



**SAVE THE DATE! UUFANJ GALA
RESCHEDULED TO 2/10/2024 (see [p. 9](#))**

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



• Although the scheduled Rally in Trenton didn't take place last month, at the last EJTF Zoom meeting **EJTF member Barbara Diamantopoulos**, of the Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC), shared the eye-catching poster she had made for it. The "Dirty Gas" bill is by no means off the table, and a **Trenton Lobby Day is now planned for 1/4/2024** (see [p. 5](#)).

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

On a recent Sunday morning, the Green Earth Ministry (GEM) of the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) led a Faith Formation Station that stimulated the children to create a vision of best places to live, work and play; see [p. 2](#) for more, including the vision the children drew! (That's **EJTF member Jo Sippie-Gora**, waving.)



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EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

• Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) (continued)

Pictured at right are the children after being led by the MUUF Green Earth Ministry (GEM) at a Faith Formation Station that stimulated them to create a vision of best places to live, work and play (see [p. 1](#)). After watching an introductory video that introduced basic characteristics of urban, suburban and rural types of communities, the 7- to 13-year-olds were invited to draw and talk about the kinds of neighborhoods they currently live in, and how they relate to and depend on the natural world. Afterward, they worked in small groups to imagine and draw their "dream" community, one that could meet everyone's needs.



In November, the MUUF Green Earth Ministry (GEM) sponsored a free, "Earn Incentives While Cutting Your Utility Bills and Combating Climate Change" program presented by the Morristown chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby (see photo at left). This program explained the financial incentives available for weatherizing and electrifying your home. Attendees learned how to cut their utility bills, reduce the amount of air pollution their homes produce, and receive tax credits and rebates through the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for doing that. This program will be repeated on a Sunday in mid-February - watch this space!

- SOME ITEMS OF INTEREST -

- **Applications are being accepted for:**

- **Climate Justice Fellows Program:** The Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH) is now accepting applications for their 2024 Climate Justice Fellows Program, designed specifically for individuals with beginner to intermediate levels of climate and environmental justice knowledge. "Through this opportunity, participants can deepen their understanding of environmental and climate issues while developing skills to empower their communities. Fellows will gain foundational knowledge on local Environmental and Climate Justice challenges, become community stakeholders, engage in meaningful interactions with technical experts, and network with community leaders, faculty mentors, and federal partners." Applications can be submitted here: <http://tinyurl.com/55zju57m>; for additional information see: <http://tinyurl.com/4zvp5mcb>.

- **Rutgers Environmental Stewards Program:** The Rutgers Environmental Stewards program is designed to introduce non-scientists to the science behind important environmental issues and the impacts of climate change affecting NJ. Stewards then give back to their own communities by helping to tackle local environmental problems. Additional information and the registration link are available here: <https://envirostewards.rutgers.edu/program-overview/annual-class/>.

- The **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)**, a "nonprofit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights together with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates," published a report for COP28 about the impact of climate on the most vulnerable populations, "**Standing in Solidarity with Those on the Front Lines of the Climate Crisis: A Loss and Damage Package for COP28**" (available here: <http://tinyurl.com/mdkvcsfj>). Information from the report was featured on the "**Just Have a Think**" YouTube video about Cop28, available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9I2ZDYFTMg>. "Just Have a Think" is a (slightly irreverent) YouTube channel that deals with issues related to climate change.

- The **NJ Urban & Community Forestry Program (NJUCF)** has provided the following links that may be of interest: "Explainer - 5 reasons trees are a solution to the climate crisis" (available here: <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/84571/explainer-five-reasons-why-trees-are-a-solution-to-the-climate-crisis>); and Urban Forest Management Handbook (available here: <https://ffgs.ifas.ufl.edu/urbanforestmanagementbook/>). The NJUCF program, under the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), "is where biotic and abiotic resources connect to increase the function of our urban, human-occupied ecosystems"; their website is here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/urbanandcommunity/>.

- **Alternative Fueling Station Locator (& route tool)** - The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Program has an interactive tool (accessible from this page, under "Station Locator": <https://afdc.energy.gov>) to find available, publicly accessible alternative fueling stations in the United States and Canada. The type of fuel (e.g., electric) and area may be chosen; the "fuel corridors" tool will also show "alternative fuel corridors" designated by the Federal Highway Administration and will measure the distance between fueling stations that meet the criteria for corridors.

- **Opposition to Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub (MACH2)** - MACH2 has been slated to receive \$750 million as part of the federal \$7 billion hydrogen hub program. It would impact southern NJ, southeastern PA, and Delaware. Besides misdirecting funding that is needed for truly renewable energy sources, this program has a myriad of issues that are described here: <https://delawareriverkeeper.org/ongoing-issues/mid-atlantic-hydrogen-hub> and in a **letter to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) you can read and sign** here: <https://bit.ly/4agSQjn>.

FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid

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

JANUARY 2024 (with hyperlinks to details on the following pages)						
<i>Sun.</i>	<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
	1	2	3	4 "Stop the Unaffordable Dirty Gas Bill and Lobby for Clean Energy": TRENTON LOBBY DAY - 10:00 a.m.	5 Comments Due: Design of NJBPU Federal Inflation Reduction Act HOMES & HEEHR Programs	6
7	8	9	10	11 ANJEE Winter Conference Research Symposium - 8:00 a.m.	12 New Jersey Academic Alliance for Offshore Wind Energy Symposium - 9:00 a.m. <hr/> ANJEE Winter Conference - 7:30 a.m.	13
14	15	16	17 "Artificial Intelligence for Climate Change Mitigation" - 12:00 p.m.	18 "IRA Creates Highly Energy Efficient Home" - 7:00 p.m. <hr/> "Centering Justice: Conversation with Environmental Justice Leaders" - 7:00 p.m.	19	20
21	22	23 "Recalibrating Our Economic Compass: Embracing Circularity for a Healthy Planet" - 11:15 a.m. <hr/> NJADAPT: New Tools and Critical Enhancements - 1:00 p.m. <hr/> "The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration" - 7:00 p.m. <hr/> "Reflections on the Outcomes of COP28" - 7:00 p.m.	24 BOEM New York and New Jersey Quarterly Environmental Justice Forum (EJF) - 10:30 a.m.	25 "Reimagining with Energy Democracy" - 7:00 p.m.	26 Rutgers-Newark Offshore Wind Energy Community Engagement Event - 9:00 a.m.	27 NOFA NJ 34th Annual Winter Conference - 8:00 a.m.
28	29	30 Liberty State Park – Design Task Force Public Meeting - 6:00 p.m.	31	<u>SAVE THE DATE: UUFANJ GALA - 2/10/2024</u>		

FUTURE EVENTS

"Stop the Unaffordable Dirty Gas Bill and Lobby for Clean Energy": TRENTON LOBBY DAY 1/4/2024, 10:00 a.m. Trenton, NJ - In-person

The lobbying event originally planned for 12/18/2024 that was washed out by torrential storms has been rescheduled for 1/4/2024. A bill (A577/S1366) that was temporarily stopped (see article on [p. 16](#)) may come up for a vote on 1/4/2024. It has been termed the "dirty gas bill" because it would give billions in subsidies for the fossil fuel industry to expand fossil fuel infrastructure for "renewable" natural gas (RNG), which would extend the use of natural gas while increasing both health risks and consumers' energy bills. According to EmpowerNJ (a coalition of which **EJTF is a member**), "we need to show up to stop the dirty gas bill AND to lobby for true clean energy that eliminates greenhouse gas emissions causing the climate crisis and co-pollutants that harm public health, especially in overburdened communities that have borne the brunt of pollution. We need to show legislators that we demand a just transition away from fossil fuels without relying on dirty energy schemes like trash incineration and RNG." Additional information will be provided to those who RSVP here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/save-the-date-stop-the-unaffordable-dirty-gas-bill/>.

Design of NJBPU Federal Inflation Reduction Act HOMES (Home Efficiency Rebates) and HEEHR (Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates) Programs Comments Due 1/5/2024

"On February 15, 2023, Governor Phil Murphy signed Executive Order 316 directing the State to advance the electrification of 400,000 additional residential dwelling units and 20,000 additional commercial spaces, and an additional 10 percent of residential units in low income communities to be made electrification-ready by 2030. Executive Order 316 further directs the Board [NJ Board of

Public Utilities (BPU)] to ensure that the federal HOMES [Home Efficiency Rebates] Program and the HEEHR [Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates] Program are implemented and coordinated to support buildings electrification, with a primary focus on the needs of low- and moderate-income (LMI) customers." The BPU held a 6-1/2 hour Technical Conference (video available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9ESpU4330A>)

with five panels that described aspects being considered for the programs. **Comments, in particular regarding future technical conferences and working sessions related to HOMES/HEEHR funding, are due by 5:00 p.m. on 1/5/2024.** Additional information about the design and parameters being considered for the programs, and about commenting, is available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/pdf/publicnotice/12.8.23%20HOMES%20HEEHR%20Public%20Notice%20-%20Revised%20FINAL%20V3.pdf>.

Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education (ANJEE) - 39th Annual Winter Conference

- Research Symposium - 1/11/2024, 8:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.

- Conference - 1/12/2024, 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Ewing, NJ - In-person

The Alliance for NJ Environmental Education (ANJEE) is presenting a two-day Environmental Education Research Symposium and Conference. "Network with practitioners from a variety of perspectives, learn important content and practice, and forge connections with fellow environmental advocates, educators and leaders." The Thursday Research Symposium features panels including "Voices from the Field," "Research in Climate Change Education" and "Environmental Education (EE) Empowering Communities." The Friday Conference "for formal, non-formal and higher education teachers" will include a keynote featuring Denis Coogan, Environmental Partnership Manager for Subaru of America, Inc. and a leader in zero waste programs, and four workshop strands (including

some outdoors) as follows: "Field Studies - Topics and Best Practices"; "Climate Change; Linking Research and Practice to Increase Impact"; and "Kids in Nature." Additional information, including the agenda, descriptions of workshops, and the link to register (**for non-members: \$150 for 1/11/2024; \$165 for 1/12/2024; \$280 for both**) is available here: <https://anjee.org/schedule-and-workshops.html>.

"Artificial Intelligence for Climate Change Mitigation" - Webinar
1/17/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

The Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs is presenting a discussion of how artificial intelligence (AI) can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. David Sandalow, lead author of the ICEF ("Innovation for Cool Earth Forum," a yearly forum held in Japan) "Artificial Intelligence for Climate Change Mitigation Roadmap," will explore that topic along with seven of the report's co-authors. [Note: the Artificial Intelligence for Climate Change Mitigation Roadmap is the 12th roadmap released as part of the ICEF Innovation Roadmap Project.] Additional information and the link to register, along with links to the AI Roadmap document being discussed as well as a booklet describing other ICEF Roadmap documents, are available here: <https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/artificial-intelligence-for-climate-change-mitigation/>.

"IRA Creates Highly Energy Efficient Home" - Webinar
1/18/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

This webinar, hosted by the Sierra Club NJ Chapter and NJ 50x30 Building Electrification, focuses on using Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) incentives to create a highly energy efficient home. "A homeowner discusses options with their heat pump vendors - Learn what to do, and why!" Additional information the registration link are available here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002HqtZAAS&mapLinkHref=>.

"Centering Justice: A Conversation with Environmental Justice Leaders"
1/18/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Hybrid
New York, NY - In-person & Livestreamed

At this event, "Centering Justice," Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, Senior Director for Environmental Justice at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), will join in a conversation with the event's keynote speaker, Dr. Beverley Wright, Founder and Executive Director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (the first-ever environmental justice center in the United States). This event is sponsored by the Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School, and will be moderated by the Tishman Center's co-director, Dr. Ana Baptista, who is also a Trustee of **EJTF partner** NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA). Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://event.newschool.edu/aconversationwithbeverlywright>.

"Recalibrating Our Economic Compass: Embracing Circularity for a Healthy Planet"
1/23/2024, 11:15 a.m. - 12:45 a.m.
- Webinar

The Security and Sustainability Forum (SSF) and the Routledge Taylor & Francis Group are sponsoring this webinar on the circular economy, "a model that mimics nature's cyclical patterns, offers a concrete path toward a sustainable and equitable future, ushering in an era of resource stewardship and prosperity. Circularity concepts challenge the fundamental assumptions of our 'take-make-dispose' linear economic system. The transition to a circular economy will require a fundamental change in how we design, produce, consume, and dispose of goods and services and view our planetary relations. This requires unprecedented collaboration among businesses, governments, and consumers." Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3749273513345305432>.

**"The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration" - Virtual
1/23/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

This event, part of Food & Water Watch's Livable Future LIVE monthly series, will present a conversation with Jake Bittle, author of *The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration*. The book "explores the untold story of climate migration in the United States. Through the personal stories of people experiencing climate-caused displacement, Bittle explores how climate change is impacting our lives and reshaping the geography of the United States." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://www.mobilize.us/fww/event/588384/>.

**"Reflections on the Outcomes of COP28"
1/23/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
& "Climate Action Now" App Action Party
8:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.
- Webinar**

This webinar is presented by Elders Climate Action, which says "A lot happened at COP28, was it just smoke and mirrors? We witnessed a historic global agreement to move away from fossil fuels, the creation of a Loss and Damage Fund, the first health day at COP, and the commitment from dozens of oil companies to tackle methane leaks. We'll hear from a few of our allies, including two of our Breathe Again Collaborative partners, about their first-hand experiences in Dubai. Our guests will discuss the wins and the losses, including the failure of more ambitious plans to phase out fossil fuels, unfortunately leaving room for fossil (natural) gas and false solutions like Carbon Capture and Storage (CSS). We'll look to what we can do moving forward to ensure the promises of global leaders are kept." After the webinar, there will be a 15-minute Action Party on the Climate Action Now app, which "gives individuals the ability to take planet-saving actions from their phone in seconds." The app will be described, and a number of quick actions that can be taken related to this webinar's subject will be provided. Additional information about the webinar, and a QR code to set up the app in advance, are available here:

https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc_jan24/.

**BOEM New York and New Jersey Quarterly Environmental Justice Forum (EJF)
1/24/2024, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (plus
30 minutes of optional networking)
- Webinar**

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) created the NY and NJ Offshore Wind Environmental Justice Forum (EJF) to advance meaningful engagement with environmental justice communities around the environmental review of offshore wind development in the NY Bight region. The EJF is comprised of community organizations and individuals, state agencies, federal agencies, and lessees who meet quarterly to discuss and advance environmental justice issues relevant to the New York Bight Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The draft agenda for the 1/24/2024 meeting includes the following:

- Discussion on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the six lease areas in the New York Bight located offshore New York and New Jersey
 - Overview of comment period & meetings
 - Overview of key elements of the Draft PEIS
 - Open discussion
- Review Draft PEIS outreach tools
- Debrief November EJF
- Key themes & action items
- Next steps

Registration for the meeting is available here:
<http://tinyurl.com/52m22dyj>.

[Note: A comprehensive summary of the previous meeting will be available here:
<https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/new-york-new-jersey-offshore-wind-environmental-justice-forums.>]

**"Reimagining with Energy Democracy"
- Webinar
1/25/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

This is the last in a webinar series on "Clean Energy as a Human Right," part of the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Side With Love climate justice campaign. "We invite you to explore the power of Energy Democracy and the ways our congregations can reimagine energy for our communities. Energy Democracy helps

frontline communities build power and liberation by reimagining how we organize our lives toward new systems that support the health and wellbeing of our communities and ecosystems. Join the Energy Democracy Project, Cleveland Owns (OH), People Power Solar (CA), and POWER Interfaith (PA) for Reimagining with Energy Democracy." The link to sign up for the webinar is available here:

https://secure.everyaction.com/LTCKDsbwC0aaiaiFqD_Stg2.

Rutgers-Newark Offshore Wind Energy Community Engagement Event
1/26/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Newark, NJ - In-person

The Rutgers Offshore Wind Energy Collaborative, a university-wide community of faculty and researchers working on wind energy, are presenting this event "To identify key community challenges and opportunities that will impact the direction of offshore wind in Newark and New Jersey. The topics of business development, supply chain, and workforce development will be discussed." Additional information, including links to access the agenda and to register, are available here:

<https://osw.rutgers.edu/event/rutgers-newark/>.

NOFA NJ 34th Annual Winter Conference
1/27/2024, 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
New Brunswick, NJ - In-person

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ) is holding its 34th Annual Winter Conference at Rutgers University. "The NOFA NJ Winter Conference is not just for farmers and gardeners... our community and audience also includes students, educators, ag industry professionals, chefs, conservationists, foodies, brewers, and more. This year, we aim to galvanize our community in a time when cooperation is needed most, focusing on local connections and collaboration that carries on into the growing season." Additional information and the registration link (admission is **\$100.00 for NOFA NJ members and \$125.00 for non-members**, with some scholarships available) are available here:

<https://nofanj.org/event/nofa-nj-34th-annual-winter-conference/>.

Liberty State Park – Design Task Force Public Meeting - Hybrid
1/30/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Jersey City, NJ - In-person & via Zoom

The Liberty State Park Design Task Force was established to advise the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on "iterative park planning and design decisions and, most importantly, to support DEP in operationalizing public feedback to ensure that park improvement decisions were responsive to and likely to meet the diverse needs of the public." At this meeting, the Task Force will continue to consider and provide advice to the DEP regarding design alternatives for potential public active recreation, arts, and cultural amenities in LSP-North (also known as Phase 1B of the LSP Revitalization Program). The Task Force will also continue to consider and provide advice to DEP regarding elements for suggested inclusion in the development of a Master Plan for potential improvements of park facilities, programs, and amenities in LSP-South (also known as Phase 2 of the LSP Revitalization Program)." In-person registration is voluntary but recommended, but to attend virtually, you must register to receive a Zoom link; a registration link will be available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/event/liberty-state-park-design-task-force-public-meeting-2/>.

Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute Listing of Climate Events

Multiple events are listed on this site. A sampling of January 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/>.

New Jersey Academic Alliance for Offshore Wind Energy Symposium
1/12/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Piscataway, NJ - In-person

The New Jersey Academic Alliance for Offshore Wind Energy (A²OSW) was formed earlier this year with the vision "to be a national leader for innovative offshore wind energy research and education, and to serve as a hub to convene,

coordinate, and catalyze innovative research and education programs so they are academically diverse and inclusive, recognized for thought leadership, support state goals, and ensure that coastal communities receive the benefits of a clean and resilient offshore wind energy economy..... The A²OSW Symposium is an opportunity for New Jersey academic institutions to discuss their expertise, programs, and projects in offshore wind energy education, research, community engagement, and workforce development; identify opportunities for collaboration; and develop a plan to build an organized statewide effort in offshore wind energy.... Academia and partners in offshore wind energy – students, faculty, staff, government, nonprofits, and industry – are invited to attend." Additional information, including links to the draft agenda and to register are available here: <https://osw.rutgers.edu/event/symposium2024/>.

NJADAPT: New Tools and Critical Enhancements - Webinar
1/23/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

"NJADAPT is a suite of data visualization and mapping tools providing critical support in planning for future climate conditions, assessing climate change related hazards, and communicating risks and hazards. Guided by input from our users, the Rutgers team has thoroughly enhanced NJADAPT with new and updated data, guidance for applying the tools to local planning, and numerous new features including links to municipal land-use, public health, and hazard mitigation planning. Join Lucas Marxen, Associate Director, NJAES [Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station] Office of Research Analytics, for an introduction to the latest release of these powerful decision-support tools, and learn how to use them in your own practice." Additional information including links to the event flyer and to register are available here: <https://rcei.rutgers.edu/event/njadapt-new-tools-and-critical-enhancements/>.



UUFANJ Gala
2/10/2023, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Princeton, NJ - In-person

The UU FaithAction NJ (UUFANJ) Annual Gala that had been planned for 9/2023 has been rescheduled. As originally planned, it will be a luncheon at the beautiful Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton. The "Justice For All" Gala will honor the work and leadership that advances immigration justice and equity. Any tickets previously purchased will be honored. Additional information, including how to request any needed refunds and the link to purchase new tickets, is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/5n7khpde>.

VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

"NJDEP Somerset County EJ Community Engagement Session
- Video of Session

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) held a Somerset County EJ Community Engagement Session regarding Environmental Justice. This community engagement session provided residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet DEP Commissioner LaTourette and EPA Region 2 Administrator Garcia and discuss environmental justice issues in Somerset 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=KXNIX3Faw6U>.

Eco-Logic Radio Shows

"PFAS Chemicals : Forever Dangerous;" "From Scratch: Adventures in Harvesting, Hunting, Fishing & Foraging on a Fragile Planet;" and - Recordings of Radio Shows

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI (co-hosted by **EJTF member Sally Gellert**) aired recent shows related to EJTF's goals. The show airs Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. on WBAI 99.5 FM. and can also be accessed on wbai.org. Recordings of these shows are available here:

- "PFAS Chemicals : Forever Dangerous" - <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=45589>
- "From Scratch: Adventures in Harvesting, Hunting, Fishing & Foraging on a Fragile Planet"- <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=45588>

Lead-Free NJ "Listen and Learn: Lead Hazards in New Jersey" - Videos of Webinar

Lead-free NJ presented a webinar in which various speakers gave information about lead hazards in NJ. A YouTube playlist includes videos of each presentation as well as videos of a Spanish translation of each one. The playlist is available here:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxtjJWtwEdsp1UT19-jYodFy_bTav3pYn.

"The Science Behind Carbon Markets" U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change COP28 Side Event - Video of Session

"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." This event explored the science behind carbon markets, and steps to increase confidence in this sector. It was co-hosted by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), American Forest Foundation, American Forests, Woodwell Climate Research Center, and U.S. Nature4Climate. The video is available here:
<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/120323carbonmarkets>.

2023 NJEJA Waste Justice Assembly - Videos of Keynote & Panels

In November, **EJTF partner** the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA) hosted its third annual Waste Justice Assembly, which "delves into the intricate connections between consumerism, goods movements, and waste infrastructure in New Jersey." The Assembly focused on three main topics: Strategies to Reduce Food Waste; Reducing Plastic Pollution Without False Solutions; and Reflecting on Fast Fashion. A major highlight of this year's Assembly was the keynote speech delivered by **EJTF partner** Maria Lopez-Nuñez, urging everyone to take action and bring about real change in their communities. Videos are available of:

- Keynote speech by EJTF partner Maria Lopez-Nuñez;
- Panel 1: Food Waste;
- Panel 2: Plastic Pollution; and
- Panel 3: Fast Fashion.

The videos are available here:
<https://njeja.org/2023-njeja-waste-justice-assembly/?playlist=151c641&video=1c6c87e>.

Jersey Water Works Conference - Slides from Sessions

Jersey Water Works (JWW) presented its Ninth Annual Jersey Water Works Conference, with the theme "The Value of Water - New Jersey Edition." Topics included PFAS and emergent contaminants, climate resilience and green infrastructure, and shared services to reduce cost and improve efficiency, among others. Slides for the following sessions are available here:

- <https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/events/annual-conference/2023/event-materials/>.
- Drinking Water Utility Track: Beyond the Initial Inventories; Identifying unknowns, Complying with LCRI, LCRR, and NJ State Laws
 - Exploring Shared Services
 - Green & Gray: Solutions to Manage Stormwater and CSOs
 - Pathways to Funding Climate Resilient Projects
 - Communicating the Value of Water
 - Partnering to Advance Water Workforce Initiatives in New Jersey
 - Let's Talk About PFAs and Other Contaminants
 - Water 2050: Charting a Course for a Safe and Sustainable Water Future

National Offshore Wind R&D Symposium **- Videos of Sessions**

The National Offshore Wind Research & Development Consortium (NOWRDC) held its 4th annual symposium. It featured "presentations from NOWRDC's offshore wind R&D projects, as well as networking opportunities and keynote talks from industry leaders." Videos of the following sessions are available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI8PjKpQfA0AB8TSHXSlor2LiDLN0Pwvb>.

- Opening Keynote
- Technology to Improve Ocean Area Coexistence
- Offshore Wind Innovation Hub's 2023 Cohort Panel
- Floating Offshore Wind Deep Dive Mooring & Anchoring Innovations
- Floating Offshore Wind Deep Dive -Engineering Mooring Solutions for U.S. Markets
- Emerging OSW Innovation Testing Facilities
- Developing a Robust U.S. Offshore Wind Supply Chain
- Developer Perspectives on Near Term Opportunities for OSW Innovation
- Applications for Autonomous Technology in Offshore Wind

Rutgers Climate Symposium 2023: "In Search of Solutions" - Video of Presentations and Poster Session Materials

This symposium focused on "Fostering collaboration among researchers and students from institutions in the greater NJ, NY, and Philadelphia region who are interested in climate change, renewable energy, energy efficiency, or other approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions across disciplines representing climate science, human dimensions, technology, the arts, communications, and humanities." Speakers included John P. Krasting, NOAA Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (Focus Area: Earth Systems Science); Orville Grey, International Institute for Sustainable Development (Focus Area: Human Dimensions); Benjamin Sovacool, Boston University (Focus Area: Renewable Energy, Technology, Energy Conservation); and Lisa Beth Robinson, East Carolina University and

Kristen Thielking, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point (Focus Area: Communication and Environmental Humanities). A recording of the presentations as well as PDFs of them, and materials including the Poster Session titles, abstracts, and PDFs of the posters, are available here: <https://rcei.rutgers.edu/events-archive/rutgers-climate-symposium-2023/>.

"Moving Toward a More Sustainable Life" **- Video of Webinar**

In this webinar presented by the Foodshed Alliance (of which **EJTF member Christine Dunbar** is the Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator), Montclair native Jason DeSalvo explored how to invest in becoming a part of the solution to the world's growing environmental crisis, and how he and his wife built and live on a sustainable homestead in Tewksbury, NJ. On their property they grow heirloom grains, fruits, berries, nuts, and vegetables. The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=906JLH4_TV0&t=7s.

"Forging a Future with Nature" **- Video of Webinar**

This was the third of a three-part "Beyond Pesticides" webinar series. "A future supported by the natural environment depends on our effective involvement in decisions in our homes, communities, states, and at the federal level to ensure that we are taking the steps necessary to protect against existential threats to health, biodiversity, and climate. The Forum is an important opportunity to hear from those working as scientists, advocates, land managers (from gardens, parks, play fields to farms), and public decision makers about steps being taken and action needed to prevent catastrophic collapse of the natural systems that sustain life." The video of this webinar - as well as videos of the first two webinars - is available here:

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/programs/national-pesticide-forum/2023-national-forum-series/session-recordings-and-materials>.

"New Perspectives on a Changing Climate: Young Voices in Nuclear Energy" - Video of Webinar

"Nuclear energy can be an important tool for addressing global climate change. According to the International Energy Agency, achieving global emissions reduction goals will require nearly doubling, between 2020 and 2050, electricity produced from nuclear reactors. As momentum grows for meaningful climate action, nuclear energy in some corners is experiencing a resurgence of interest. But trust and confidence in nuclear energy remains low in many sectors, and younger generations and people of color, many of whom are driving the conversation on climate action and climate justice, have questions about nuclear energy. Historical injustices tied to the nuclear sector and open questions on cost, timeliness, and safety loom large." The Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia SIPA and the Good Energy Collective presented this moderated discussion and Q&A addressing these issues. The panel consisted of "young and diverse voices at the intersection of nuclear energy and climate." The video is available here:
<https://www.energypolicy.columbia.edu/events/new-perspectives-on-a-changing-climate-young-voices-in-nuclear-energy/>.

"Regenerating Life" - Documentary Film

Although not a video of a past event, this documentary film may be of interest. It is a three-part documentary that explores "How to Cool the Planet, Feed the World, and Live Happily Ever After." It identifies ecological solutions to climate change, visiting practitioners who have already begun implementing these solutions, which include small farming, healthy waterways, and rich soil. "By rebuilding and respecting nature, we allow Earth's natural biodiversity to regulate itself as it always has." The trailer is available here:
https://vimeo.com/797064811?mc_cid=a51a634789&mc_eid=aabed91db5 and the film **may be rented for \$5.99 on Vimeo** here:
https://vimeo.com/ondemand/regeneratinglifefilm?mc_cid=a51a634789&mc_eid=aabed91db5.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES [covering 11/27/2023 – 12/26/2023]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Improving a Program That Works: Prioritizing New Jersey Water Bank Projects in Disadvantaged Communities

New Jersey Future and the Environmental Policy Innovation Center have produced a report "Improving a Program That Works: Prioritizing New Jersey Water Bank Projects in Disadvantaged Communities" (available here: https://www.njfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/NJF_EquityStudyFINAL.pdf) that analyzes NJ Water Bank (NJWB) awards (i.e., low-interest loans and principal forgiveness) over five years, and also assesses the underlying policies governing how NJ defines disadvantaged communities. The NJWB, which finances water infrastructure projects, has provided over \$9 billion in low-cost financing for water and wastewater projects. The report's ten recommendations "would increase the equity and effectiveness of the NJWB program and ensure that communities with the greatest needs receive adequate assistance."
<https://www.njfuture.org/research-reports/srfequity/>

Opinion: It's Time We Put an End to the Carbon Capture Farce

This article (by **EJTF partner** NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA) Trustee and co-director of the Tishman Environment & Design Center at The New School, Ana Baptista and WeAct for Environmental Justice senior director of strategy and federal policy Dana Johnson) points out the fallacies behind carbon capture and sequestration (CCS), utilization (CCUS), hydrogen hubs, and direct air capture projects, which "are being rolled out without transparency and our communities are targeted as development zones..... CCS, CCUS, and direct air capture, along with certain types of hydrogen hubs using CCS along with natural gas, are planned for locations already overburdened by heavy industry, imposing additional risks such as leaks, pipelines blowing

up, and health-harming air pollution like nitrogen oxide emissions. Unfortunately, a staggering 90% of the proposed or existing CCS/CCUS plants are located in or dangerously close to EJ communities."

<https://www.commondreams.org/end-carbon-capture-farce>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

Murphy Administration Drives Toward Zero Transportation Emissions Future With Nearly \$13 Million Investment

"Leveraging proceeds from New Jersey's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), Governor Murphy has announced a nearly \$13 million investment to further protect residents, the environment and the economy from the worsening impacts of climate change....The investment will use RGGI quarterly auction proceeds to fund 45 electric garbage trucks, dump trucks, shuttle buses and charging stations owned by 22 overburdened municipalities throughout the state."

https://nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2023/23_0066.htm

School Districts Seek More Funding for Electric Buses

This 4-minute news video describes the benefits of replacing diesel school buses with electric buses. It also describes possible sources of funding, including \$15 million from 2024 Clean Energy Fund money that comes from the societal benefit charge paid by utility ratepayers [note: that funding has now been approved by the legislature and Gov. Murphy] and potential funding from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which dedicates funding for electric school buses. Fifty-four NJ school districts have been designated as "priority," which will receive preference in the federal selection process and, if selected for funding, will be eligible for more funding per bus.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/school-districts-seek-more-funding-for-electric-buses/>

NJ Lawmakers Approve First-In-The-Nation EV Battery Recycling Bill

The NJ legislature has approved a bill (S3723/A5365), "The Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Battery Management Act," that, if approved by the governor, would be the first in the U.S. to create guidance for recycling lithium-ion batteries. It would require battery producers to submit a battery management plan to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), including methods for their acceptance and transport of the batteries as well as the means to be used to recycle, reuse, or repurpose them.

<https://enviropolitics.com/nj-lawmakers-approve-first-in-the-nation-ev-battery-recycling-bill/>



Camden County Continues to Expand Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

In 2013, Camden County entered a pilot program as a cost-sharing agreement with ECOtality North America to install countywide charging infrastructure. Since then, chargers have been installed throughout the County, with the latest two being installed in Collingswood, funded by a NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) "New Jersey Clean Energy Electric Vehicle Tourism" grant, a NJ Department of Environmental Protections (DEP) "It Pay\$ to Plug In" grant, and additional grant funding from PSE&G.

<https://www.camdencounty.com/camden-county-continues-to-expand-electric-vehicle-charging-stations/>

Will NJ Electric Vehicle Owners Be Asked to Pay Equivalent of Gas Tax?

In NJ, taxes on motor vehicle fuel have been providing around \$2 billion for investments in transportation infrastructure. However, questions have arisen as to how increases in electric vehicles will impact the amount provided. The NJ Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) must be reauthorized by 6/30/2024. Because a large share of the program supports county and local projects, a decrease in available funding could potentially have an impact on property taxes, which might be raised in order to make up the difference in order to make up the difference. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/renewing-nj-transportation-trust-fund-raises-fee-question-electric-vehicles/>

Op-Ed: It's Time to Modernize School Buses, Go Electric

This article by Anjuli Ramos-Busot, director of the New Jersey chapter of the Sierra Club, and Doug O'Malley, director of Environment New Jersey, describes the numerous reasons why NJ's school bus fleet needs to go electric, and enumerates a number of potential sources of funding. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/op-ed-time-to-modernize-electrify-school-buses/>

LAND MANAGEMENT / AGRICULTURE / FOOD

Mobile Grocery Store Comes to Atlantic City

This 4-minute news video shows the Virtua Health's "Eat Well" Mobile Grocery Store expansion (sponsored by the NJ Economic Development Authority [EDA]) to the food desert of Atlantic City. Besides being convenient, prices are 30% - 50% less than supermarket prices. Atlantic City, the second-worst NJ Food Desert Community (after Camden), as ranked by the EDA, has been without a brick-and-mortar supermarket since 2004. ShopRite had been in the process of developing a store, but pulled out when the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority rejected its request for a \$500,000

annual subsidy, which ShopRite said was required due to crime and theft in the area. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/mobile-grocery-store-comes-to-atlantic-city/>

NJEDA Awards First Grant Under Innovative New Program to Strengthen Food Security in Newark

The first award has been made by the NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) for an innovative program that will allow Newark South Ward residents to order food online (including with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP - benefits) and pick them up from a temperature-controlled locker in their neighborhood at their convenience. This Food Retail Innovation in Delivery Grant (FRIDG) program is designed to expand food delivery options for Food Desert Community (FDC) residents; the South Ward of Newark is the third most acute food desert in NJ. In 2020, the NJ Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) launched a pilot program to allow SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase groceries online; however, many FDC residents have been unable to utilize it because they lack a reliable delivery location due to unpredictable work schedules, family obligations, or housing insecurity. This first FRIDG-funded locker is to be installed at the Shari Baraka Women's Resource Center, and all delivery fees are being waived by the grant recipient, Brookdale ShopRite, Inc. <https://www.njeda.gov/njeda-awards-first-grant-under-innovative-new-program-to-strengthen-food-security-in-newark/>

Another School-Based Food Pantry Opens in Trenton

This 4-minute news video describes the work of the Quaker-based, nonsectarian nonprofit Mercer Street Friends' Community Schools program, which has just opened its second school-based food pantry in Trenton and plans to open a third early next year. As noted on the Mercer Street Friends website (available here: <https://mercerstreetfriends.org/mercer-street-friends-opened-2nd-school-based-food-pantry-in-trenton-district/>), "Food insecurity is ongoing for school

families in our area and convenience and consistency are critical....A key differentiator for school-based pantries is that they are open to the entire school community – where everyone is encouraged to attend....People who might otherwise feel uneasy visiting a food pantry often feel more comfortable in a familiar school setting The convenience of an in-school food pantry is a game-changer for families, especially for the Gregory school community whose closest supermarket is a 40-minute walk. Choice, frequency, and breadth of offerings are other benefits."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/another-school-based-food-pantry-opens-in-trenton/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)



NJBPU’s Community Solar Program Receives More Than 300 Applications With More Than 300 MW for New Solar Projects

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) opened the application window for the new, permanent Community Solar Energy Program (CSEP) in mid-November, and available capacity was reached within weeks for the PSE&G service territory. The CSEP requires the projects to serve a minimum of 51 percent low- to moderate-income (LMI) subscribers and must give a minimum bill credit discount of 15 percent; projects may offer a greater discount, and those projects will be given priority if program capacity is exceeded during an initial registration period. Since the Community Solar Pilot Program was created in 2018, 150 projects totaling 243 MW of capacity have been approved, and 88 of those projects, totaling 130

MW, have reached commercial operation, which provide for over 16,000 New Jersey households. <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2023/approved/20231208.html>

Bill Strengthening NJ’s Community Solar Program Advances to Governor’s Desk

The New Jersey Legislature has passed a bill (A4782/S3123) that expands access to NJ’s community solar program by eliminating some barriers for low- and moderate- income (LMI) residents’ participation, and increases its size. The bill accomplishes three key things: 1) streamlining eligibility verification by putting self-attestation into law; 2) allowing municipalities to facilitate access for low income subscribers through municipalities’ sharing of necessary information; and 3) increasing the community solar program’s size (see article in previous column describing the success of the existing program). While the community solar program is viewed as a great success for accelerating NJ’s clean energy transition and expanding access to clean energy for more residents regardless of income or housing type, it is also possible that large expansion of the program may come at the expense of other clean energy programs which utilize the same grid interconnections.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2023/12/bill-strengthening-nj-s-community-solar-program-advances-governor-s-desk>

OFFSHORE WIND

Governor Murphy Directs New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to Accelerate New Offshore Wind Solicitation

Gov. Murphy has directed the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to issue its fourth offshore wind solicitation in early 2024. “New Jersey can — and will — continue to remain a burgeoning offshore wind development hub that attracts new projects and their accompanying economic and environmental benefits for generations to come,” Gov. Murphy said. [See related news videos showcasing positive views from offshore wind advocates - available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-solicits-bids-for-new-offshore-wind-projects/> - and the

president of the BPU - available here: [https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/bpu-president-nj-commitment-to-offshore-wind-remains-strong/.](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/bpu-president-nj-commitment-to-offshore-wind-remains-strong/) After Ørsted abandoned its plans for two wind-power projects off the Jersey coast, there is currently one active project - the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind project awarded in 2021 - and the third BPU solicitation recently resulted in four proposals being submitted. <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20231129a.shtml>

Complaint Against Offshore Wind Developer Atlantic Shores Dismissed by NJ Utilities Board

The anti-offshore wind organization Save Long Beach Island Inc., or Save LBI, had petitioned the NJ Board Public Utilities (BPU) for a hearing, saying the value of Atlantic Shores' Offshore Wind Renewable Energy Certificates (ORECs) were too high and didn't take impacts into effect. Atlantic Shores submitted a request for the BPU to dismiss the petition because it stated that BPU is not the proper entity for the request, and the petition also missed the deadline for filing an appeal related to the ORECs' approval. The BPU has dismissed the Save LBI petition. <https://www.savingseafood.org/news/state-and-local/new-jersey-complaint-against-offshore-wind-developer-atlantic-shores-dismissed-by-nj-utilities-board/#>

CLIMATE CHANGE

Clean Electricity Bill Put On Hold – At Least Until Next Year

On 11/20/2023, EJTF joined other environmental advocates at a rally in Trenton in favor of the "Clean Energy Bill" (S2978) that would make Gov. Murphy's Clean Energy Executive Order into law, which, unlike an Executive Order, would require action by the full legislature to change it. Environmental advocates were united in favor of the bill, just requesting some revisions such as adding restrictions on co-pollutants that harm health. Solar developers and labor expressed reservations about the bill related to their belief that it would shift NJ jobs to other states. The bill's sponsor, Sen. Bob Smith, has stated that it

"is not ready for prime time yet" and will not be able to be addressed in the lame duck legislative session. However, it is expected to be taken up early in the next legislative session, along with a bill for modernizing the power grid. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/nj-clean-energy-bill-on-hold-faced-strong-opposition/>

Big Oil Seeks to Sidestep Two NJ Trials That Could Hit Companies With Hefty Fines

The defendants (i.e., Chevron, BP, Shell, Exxon Mobil, ConocoPhillips and the American Petroleum Institute) in two cases filed in NJ are trying various means to get the cases dismissed, as described in this article. One case was filed by the City of Hoboken and one was filed on behalf of NJ residents by the NJ Attorney General, the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), alleging the defendants 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. There is also a possibility that the cases may be consolidated. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/rutgers-law-school-in-newark-mercer-county-hudson-county-hudson-county-superior-court-judge-anthony-delia-chevron-bp-shell-exxon-mobil-conocophillips-and-the-american-petroleum-institute/>

Bill to Advance RNG Stalls in Lame-Duck Legislative Session

A bill (A577/S1366), that directs the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to establish a program concerning renewable natural gas, and provides gas public utilities with a customer rate recovery mechanism for costs associated with the program, was slated for a vote by the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee but was pulled after hours of testimony. According to a letter from environmental advocates to Gov. Murphy and NJ legislators, "A577/S1366 lets gas utilities and the fossil fuel industry increasingly profit from burning more unneeded dirty gas at the expense of New Jersey ratepayers. The bill requires BPU to let utilities hike consumers' electric and heating bills to subsidize RNG [renewable natural gas] procurement and

infrastructure. RNG is 3-18 times more costly than the current market price for natural gas. The bill can't be fixed -- the only question is how unaffordable and dirty would the bill be. Any version of it would increase the burning of unaffordable dirty gasses, increase emissions of co-pollutants with overburdened communities being disproportionately harmed, and increase climate emissions despite the bill's stated intentions not to do so." A similar letter (available here, courtesy of *New Jersey Monitor*):

<https://newjerseymonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/A577-opposition-letter.pdf>)

was sent by the NJ League of Conservation Voters. The bill still may be considered in the Lamé Duck Session, however, and a Trenton Lobby Day is scheduled for 1/4/2024 to oppose it (see [p. 5](#)). See

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/bill-to-advance-rng-stalls-in-lame-duck-legislative-session/>.

Additional information is provided in a New Jersey Monitor article, available here:

<https://newjerseymonitor.com/2023/12/01/bill-to-allow-n-j-utilities-to-use-renewable-gas-stutters-in-committee/>.

BPU Says Overhaul of Energy Master Plan Scheduled for Next Year

In January 2023, Gov. Murphy cancelled a series of public meetings that had been scheduled to address updating NJ's 2019 Energy Master Plan (EMP), stating that the update needs to take into account the implications of new state and federal policies, economic costs and benefits, and ratepayer impacts. In the past year, a number of changes have taken place, including the acceleration of NJ's goals, to convert to a 100% clean-energy economy by 2035 rather than the previous goal of 2050. In early December 2023 the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) asked the NJ Treasurer's office to hire a consultant to assist with the development of the 2024 Energy Master Plan. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/bpu-says-overhaul-of-energy-master-plan-scheduled-for-next-year/>



NJ's Lucrative Clam Fishing Industry Is Threatened by Climate Change – And the Wind Farms Meant to Fight It

This article on "Climate Change and NJ Agriculture" looks in depth at impacts on NJ's clam fishing industry, and includes a 14-1/2-minute video. As climate change is impacting the areas and clam species historically fished in waters off of NJ, fishermen also fear that wind farms will impact them financially by closing off additional areas. A study has projected potential losses of revenue of up to 25% for the Atlantic City-based fleet. The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind nonprofit group is leading a Fisheries Mitigation Project involving eleven states, which puts forth the idea of a regional fund to compensate fisheries for losses.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/nj-surfclam-industry-threatened-by-climate-change/>

Murphy Administration Announces Tools to Protect New Jerseyans From Increasing Flood Risks Brought by Climate Change

New and enhanced tools and technologies "designed to provide prospective homebuyers and renters with critical information needed to make better informed decision on where they choose to live and how best to protect their property from flood damage" are now available to address NJ's increasing flood risks under climate change. They include the publication of property disclosure forms notifying prospective buyers and tenants of a property's known flood history and potential flood risks, (available here, and mandatory after 3/20/2024:

<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/Documents/Sellers-Property-Condition-Disclosure-Statement.pdf>) as well

as a user-friendly internet look-up tool searchable by mailing address that identifies properties in flood hazard areas (available here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d5d503eb2d3248218632570097e4efa8>). These measures implement provisions of the flood risk disclosure legislation passed in 6/2023 in response to the growing flood risks NJ is seeing as a result of climate change, and this law resulted in NJ being one of seven states to receive an “A” grade on the Natural Resources Defense Council’s Flood Risk Disclosure Law Scorecard. <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20231221a.shtml>

Opinion: Why NJ Should Lead the Way in a Speedy Energy Transition

This opinion piece by Anjuli Ramos-Busot, the director of the NJ chapter of the Sierra Club, and Barbara Blumenthal, director of research at the NJ Conservation Foundation, describes the benefits and positive impacts of the Clean Energy Act (A4658/S2978), now slated to be taken up early in the next NJ legislative session. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/op-ed-nj-should-lead-speedy-energy-transition/>

FOREST HEALTH

Efforts Underway to Help Beautify and Protect NJ’s Urban Areas With Trees

This article touts the many benefits of planting trees in NJ’s urban areas, and focuses on the November 2023 Trenton tree planting project spearheaded by the NJ Tree Foundation (of which **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** is a Trustee) and joined by a host of partners and volunteers. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/efforts-underway-to-help-beautify-and-protect-njs-urban-areas-with-trees/>

Biden-Harris Administration Proposes First-Of-Its Kind National Forest Plan Amendment to Conserve and Steward Old Growth Forests

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced a proposal to amend all 128 forest land management plans to conserve and steward old-growth forest conditions on national forests

and grasslands nationwide. While focusing on federally-managed lands, the agency also is analyzing reforestation opportunities on state, Tribal and private lands. NJ has a handful of areas that may be defined as old-growth or mature native forests, such as four (shown here: <https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/new-jersey>) in the nonprofit Old-Growth Forest Network. <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/12/19/biden-harris-administration-proposes-first-its-kind-national-forest>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

Biden-Harris Administration Proposes to Strengthen the Lead and Copper Rule to Protect All Communities in America from Lead in Drinking Water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a proposal to strengthen its Lead and Copper Rule that would require water systems across the country to replace lead service lines within 10 years. EPA is also proposing additional improvements to protect public health, such as lowering the lead action level and improving sampling protocols utilized by water systems. EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox stated, “Cities like Newark, New Jersey, Benton Harbor, Michigan, and Green Bay, Wisconsin, have all successfully gotten the lead out of their water systems. Our proposed rule applies the lessons learned to scale these successes to every corner of the country.” <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-proposes-strengthen-lead-and-copper-rule-protect-all>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

NJ Utilities Appear More Invested in Cutting Customers’ Energy Use

As required by the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU), a number of utilities submitted filings to the BPU for approval of their Energy Efficiency, Building Decarbonization, and Demand Response programs in the amount of nearly \$6 billion for

the period from 1/2025 through 6/2027. PSE&G's filing of \$3.1 billion was the largest, and PSE&G projects that it will result in a lifetime savings to customers of \$3.5 billion, with bills increasing by a projected \$4 to \$4.50 a month, and will also result in about 10 million fewer tons of greenhouse gases being emitted. Utilities' usage reduction targets are set by NJ law. According to Doug O'Malley, director of Environment New Jersey, "This is the unsexiest way to take action on the climate and arguably the most important way to reduce costs and emissions."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/nj-utilities-appear-more-invested-in-cutting-customers-energy-use/>

OTHER

Lawmakers Move to Help Utilities Recover Costs for Upgrades

A bill (A4791/S3184) that is advancing in the NJ legislature would allow water utilities to recoup costs of certain improvements more quickly, without regulatory review. The NJ Rate Counsel Director has stated that the bill is not needed because there is already a mechanism in place, and which ensures ratepayers are not overcharged. However, utilities' representatives have stated that they face greatly increased costs due in part to new stringent federal standards related to PFAS "forever chemicals."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/lawmakers-move-to-help-utilities-recover-costs-for-upgrades/>

Are NJ Lawmakers Ready to Pump \$300M Into Major Electric Grid Upgrades?

A bill (S3992) that has been introduced by Sen. Bob Smith, with plans for immediate consideration in the next legislative session, would require electric utilities to develop and implement grid modernization plans, and appropriates \$300 million for this purpose. Funding sources were not specified in the bill, but could include: the general fund surplus; Clean Energy Fund money that comes from the societal benefit charge paid by utility ratepayers; and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Further, up to an additional \$200 million may be forthcoming from the 2021 federal Inflation Reduction Act. Grid modernization is seen as vital by all entities concerned.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/11/key-nj-legislative-committee-plans-consider-300-million-electric-grid-upgrades/>

Lawmakers Weigh Ban on Toxic, but Effective, Firefighting Foam

A bill (A4125/S2712) that has passed both houses of the NJ legislature "Prohibits sale, manufacture, distribution, and use of firefighting foam containing intentionally added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances [PFAS - "forever chemicals"]; requires DEP to establish collection and disposal program; appropriates \$250,000 [from the General Fund for grants to qualifying municipalities to cover the cost of replacing the firefighting foams prohibited by the bill]."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2023/12/nj-bill-would-ban-toxic-firefighting-foam-containing-pfas-forever-chemicals/>

EJTF's GOALS for 2023/2024

- 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
