



**UUFANJ GALA
RESCHEDULED TO 2/10/2024 (see p. 6)**

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.

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

• Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills (UUCSH)



UUCSH earned this Garden Bench made from Recycled Plastic!

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills (UUCSH) Green Sanctuary Team has a variety of initiatives for recycling beyond what is collected by the local or county recycling. In July of last year, congregants began collecting plastic film and bags for a program through NextTrex. They collected the plastic on site in the congregation's Fellowship Hall, and Green Team volunteers took turns weighing, delivering, and reporting the plastic.

The goal was to collect 500 pounds in six months to earn a Garden Bench made from recycled plastic (note: now the requirement is for 1000 pounds in 12 months). Members collected this plastic from their neighbors and workplaces - it was a true community effort! At the beginning of December, only 351 pounds of this lightweight material had been collected, but on December 27, they reached the 500 required pounds of plastic film and bags! They have just received the bench, that will find its new home in UUCSH's native plant garden. You can learn more about the NextTrex plastic recycling program here:

<https://nextrex.com/view/recyclingchallenge>.



UUCSH congregants including Lauren Randolph, the Green Team volunteer who led the effort (back row, pink scarf), next to EJTF member Nadine Kadell Sapirman

See p. 20 for actions taken on Lame Duck session bills

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CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

• Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF)

On January 21, 2024, the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship's (MUUF) environment ministry hosted the second in a series of Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) programs related to using federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) incentives to cut utility bills while combating climate change. In this program, entitled "Electrify Your Home with the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)," CCL chapter member Ernest Dorflinger presented excellent slides that clearly displayed many of the tax rebates and subsidies available to homeowners as they switch over to cleaner energy electric appliances, heating systems and more. The savings can be enjoyed by homeowners among a broad swath of economic levels. A robust Q&A followed. If you would like to host one of these presentations for your congregation, library, civic group, or other group, contact CCL via email at morristown@citizensclimatelobby.org.



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.**

FUTURE EVENTS - *Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid*

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

| FEBRUARY 2024 | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| (with hyperlinks to details on the following pages) | | | | | | |
| Sun. | Mon. | Tues. | Wed. | Thurs. | Fri. | Sat. |
| | | | | 1 "Energy Earthshots: The Frontier of Climate Innovation" - 2:00 p.m. LWVNJ - "Introduction to NJ Legislative Process" - 6:00 p.m. | 2 | 3 |
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Calendar continued from p. 2

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| <p>4</p> | <p>5</p> | <p>6 "All Hands Legislative Briefing and Campaign Strategy Meeting" - 6:30 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>NJ Agricultural Convention</p> | <p>7 "New Jersey's Climate Future: The Science, Politics & Planning" - 4:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>DRBC 1Q Public Hearing - 1:30 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>NJ Agricultural Convention</p> | <p>8 BOEM Public Meeting: "Draft PEIS for Wind Energy in the New York Bight" - 4:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>Lead-Free NJ Housing Committee - 4:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>"The Greatest Transformation in Human History" - 8:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>NJ Agricultural Convention</p> | <p>9</p> | <p>10 UUFANJ Gala - 12:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>"The Pathway to Achieve a Net-zero Economy in the U.S. by 2050" - 9:30 a.m.</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p>12 "The Fight for a NJ Green Amendment" - 7:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>"Blue Carbon as a Natural Climate Solution" - 10:00 p.m. EST</p> | <p>13 BOEM Public Meeting: "Draft PEIS for Wind Energy in the New York Bight" - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>Lead-Free NJ Water Advocacy Committee - 4:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>LWVNJ - "Introduction to Organizing" - 6:00 p.m.</p> | <p>14 Pinelands Commission Climate Committee Meeting - 9:30 a.m.</p> <hr/> <p>"Spillover Benefits from Electric Vehicle Charging Stations to Local Businesses" - 12:00 p.m.</p> | <p>15 "Innovations in Weather Forecasting for a Changing Climate" - 3:00 p.m.</p> | <p>16</p> | <p>17 "Decarbonizing the Energy System for a Cleaner and Healthier Future" - 9:30 a.m.</p> |
| <p>18</p> | <p>19</p> | <p>20</p> | <p>21 "Understanding the DEP Regulatory Process I" - 4:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>LWVNJ - "From Ideas to Law: The Activist's Role" - 6:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>"Renewing EJ Commitments with Green Sanctuary 2030" - 7:00 p.m.</p> | <p>22</p> | <p>23 "7th Annual Watershed Conference" - 9:00 a.m.</p> | <p>24</p> |
| <p>25</p> | <p>26 Comments Due: BOEM "Draft PEIS for Wind Energy in the New York Bight"</p> | <p>27 NJDEP Gloucester County EJ Community Engagement Session - 6:00 p.m.</p> | <p>28 "Inflation Reduction Act Peer Learning Circle" - 4:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>"Environmental Justice & Community Organizing 101" - 6:00 p.m.</p> | <p>29 "Understanding the [federal] 2025 Budget and Appropriations Process" - 3:00 p.m.</p> | <p>Green Infrastructure Champions Program - various dates</p> <hr/> <p>SAVE THE DATES:</p> <p>"35th-annual Pinelands Short Course" - 3/9/2024</p> <hr/> <p>2024 Watershed Congress - 3/23 & 3/25 - 29/2024</p> | |

FUTURE EVENTS

"Energy Earthshots: The Frontier of Climate Innovation" - Online **2/1/2024, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

This briefing, sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), will provide information about the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) "Energy Earthshots Initiative." DOE's Energy Earthshots are analogous to moonshots in that they are designed to rapidly break down market barriers and scale up innovation. They address eight sectors to address the climate crisis: Hydrogen Shot™, Long Duration Storage Shot™, Carbon Negative Shot™, Enhanced Geothermal Shot™, Floating Offshore Wind Shot™, Clean Fuels and Products Shot™, Affordable Home Energy Shot™ and Industrial Heat Shot™ (additional information about the initiative is available here: <https://www.energy.gov/energy-earthshots-initiative>). Panelists from the DOE and its partners will share the latest updates on each Earthshot's progress and how they "complement each other to advance a just and equitable transition to clean energy." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/020124doe>.

"All Hands Legislative Briefing and Campaign Strategy Meeting" **2/6/2024, 6:30 p.m. - Online**

EmpowerNJ, a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**, is holding an online all hands legislative briefing and campaign strategy meeting as the new NJ legislative session begins. During the last legislative session, the "Dirty Gas" bill was halted, and the "Clean Energy" bill was strengthened, with the help of the coalition. "As the new legislature convenes for the 2024-2025 session, both of these major energy bills have been reintroduced. We anticipate legislative hearings on at least one of the bills in mid-February." At this webinar, policy experts, issue advocates and grassroots organizers will provide information about these bills, and their impacts on energy affordability, public health, climate change and environmental justice. Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/all-hands-legislative-briefing-and-campaign-strategy-meeting>.

NJ Agricultural Convention & Trade Show and the 2024 Annual State Agricultural Convention **2/6/2024, 2/7/2024, & 2/8/2024** **Atlantic City, NJ - In-person**

The 2024 Annual State Agricultural Convention and the New Jersey Agricultural Convention and Trade Show are being coordinated by the Vegetable Growers Association of NJ (VGA) and the NJ Agriculture Experiment Station, Rutgers University. The trade show and VGA educational sessions will open on 2/6/2024 and are open to VGA members (**\$150 for membership; \$75 for a 1-day pass for a specific day**). The show will feature exhibits and displays from many of the industry's suppliers and business associates. In addition, a wide variety of educational sessions on topics ranging from growing crops to food safety, the latest ideas in agricultural practices and much more will be offered. While primarily geared toward the farm community, **EJTF partner NOFA NJ** is involved in several sessions on organic farming. Additional information and links to the schedule of VGA educational sessions and to register are available here: <https://vganj.com/convention>. The 2024 State Agricultural Convention will open a business session on 2/7/2024. On that day and the following day there will also be informational sessions as well as presentations. Links to the program, as well as a meal reservation form, are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/hottopics/approved/topics231208.html>.

"New Jersey's Climate Future: The Science, Politics & Planning" - Online **NJ Spotlight News Virtual Roundtable Series Session 1: "Storm Flooding"** **2/7/2024, 4:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.** **+ 3 more dates TBA**

NJ Spotlight News is presenting this virtual roundtable series on NJ's Climate Future. It will consist of four sessions: three sessions "exploring the science behind New Jersey's specific climate change vulnerabilities and the policies intended to address the impacts of each" and one session "evaluating the scope of policy actions the state is

taking - and may yet need to take - to enable New Jerseyans to adapt to an increasingly intense and volatile new climate normal." The sessions will be as follows:

- Session 1: Storm Flooding (**2/7/2024**)
 - Storm flooding and water infrastructure effects on water quality, housing, environmental justice, and state economics
- Session 2: Land and Marine Heat (**TBA, 2/2024**)
 - Land heat effects on education, labor/workforce, physical/mental health of general population, environmental justice, state economics
 - Marine heat effects on marine life, economic impact on fishing industry
- Session 3: Sea Level Rise (**TBA 3/2024**)
 - Sea level rise effects on housing, environmental justice, state economics
 - Saltwater intrusion effects on water quality and agriculture
- Session 4: Policy: What are we doing? Is it enough? (**TBA 3/2024 or 4/2024**)
 - Examine process/legislation/moving parts for transition to clean energy
 - Economic costs of climate action vs. inaction
 - Why hasn't climate action been taken more quickly? How can work be accelerated?

Additional information and the link to register are available here [**and also check here for dates of future sessions**]:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-jerseys-climate-future-the-science-politics-planning-tickets-808015856177>.

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) First Quarter 2024 Public Hearing 2/7/2024, 1:30 p.m. - via Zoom

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) will hold its first-quarter public hearing on Wednesday, 2/7/2024. Additional information including links to the agenda, to register for the Zoom webinar, and to provide testimony, are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yvtrcb4u>.

BOEM Public Meetings on "Draft PEIS for Expected Wind Energy Development in the New York Bight" - In-person & Virtual 2/8/2024, 4:00 p.m. Toms River, NJ - In-person 2/13/2024, 1:00 p.m. - via Zoom

"BOEM [U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management] announced the publication of a 'Notice of Availability of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Draft PEIS) for Expected Wind Energy Development in the New York Bight,' initiating a 45-day public comment period.... During the comment period, BOEM is seeking additional information on important resources and issues, potential impacts to the environment, and programmatic avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and monitoring measures analyzed in the New York Bight Draft PEIS." BOEM is holding public meetings related to the PEIS; registration links for the remaining meetings in NJ and on Zoom, as well as additional information including links to the PEIS, are available here: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/new-york-bight>. **Comments are due by 2/26/2024.**

"The Greatest Transformation in Human History" - Webinar 2/8/2024, 8:00 p.m.

This webinar, sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), will be presented by Dr. Sailesh Rao. Dr. Rao was designated a Climate Hero by The Guardian Newspaper in 2023, which recognized him as "a foremost voice on green transition and on the true scale of societal change required to save the planet." He has "over three decades of professional experience and is the Founder and Executive Director of Climate Healers, a non-profit dedicated towards healing the Earth's climate. A systems specialist with a Ph. D. in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University, Dr. Rao worked on the internet communications infrastructure for twenty years after graduation. In 2006, he switched careers and became deeply immersed, full time, in solving the environmental crises affecting humanity." Additional information and links to register for the Zoom webinar, or to watch the webinar on Facebook, are available here: <https://uujec.org/webinars>.

**"The Pathway to Achieve a Net-zero Economy in the U.S. by 2050" - Hybrid
2/10/2024, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Princeton, NJ - In-person & via Zoom**

This talk is part of the Princeton University Plasma Physics Laboratory "Science on Saturday" series and will be presented by Dr. Jesse Jenkins, Assistant Professor in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment. He is also an affiliated faculty member with the Center for Policy Research in Energy and Environment at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs and an associated faculty member at the High Meadows Environmental Institute. The link to register is available here: <https://www.pppl.gov/events/2024/science-saturday-pathway-achieve-net-zero-economy-us-2050-jesse-jenkins>.



**UUFANJ Gala
2/10/2024, 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>.

**"The Fight for a NJ Green Amendment"
2/12/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- via Zoom**

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Camden County and partners, this webinar will present a discussion with local advocates including Maya Van Rossum, founder of "Green Amendments for the Generations." The discussion will include the need for a green amendment, the impacts similar legislation has had in other states, and how local NJ community members can get involved. Additional information is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/2ajrtrd3>. Registration is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/4c97mehb>.

**"Blue Carbon as a Natural Climate Solution" - via Zoom
2/12/2024, 10:00 p.m. EST [Note time!]**

This webinar, hosted by OCTO (Open Communications for the Ocean - a nonprofit organization "advancing marine conservation and management"), will be presented by Dr. Peter Macreadie, director of the Blue Carbon Lab at Deakin University, Australia. "Blue carbon ecosystems (BCE), including mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, and tidal marshes, store carbon and provide co-benefits such as coastal protection and fisheries enhancement. Blue carbon sequestration has therefore been suggested as a natural climate solution. In this webinar, the Blue Carbon Lab at Deakin University will examine the potential for BCEs to act as carbon sinks, as well as the opportunities and challenges to protect or restore ecosystems for this function." Additional information and the link to register are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/5c5ynkvc>.

**Pinelands Commission Climate Committee Meeting - Livestreamed
2/14/2024, 9:30 a.m.**

Additional information, including the link to view the livestream, is available here: <https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/home/meetings/index.shtml>.

"Spillover Benefits from Electric Vehicle Charging Stations to Local Businesses"

2/14/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

- via Zoom

This talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," will be presented by Qingran Li, Assistant Professor at Clarkson University in the David D. Reh School of Business and the Institute for a Sustainable Environment. "In this talk, Qingran will discuss her research on local benefits of EVCS [electrical vehicle charging stations] in terms of increased revenues for businesses near new EVCS establishments. She will also talk about how these benefits are distributed across different communities.... As a researcher in the interdisciplinary field of environmental economics, Qingran Li finds it important to closely tie her research to policy-related questions concerning a variety of stakeholders." Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://irving.dartmouth.edu/news-events/news-events/new-energy-series>.

"Innovations in Weather Forecasting for a Changing Climate" - Online

2/15/2024, 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) invites you to a briefing about the latest innovations in weather forecasting and communication to improve community resilience, awareness, and preparedness. Climate change multiplies and intensifies acute weather events like hurricanes as well as chronic stressors like droughts.... At this briefing, speakers will discuss exciting technologies that can help deliver accurate, timely, and actionable forecasts to those who need it most.... and how weather and disaster information can be delivered to the public in ways that support equitable, accessible, and effective community preparedness." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/021524weather>.

"Decarbonizing the Energy System for a Cleaner and Healthier Future" - Hybrid

2/17/2024, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Princeton, NJ - In-person & via Zoom

This talk is part of the Princeton University Plasma Physics Laboratory "Science on Saturday" series and will be presented by energy and human systems modeler Dr. Wei Peng, an assistant professor of public and international affairs at the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment at Princeton University. "A core faculty member of the Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment (C-PREE), Peng studies ways to better represent institutional and political factors in energy systems models to inform climate policies and decarbonization strategies that are realistically implementable and politically durable." The link to register is available here: <https://www.pppl.gov/events/2024/science-saturday-decarbonizing-energy-system-cleaner-and-healthier-future-wei-peng>.

"Understanding the DEP Regulatory Process I" - Hybrid

2/21/2024, 4:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Trenton, NJ - In-person and Online

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in partnership with the Environmental Justice Advisory Council's Environmental Education Committee, is presenting "Navigating the DEP: A Series of Environmental Seminars for Overburdened Communities" for EJ advocates from across the state to learn about DEP's regulations, permitting processes, and opportunities for funding. Seminars related to the regulatory process will take place on **2/21/2024** in Trenton and online ("Understanding the Regulatory Process I - learn about permitting processes under the EJ Law and Administrative Order 25, Environmental Justice Impact Statements, & public engagement requirements under the EJ Law, and EJMAP") and on **4/23/2024** in Camden and online ("Understanding the Regulatory Process II - learn about permitting processes for Drinking Water, Watershed and Land Use, & Air"). Additional information and registration are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ecnd68se>.

"Renewing Environmental Justice Commitments with Green Sanctuary 2030"
2/21/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (EST)
- Online

"Since 1989, the Unitarian Universalist Association's [UUA] Green Sanctuary program has provided an in-depth roadmap of actions for congregations seeking to start or deepen their climate justice work. The current iteration of the program - Green Sanctuary 2030 [GS2030] - has been updated to include a larger focus on congregational transformation and justice." At this meeting, "learn from the recently recognized Green Sanctuary 2030 Congregation, the UU Fellowship of Raleigh, NC, about the ways their congregation renewed their environmental justice commitments through the GS2030 process." This is a regular meeting of UUs working on congregational transformation through climate justice held on the third Wednesday of the month; "each meeting includes a short presentation on a climate justice topic, followed by open discussion on pressing needs." Additional information and the link to register are available here: https://secure.everyaction.com/n_gQDXu7k0WVGZEBPtPA_xA2.

"7th Annual Watershed Conference" of The Watershed Institute - Hybrid
2/23/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Ewing, NJ - In-person & on Zoom

The Watershed Conference is an annual educational and networking event on topics related to watershed health in NJ. The audience typically includes state, municipal, and county officials and staff, nonprofit organizations, environmental professionals, and the general public, and offers sessions "that will increase knowledge and skills, encourage discussions between stakeholders, and foster collaboration on specific issues and potential solutions." This year's theme is "regional/watershed planning, a collaborative strategy to address the impacts of climate change and to restore clean and healthy habitats." Register by 2/19/2023: Virtual = \$45.00; In-person = \$90.00 (breakfast, lunch and snacks included); scholarships are available. Links for additional information, including a list of confirmed sessions and to register, are available here: <https://thewatershed.org/7th-annual-watershed-conference/>.

NJDEP Gloucester County EJ Community Engagement Session - Hybrid
2/27/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Location TBA- In-person & on Zoom

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invites Gloucester 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 and EPA Region 2 personnel and discuss environmental justice issues in Gloucester 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. When additional information is available, it will be provided here: <https://dep.nj.gov/event/gloucester-county-environmental-justice-community-engagement-session-20240227/>.

"Inflation Reduction Act Peer Learning Circle" - Online
2/28/2024, 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

This program is part of the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) climate justice campaign with Side With Love. "We've all heard about the funding available for congregations to advance clean energy through Inflation Reduction Act Funding, but...really...don't we all still have questions about how it works?! If this sounds like you, we invite you to join the Inflation Reduction Act Peer Learning Circle [PLC] to learn with other UUs figuring out how to put these opportunities into action in our communities. Get up to speed by reading this short primer [available here: <http://tinyurl.com/yp6eeh4m>] on the opportunities available for congregations, then bring your questions and good ideas to the PLC!" The link to register is available here: https://secure.everyaction.com/B7i_C_zUFEmioQSOHngmqg2.

"Environmental Justice & Community Organizing 101" Training
2/28/2024, 6:00 p.m. - Virtual

The Newark South Ward Environmental Alliance (SWEA), founded by **EJTF partner Kim Gaddy**, is hosting a virtual training session for those interested in learning about environmental justice and community organizing. Registration is available here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMud-2tqj8qHNTIKiKIJb1ZfKD8UKJxGpl>.

"Understanding the [federal] 2025 Budget and Appropriations Process" - Online
2/29/2024, 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) invites you to a briefing about the latest presidential budget proposal and the outlook for Congressional appropriations for fiscal year 2025. The briefing will describe the different stages of the appropriations process and how it interfaces with other legislative activity on the Hill. The briefing will also shed light on the role of the 12 appropriations subcommittees and highlight ways Congressional staff, working both on and off the appropriations committees, can engage with the process. Panelists will showcase examples of investments in climate, energy, and environment research and innovation that bring the process to life." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/022924budget>.

Green Infrastructure Champions Program
Various dates - Online

"Green Infrastructure Champions are key players in implementing green infrastructure as an approach to stormwater management." This 10-session training program is a collaboration between the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program and the Green Infrastructure Subcommittee of Jersey Water Works. Some sessions have already taken place, and some sessions seem geared to specific entities (e.g., municipalities or schools) but sessions such as "How to design and build a rain garden," may be of interest. Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<http://water.rutgers.edu/Projects/GreenInfrastructureChampions/GIC.html>.

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 sessions scheduled for February 2024 are listed below and on [p. 10](#); descriptions of these and future sessions are available here: <https://www.lwvnj.org/training>.

LWVNJ - "Introduction to the NJ Legislative Process" - via Zoom
2/1/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

"This training is perfect for anyone who is new to advocating for legislation or any veteran grassroots lobbyist looking for a refresher on how laws are made in the Garden State. Our trainers will provide an overview of the structure and powers of the New Jersey Legislature, explain how bills advance through each chamber, teach you how to research and track legislation, and let you know how you can start lobbying with the League." Registration is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/mudrd273>.

LWVNJ - "Introduction to Organizing"
2/13/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- via Zoom

"Grassroots organizing happens when everyday people come together to identify common problems faced by their community and work together to address the issue or advocate for change. This training will introduce you to grassroots organizing principles and strategies and walk you through creating a campaign plan to mobilize supporters and reach critical goals." Registration is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/3vab8usb>.

LWVNJ - "From Ideas to Law: The Activist's Role" - via Zoom
2/21/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

"As an activist, you probably have ideas on actions the state can take to solve a problem in your community. So how do you turn passion into policy that results in meaningful change? Join this training to learn the nuts and bolts of how activists can work with elected officials to introduce impactful new laws bills." Registration is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/4ez9ja45>.

Lead-Free NJ Committee Meetings
Various dates - Online

Lead-Free NJ is a collaborative that "seeks to eliminate racial and economic inequities by focusing on legacy lead hazards in low-income communities and/or communities of color, while also creating the conditions for children to be free from lead poisoning statewide." It is made up of advocacy groups, faith leaders, professionals, neighbors, friends, families, and elected officials and focuses on "Holistic Lead Remediation," "Equitable Policy Change," and "Empowered Communities" A short video describing the organization is available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A1X6W7I0HtDs49n7eWT3-f2UhKoLil/view>. The organization has Community Hubs along with several committees which are having their first meetings of the year in February, as follows:

- **Housing Committee - 2/8/2024, 4:00 p.m.**
- **Water Advocacy Committee - 2/13/2024, 4:00 p.m.**
- **Steering and Advocacy Committee - TBA.**

Additional information about the committees and contact information for joining a committee are available here: <https://www.leadfreenj.org/committees/>.

Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute
Listing of Climate Events

Multiple events are listed on this site; check the site periodically for an updated list, here: <https://rcei.rutgers.edu/events/> and here: <https://rcei.rutgers.edu/news-events/external-events/>.



"35th-annual Pinelands Short Course"
3/9/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Galloway, NJ - In-person

Registration is open for the "Pinelands Short Course," a much-touted daylong event featuring educational presentations that explore the unique history, ecology, and culture of the Pinelands. This year's event will feature 30 presentations, including 14 new, educational programs. The Short Course is hosted by Stockton University for the NJ Pinelands Commission. Additional information, including session descriptions and the link to register (**the cost is \$60.00**) and to sign up for sessions, is available here: <https://www.stockton.edu/continuing-studies/pinelandsshortcourse.html>.

2024 Watershed Congress - Hybrid
3/23/2024, 8:00 a.m.
Pottstown, PA - In-person
3/25/2024 - 3/29/2024, various times - via Zoom



The Watershed Congress is presented by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and its partner organizations. "The Watershed Congress has evolved since 1998 to advance the best available information and techniques for protecting and restoring watersheds. The focus on networking across disciplines means that the Watershed Congress melds science, policy, and practical applications into one program. As a result, the annual Watershed Congress is a highly anticipated event for people interested in understanding, protecting, and restoring their local streams." Links to access details of the event, including program information, are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/383kweyn>. Tickets are available here: <https://www.classy.org/event/2024-watershed-congress/e551083/register/new/select-tickets>. **Note: the following Early Registration Rates are available until 3/1/2024: full access = \$80, in-person only = \$60, and virtual only = \$30.**

VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

NJADAPT: New Tools and Critical Enhancements - Video of Webinar

NJ State of the Food System Summit - Videos of Sessions

The Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health (REACH) and NJ Food Democracy Collaborative (NJFDC) sponsored the NJ State of the Food System Summit. The purpose of this Summit, held annually, was "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." Videos of the following sessions are available:

- REACH Funding Opportunity Information Session
- Jersey Fresh for All Overview & Survey for Farmers and Food Pantries
- Strong Community Farmers Markets
- Advancing Game-Changing Solutions for Food Production in NJ Cities
- Including Students in Community-Engaged Food System Research
- Creating Inclusive Community Markets
- Strategies to Increase Consumer Demand for Local Produced Food.

The videos are available here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbStBAK6VSH_NQ1uzhgLzEIsesXKuXpd8.

"Gray Is the New Green: Organizing the Surge of Older Climate Voters" - Video of Webinar

This Environmental Voter Project's briefing was co-hosted with Third Act, Elders Climate Action, and Moms Clean Air Force. It included recent data on the increasing political power of older climate voters, followed by expert advice, stories, and discussion from the following panel of organizers and climate leaders: Bill McKibben, Third Act; Judith LeBlanc, Native Organizers Alliance; Frances Stewart, Elders Climate Action; and Dominique Browning, Moms Clean Air Force. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUT7TZvsiLY>.

"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." In this webinar, Lucas Marxen, Associate Director, NJAES [Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station] Office of Research Analytics, presented an introduction to the latest release of these powerful decision-support tools, and showed how to use them. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO33xu6VdhA>.

"What Can Social Sciences Do for Energy Efficiency?" - Video of Presentation (starts at 00:31:22 of video)

This recording of the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Clean Energy Program's Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Meeting held on 1/18/2024 includes a presentation by Dr. Rachel Shwom – Chair of Human Dimensions of Environmental Change, Rutgers University, on "The Social Science of Climate Change in NJ." Dr. Shwom's presentation starts at minute 00:31:22 of the video available here: <http://tinyurl.com/25943kr8>.

"Reflections on the Outcomes of COP28" & "Climate Action Now" App Action Party - Video of Webinar

This webinar was presented by Elders Climate Action, which has noted that "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." The webinar included discussions by Elders Climate Action's allies who were present in Dubai. They discussed 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). They also covered what needs to be done to ensure the promises of global leaders are kept. Near the end of the video (at 1:15:50), there is a tutorial and demonstration of the Climate Action Now (CAN) app that "gives individuals the ability to take planet-saving actions from their phone in seconds." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV6x6crPvQ8>.

EPA Community, Equity & Resiliency Virtual Open Houses - - Videos of Sessions

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Air and Radiation and Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights have launched a Community, Equity & Resiliency initiative and hosted several Virtual Open House sessions. Community partners and potential grant applicants were invited to participate in panel discussions and educational fireside chats about the Inflation Reduction Act and other Investing in America funding. Videos of two sessions are available below:

- **Session 1 - "Hot, Crowded & Unhealthy: The Effects of Heat and Infrastructure on Black and Brown Communities"**

This session addressed the complexities of historical segregation, extreme heat, the education gap, and possible solutions for children to grow up in a fair school system with clean air. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMyGmlxOJh4>.

- **Session 2 - "Fresh Air, Fresh Start: Redefining Health & Equity"**

This session addressed the question of how discussions that center on climate change can include health and equity. Ideas for promoting clean air and healthy communities, and the role of advocacy and policy change in achieving environmental justice for all, were discussed. The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9arX_qg4zU.

Eco-Logic Radio Shows "Combating Greenhouse Gas Emissions" and "Green Jobs: Resources & Applications" - 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 <https://wbai.org>. Recordings of these shows are available here:

- "Combating Greenhouse Gas Emissions" - <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=46942>
- "Green Jobs: Resources & Applications" - <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=46941>

"Unpacking the Fifth National Climate Assessment" - Video of Webinar

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) held a briefing about the U.S. Global Change Research Program's fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5). NCA5 is the most comprehensive, holistic, and inclusive report to date on national climate risk and response. Panelists discussed the report's emphasis on the need for 'rapid and deep' greenhouse gas emission reductions and the resulting economic and health benefits. The report also highlights the importance of investing in adaptation to the impacts of climate change - impacts which exacerbate existing climate and social injustices." The video is available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/011824nca>.

"Artificial Intelligence for Climate Change Mitigation" - Video of Webinar

The Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs presented 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," explored 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, 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/>. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jHPqD0ojQ0>.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

[covering 12/27/2023 – 1/26/2024]

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

NJ Gov. Murphy Signs Nation's First EV Battery Recycling Law

Gov. Murphy signed into law "The Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Battery Management Act" that makes NJ the first state in the nation with an "extended producer responsibility" (EPR) law for electric vehicle (EV) batteries and other, similar propulsion batteries. The law requires battery producers to create and submit management plans to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). "The plan may include a complete vehicle take-back program, a battery take-back program or any other such program approved by the department," the law states. It also requires the DEP to carry out a needs assessment in the next six months to determine the availability of propulsion battery recycling operations and related infrastructure. Eighteen months after the needs assessment, the DEP is to adopt rules and regulations establishing standards and criteria for battery management plans.

<https://enviropolitics.com/nj-gov-murphy-signs-nations-first-ev-battery-recycling-law/>

Funding Boost for Electric School Buses, EV Infrastructure

This article describes the mix of federal and state funding, totaling approximately \$44 million, that has recently been made available to NJ for the purchase of electric school buses and installation of charging stations for light-duty vehicles to be used by people living in multi-dwelling units. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/big-funding-boost-electric-school-buses-ev-infrastructure/>

LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

Governor Murphy Vetoes Bill to Battle Invasive Plant Species in New Jersey

On the last day of the legislative session, Gov. Murphy vetoed a bill that would have prohibited the sale, distribution, import, export, or propagation of certain invasive species without a permit from the NJ Department of Agriculture. It also would have created an "Invasive Species Council" that would have been tasked with developing an invasive species management plan; a previous such council had been disbanded by Gov. Christie. Gov. Murphy called the bill's goals "laudable," agreeing that the spread of invasive plants threatens New Jersey's natural resources and agriculture, but he stated that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) already has "existing authority ... in this space." He issued an absolute veto, which means the bill cannot become law unless the Legislature overrides it by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members of each House, but that did not happen. Sen. Bob Smith, a prime sponsor of the bill, said he'll reintroduce it in the new legislative session. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2024/01/09/governor-murphy-vetoes-bill-to-battle-invasive-plant-species-in-new-jersey/>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

NJ Transit Abandons Controversial Kearny Gas Plant

NJ Transit has announced that it is abandoning plans to construct the controversial gas-burning

power plant "NJ TransitGrid Microgrid Central Facility" in Kearny, which was meant to prevent service interruptions during severe weather events like those seen following Hurricane Sandy. The \$500 million in funding that was intended for the plant will be used on three other infrastructure projects. [A 1-minute news video is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-transit-scraps-controversial-meadowlands-power-plant/>.] "This is a victory for the grassroots activists who never stopped pushing the Murphy administration to reject a scheme to place a new fossil fuel project near communities that have suffered from decades of industrial pollution," said Matt Smith, NJ state director for Food and Water Watch. According to NJ Transit, improvements to the power grid, coupled with the fact that the project is no longer financially feasible, led to the decision to abandon the planned plant. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/briefs/nj-transit-abandons-controversial-kearny-gas-plant/>

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Expanding Access to School Meals for New Jersey Students

"Advancing efforts to eliminate food insecurity among New Jersey's young learners, Governor Phil Murphy today [1/16/2024] signed legislation expanding eligibility criteria under the Working Class Families Anti-Hunger Act, A5684/S4055. Under the legislation, public and non-public schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or federal School Breakfast Program will provide a free school lunch and/or breakfast to students whose families have an annual household income of up to 224 percent of the federal poverty level, which will make over 60,000 families newly eligible." <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240116b.shtml>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)

FERC Only Grants NESE a 1-year Extension

"On May 3, 2019, the Commission [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission - FERC] issued an order authorizing Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (Transco) to construct and place into service the Northeast Supply Enhancement Project (NESE project) by May 3, 2021. On May 20, 2021, the Commission granted a two-year extension of time for Transco to construct and put into service the NESE project by May 3, 2023. On April 27, 2023, Transco requested a second two-year extension of time, until May 3, 2025, to construct the project and place it into service." Motions to intervene and comments opposing the requested extension were filed with FERC by a number of groups and individuals, including the NJ League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club. Taking the comments and other factors into account, FERC issued an Order granting only a 1-year extension. This may be viewed as a partial victory, and it is heartening that FERC took the comments into consideration. The Order, describing FERC's decision and reasoning, is available here: <https://www.ferc.gov/media/c-5-cp17-101-005>.

Murphy Signs Law to Expand Community Solar Program

Gov. Murphy has signed 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. 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.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/new-law-signed-expands-nj-community-solar-program/>

190,628 = Number of Solar Energy Systems Installed in NJ Homes and Businesses

"As of the end of last November, there were 190,628 solar energy systems installed in New Jersey homes and businesses, according to the state's clean-energy program. Solar energy is projected to provide up to 34% of the electricity used by residents and others by mid-century, according to the state's latest Energy Master Plan."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/190628-solar-energy-systems-installed-november-2023-nj/>

OFFSHORE WIND

NJBPU Approves Over 3,700 MW of Offshore Wind Capacity in Combined Award

As a result of NJ's Third Solicitation for offshore wind projects, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has awarded a combined 3,742 MW of offshore wind capacity to Invenergy and energyRE's Leading Light Wind Project and Attentive Energy LLC's Attentive Energy Two Project. According to the BPU press release, "Combined, the projects will bring \$6.8 billion in economic benefits to New Jersey and provide enough domestically produced energy to power 1.8 million homes....Both projects have committed to supporting the establishment of a tower manufacturer at the New Jersey Wind Port in addition to sourcing monopiles from, and investing in, the expansion of the EEW [EEW American Offshore Structures] monopile facility at the Port of Paulsboro. Together, the projects are estimated to create more than 27,000 direct, indirect, and induced full-time equivalent job years....the awarded projects have also committed to provide support for environmental and fisheries research, monitoring, and conservation efforts in an amount totaling over \$60 million....The total bill impact of the two projects for residential customers will be \$6.84 per month, beginning only once these offshore wind facilities are operational and delivering clean electricity to the New Jersey grid." These projects reflect the current economic realities and include an inflation adjustment mechanism. In addition, these projects are at least 40 miles off the coast, farther than previously-

awarded projects slated for between 10 and 20 miles offshore. See <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2023/approved/20240124.html>. Additional information is available in this article: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/nj-state-regulators-approve-2-new-wind-farms-boost-gov-phil-murphy-clean-energy-agenda/>, and a related 4-1/2-minute news video is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-regulators-approve-two-new-offshore-wind-farms/>.



Rutgers Researchers Want New Lab to Test Floating Offshore Wind Turbines

This 4-minute news video describes a proposed Rutgers University "Net-Zero Wind Energy Test (WET) Center" research center devoted to the study of wind energy, focusing on floating offshore wind turbines. It is envisioned to consist of a warehouse-sized facility near the Jersey Shore and a smaller laboratory on the Rutgers New Brunswick campus. The WET Center is one of the first flagship interdisciplinary projects of the newly created Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute (RCEI). It was chosen to receive about \$1.1 million in startup funds from the Rutgers-New Brunswick Chancellor's Office (see <http://tinyurl.com/4z3vay5e>), and Rutgers is seeking government and private industry funding for the Center. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/rutgers-researchers-want-new-lab-to-test-floating-offshore-wind-turbines/>

Rutgers Students Among Those Working on Wind Institute Fellowship Program

The NJ Wind Institute Fellowship Program is a pilot project sponsored by the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA). "The Wind Institute Fellowship Program provides funding for NJ

university students seeking to be at the forefront of advancing knowledge and innovation in the offshore wind industry in New Jersey. In its second year, Rutgers [and eight other institutions] are participating in the Fellowship Program to offer a combined 40 undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to perform paid, independent research over an academic year." This article describes the work of one of the Rutgers students who is researching the impact of offshore wind farms on marine benthic communities.

<https://www.civictory.org/reporting/2024/1/16/rutgers-students-among-those-across-the-state-working-on-wind-institute-fellowship-program>

BP Terminates Empire Wind 2 Farm; 2nd Jersey Shore Wind Farm Axed

In November 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, located about 17 nautical miles east of Long Branch, NJ and 12 nautical miles south of Long Island, NY. Empire Wind 1 and 2 was an agreement made between Equinor/BP and NY; NJ was not involved in the project. On 1/3/2024, Equinor/BP announced the termination of their agreement with NY for Empire Wind 2, citing "inflation, interest rates and supply chain disruptions" as reasons for canceling the project along with "changed economic circumstances on an industry-wide scale." Although the wind farm would have been located off the Jersey Shore, the energy that would have been generated there was primarily meant to service Long Island, NY. However, BP/Equinor is now the second energy company in the past four months to walk away from plans to build a wind farm off the Jersey Shore.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/longbranch/empire-wind-2-turbines-canceled-would-have-been-19-miles-nj>

Pallone: Speeding Cargo Ships Killing Whales

This 4-minute news video describes a press event held in Long Branch at which Congressman Pallone and several environmental organizations described effects on whales, particularly the very

endangered North Atlantic right whales, of the lack of enforcement of the vessel speed restriction rule by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Coast Guard. At the event were: the Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter; Congressman Pallone; OCEANA; Environment NJ; and the NJ League of Conservation Voters. OCEANA recently released a report (available here: https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/10/NARW-23-0004-NARW-Ship-Report_Printable-Report.pdf) on the harmful impact of vessel strikes on whales, and Congressman Pallone sent a letter (available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zhZx6qy76VBUjvw6Sjr7vieYiZS9CFc/view>) calling on NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to better enforce the rule. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/pallone-speeding-cargo-ships-killing-whales/>

CLIMATE CHANGE

As Climate Crisis Deepens, NJ Confronts Pivotal Choices on Green Energy

This article addresses the questions: "Should New Jersey move forward on an increasingly contentious offshore wind program? How should it revive a once robust solar energy sector? Does it need to continue funding billions of dollars in energy efficiency initiatives? What will it take to accelerate an even more expensive modernization of the electric grid with the capacity to handle new cleaner sources of energy? And then there's the more overarching question: Does the state have the financial resources, expertise and even the political will to achieve all that by 2035, the target set by Gov. Phil Murphy for New Jersey to reach 100% clean energy?"

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/as-climate-crisis-deepens-nj-confronts-pivotal-choices-on-green-energy/>

As Saltwater Encroaches on Farms, Solutions Emerge From the Marshes

This collaborative piece between NJ Spotlight News and Civil Eats (a nonprofit news organization that focuses on stories about sustainable agriculture in an effort to build economically and socially just communities) is part of a series on "Climate Change and NJ Agriculture." This report focuses on the effect sea level rise due to climate

change is having on NJ farmers and how they are coping with it. It includes a 13-minute video that describes some of the impacts already occurring and ways farmers are reimagining use of the land to grow more viable plants, such as salt hay, that can be sold and also serves to stabilize and restore the land.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/climate-change-already-changing-what-some-farmers-can-grow-south-jersey-salt-hay-marsh-grasses-salt-encroachment/>

Hoboken Creates New Department to Address 'Urgent Challenges of Climate Change'

The City of Hoboken has created a new Department of Climate Action & Innovation to address the challenges of climate change. Hoboken is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, because close to 70 percent of the city is within the floodplain. Mayor Ravi Bhalla stated that, "By creating this department ... we aim to make Hoboken the most prepared, adaptable, and climate-ready community in New Jersey, while setting an example for cities of similar size worldwide."

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/hoboken/sections/green/articles/hoboken-creates-new-department-to-address-urgent-challenges-of-climate-change>



Sand Dollars: NJ's Costly Beach Replenishment Cycle Faces Climate-Change Challenge

This article describes the cycle of NJ beach replenishment and subsequent erosion due to increasingly occurring and destructive storms, and the costs associated with the replenishment.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/climate-change-rising-sea-levels-stronger-more-frequent-threaten-nj-shore-beach-replenishment/>

FOREST HEALTH

DEP Opens Online Public Comment Period on Proposed Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is accepting online comments **until 3/9/2024** for the proposed Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map, which designates "legal routes for street-legal vehicle usage, while protecting culturally and ecologically sensitive areas." [A 4-1/2-minute news video is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/new-map-would-limit-vehicles-in-wharton-state-forest/>.]

Development of the map was guided by input provided by stakeholders as well as DEP data on endangered and nongame species, wetlands, historic resources, rare plants and ecological habitats. The proposed map and additional information are available here:

https://nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0001.htm.

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

Morris Township Rental Properties Must Be Inspected for Lead Hazards

NJ law requires that all rental properties that were built before 1978, whether single family or multi-family, must be inspected for lead hazards. Morris Township recently passed an ordinance to comply with the law, which requires a visual inspection of painted surfaces every 3 years, or upon tenant turnover. If hazards are found, the owner must remediate through abatement or interim control measures. The first inspection must take place by 7/22/2024. Fees for using municipality contractors varies in NJ (see Flemington borough fees here: <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/flemington-slash-raritan/sections/government/articles/flemington-approves-new-contract-regarding-lead-paint-inspections>), although in some cases owners can hire their own contractors.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/morristown/sections/home-and-garden/articles/morris-township-rental-properties-must-be-inspected-for-lead-hazards>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

Gov. Murphy Signs Nation-Leading PFAS Bill Into Law, More Needed for Strongest Protections

A bill (S3176/A4760) signed by Gov. Murphy institutes a nation-leading law on per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). It requires the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Drinking Water Quality Institute to perform studies concerning PFAS regulation and treatment that take into account the entire class or specific subclasses or mixtures of PFAS in drinking water rather than focusing on each substance individually, and also to assess treatment technologies for their removal from drinking water or wastewater. According to the Sierra Club NJ Chapter, passage of this law "is a massive win for toxics regulation and the protection of drinking water for New Jerseyans. This posits our state leaps and bounds beyond what others have done across the county and even beyond measures taken by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)."

<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2024/01/gov-murphy-signs-nation-leading-pfas-bill-law-more-needed-strongest>

OTHER

Jersey City's Subsidized Ride-Share Program Addresses 'Transit Deserts'

Four years ago, Jersey City launched a subsidized ride-share program to serve areas without adequate public transportation; it has now surpassed 2 million rides. According to Jersey City officials, 80% of the rides served people of color and 60% served low-income residents.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/jersey-city-subsidized-ride-share-program-tackles-transit-deserts/>

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Establish NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation

Gov. Murphy signed the bill S1311/A594, which establishes the NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation within the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). As described in the Statement for the bill, "The foundation would be devoted to the raising of funds for: (1) improvements to natural or artificial assets, including the planning, design, construction, installation, renovation, repair, or restoration thereof, which are designed to expand and enhance the utilization of State, county, and municipal parks and open space for recreation and conservation purposes and the equitable access thereto; and (2) activities, beyond the routine operations of State, county, or municipal parks and open space, which are intended to enhance public programming and recreational and educational offerings, restore or maintain public accessibility to the natural resources of the State, or support operation and maintenance activities attendant thereto."

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240112a.shtml>

Murphy Is Told He Needs to Do More for the Pinelands

In its 2024 "State of the Pinelands Report" (available here: <https://pinelandsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/State-of-the-Pinelands-report-2024-web.pdf>), the Pinelands Preservation Alliance criticized the governor and the NJ Legislature for not increasing funds to add needed staff at the commission, for allowing the corporate-business tax surcharge to expire, and for failing to fill three open seats on the Pinelands Commission. The report also described some positive occurrences, such as the appointment of a new executive director, the adoption of new protections for the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer, and a new plan and visitor map of Wharton State Forest.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/murphy-urged-to-increase-funding-protect-nj-pinelands/>

Sustainable Princeton Named Citizens Champion in Action for Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Across New Jersey

The nonprofit "Sustainable Princeton" has been named a Citizens' [Citizens Financial Group, Inc.] 2024 Champion in Action® for their efforts promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy. Sustainable Princeton will receive \$50,000 in funding and support from Citizens. Sustainable Princeton's vision is for Princeton to examine every action through the lens of sustainability. "Their three focus areas are: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by increasing energy efficiency in their built environment and the use of renewable energy, protecting their local ecosystem, and strengthening their resilience to climate change. They also provide sustainability consulting services to their municipality and public school district." <https://www.sustainableprinceton.org/sustainable-named-citizens-champion-in-action/>

NJDEP Releases a Ground Source Heat Pump Baseline Report

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has released a Ground Source Heat Pump Baseline Report. The report was developed with the objective of "quantifying and analyzing the current landscape of vertically drilled open-loop and closed-loop ground source heat pump (GSHP) systems installed in the State... [it] integrates input from GSHP developers to put forward strategic policy recommendations to help spur future growth of this clean heating and cooling technology." The report is available here: https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/cleanenergy/new-jersey-ground-source-heat-pump-baseline-report_final.pdf.

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

ACTION ON BILLS IN THE NJ 2022-2023 LAME DUCK LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The following bills related to EJTF's goals were signed by Gov. Murphy during the NJ legislature's "Lame Duck" session, after the election. Note: to look up the bills at <https://njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search>, specify "Legislative Session 2022-2023" in the Search box.

- A-4782/S-3123 - Revises goal for annual capacity of projects to be approved under Community Solar Energy Program; allows certain customers to self-attest for income requirements (see article on [p. 14](#))
- A-4691/S-1530 - Requires hazard mitigation plans to include climate change-related threat assessments and hazard prevention and mitigation strategies
- A-5442/S-3793 - Directs BPU to conduct study to determine feasibility, marketability, and costs of implementing large-scale geothermal heat pump systems in State
- A-4821/A-4823/S-3283 - Directs DEP to take certain actions concerning identification and testing of microplastics in drinking water, and requires DEP and BPU to study and promote use of microplastics removal technologies
- S-3176/A-4760 - Requires DEP and Drinking Water Quality Institute to perform study concerning regulation and treatment of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (see article on [p. 18](#))
- A-4125/S-2712 - Prohibits sale, manufacture, distribution, and use of firefighting foam containing intentionally added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances; requires DEP to establish collection and disposal program; appropriates \$250,000
- S-1311/A-594 - Establishes NJ State Parks and Open Space Foundation (see article on [p. 18](#))
- S-3044/A-4716 - Makes supplemental appropriation of \$15 million to DEP for implementation of Electric School Bus Program
- S-3723/A-5365 - "Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Battery Management Act" (see article on [p. 13](#))
- A-4794/S-3224 - Requires request for proposal to establish demonstration projects to develop electric vehicle (EV) charging depots serviced by distributed energy resource charging centers for certain EV use
- S-3102/A-4715 - Establishes uptime requirement for electric vehicle charging station incentive programs
- S-3490/A-5124 - Amends certain requirements for installation of electric vehicle supply equipment and Make-Ready parking spaces
- A-4522/S-3234 - Requires certain disclosures by sellers of single-family homes with solar panels installed
- S-2848/A-4328 - Revises criteria for remote net metering program established by BPU
- A-4791/S-3184 - Establishes "Resiliency and Environmental System Investment Charge Program"
- A-5813/S-3392 - Exempts electricity sold to certain recovered materials manufacturing facilities from renewable energy portfolio standards
- A-2040/S-540 - Requires Commissioner of Human Services to request authorization for SNAP benefits to be used to pay delivery charges for online grocery purchases
- S-539/A-2140 - Permits online purchase of eligible foods using WIC funds and use of WIC funds for grocery delivery charges (as may be permitted by the USDA WIC program)
- S-3153/A-4548 - Authorizes schools to receive certain food waste from other schools, and provides exemption to such receiving schools from certain DEP permits, under certain conditions
- A-5684/S-4055 - Requires certain nonpublic schools to provide meals to all students under "Working Class Families Anti-Hunger Act"; authorizes limited expansion of income eligibility to qualify public and nonpublic school students for free lunch (see article on [p. 14](#))

Governor Murphy "absolute vetoed" the following bill:

- A-3677/A-2807/S-2186 - ABSOLUTE VETO - Prohibits sale, distribution, import, export or propagation of certain invasive species without permit from Department of Agriculture; establishes NJ Invasive Species Council (see article on [p. 13](#))

BILLS TO WATCH IN THE 2024-2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- **2024-2025 Bill #A-1480/S-237 - "Clean Energy Bill"** - Revises State renewable energy portfolio standards - **SUPPORT!**
- **2024-2025 Bill #A-1462/S-2275 - "Dirty Gas Bill"** - Directs BPU to establish program concerning renewable natural gas; provides gas public utilities with customer rate recovery mechanism for costs associated with program - **OPPOSE!** (additional information is available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n9OuDMBF8RcrYNo5yBB98Ev6aU8D669S/view>)