



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

Clean Energy Bill S2978 Rally and Hearing

On 11/20/2023, Unitarian Universalists including UUFANJ/EJTF, and other environmentalists and environmental justice groups, rallied in Trenton at the Statehouse and testified in favor of Senate Bill 2978, which has the goal of 100% clean electricity production in NJ by 2035. (See box on [p. 2](#))



Photos by Mike Skelly

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EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

Clean Energy Bill S2978 Rally and Hearing

UU FaithAction NJ Environmental Justice Task Force joined its Environmental Justice Partners and Environment advocates across New Jersey at the Statehouse on Monday, November 20, 2023. They rallied out front of the Statehouse in favor of a bill to turn Governor Murphy's Clean Energy Executive Order into a bill for approval by the full legislature. If passed by the legislature, the bill will set the definition of Clean Energy. This will impact State Policy for improving health, reducing climate change, and creating more clean energy jobs. Without this bill it is possible that the Governor's Executive Order could be changed or reversed when Murphy leaves office in 2025. Once it is made into law by the legislature it would take the full legislature to change course after he leaves office.

The cold Monday morning started with a rally out in front of the Statehouse by Environmental Justice and Clean Energy advocates including UU FaithAction NJ. Immediately after the rally the crowd and Trenton "movers and shakers" passed through security and into the formal hearing chambers. The hearing was presided over by Senator Bob Smith. Senator Smith noted that this had been in the works for a more than a year and is one of the most important hearings for energy and environment of this session of the legislature. Although the intent was to make more permanent an existing energy policy of the Governor and the State of New Jersey, the public and advocacy groups used this as an opportunity to state their views and even speak on some broader issues. The hearings on the bill and other business stretched on for five hours going into the afternoon without a break. As the day wore on the remarks of each presenter became brief and to the point. The legislative Committee was engaged and asked questions as they proceeded.

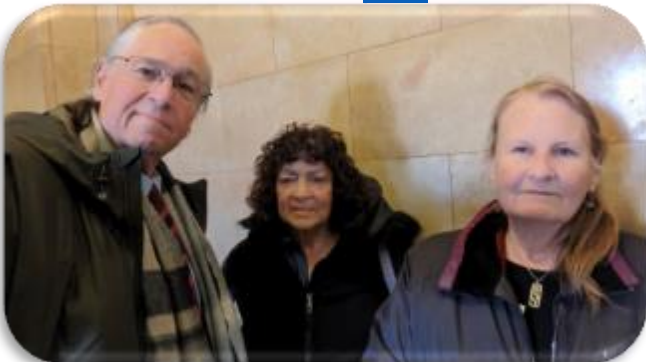
Environmental Justice advocates approved of the bill with some changes. They strongly favored clean energy generation to prevent climate change pollutants AND adding restrictions on co-pollutants that harm health. NJ Rate Counsel, who represents utility customers, was in favor of the bill but spoke in favor of some changes that would require accountability from the energy producers. NJ Business and Industry Association favored the bill, but called for the Senate to go slow. Princeton Professor Jesse Jenkins described the bill as truly historic and said "This bill offers an opportunity to establish New Jersey as a clean-energy leader." Solar industry favored the bill, but requested additional subsidies. Environment NJ and Clean Water Action and more environmental groups favored the bill.

At the end of the day it was decided to take the bill up again at the next scheduled Senate environment meeting date December 18, 2023. UU Faith Action EJTF and our EJ and environmental partners will continue to work on the bill and be present at the next hearing.

Stay up to date as this bill moves forward. You can make a difference. We will be calling upon our readers to help us in these final weeks of the legislative session to get this good bill passed by the legislature with the changes that will protect the environment, improve our health, and create high quality local jobs.

- Story and photos by Mike Skelly

Also see the news article on [p. 16](#).



From left above: **EJTF member Mike Skelly**, Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) member Roseann DePasquale, and **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh**



Members of **EJTF partner** NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA) testifying, above: Trustee Nicky Sheats, Esq. at left, and Executive Director Melissa Miles at right.

EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

• Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing (UUCWC)

On 10/26/2023, the Earth & Climate Ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing (UUCWC) hosted a discussion on "The Green Amendment" with Maya K. van Rossum, both in-person and on Zoom. The event included opportunities to buy her book, enjoy refreshments, and ask questions about such an amendment in NJ and PA. The audience included about 2 dozen in person and about 3 dozen more Zooming in, which was a very good turnout. There was "vigorous Q&A, plus donations and book sales."



EJTF member Pete Boughton
at left

- UUFANJ/EJTF** commented (thanks to the **EJTF Clean Energy Action Group and its Chair, Nancy Griffeth**) on the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) rules establishing NJ's permanent Community Solar Energy Program and setting new standards for participation in the program. EJTF has been involved in the development of this program from its beginnings as a pilot program, and is pleased to see it grow and be made permanent. Our comments included recommendations for increased publicity via municipalities and local news outlets, and simplification of income verification and of bill-paying. The comments are available here: https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023_CommentsOnCommunitySolar.pdf.

FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid

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

DECEMBER 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>
3 "The Science Behind Carbon Markets" - 6:00 a.m. EST (from Dubai)	4 National Offshore Wind R&D Symposium - 10:00 a.m.	5 National Offshore Wind R&D Symposium - 8:30 a.m. NEJAC Public Meeting - 10:00 a.m. NJDEP Somerset County EJ Community Engagement Session - 6:00 p.m.	6 DRBC 4th Quarter Business Meeting - 10:30 a.m. WHEJAC Public Meeting - 2:00 p.m. LWVNJ - "Understanding Local School Boards" - 6:00 p.m.	7	8 NJ State of the Food System Summit - 8:30 a.m.	9
<i>Calendar continues on p. 4</i>						

Calendar continued from p. 3

10	11	12	13 Jersey Water Works Conference - 8:00 a.m. Pinelands Commission Climate Committee - 9:30 a.m. "State of the Climate: Wins (& Losses) and What's on the Horizon" - 3:00 p.m. Comments Due: NJBPU Dual-Use Solar Energy Pilot Program	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 NJ Clean Air Council - 9:30 a.m. DRBC Advisory Committee on Climate Change - 10:00 a.m.	21	22	23

FUTURE EVENTS

**"The Science Behind Carbon Markets"
U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change COP28 Side Event - **Livestream**
12/3/2023, 6:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m. EST**

This COP28 Side Event is being livestreamed from Dubai (**note EST time, above**). "Carbon markets are drawing growing interest as a tool to increase investment in natural climate solutions, but markets must be supported by rigorous science to ensure they provide a climate benefit. We will explore the science behind carbon markets, and steps to increase confidence in this sector." The event is co-hosted by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), American Forest Foundation, American Forests, Woodwell Climate Research Center, and U.S.Nature4Climate. Additional information and the links to RSVP and to access the livestream are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/120323carbonmarkets>.

**National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) Public Meeting
12/5/2023, 10:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- via Zoom**

"The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) will convene a virtual public meeting on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 and will run from approximately 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. E.T. The meeting is free and open to all members of the public. Individual registration for this event is REQUIRED. No two individuals can share the same registration link. Registration is open throughout the duration of all meeting days. However, members of the public who wish to participate during the public comment period must register by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, November 28, 2023.... The meeting discussions will focus on several topics including, but not limited to, updates on NEJAC recommendations related to air quality and community monitoring, PFAS, finance and investments and responses to community concerns brought forward in Puerto Rico." Additional information about the meeting, including links to the agenda and to register for the Zoom, are available here: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/national-environmental-justice-advisory-council-meetings>.

**NJDEP Somerset County EJ Community
Engagement Session - Hybrid
12/5/2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Salem, NJ - In-person & on Zoom**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invites Somerset County residents to attend an EJ Community Engagement Session regarding Environmental Justice. This community engagement session will provide residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet DEP Commissioner LaTourette and EPA Region 2 Administrator Garcia and discuss environmental justice issues in Somerset County. It is one of a series being conducted by DEP in communities across NJ. Registration for in-person participation is voluntary, but recommended to assist communication. Registration is required for virtual attendance, to send the link for the Zoom livestream. Additional information including how to register to receive the Zoom link is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdz2fds3>.

**Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)
Fourth Quarter 2023 Business Meeting
12/6/2023, 10:30 a.m. - via Zoom**

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Fourth Quarter Business Meeting will take place on Zoom. After all scheduled business has been completed and as time allows, the meeting will also include up to one hour of Open Public Comment (prior sign-up by 5 p.m. on 12/5/2023 is required). A link to the agenda, additional details about items to be covered, Zoom link for the meeting, and information for prior sign-up for the Open Public Comment portion are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ykjdkd64>. The meeting will also be livestreamed here (although DRBC has encountered issues with the livestream; see the agenda for additional information): <https://www.youtube.com/user/delrivbasincomm>.

**White House Environmental Justice
Advisory Council (WHEJAC) Public Meeting
12/6/2023, 2:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.
- via Zoom**

"The White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC) will convene a virtual public meeting Wednesday, December 6, 2023, from

approximately 2:00 - 7:45 PM E.T. This free meeting is open to all members of the public. Individual registration is REQUIRED and is available through the scheduled end time of the meeting day.... The WHEJAC is interested in receiving public comments relevant to current charges, topics, and questions currently under consideration." NJ has two WHEJAC representatives: **EJTF partners** Nicky Sheats, Esq., Ph.D., on the Board of Trustees of the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA), and Maria Lopez-Nuñez, Deputy Director for Organizing and Advocacy of the Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC). Additional information about the meeting including the topics currently under consideration, as well as the link to register for the Zoom, are available here: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/white-house-environmental-justice-advisory-council>.

**Jersey Water Works Conference 2023
12/13/2023, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Ewing, NJ - In-person**

Jersey Water Works (JWW) is presenting its Ninth Annual Jersey Water Works Conference, with the theme "The Value of Water - New Jersey Edition." Topics will include PFAS and emergent contaminants, climate resilience and green infrastructure, and shared services to reduce cost and improve efficiency, among others. The JWW Conference is an event that will bring together state and local decision makers, practitioners, and stakeholders. It will be a full-day event including a keynote speaker, featured speakers, six workshops, a utility track, and lunch. Additional information, including the agenda and the registration link (**general registration - \$95; nonprofit and government employees - \$45**), is available here: <https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/events/annual-conference/2023/>.

**NJBPU Dual-Use Solar Energy Pilot
Program
Comments Due 12/13/2023**

"The Dual-Use Solar Energy Act of 2021... requires the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU"), in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, to adopt rules establishing a Dual-Use Solar Energy Pilot

Program ("Pilot Program" or "Program"). The Pilot Program is designed to encourage the development of dual-use solar facilities, also known as agrivoltaics, and the creation of a new segment of the solar industry in New Jersey that is compatible with the State's rich agricultural heritage. Specifically, the Pilot Program seeks to demonstrate and study the compatibility of agricultural or horticultural production and solar photovoltaic infrastructure on the same land. This Pilot Program will permit the construction, installation, and operation of solar energy projects that are 'connected to the distribution or transmission system owned or operated by a New Jersey public utility or local government unit' and 'located on unreserved farmland, while maintaining the affected land in active agricultural or horticultural use'... Dual-use solar can provide farmers with an additional stream of revenue, contributing to farm financial stability and allowing for continued agricultural or horticultural production of land while increasing the production of clean energy." Additional information about the proposed program and instructions for commenting are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2yxfxwyf>.

Pinelands Commission Climate Committee Meeting
12/13/2023, 9:30 a.m.
Location is forthcoming

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

"State of the Climate: Wins (& Losses) and What's on the Horizon" - Virtual
12/13/2023, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

This event, part of Food & Water Watch's Livable Future LIVE monthly series, will present a discussion of the past year's climate successes and setbacks, focusing on: "what have we learned as a movement this year? And what lessons can we bring forward to next year – a critical presidential election year?" Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://www.mobilize.us/fww/event/575581/>

NJ Clean Air Council Meeting
12/20/2023, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
East Windsor, NJ - In-person

The December meeting of the NJ Clean Air Council will be held at the IBEW in East Windsor, NJ. Additional information is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/event/clean-air-council-meeting-20231220/>.

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Advisory Committee on Climate Change Meeting - Details TBA
12/20/2023, 10:00 a.m.

For the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Advisory Committee on Climate Change meeting, details on how to participate and the draft agenda will be shared closer to the meeting date and will be available here: <https://www.nj.gov/drbc/meetings/advisory/>. Contact Kristen Bowman Kavanaugh, P.E. via email at kristen.b.kavanaugh@drbc.gov for more information.

League of Women Voters of New Jersey (LWVNJ) Activist Trainings - Virtual
Various dates

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey (LWVNJ) (of which **EJTF member Nancy Griffeth** is co-chair of the Natural Resources Committee) has been presenting a public series of virtual activist training sessions designed to equip participants "with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out dynamic organizing strategies that can effectively influence public policy and the state of democracy in New Jersey." The session scheduled for December 2023 is listed on [p. 7](#); descriptions of this and previous sessions (for which recordings may be requested from LWVNJ), are available here: <https://www.lwvnj.org/training>.

LWVNJ - "Understanding Local School Boards" - Via Zoom
12/6/2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

"Education is a vital cornerstone of our society, and local school boards play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape in our communities. If you are interested in understanding how decisions are made at the local level and in making a difference in our education system, this training is for you."

Registration is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycxaf233>.

Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute
Listing of Climate Events

Multiple events are listed on this site. A sampling of December listings is below; check the site periodically for an updated list, here:

<https://rcei.rutgers.edu/events/> and here:

<https://rcei.rutgers.edu/news-events/external-events/>.

NJ State of the Food System Summit - Hybrid
12/8/2023, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
New Brunswick, NJ - In-person (sold out) & via Zoom

The Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health (REACH) and NJ Food Democracy Collaborative (NJFDC) are sponsoring the NJ State of the Food System Summit. The purpose of this annual Summit is "to come together to highlight the progress and obstacles that we've experienced as a community this year, celebrate each others' successes, and engage in honest solutions-focused conversation about how to address ongoing inequities and other challenges across NJ's food supply chain to bring about healthy, resilient community-scale food systems." The agenda is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3kenzpvx>. (In-person registration is sold out, but you may email NJFDC@foodshedalliance.org to be put on a waiting list - use the words, "Waiting List" in the subject line.) Registration for Zoom participation is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8e9c5h>.

National Offshore Wind R&D Symposium
12/4/2023, 10:00 a.m. - 6:16 p.m. (plus reception 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.);
12/5/2023, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Brooklyn, NY (In-person & Livestreamed)

The National Offshore Wind Research & Development Consortium (NOWRDC) is holding its 4th annual symposium. It "will feature presentations from NOWRDC's offshore wind R&D projects, as well as networking opportunities and keynote talks from industry leaders. In this 2023 Symposium, you will: Learn what NOWRDC's project portfolio is working on to deliver the next generation of cost reduction innovations in offshore wind; Connect with other top professionals in the offshore wind innovation community; Get a comprehensive overview of current barriers to offshore wind cost reduction and deployment in the U.S.; and Engage in solution-oriented discussion." Additional information including the agenda and the link to register (**\$300 in-person, livestream is free**) are available here:

<https://hopin.com/events/national-offshore-wind-r-d-symposium-2023-6b838f3d-545f-45b8-9a75-8e7ce2aafcdb/registration>.

VIDEOS OF PAST EVENTS

UU FaithAction NJ Fall Issues Conference
- Video of Plenary Session

This video of the October UUFANJ Fall Issues Conference morning (plenary) session includes:

- Welcome and Chalice Lighting – Rev. Charles Loflin, Susan Druckenbrød
- Board President's Remarks – Mia Morse
- Keynote Speaker - Roxanne Sutocky, Director of Public Affairs, The Women's Centers
- "Keep Schools Safe" – Rev. Rosemarie Newberry
- Task Force Overviews.

The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry1BMPTnLPs>.

"Unlocking the Value of Green Infrastructure Incentive Programs for Urban Agriculture by Leveraging Public and Private Investment" **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Science and Technology. "As landowners in cities across the U.S. seek to innovatively reimagine portions of their sites, nature-based solutions like green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and urban agriculture (urban ag) present an opportunity to improve community well-being while addressing critical issues such as flooding and food insecurity." The webinar presented information about Greenprint Partners, the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), and Quantified Ventures' (QV) pilot model for co-locating GSI and urban ag practices on urban lands. "Working closely with an Urban Agriculture Advisory Group (UAAG) comprised of producers across the country, the project team developed an approach for a holistic edible rainscapes program - particularly for schoolyards - that designs and implements urban ag and GSI in tandem via funding through a stacked incentive model, vetted that model with stakeholders and potential payors, and quantified the impacts of implementing such a program at a national scale." A link to register to view the webinar is available here:

<https://conservationwebinars.net/webinars/unlocking-the-value-of-green-infrastructure-incentive-programs-for-urban-agriculture-by-leveraging-public-and-private-investment-1/>.

"Next Decade Technologies for the Energy Transition" - The Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment 2023 Annual Meeting **- Videos of Sessions**

"Ensuring a robust pathway to global decarbonization will require the rapid deployment of established clean energy technologies, as well as the swift research, development, and deployment of new and emerging technological solutions." This year's Andlinger Center Annual Meeting convened experts from the academic, public, and private sectors who discussed the

challenges and opportunities of three such technologies - fusion; carbon capture, utilization, and storage; and hydrogen. Videos include: the Welcome; the Keynote - Disruptive Energy Futures; Panel 1 - Next-Generation Technologies for Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage; Panel 2 - Hydrogen's Role in a Decarbonized Energy System; and Panel 3 - Public-Private Partnership Towards Fusion Power Plants. The videos are available here:

<https://acee.princeton.edu/2023-annual-meeting/videos/>.

"Electrify Your Life" - Video of Webinar

This webinar sponsored by Elders Climate Action was presented by Brian Stewart, a co-founder of Electrify Now, a volunteer organization devoted to educating energy consumers and homeowners about the benefits of electrification and the role they can play in accelerating the world to clean renewable energy and a sustainable future. "Our individual actions are a critical part of building a clean energy future." This workshop provided information that "will help you to understand what you can do NOW, and the incentives and resources that are available to help you take action." The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YF8_kb_zV-8.

"PFAS: The 'Forever Chemicals' Contaminating Our Water" **- Video of Webinar**

"PFAS - the toxic 'forever chemicals' found in almost everything from food packing to non-stick pans are a major pollutant of our drinking water. More and more studies are uncovering PFAS's health risks, including cancers, and immune system and reproductive system harm. The corporations that make PFAS, including 3M and Dupont, have known about these dangers for decades. Food & Water Watch is fighting on multiple fronts to regulate - and ultimately ban - PFAS and hold manufacturers accountable for cleaning up their pollution." This webinar, part of Food & Water Watch's "Livable Future LIVE" monthly virtual event series, provided information about "how, together, we can protect public health from toxic PFAS chemicals." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27k7Tki5xsU>.

NJDEP Salem County EJ Community Engagement Session - Video of Session

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) held an EJ Community Engagement Session in Salem County. It provided residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet DEP Commissioner LaTourette and EPA Region 2 Administrator Garcia and discuss environmental justice issues in Salem 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=mXLtPcZ5miw>.

"Bioenergy/Biofuels as a Renewable Energy Source in New Jersey" - Video of Webinar

As part of Rutgers' "Earth Day Every Day" webinar series, Dr. Serpil Guran, Director of the Rutgers EcoComplex, discussed "renewable energy resources such as solar, wind and offshore wind [which] play an important role in mitigating climate change. Biomass also has long been considered as a renewable energy source. However, attention needs to be paid on which biomass resources may provide New Jersey needed carbon reduction and climate change mitigation benefits." Dr. Guran covered available biomass types and suitable technologies to convert them into renewable energy and achieve a circular carbon economy in NJ. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMOsVYuAYbM>.

WE ACT's EPA Region 2 Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center Introductory Webinar - Video of Webinar

"Do you want to learn how to access and pursue environmental justice funding opportunities, ranging from federal environmental health grants to state workforce development programs and private foundation grants? Watch this webinar (sound starts at minute 4:26) and learn about our new Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC), which will serve EPA Region 2. The TCTAC will provide free training and other assistance to build capacity for

navigating federal grant application systems, writing strong grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding. This video begins with an overview of the program, including insight from EPA Region 2 Regional Administrator Lisa Garcia, and includes all the Q&A discussions." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1MfqPbAIHk&t=250s>; the presentation slides are available here: <https://www.weact.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/TCTAC-Launch-Presentation.pdf>; and additional information, including how to request technical assistance, is available here: <https://www.weact.org/tctac/>.

Delaware River Watershed Forum - Videos of Plenary Sessions

Videos are available of plenary sessions of the 11th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum. "The Forum kicked off with an opening plenary featuring Cathy Libertz, the Water Division Director of EPA Region 3. Her insights into EPA activities related to the Delaware River set the stage for riveting discussions on historic levels of federal funding, regulatory initiatives, and the art of collaborative conservation.... The second day opened with a ceremony led by Dennis Coker, Principal Chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, grounding the event in the rich cultural and historical tapestry of the region. The closing plenary featured dynamic discussions led by the William Penn Foundation's staff on their Strategic Planning. The US Water Alliance followed with a discussion on Leveraging Local Water Partnerships for an Equitable, One Water Future." The lunchtime remarks on the first day featured the president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). The videos are available here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1q-v3HR6udj_mdw7p3euGm-znxdJ0UzIn.

"The Earth Bill - The Political & Policy Solution to the Climate Crisis" - Video of Webinar

In this webinar sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), J. Todd Fernandez, Esq., founder and

executive director of Climate Crisis Policy and The Earth Bill Network, described "a new flagship bill in Congress to stop our climate pollution this decade as science urges, designed to unite a movement powerful enough to break the power of Big Ag & Big Oil in Congress. This is an all-hand[s]-on-deck moment that will only work if we unite as one with a singular intention, powered by each of us taking action individually, toward one shared demand: The Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution by 2030 (H.R. 598), aka The Earth Bill." The video is available here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3gF_umUjuY.

"In the Vault: The Roles of Public Green Banks in the Transition to Net-zero Emissions" - Case Studies of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States
- Video of Webinar

This webinar, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," was presented by Chell Lyons, Sir Roland Wilson PhD Scholar at Australian National University. "Decarbonizing the global economy requires a significant increase in funding for low-carbon, climate-resilient infrastructure. It is widely recognized that current levels of investment are insufficient, and need to scale up rapidly to meet the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement. Green Banks, a relatively new form of public financial institution, were developed to address this issue by accelerating investment and 'crowding in' private finance." This presentation addressed the investment governance and evaluation processes of four Green Banks; Australia's Clean Energy Finance Corporation, New Zealand Green Investment Finance, the New York Green Bank and the Montgomery County Green Bank. It concluded with "lessons for other public financial institutions seeking to leverage private finance in the investment transition to net zero emissions." The video is available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qc1LK9h4PU>.

"Understanding the Potential of Carbon-Negative Hydrogen" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, presented by the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University's School of

International and Public Affairs (SIPA), included "an international panel of diverse stakeholders immersed in carbon-negative hydrogen initiatives.... [in] an in-depth conversation regarding the potential and challenges associated with carbon-negative hydrogen as a transformative element within the global energy transition, including its production methodologies, carbon footprint, cost implications, practical applications, and the relevant policy landscape." The video is available here:
<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/understanding-the-potential-of-carbon-negative-hydrogen/>.

"Bridging the Divide: Making Action on the Energy Transition a Reality"
- Video of Webinar

The Center on Global Energy Policy and Institute of Global Politics at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) presented this moderated, in-depth discussion and Q&A with leading climate activists, scholars, and policymakers. "With a pivotal COP coming up later this year in the UAE, it is important to take stock of where we are in the energy transition, and examine the disparity between our climate ambitions and the prevailing reality of the world's energy needs." In this discussion, the panel looked at "strategies for hastening this energy shift and advancing climate policy action, while discussing the roles of effective communication, policy, research, and social mobilization.... [and] pragmatic opportunities to enhance ambition on climate and energy action during this critical window of time for accelerated action on mitigation." The video is available here:
<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/bridging-the-divide-making-action-on-the-energy-transition-a-reality/>.

"Balancing Lithium Production, Investment, and Policies for a Sustainable Energy Transition"
- Video of Webinar

This webinar presented by the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University's School of International Public Affairs (SIPA) and the Columbia Electrochemical Energy Center (CEEC)

featured "influential figures across the battery supply chain, environmental groups, civil society stakeholders, and analytical experts" who addressed the question "How should we ensure a secure, sufficient, and sustainable lithium supply?" The discussion encompassed "multifaceted aspects, including production, investment, and regulation, which require a collective effort from diverse stakeholders" with the goal of fostering "a comprehensive and well-rounded conversation that considers tradeoffs from multiple perspectives by bringing together key players from various sectors to encourage an inclusive and open dialogue that delves into the complexities and challenges of lithium supply and its impact on the energy transition." The video is available here:

<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/balancing-lithium-production-investment-and-policies-for-a-sustainable-energy-transition/>.

"Artificial Intelligence for Energy: AI & Energy Technology Discovery" **- Video of Webinar**

The Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) held a discussion on how the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the energy sector can advance the discovery of new technologies. "Historically, researchers have developed technologies by estimating which materials and designs were potentially the most promising from previous laboratory testing and advancing those to the laboratory experimentation stage.... Today, scientific discovery of new technologies can be significantly accelerated by the use of AI and high-performance computers.... [as] successfully used by the U.S. National Laboratories in the development of COVID-19 vaccines and therapies, which significantly reduced the time and risk of developing those drugs." The webinar featured Rick L. Stevens, Associate Laboratory Director for Computing, Environment, and Life Sciences, Argonne National Laboratory. The video is available here:

<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/artificial-intelligence-for-energy-ai-energy-technology-discovery/>.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

[covering 10/27/2023 – 11/26/2023]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$2 Billion to Fund Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants as Part of Investing in America Agenda

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Community Change Grants program will be funded with \$2 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Act funds, and will support place-based, community-driven projects designed to be responsive to community and stakeholder input. The program will focus on clean energy, climate resilience, and building capacity for communities to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges. These grants "are the single largest investment in environmental justice going directly to communities in history, and will advance collaborative efforts to achieve a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future for all." Additional information is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yybr8c2u>. The entities eligible to apply are: a partnership between two community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs), or between a CBO and a Federally-Recognized Tribe; a local government; or an institution of higher education. Technical assistance related to the grants will also be available (see information here:

<https://tinyurl.com/swkt63ep>). The activities to be performed under the grants are expected to fall under the following categories:

- Climate resiliency and adaptation.
- Mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events.
- Community-led air and other (including water and waste) pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation.
- Investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure.
- Workforce development that supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.

- Reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution.
- Facilitating the engagement of disadvantaged communities in state and federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes.

Applications may be submitted until 11/21/2024, and EPA will review applications on a rolling basis.

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-2-billion-fund-environmental-and-climate-justice>

Empowering Communities: A Vision for Environmental Justice in Paterson, New Jersey

While not a news story per se, this interview (in participation with **EJTF partner** Kim Gaddy, Clean Water Action's National Environmental Justice Director) of two Paterson community organizers who are addressing environmental justice describes some of the key factors they have found that facilitate working with communities.

<https://cleanwater.org/2023/11/04/empowering-communities-vision-environmental-justice-paterson-new-jersey>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

NJ Goes Ahead With Ban on Sale of New Gas-Powered Vehicles, Begins in 2035

Gov. Murphy has signed off on the Advanced Clean Cars II rule, and it has been filed to be published in the NJ Register on 12/18/2023, which is when it will become effective. The rule requires that 43% of the annual production volume of passenger cars and light-duty trucks manufactured in 2027 must be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). The percentage increases each year, peaking at 100 percent in 2035 and thereafter. The rule also includes more stringent multi-pollutant exhaust emission standards that manufacturers of internal combustion engine passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty vehicles must meet. (Gov. Murphy's press release announcing filing of the rule, which also gives the history of EV policies in NJ and provides positive reactions to this rule, is available here: <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/app>

[roved/20231121a.shtml](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/20231121a.shtml) and a 4-minute news video of reactions from proponents and opponents of the rule is available here:

[https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/njs-new-electric-car-requirement-like-it-or-not/.](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/njs-new-electric-car-requirement-like-it-or-not/))

UUFANJ/EJTF submitted comments on the rule (available here: https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/AACII_Comments2mike.ppt) that expressed strong support for it and also addressed many of the arguments used by its opponents.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/environmentalists-hail-nj-ban-sale-gas-powered-vehicles-starting-2035/>



Environmentalists Fault NJ Transit for Ordering 750 New Diesel Buses

This 4-minute news video focuses on a rally held in Camden by clean-energy advocates to protest the purchase by NJ Transit of 750 diesel-powered buses, and no additional electric buses. To date, NJ Transit has only purchased eight electric buses despite the NJ law that has a goal of half the fleet being electric by 2026.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/environmentalists-fault-nj-transit-for-ordering-750-new-diesel-buses/>

NJ Transit to Purchase Battery Electric Vans to Support Community Transportation for Local Providers

For the first time, the NJ Transit Board of Directors has approved the purchase of 19 federally-funded battery electric vans for Local and Community-based transportation programs. A portion of the vans will be distributed to community-based services in Essex, Middlesex and Somerset counties as well as to NJ Transit's

Access Link service. Eight of the vans will be utilized in a future pilot program of an on-demand micro transit shuttle service along the Route 9 corridor in Monmouth County. The vans will include lifts for transportation for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

<https://www.njtransit.com/press-releases/nj-transit-purchase-battery-electric-vans-support-community-transportation-local>

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

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has announced that "Year Four of the popular Charge Up New Jersey Program, its electric vehicle (EV) incentive initiative, is expected to fully commit all funds by Tuesday November 21, 2023. In June 2023, there were over 123,000 EVs on New Jersey roadways, and EV purchases constituted twelve percent of all new car sales for the year. Due to the enthusiastic response to the Charge Up Program, which launched point-of-sale incentives at showrooms and dealerships for FY24 beginning on July 12, 2023, Year Four of the Program will pause on November 21 at 9:00 p.m. EST. By the close of the Program, an estimated \$30 million will have been disbursed this year to support the purchase or lease of over 12,000 new EVs by New Jersey residents."

<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2023/approved/20231120.html>

LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

New Jersey's Plan to Reduce Food Waste by a Dramatic 50 Percent

According to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website, "The Food Waste Reduction Act.... was signed into law on July 21, 2017, establishing a goal of reducing the amount of food waste generated annually by 50% by the year 2030, based on the amount of food waste generated in 2017 (50x30 Goal). This law tasked the DEP with developing a plan that will guide the state to achieve the reduction goal. The Food Waste Reduction Plan (available here:

https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/food-waste/food_waste_reduction_plan.pdf) quantifies the amount of food waste generated in New Jersey based on available data, establishes the 50x30 Goal in accordance with the law, and proposes short and long-term actions that the DEP intends to take to achieve this goal." Actions are also grouped by sector, such as "Residential," and are summarized on the DEP Food Waste website, available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/food-waste/>. NJ is estimated to generate 1.8 million tons of food waste annually.

<https://enviropolitics.com/new-jerseys-plan-to-reduce-food-waste-by-a-dramatic-50-percent/>

Governor Murphy Commits Over \$5.5M to Strengthen Food Access in Atlantic City

Atlantic City is the second-worst Food Desert Community (after Camden), as ranked by the NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), and the NJEDA "will commit over \$5.5 million in funding to support a multi-faceted approach to immediately expand access to fresh, healthy grocery shopping options for Atlantic City residents." A portion of the funding will allow the NJ Department of Health (DOH) to expand their Healthy Corner Store Initiative, which brings healthy food and beverage choices to communities (see article on [p. 14](#)). Pilot programs will include mobile grocery stores, a weekly market and educational event, cooking demonstrations and classes, and assistance with online ordering.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20231114a.shtm>

Working Toward Food Equity in Newark

This article describes the work of the "Urban Agriculture Cooperative" (UAC) in Newark, NJ. According to their website (available here: <https://www.urbanagriculturecooperative.org>) "UAC exists to enhance the localized food system between underserved local food growers and consumers.... [as] part of the "connective tissue" between farmers, institutions and families. " UAC services include: helping urban and small/medium farms coordinate sales through their food hub; curating, packing, and delivering "farms to families" boxes to food pantries,

schools, non-profits, and others, and brokering wholesale sales to a variety of them; assisting farmers' markets with technical assistance, staffing and coordination; training and employing students and young adults to become part of the local food system; and consulting on special projects that increase local food economic development.

<https://srhub.org/2023/09/16/working-toward-food-equity-in-newark/>



NJ Health Department Funding Expansion of Healthy Corner Store Initiative

"The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is expanding the Healthy Corner Store Initiative, which is aimed at increasing the availability and awareness of nutritious food and beverage options in neighborhood corner stores in underserved communities, particularly benefiting patrons eligible for SNAP and WIC benefits. The Department is making \$1.75 million available across stores statewide and is investing \$250,000 towards stores in Atlantic City, which is currently a leading food desert (see article on [p. 13](#)).... The expansion is expected to benefit about 150 stores, and will provide funding for items such as refrigeration and freezers to help with stocking fresh food items as well as educational opportunities for store owners." The program aims to prioritize food deserts, and small stores and bodegas are encouraged to apply for the funding.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20231114b.shtml>

Opinion: Additional Protections Needed for NJ's Preserved Farmland

In this piece Jim Waltman, executive director of The Watershed Institute, lauds NJ's farmland preservation program but notes that these farms continue to be under development pressures that result in soil disturbance that destroy the preserved soil. He describes new rules proposed by NJ that define what activities on preserved farmland constitute soil disturbance, and establish limits for them. An email address to register support for the proposed rules and a link for additional information are provided.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/op-ed-nj-needs-preserved-farmland-soil-protection-standards-enacted/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)

Solar Landscape Announces Plans to Hire 100+ New Employees in 2024

Asbury Park, NJ-based Solar Landscape, which is the nation's leading community solar provider to lower-income households, has announced it plans to hire over 100 new employees in 2024. "The expansion will double its operations next year – with a goal of building 100 megawatts (MW) of commercial rooftop solar and serving 20,000 new community solar subscribers – over half that will be lower-income households." Founded in Asbury Park, NJ in 2012, the company now has 150 employees across the country.

<https://solarlandscape.com/news/solar-landscape-announces-plans-to-hire-100-new-employees-in-2024/>

OFFSHORE WIND

GENERAL

Biden-Harris Administration Approves Sixth Offshore Wind Project

On 11/21/2023, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) announced approval of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the construction and operation of the Empire Wind project (Empire

Wind 1 and Empire Wind 2) offshore of NJ and NY. The lease area is located about 17 nautical miles east of Long Branch, NJ and 12 nautical miles south of Long Island, NY. These projects would have a total capacity of 2,076 megawatts of clean, renewable energy that it is estimated could power more than 700,000 homes, and would support over 830 jobs each year during the construction phase and about 300 jobs annually during the operations phase. This ROD approval represents the final step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process for the Empire Wind Construction and Operations Plan (COP). The lessee must still receive COP approval, and other required Federal and state authorizations, and cannot begin any construction (easement included) until after review of the Facility Design Report and Fabrication and Installation Report (FDR/FIR) in the COP.

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/biden-harris-administration-approves-sixth-offshore-wind-project>

Despite Loss of 2 Major Projects, New Jersey Is Moving Forward With Its Offshore Wind Power Goals

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has issued an Order (available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/boardorders/2023/20231117/8G%20ORDER%20PBI%20Solicitation.pdf>) that

opens a solicitation for bids for a transmission facility into which several offshore wind projects can plug, which is key to get the power from offshore wind turbines into the onshore electrical grid. Bids are to be submitted for "an open-access transmission facility, located either in the Atlantic Ocean or onshore, used to facilitate the collection of offshore wind energy or its delivery to the electric transmission system" and it would include structures and pipes, which would be installed in a single construction effort, capable of servicing multiple offshore wind farms. According to the BPU, installing the project all at once "would minimize environmental and community impacts by resulting in a single shore crossing."

<https://whyy.org/articles/new-jersey-offshore-wind-power-goals/>



OCEAN WIND 1 PROJECT

Offshore Developer Cancels 2 NJ Wind Farms. Murphy Slams Decision

This article describes the decision by Ørsted to abandon its two NJ offshore wind projects - Ocean Wind 1 and Ocean Wind 2, saying it had "no choice" other than to withdraw amid rising interest rates, inflation and supply-chain issues. The article also describes the impacts on NJ of the announcement, Gov. Murphy's reaction to it, and his vow to pursue any legal remedies necessary for NJ to receive funds from a \$300 million guarantee that he states Ørsted made to NJ.

Also see the box on p. 16 for related news. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/10/danish-developer-cancels-2-nj-offshore-wind-projects-gov-phil-murphy-slams-decision/>

Law Would Bolster NJ Commitment to Clean-Energy Goals

The NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee held a hearing on a bill (S2978/A4658) that would codify an executive order from Gov. Murphy signed earlier this year requiring the transition to 100% clean electricity by 2035. If the targets are not put into law, the executive order could be modified or rescinded by a subsequent administration. Environmentalists are strongly in favor of such a law, but it has been lobbied against by industry representatives. Environmental advocates held a rally (see [pp. 1 and 2](#)) the same day as the hearing, asking the legislature to support "real clean energy." (A 4-minute video of the rally and of testimony at the hearing are available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/vote-on-major-clean-energy-bill-is-put-off/>.) Although environmental advocates strongly support the bill, at the hearing representatives of environmental justice groups asked that it be amended in ways that would close some loopholes related to effects on overburdened communities. (A summary is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/nj-clean-energy-legislation-no-vote-means-lame-duck-action-less-likely/>.) After the 5-hour hearing, the Committee did not vote on the bill, but a vote is expected on 12/18/2023, after some amendments are made. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/nj-lawmakers-poised-clean-energy-legislation-goals/>

Opponents Dispute New Analysis of NJ Turnpike Expansion Project

This 4-minute news video describes opposition to the planned NJ Turnpike extension to the Holland Tunnel, for which a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the portion from interchanges 14 to 14A and the Newark Bay Bridge replacement was just released by the NJ Turnpike Authority (summary available here: <https://www.njta.com/media/7715/summary-of-eis-findings.pdf>). The DEIS found no significant harm would be done.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/opponents-dispute-new-analysis-of-nj-turnpike-expansion-project/>

NEWS RELATED TO ØRSTED'S CANCELATION OF OCEAN WIND 1 & 2

- **Offshore Wind Company Pulls Out of New Jersey Projects, a Setback to Biden's Green Agenda**
<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/31/offshore-wind-new-jersey-orsted-00124661>
- **Democrats Try to Save Face — And Hold Onto Cash — After Canceled New Jersey Wind Projects**
<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/11/02/democrats-try-to-save-face-and-hold-onto-cash-after-canceled-new-jersey-wind-projects-00124906>
- **Ship Shortage Dealt Death Blow to Ørsted's NJ Offshore Wind Hopes**
<https://uk.sports.yahoo.com/news/ship-shortage-dealt-death-blow-205159775.html>
- **What Happens to NJ's Plans for Offshore Wind After Ørsted?**
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/orsted-clean-ocean-action-gov-phil-murphy-special-initiative-for-offshore-wind-new-jersey-solar-coalition-net-zero-emissions-glenrock-associates-jersey-shore-senate-republican-leader-anthony-bucco-en/>
- **Supporters Still Bullish on NJ Offshore Wind Despite Ørsted Exit** (5-minute news video)
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/supporters-still-bullish-on-nj-offshore-wind-despite-orsted-exit/>
- **Ørsted Wants to Avoid Paying \$300M Guarantee to NJ** (1-1/2-minute news video)
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/orsted-wants-to-avoid-paying-300m-guarantee-to-nj/>
- **Letter Ørsted sent NJBPU "withdrawing" from the deal:**
<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/f/?id=0000018b-9217-deac-a19b-f29f22b60000>
- **The "Parent Company Guarantee" with language (some redacted) that could possibly provide Orsted a route to avoid paying NJ:**
<https://static.politico.com/93/4c/721db4814e558b09709707dc41bb/10-4-2023-orsted-as-parent-company-guaranty-signed->

NJEDA Board Approves Program Aimed to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Board of Directors approved "the creation of a new pilot program that will provide grants to commercial building owners and tenants undertaking retrofit construction projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing commercial buildings. The \$15 million NJ Cool program will start as a pilot for projects in Atlantic City, Edison, and Newark." The pilot program will be funded by Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) proceeds.

<https://www.njeda.gov/njeda-board-approves-program-aimed-to-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions/>

Murphy Administration Unveils Report Highlighting State Government Climate Resilience Accomplishments

"The Murphy Administration's Interagency Council on Climate Resilience has released a Two-Year Anniversary Accomplishments Report highlighting New Jersey state agencies' climate resilience success stories... ranging from financial and tax implications of mitigation strategies to new flood protection measures for inland communities.... The Climate Change Resilience Strategy (available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/climatechange/resilience/resilience-strategy/>), developed collaboratively across 17 agencies... and published in October 2021, provided a policy framework to guide state government efforts to protect vulnerable communities, infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment from the impacts of climate change."

https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23_0061.htm.

Is New Jersey Moving Too Fast on Electrification? Doubts Abound

This article describes NJ's electrification goals and the fears by some that the goals may not be realistic to reach within the currently stated timeframes.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/is-nj-moving-too-fast-on-electrification/>

How Does Climate Change Threaten Where You Live? A Regional Review

The Congressionally-mandated National Climate Assessment (NCA) is released periodically by the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), which coordinates a team of 800 scientists in 14 federal agencies. The Fifth NCA has been published (a detailed overview with graphics is available here: <https://nca2023.globalchange.gov>), and it deals with effects of climate change that are already occurring as well as predictions of future climate change effects. Data is broken out by region (e.g., the Northeast) and also by individual states.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/fifth-national-climate-assessment-takeaways-northeast-southeast-us-caribbean/>

Many Coastal Homeowners Lack Flood Insurance Despite Rising Seas, Report Says

The recently-released Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA) (see previous article) includes a chapter on the economic impacts of climate change and an analysis of methods being used to pay for climate action. One of these is flood insurance, which is only carried by 12% - 14% of homeowners. This article focuses on financial risks to NJ, and includes a video interview on the NCA with NJ State Climatologist David Robinson.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/despiterising-seas-many-coastal-homeowners-not-covered-floods-nj-northeast-vulnerable/>

Climate Change Issues Force Areas to Consider if People Shouldn't Live There Anymore

This article describes the home buyout process in NJ ("Blue Acres") that can enable people to move from flooded homes, focusing on one family's experience after the remnants of Hurricane Ida washed their home off of its foundation. It also describes Woodbridge NJ's extensive use of the program.

<https://www.npr.org/2023/11/10/1212068825/climate-changes-forces-areas-to-consider-if-people-shouldnt-live-there-anymore>

City of Hoboken Conducts Climate Stocktake, "Mini-COP" to Further Climate Action

"The City of Hoboken completed its first Climate Stocktake & 'mini-COP' (climate-related Conference of the Parties), an inclusive and collaborative event that brought together nearly 50 stakeholders, to evaluate the City's climate action and sustainability initiatives. This crucial assessment will be used to identify gaps and update the City's Climate Action Plan, originally drafted in 2019, to help accelerate efforts to combat climate change."

<https://www.hobokennj.gov/news/city-of-hoboken-conducts-climate-stocktake-mini-cop-to-further-climate-action>



Why Honolulu's Big Oil Lawsuit "Is Now the Most Important Climate Case in the United States"

"A climate lawsuit filed by the City and County of Honolulu that could make oil and gas majors pay billions of dollars in damages for deceiving the public about their products' role in climate change is now positioned to be the first of its kind to go to trial, following a ruling from the Hawai'i Supreme Court. Legal experts say that Honolulu's case could set a precedent for similar climate lawsuits filed by dozens of U.S. communities and make history as the first time fossil fuel companies would have to face the evidence of a decades-long industry campaign of climate deception in court." (One such lawsuit is that filed on behalf of NJ residents in 2022 by NJ Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin, the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) against five oil

and gas companies and a petroleum trade association, alleging they knowingly made false claims to deceive the public about the existence of climate change and the degree to which their fossil fuel products have been exacerbating anthropogenic global warming.) In a unanimous opinion, the Hawai'i Supreme Court rejected the companies' argument that the lawsuit seeks to regulate emissions or interstate commerce, powers reserved for the federal government. It said the case instead focused on allegedly misleading statements the companies made, which led to climate change-caused property and infrastructure damage. "This case concerns torts committed in Hawaii that caused alleged injuries in Hawaii," Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald wrote for the court. "We decline to unduly limit Hawaii's ability to use its police powers to protect its citizens from alleged deceptive marketing."

<https://www.exxonknews.org/p/why-honolulu-big-oil-lawsuit-is>

Getting Transportation Right: Ranking the States in Light of New Federal Funding

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has issued a report "Getting Transportation Right: Ranking the States in Light of New Federal Funding" (available here:

<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/state-transportation-ranking-federal-funding-report.pdf>). In light of new historic levels of

available federal funding for infrastructure projects, the NRDC has "evaluated all 50 states to gauge the general policy and spending context that will influence and direct this federal funding, with the aim of identifying the degree to which states have adopted policies and directed dollars toward improving equity, public health, and climate outcomes." According to the metrics used in this analysis, NJ is in the top 10 (#8) of states doing the most to improve equity and climate outcomes from the transportation sector.

According to the NRDC, "The influx of federal dollars from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act represents a powerful opportunity to change the trajectory of the transportation sector's impacts on both equity and climate change."

<https://www.nrdc.org/resources/getting-transportation-right-ranking-states-light-new-federal-funding>

FOREST HEALTH

New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Partners Plant Trees in East Trenton

"The New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJ Conservation) together with the NJ Tree Foundation, and the City of Trenton led a shade tree planting of 46 trees at the intersection of North Clinton and North Olden Avenues in the City. The trees were planted near the East Trenton Community Center and home to many weekend pop-up shops. The trees will provide many environmental and quality of life benefits in the neighborhood."

https://www.njconservation.org/press_release/new-jersey-conservation-foundation-and-partners-plant-trees-in-east-trenton/

Burlington County and Bridge Commission Help Offset Carbon Footprint with Tree Planting Initiative

Besides being charged with providing Burlington County with safe, accessible, and affordable bridges, roads, and facilities, the Burlington County Bridge Commission undertakes programs such as its Tree Planting Initiative, which just completed its second year and has planted over 200 trees in Burlington County. The Commission also partners with the Burlington County Parks System to jointly manage the Palmyra Cove Nature Center, a 250-acre preserve along the Delaware River, and in 2021 the Commission opened a community garden at the park.

<http://co.burlington.nj.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2139>

Madison, NJ Rotary's 100 Trees Projects Completes First Phase

Madison, NJ's Shade Tree Management Board had identified a need for Madison to replenish its tree canopy, and the Rotary Club of Madison has undertaken a "100 Trees for 100 Years" project to address this need and to commemorate their 100th year. (Additional information about the project, including descriptions of the tree species being planted, is available here:

<https://www.madisonrotarynj.org/stories/madison-rotary-100-years-100-trees>.) The first phase of the

project has been completed, with 52 trees planted.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/madison-s-rotary-s-100-trees-projects-completes-first-phase/ar-AA1jOzNo>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

Feds Help 10 NJ Towns Replace Toxic Lead Service Lines

This 4-1/2-minute news video describes the federal assistance just made available under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators" program, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (additional information is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-partnership-10-new-jersey-communities-accelerate>). Forty communities in four states, including ten communities in NJ, will partner with EPA to accelerate lead service line projects by supporting the development of: community engagement plans; Lead Service Line (LSL) inventories; Lead Service Line replacement plans; and/or funding applications that help communities access funding for LSL replacement projects.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/feds-help-10-nj-towns-replace-toxic-lead-service-lines/>

NJ Will Save Much More Than It Spends Replacing Lead Pipes: Study

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has issued a report "Getting the Lead Out: Removing Lead Pipes Would Yield Hundreds of Billions of Dollars in Health Benefits" (available here: <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/getting-lead-out-health-benefits-ib.pdf>). Even though NJ estimates that replacing all the lead service lines may cost \$2.65 billion over the next decade, this study estimates that NJ will avoid close to \$30 billion in health costs by replacing all of the lines.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/newarknj/nj-will-save-much-more-it-spends-replacing-lead-pipes-study>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

NJ Utilities Say Spend \$1B More for Energy Efficiency

Three NJ utilities filed proposals with the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) for electric grid infrastructure upgrades including the use of smart devices. The proposals ask for the BPU's approval to raise rates for businesses and residential customers. Additional filings for new proposed energy efficiency programs are expected from all of NJ's gas and electric utilities on 12/1/2023.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/nj-utilities-propose-1-billion-infrastructure-upgrades-energy-efficiency/>

EDUCATIONAL and YOUTH-RELATED

Students from Highlands' M.A.S.T. Earn 1st Place in Green Ambassador Program Sustainability Challenge

For several years, the nonprofit Sustainable Jersey City and the Asbury-based solar developer Solar Landscape have sponsored a Green Ambassador program for high school students, culminating in a Sustainability Challenge for which scholarships are awarded. This year, 360 students nationwide enrolled in the program. The winners of the Sustainability Challenge were

three students from the Marine Academy of Science & Technology in Highlands, NJ who designed a remote-controlled drone for taking water samples.

<https://www.roi-nj.com/2023/10/31/industry/energy-utilities/students-from-highlands-m-a-s-t-earn-1st-place-in-green-ambassador-program-sustainability-challenge/>

OTHER

New Head of NJ School of Conservation Proves You Can Go Home Again

Kerry Kirk Pflugh, president of the Friends of the NJ School of Conservation, will become the executive director of the facility on 12/1/2023. Her father, Dr. John J. Kirk, was the longest-serving executive director of the school, from 1963 to 2001, and Kerry Pflugh says that she grew up with the forest at the school as her playground. (A history of the school is available here: <https://friendsofnjsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SOC-History.pdf>.) Pflugh has stated, "I want the school to be the gold standard for which all environmental centers aspire."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/10/nj-school-of-conservation-new-head-kelly-pflugh-sussex-county-stokes-state-forest/>

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.**

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. 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 NJ until there are rules in place to achieve 100% clean energy goals.

**UU FaithAction NJ - Environmental Justice Task Force - Peggy Middaugh, Chair
Visit <https://uufaithaction.org/environment/> for links and resources, and to join the EJTF**
