September 2020, the implementing regulations for NJ's landmark Environmental Justice (EJ) Law have finally been adopted. This has great significance because, until the rules were finalized and adopted, applicants were attempting to gain approval for new potentially polluting facilities, or modifications to existing facilities, prior to the law going into effect. As stated in Gov. Murphy's press release (available here:

<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230417a.shtml>), "Under the EJ Rules,

when proposing to locate certain pollution-generating facilities in an overburdened community, an applicant must prepare an environmental justice impact statement and engage directly with members of their proposed host community by hosting a public hearing. The applicant must collect all public comments and respond to them in writing. DEP will then evaluate whether pollution from the proposed facility would cause or contribute to environmental and public health stressors at levels disproportionate to those in less burdened communities. ... Where disproportionate impacts are not avoidable, certain new facilities could be limited, or existing facilities could be subject to additional permit conditions that reduce environmental and public health stressors affecting the community."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-new-anti-pollution-rules-described-as-most-stringent-in-nation/>

AG Platkin and DEP Commissioner LaTourette Announce Eight New Environmental Justice and Environmental Enforcement Actions and Other Settlements

NJ Attorney General Platkin and Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) LaTourette announced eight new environmental enforcement actions, which include five environmental justice actions related to toxic pollutants at two sites in Newark, a site in Fort Lee, a site in Milltown, and a site in Camden. They also announced that settlement agreements had been reached in two other environmental justice cases. During Gov. Phil Murphy's time in office, the state has filed 56 environmental-justice cases, resulting in \$19 million in judgments.

<https://www.njoag.gov/ag-platkin-and-dep-commissioner-latourette-announce-eight-new-environmental-justice-and-environmental-enforcement-actions-and-other-settlements/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

Murphy Administration Announces \$70 Million in RGGI Proceeds Awards to Fund Electric Public Transportation Initiatives

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU), and NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) have announced \$70 million in Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) funds to be awarded to help reduce the upfront costs of electric trucks, buses, and equipment in overburdened communities. This will fund the purchase of 156 electric vehicles, including 114 school buses, eight garbage and dump trucks, 26 shuttle and transit buses, and four forklifts, all operating in approximately 20 overburdened communities

Subscribe to EJ Law Notices by County

You can receive notices for EJ Law application hearings in specific areas by subscribing online and selecting the counties in which you'd like to stay up-to-date for hearings. Sign up here: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NJDEP/signup/35599>.

across the state. The auction proceeds will also fund four projects to bring electric ride-sharing options to communities that lack access to reliable transportation.

<https://www.njeda.com/murphy-administration-announces-70-million-in-rggi-proceed-awards-to-fund-electric-public-transportation-initiatives/>

Successful NJBPU Charge Up New Jersey Electric Vehicle Incentive Program Expends FY23 Funds, Moving State Closer to Electric Vehicle Goals

Due to the use of all allocated funds, on 4/17/2023, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) paused the "Charge Up NJ Program" that provides financial incentives for purchase or lease of a new electric vehicle (EV). An estimated \$35 million will have been disbursed this year to support the purchase or lease of over 10,000 new EVs by NJ residents.

<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230417b.shtml>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

'Protect West Milford': New Jerseyans Block Construction of Fracked Gas Compressor

On the Monday after a Saturday rally calling on Gov. Murphy to intervene and stop the Kinder Morgan company's Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) East 300 Upgrade project, opponents of the fracked gas expansion project risked arrest by blocking the construction site for a new gas compressor station in West Milford. A video of the protest is available here:

<https://twitter.com/foodandwater/status/1647973263342018562?s=20>. In a related opinion piece ("The Tennessee Gas Pipeline Expansion is Still a Bad Idea. Here's Why," available here:

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2023/04/20/tennessee-gas-pipeline-expansion-west-milford-nj-still-a-bad-idea/70127807007/>) activist Ted Glick describes the issues related to the project and its history.

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/west-milford-nj-gas-tgp>

With Rail Plan Denied, What's Next for Gibbstown Gas Port?

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has denied renewal of a "special permit" that was issued four years ago by the Trump administration to allow the shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by rail from Wyalusing, PA to Gibbstown, NJ where a port has been approved but not yet built. LNG could still be transported by truck, which would require around 360 trucks, 24 hours a day. In addition, there is a DOT rule, also from the Trump administration, that would allow the LNG to be transported by rail; this rule is currently under review.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/gibbstown-ling-liquefied-natural-gas-rail-plan-denied/>



Opposition To Power Plant Growing In Newark; City Council Takes Vote

During the April 5 meeting, the Newark City Council unanimously voted in favor of a resolution that opposes the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) plan to build a natural gas power plant in Newark. In March, the Essex County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a similar symbolic measure opposing the PVSC power plant, joining other local government bodies in nearby towns and cities that have passed such resolutions, including Alpine, Bayonne, Hoboken, Jersey City, Kearny, Livingston, Maplewood, Secaucus, Union City and Weehawken.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/newarknj/opposition-power-plant-growing-newark-city-council-takes-vote>

LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

Enlisting NJ's Land in Battle against Greenhouse Gases

This article describes some of the topics covered in the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) "Natural & Working Lands Strategy," which is currently being prepared. The Strategy will seek to "increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in and on farms, forests, grasslands, wetlands, and urban lands." (Additional information, as well as recordings of DEP webinars related to strategies for the four different working land types - Agricultural Lands; Developed Lands; Aquatic Habitats, Non-tidal Wetlands, and Tidal Wetlands; and Forested Lands - are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/mitigation/nwls.html>.) The article focuses on different approaches related to the "Forested Lands" category.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-conservationists-agree-forests-farmland-key-to-reducing-greenhouse-gases-but-differ-on-strategy/>

The Push for More Trees, Greener Newark

In this 4-minute news video, elected officials including U.S. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and U.S. Senator Booker gather in Newark to describe the benefits to the city, and especially to disadvantaged communities, of additional green spaces including trees to be established in Newark using grant funds from the Biden administration's "Investing in America" agenda. Funding will also be provided through the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Urban and Community Forestry program that funds state work in disadvantaged communities. Local residents have been trained to plant the trees and to maintain the green infrastructure projects.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/the-push-for-more-trees-greener-newark/>

Scraps to Soil: How Princeton's Food Waste Is Recycled on and off Campus

This article describes in detail the steps Princeton University is following to recycle food waste, utilizing an on-campus composting lab for 15% of the food waste and sending the remaining 85% to an off-campus energy waste facility (Trenton Biogas). The facility utilizes anaerobic digestion for organic material, and creates methane biogas that is turned into electricity, via cogeneration, that helps to power Princeton's electric grid.

<https://www.dailyprincetonian.com/article/2023/03/composting-and-reuse-of-princeton-food-waste-trenton-biogas-methane-scrap-lab>

Union County Awards Grants for School and Community Gardens

The Union County "Plant a Seed" initiative has awarded funding to 94 school and community gardens to support nutrition, sustainability, civic service and STEM education. The initiative helps to build community connections and improve access to fresh produce as well as social opportunities and outdoor recreation. The "Plant a Seed" grant program began in 2018. It includes the "Union County Kids Dig In" grant program for schools, and the "Union County Means Green" community garden grant program.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/westfield/union-county-awards-grants-school-community-gardens>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Community Solar Projects Seen as Key to NJ's Clean-Energy Targets

After describing the latest environmental enforcement actions taken by NJ (see article on [p. 14](#)) this 4-1/2-minute news video shows an Earth Day-related tour, taken by officials and advocates, of a rooftop community solar project in Avenel. Doug O'Malley, the director of Environment NJ, stated that "New Jersey is the Saudi Arabia of rooftops" and that the state should be taking advantage of the potential for solar energy that those rooftops represent.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/community-solar-projects-seen-as-key-to-njs-clean-energy-targets/>

Murphy Administration Announces Funding for Offshore Wind Environmental Studies, Entry into Responsible Offshore Wind Science Alliance

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) have announced \$2 million in additional research study funding, primarily for the NJ Research and Monitoring Initiative (RMI), with \$100,000 of the funds to be used for a two-year membership in the Responsible Offshore Wind Science Alliance (ROSA). The RMI is a collaborative effort of the DEP and BPU to coordinate research on potential impacts of offshore wind energy development, and builds upon extensive work in this area by federal partners, including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Funds will be used for a whale detection buoy, an environmental DNA (eDNA) study, and a study of harbor seals' movement. RMI is funded by developers as part of the NJ wind energy solicitation, and to date has provided \$8.5 million in funding for offshore wind-related projects. ROSA is a nonprofit organization founded in 2019, dedicated to regional research on the potential impacts of offshore wind on fisheries. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23_0025.htm

New Jersey LCV Reacts To Recent Brown University Report on Anti-Wind Disinformation Campaigns

A team in the Climate and Development Lab at Brown University has issued a report "Discourses of Climate Delay in the Campaign Against Offshore Wind: A Case Study from Rhode Island" (available here: https://ecori.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/delay_and_misinformation_tactics_in_anti_ow_campaigns-ri_case_study_4-10-23.pdf) that examines in detail the misinformation methods used by anti-wind groups, focusing on the Green Oceans anti-wind group in Rhode Island, highlighting how such community groups may borrow arguments from national climate disinformation organizations and use them in local anti-offshore wind

campaigns. The NJ League of Conservation Voters (LCV) has issued a statement regarding the report and its relevance to anti-offshore wind campaigns in NJ. <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/new-jersey-lcv-reacts-to-recent-brown-university-report-on-anti-wind-disinformation-campaigns/>



Congressional Democrats Demand 'Real Solutions' to Marine Mammal Deaths

This 1-minute news video describes a letter (available here: <https://pallone.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/pallone.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/nj-letter-to-ceq-final.pdf>) sent to the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality by all nine of NJ's Democratic U.S. Representatives asking the Administration to do more to address marine mammal vessel strikes and entanglements, and requesting information from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on what the agency is doing to enforce vessel speed, limit entanglements, and reduce microplastic pollution. The letter emphasizes the threat climate change poses to marine mammals, and decries offshore wind opponents who "are funding attempts to blame offshore wind pre-construction activity for marine mammal deaths without scientific evidence." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/congressional-democrats-demand-real-solutions-to-marine-mammal-deaths/>

Booker, Pallone Support Permanent Ban on Atlantic Offshore Drilling

This 4-minute news video describes a meeting between elected officials, including U.S. Senator Booker and U.S. Representative Pallone, NJ environmental officials including NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette, and leaders of NJ environmental groups including Executive Director Potosnak of the NJ League of Conservation Voters (NJLCV), in which they expressed support for a bill (the "Clean Ocean And Safe Tourism (COAST) Anti-Drilling Act") that has been introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives by members of Congress from NJ. They also emphatically stressed that climate change-related impacts, not offshore wind-related activities, are causing marine mammal deaths. (Note: this story was picked up nationwide and even internationally, under the title "Panel: Climate change, not wind prep, is threat to whales.") As water temperatures rise, fish species that whales prey upon move into different areas, bringing whales more frequently into the path of shipping lanes off the East Coast. In NJLCV Executive Director Potosnak's words, "They're having a picnic in the Parkway; they're getting hit." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/booker-pallone-support-permanent-ban-on-atlantic-offshore-drilling/>

Report by Feds, Anglers Cites Offshore Wind Impacts on Fish

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA - a "coalition of fishing industry associations and fishing companies committed to improving the compatibility of new offshore development with their businesses") issued a report resulting from a 2-1/2-year-long study of the impacts existing offshore wind projects have on fish and marine mammals. The goal of the study was to document what is known and not known with respect to all aspects of the potential interactions between fisheries and offshore wind, and to recommend additional research. Although the report stated that the physical changes associated with offshore wind development will affect the marine environment and species who live there, NOAA

continues to take the position that offshore wind is not causing the whale deaths, which remain under investigation.

https://pressofatlanticcity.com/news/local/report-by-feds-anglers-cites-offshore-wind-impacts-on-fish/article_09e97cb6-d001-11ed-9dd0-ffd3d8e799e1.html

Menendez, Booker Urge NOAA to Address Rising Number of Whale Deaths Along Atlantic Coast

Both of NJ's U.S. Senators joined three other Democratic Senators in sending a letter (available here:

https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/03282023noaa_atlantic_whale_deathsletter.pdf) to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) asking for information about how NOAA plans to utilize funds it has received to respond to Unusual Mortality Events (UMEs) for humpback whales and North Atlantic right whales in the Atlantic, and whether additional resources will be needed. In addition, the letter requests information about how NOAA plans to communicate information to the public, and a description of "any challenges or barriers NOAA faces with efficiently determining a whale's cause of death, as well as recommendations for congressional or administrative action needed to reduce these barriers."

<https://www.menendez.senate.gov/newsroom/press/menendez-booker-urge-noaa-to-address-rising-number-of-whale-deaths-along-atlantic-coast>

Offshore Wind Opponents Demand Immediate Halt to Wind Farm Development

This 4-1/2-minute news video shows a protest held in Trenton by offshore wind opponents, where they asked for an immediate halt of wind farm development. The video also covers a recent Republican energy bill that aims to undo virtually all of President Biden's agenda to address climate change, and a recent letter sent by NJ U.S. Senators to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) asking for information about how it plans to address whale deaths (see article above).

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/offshore-wind-opponents-demand-immediate-halt-to-wind-farm-development/>

Opinion: What's Killing the Whales? A Likely Culprit Is Close to Home

In this piece, Heidi Yeh, a doctoral candidate in the Rutgers Graduate Program in Oceanography and the policy director for the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, describes the negative impact on whales of big ships, exacerbated by climate change that can have the result of whales being in the path of ships for a longer time period. She points out that offshore wind can actually help the whales by reducing dependence on fossil fuels, stating that "By weight, 40% of maritime trade is dedicated to exchanging fossil fuels and petrochemicals. Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels can have a direct impact on ship traffic, simultaneously reducing the risk of a deadly strike."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/op-ed-likely-culprit-in-whale-deaths-along-jersey-shore/>

CLIMATE CHANGE



Climate-Change Lawsuits Get Boost From US Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear appeals of oil industry petitions to change the jurisdictions from state court to federal court for climate change damages-related lawsuits filed by several states and localities. Federal court procedural rules are generally viewed as more favorable to industry. This ruling may indicate promising jurisdictional outcomes for a similar lawsuit brought by Hoboken, for which the

Supreme Court has scheduled a conference in May, and the recently-filed NJ state lawsuit, for which the jurisdiction issue is currently being considered by federal district court

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/us-supreme-court-decision-boosts-climate-change-lawsuits-hoboken/>

NJ Makes Pitch to Join Hydrogen 'Hub'

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations is making available \$8 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds for between six and ten "Regional Clean Hydrogen Hubs" (H2Hubs). NJ has submitted a proposal with six other states to create a Northeast Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub. Hydrogen as a "clean" energy source is not without controversy, which is described in this article.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-makes-pitch-to-join-hydrogen-hub/>

Environmental Scientists Urge More Straight Talk about Oceans

In this 4-1/2-minute news video, panel members at the 16th Annual Future of the Ocean Symposium at Monmouth University provide their insights on climate change and ocean health, the need for scientists to communicate more clearly with the public, and an optimism about young people's knowledge, passion, and organization related to climate change.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/environmental-scientists-urge-more-straight-talk-about-oceans/>

Opinion: Hands off the Clean Energy Fund

In this piece, Virgil Francis, chief executive officer of Nuvo Energy Ventures, and Richard Lawton, executive director of the New Jersey Sustainable Business Council, describe what NJ's Clean Energy Fund is supposed to be used for, and the impacts of diverting funds from it, as has taken place over the last fifteen years. They ask that this diversion of funds cease.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-governor-and-lawmakers-are-urged-to-stop-raiding-state-clean-energy-fund/>

FOREST HEALTH

State Targets Its Own after Regulators Slash Forest

A project recently undertaken by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Division of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Land Management, with no advance public notice, resulted in the clearcutting of acres of mature upland forest and the destruction of wetlands in order to develop a habitat area for the American woodcock. A public outcry ensued (see <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/nj-conservation-groups-irate-over-state-agencys-forest-clearance-work/>), and Tom Gilbert, a co-chair of the recent NJ task force on forest management, stated that this action illustrates that stringent rules, which include public input, are needed for any projects that alter public forestlands. Now, another DEP bureau - the Bureau of Coastal Land Use Compliance and Enforcement - has issued notices of violation to the Bureau of Land Management, requiring it to take immediate steps to mitigate erosion and to submit a plan for restoration.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-dep-slaps-own-regulators-for-forest-damage/>



A Changing Climate Is Contributing to Longer Wildfire Seasons in NJ, Experts Say

The peak fire season in NJ that was previously confined to about a 2-3 month period is now extending into a 4-5 month period. This article describes some of the causes for this, primarily related to climate change.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/changing-climate-is-contributing-to-longer-wildfire-season-in-nj-experts-say/>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

City of Hoboken Launches New Program to Replace Lead Pipes

There are no lead water mains in Hoboken, but service lines (lines leading from the water main into homes) could contain lead. Hoboken has launched a new program under which property owners can apply for a \$1,000 grant to replace their lead service lines.

<https://www.hobokengirl.com/lead-pipes-replacement-program-hoboken-nj/>

More Money Set to Treat Lead Poisoning in Children

In response to the federal government lowering its recommendation for the threshold of concern for lead from 5 micrograms per deciliter of whole blood to 3.5 micrograms, the 2024 NJ proposed state budget includes an additional \$5.2 million to expand the lead screening program in children. The lower levels may result in almost twice as many young children with levels of concern in their blood which require follow-up home inspections and monitoring. According to the CDC, there are no safe levels of lead in the blood.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/lead-blood-lead-threshold-testing-federal-children-kids-screening-monmouth-county-new-jersey-association-of-county-and-city-health-officials-newark-water-system-lead-lined-water-pipes-health-departmen/>

"3,016" = NJ Children Under 6 Years With Elevated Lead Levels, July 2020-June 2021

The most recent NJ Department of Health (DOH) "Childhood Lead Exposure in NJ" report found that the percent of children under 6 years old with elevated blood lead levels decreased between July 2017 and June 2021, and that 3,016 children under 6 years old were found to have elevated lead levels from July 2020 to June 2021.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/tests-found-3000-nj-children-with-elevated-lead-levels-in-2020-2021/>

New Federal Funds Will Help Pay For Drinking Water Upgrades

In August 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had released allocations for the first round of its state drinking water system upgrade funds, including funds for replacing lead service lines. At that time, the allocation was based on data from 2015, and NJ was slated to receive the second lowest amount per pipe in the nation. After urging from NJ members of Congress, EPA has revised the allocations based on 2023 data that has just become available. NJ will receive \$83 million for lead service line replacement, part of \$142.7 million for overall drinking-water system improvement. NJ estimates \$2.1 billion in all will be needed for lead service line replacement statewide.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-gets-more-federal-funds-for-water-systems-upgrades-but-facing-need-for-billions-more/>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

Paulsboro PFAS Test Misses Target Number of Volunteers So Far

Rutgers University's School of Public Health is a partner in the ongoing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study investigating possible links between PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as "forever chemicals") and a range of health conditions. In NJ, Paulsboro was chosen because of past occurrence of a PFAS chemical in one of the town's drinking water wells. Rutgers University's school of Public Health has been collecting the data, and while they have only recruited half of the volunteers they were seeking, the number exceeded their expectations and is the largest proportion of any site being tested nationally, with the third-largest number of participants. They are still seeking additional participants, through May 2023.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/paulsboro-pfas-testing-less-than-half-of-hoped-for-participants/>

POLLUTION

Plastic Bag Ban Helped Cut Shore Trash, Environmentalists Say

The 2022 Beach Sweeps Report issued by Clean Ocean Action (available here: https://cleanoceanaction.org/fileadmin/editor_group3/2022_Beach_Sweeps_Annual_Report.pdf) found that: "Plastic Shopping Bags make history, leaving the Dirty Dozen list for the 1st time since 2007; Straws/Stirrers fall to #6 on the Dirty Dozen list for the first time since 2016; decreasing 39% from 2021; and Foam Takeout Containers decreased by 29% from Spring to Fall 2022; an overall decrease by 38% from 2021-2022." Although NJ's "Single-Use Waste Reduction Act" (SUWRA) only became effective in May 2022, it was estimated by the NJ Food Council that in just the first 5 months of the law, 3.44 billion plastic bags and 68 million paper bags were eliminated from the waste stream.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/03/plastic-bag-ban-helped-cut-shore-trash-environmentalists-say/>

NJ Sees Drop in Key Air Pollution Metric

In its "State of the Air" report for the period 2019 - 2021, the American Lung Association found that NJ improved in most counties in ground-level ozone pollution ("smog"), with only two counties (Bergen and Mercer) receiving failing marks, as opposed to six counties in the last report. With respect to fine-particulate pollution ("soot"), however, most counties experienced slight increases over the last report, possibly attributable to wildfires. Maps showing the results are available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/nj-smog-pollution-decline-visuals/>. Nationally, 54% of the people who live in counties that have unhealthy levels of smog or soot are people of color. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/smog-levels-decline-in-most-of-new-jersey-ozone-pollution-improvement-communities-of-color/>

EDUCATIONAL and YOUTH-RELATED

NJ High Schoolers Take Concerns about Climate Change to Washington

In this 4-minute news video, two students from Hopewell Valley Central High School describe their recent meetings in Washington, D.C. with elected officials to promote legislative resolutions related to nationwide climate change education (comparable to the climate change education they are now getting in NJ), and the impact climate change has on the mental health of their generation.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-high-schoolers-take-concerns-about-climate-change-to-washington/>

Five Rutgers Athletes Close First NIL Deal Focused on Climate Change

With the passing of legislation allowing student-athletes to profit from their name, image and likeness (NIL), the "Knights of The Raritan" (KTR) NIL collective was formed in 2022. The first-ever climate-change-focused NIL has been formed via a partnership between KTR and EcoAthletes. Five Rutgers student-athletes have signed on to be EcoAthletes Champions at Rutgers, and will advocate for #ClimateComeback through a combination of podcast interviews, social media posts and in-person speaking appearances on or near the Rutgers New Brunswick campus.

<https://localtoday.news/nj/five-rutgers-athletes-close-first-nil-deal-focused-on-climate-change-192674.html>

OTHER

Murphy Administration Uses 'Aggressive' Litigation to Seek Environmental Redress

This article describes some of the twenty natural resources damages lawsuits, and 52 complaints related to environmental justice communities, filed by the Murphy administration. In contrast, the Christie administration didn't file any.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/04/murphy-administration-aggressively-seeks-legal-environmental-redress/>

First Lady Tammy Murphy Announces Recipients of Green Jobs Council NJ BRIDGE Initiative Grant Award

First Lady Tammy Murphy and the Executive Director of the Council on the Green Economy, Jane Cohen, announced the recipients of the Green Jobs Council's \$5 million NJ "Building our Resilient, Inclusive, and Diverse Green Economy" (BRIDGE) Initiative grant awards. The recipient organizations presented innovative approaches to advance the Council's mission of building a diverse, inclusive workforce to support NJ's clean energy goals. A listing of the recipients is available in the press release, here:

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230327a.shtml>.

Environmental Groups Urge Murphy to Protect Liberty State Park from Privatization and Commercialization, Reschedule NJDEP Open House

An open house on plans to revitalize Liberty State Park that was to have taken place in March was abruptly postponed by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), two days before it was to occur, with DEP stating that due to "significant public interest," the open house was postponed "to a date later this spring to provide more advanced notice and ensure maximum public participation" (additional information on the postponement is available here:

<https://www.nj.com/hudson/2023/03/open-house-on-plans-for-liberty-state-park-is-postponed.html>.) Eight environmental groups including the "Friends of Liberty State Park" sent a letter (available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/128UBKPsqtGoeP_Gn6pcNz4XOc2v_WD88AqeqJFf3R0/edit) to Gov. Murphy, asking him to reschedule the open house and also to prevent privatization at the park.

<https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/environmental-groups-urge-murphy-to-protect-liberty-state-park-from-privatization-and-commercialization-reschedule-njdep-open-house/>

DCA Awards \$25 Million in Local Recreation Improvement Grants to 352 Local Governments Across the State

The NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has awarded \$25 million in Local Recreation Improvement Grants to counties, municipalities, and school districts to ensure public access to quality outdoor space and recreational facilities. The grant applications were evaluated based on distressed community ranking, financial need, project feasibility, local match commitment, and scope of impact.

<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230413c.shtml>

Governor Murphy Announces Nearly \$100 Million Investment in Community Recreation Initiatives Across the State

Gov. Murphy announced a proposed investment of nearly \$100 million for projects to develop or update parks and preserve open space, through the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Green Acres Program. \$7.7 million is to be awarded in non-matching grants to incentivize projects in Adversely Stressed Overburdened Communities in Urban Aid municipalities. These communities are so designated because they have a combined stressor total higher than the 50th percentile for total environmental and public health stressors.

<https://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230418b.shtml>



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 and resources / sign up for email alerts / join the EJTF
