



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

- **EJTF at the UUFANJ "Justice for All" Gala (see [p. 2](#))**



UUFANJ Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) members (L to R) Bill Potter, Clara Haignere, Michael Skelly, Christine Dunbar, Nancy Griffeth, Jo Sippie-Gora, Chair Peggy Middaugh, Judy Stevens, Ray Nichols (Photo courtesy of Michael Skelly)

- **UUOCC at the BOEM Offshore Wind Public Session (see [p. 2](#))**

Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) members and friends at Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) public session (L to R): Sue Middaugh, Ellen Sypowicz, EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh, Joanie Parks, Irene Tysh, Pat Daly, Roseanne DePasquale, Cynthia Light (not pictured: Sandy Lewis)



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EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

- **UU FaithAction NJ (UUFANJ) "Justice for All" Gala**



A core contingent of **EJTF members** attended the UUFANJ annual Gala (see photo on [p. 1](#)), held on Saturday 2/10/2024 at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton, NJ. At this year's Gala, "Justice for All," Unitarian Universalists, friends, and allies from across NJ gathered to support social justice causes. Pictured (below left, L to R) are UUFANJ Board President Mia Morse and UUFANJ Executive Director Rev. Charles Loflin, and (below right, L to R) EJTF member Michael Skelly, UUFANJ Executive Director Rev. Charles Loflin, and UUFANJ Liaison from the Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist Community (DDUUC) John DeMasi.



(Photos courtesy of Michael Skelly)

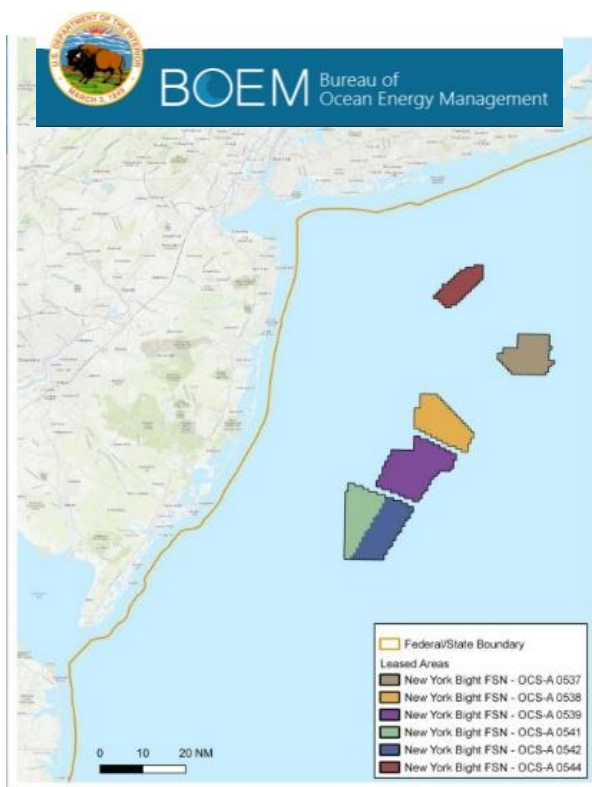
- **UUOCC at the BOEM Offshore Wind Public Session**



Ten Unitarian Universalists and friends from the **Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC)** attended the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Offshore Wind public session, to support BOEM's efforts. (See [p. 1](#) for names of those pictured; Irene Tysh appears in the inset at left). The NJ League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club and Pinelands Preservation Alliance also shared information about the benefits of Offshore Wind. Session attendees were split almost evenly between proponents of, and opponents to, offshore wind. See the news article on [p. 17](#), including a video (in which UUOCC's Irene Tysh appears).

EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

- **EJTF member Michael Skelly** provided testimony at one of the virtual public sessions held by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) regarding the draft regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) that is being prepared for the "NY Bight," which comprises six NJ and NY offshore wind lease areas (see map below). Michael's testimony is in the box at right, below, and expertly describes EJTF's position in support of offshore wind.



The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is drafting one Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the NY & NJ "NY Bight" Lease Areas.

A summary of environmental justice impacts included in the draft PEIS is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/mr2pa2xy>.

Michael Skelly's Testimony at the 1/31/2024 BOEM Offshore Wind Virtual Public Session

Hi, I'm Michael Skelly. I live in Bordentown City, NJ.

Our family had a home on New Jersey's shore in Margate New Jersey Atlantic County for nearly 30 years.

I represent Unitarian Universalist Faith Action of New Jersey and our Environmental Justice Task Force.

UU Faith Action represents all the Unitarian Universalist Congregations throughout New Jersey.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak out in support of the BOEM Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement pertaining to six commercial wind energy leases in the area offshore New Jersey and New York.

Our faith calls on us to respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and have respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part; therefore these wind energy projects, and their environmental impact are of direct interest to us.

We support BOEM's tiered study, analysis, review, and public participation process, starting with Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and then conducting a further EIS and COP for each of the projects.

We expect that process will lead to an expeditious and orderly development process that is sensitive to Environment Justice Communities AND the web of life.

We are looking forward to these wind energy projects and more because they will help clean our air of pollution that harms our health, while creating good jobs, and protecting humans and nature from the rapidly increasing dangers from climate change.

We believe the science that Climate Change is real, it is here now, and it is an existential problem that we must face and take immediate action to reduce fossil fuel emissions that cause it.

The longer we take to significantly cut our use of fossil fuels, not only will we slip deeper into the climate crisis, the harder it will be to climb out of the hole the forces of fossil energy are already digging for us and all life on earth.

Thank you for your attention. - By Dr. Michael Skelly, Sr.

- ANNOUNCING -

NEW EJTF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ACTION GROUP

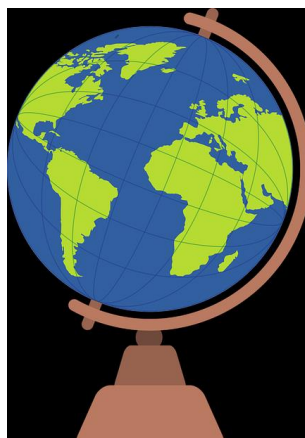
The UUFANJ Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) is forming a new Action Subgroup for Environmental Education. We plan to focus first on impacting the NJ Student Learning Standards, and are actively seeking participants from UU Congregations, partners, and allies.

BACKGROUND: NJ State law calls for revision to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) every five years. NJ Student Learning Standards sets the learning goals across nine subjects for all NJ students in grades from pre-K through grade 12. In 2022, New Jersey had 1,321,709 students enrolled in a total of 2,312 schools in 546 school districts. These standards set the foundation for school districts to build curriculum and plan instruction throughout NJ. Each year the NJ Department of Education (NJ DOE) calls for stakeholder input and public comment on the Learning Standards on a revolving schedule. This year the NJ DOE will seek public comment on the areas of science, social studies, world language, comprehensive health/physical education, and visual/performing arts. These standards will then be reviewed and seek final adoption by the State in 2025. Other subjects will be covered in other years.

REASONING: Environmental awareness, and environmental justice by our communities and our public officials, takes respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Education in the schools is one means to create a generation that has learned about the web of existence and could value it in the future. By review, comment and participation in the Student Learning Standards process we could have an impact on the next generation and our leaders.

- Analysis provided by Michael Skelly

If you are interested in participating in the Environmental Education Action Group, please contact EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh at environment@uufaithaction.org.



FUTURE EVENTS - Virtual, In-person, and Hybrid

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

MARCH 2024 (with hyperlinks to details on the following pages)						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2 Liberty State Park Design Task Force Public Meeting (with open public comment period) - 10:00 a.m.
3	4 "The Place of Human Values in Climate-risk Research" - 2:55 p.m.	5	6 DRBC 1Q Business Meeting - 10:30 a.m. "The Climate Adaptation & Mitigation Clash" - 12:00 p.m. "Understanding the DEP Regulatory Process I" - 4:00 p.m.	7	8	9 "35th-annual Pinelands Short Course" - 9:00 a.m. Comments Due: NJDEP Proposed Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map
10	11 "Draw the Line for Real Clean Energy Solutions in NJ" Rally and Lobby Day - 9:00 a.m. "Meeting the Net-zero Challenge: Corporate Climate Impact with the Voluntary Carbon Market" - 2:55 p.m.	12 LWVNJ - "Understanding the State Budget Process" - 6:00 p.m.	13 "The Next Climate Frontier - Industrial Decarbonization" - 2:15 p.m.	14	15	16
17	18 "Climate Intervention - What Do We Know, What Do We Need to Know, Should We Know It?" - 2:55 p.m.	19 LWVNJ - "Understanding NJ Local Government" - 6:00 p.m. Liberty State Park Design Task Force Public Meeting - 6:00 p.m.	20 "Option Green: Home Energy Conservation with PSE&G" - 7:00 p.m.	21 "Energy Resources & Energy Conversion Technologies" - 12:30 p.m. "2024 Sustainable Energy in America Factbook" - 2:00 p.m. "World Water Day: Water is Life" - 7:00 p.m. "Electrify Your Home - With Help of the IRA (a New Jersey Focused View)" - 7:00 p.m.	22	23 2024 Watershed Congress - 8:00 a.m.
Calendar continues on p. 6						

Calendar continued from p. 5

24	25 "Designing Effective Environmental and Conservation Policies: The Role of Collective Approaches" - 12:15 p.m. "The Next Phase of Business Sustainability" - 2:55 p.m. 2024 Watershed Congress	26 "Multisolving: Actions That Protect the Climate While Improving Health, Equity, and Biodiversity" - 7:00 p.m. 2024 Watershed Congress	27 2024 Watershed Congress	28 2024 Watershed Congress	29 2024 Watershed Congress	30
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FUTURE EVENTS

**Liberty State Park Design Task Force
Public Meeting (with open comment
period) - Hybrid**

3/2/2024, 10:00 a.m.

Jersey City, NJ - In-person & via Zoom

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is hosting a public meeting of the Liberty State Park (LSP) Design Task Force on 3/2/2024 (rescheduled from 1/30/2024 - see news video linked on [p. 21](#) and see DEP Commissioner LaTourette's viewpoint at minute 0:46 of the video interview available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/new-jersey-climate-issues-liberty-state-park-shawn-la-tourette-vin-gopal-school-funding/>). The purpose of the meeting is "to discuss alternatives for potential active recreation, arts, and cultural amenities in LSP-North (Phase 1B), as well as elements for inclusion in the Master Plan for LSP-South (Phase 2).

Following the Task Force meeting, an open comment period will be held for members of the public to offer comments to the Design Task Force." Registration for in-person attendance is voluntary, but recommended. To attend virtually, you must register to receive a Zoom link; the registration link is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/258a8m7y>. Virtual attendees will be able to submit comments online at <https://dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/>. Additional information is available here: https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0212pn.htm

**Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)
First Quarter 2024 Business Meeting
3/6/2024, 10:30 a.m. - via Zoom**

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) will hold its first-quarter business meeting on Wednesday, 3/6/2024. The business meeting is open to the public and will be held virtually via Zoom Webinar. Additional information, including a link to the agenda, registration to attend via Zoom and provide comments, and a link to the livestream via YouTube are available here: <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/meetings/upcoming/#2>.

**"The Climate Adaptation & Mitigation Clash
- A 3-Dimensional Trade-off Analysis
between Efficiency, Cost, and Emissions for
a Northeast Urban District Energy Systems
that Incorporates Distributed Energy
Resources" - Webinar
3/6/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

This talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," will be presented by Benedict Veraga, PhD Candidate in Electrical Engineering at George Washington University. "The 2023 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underscores the critical need for both adaptation to our changing climate and reducing further environmental impacts. This presentation focuses on the trade-offs among cost, efficiency, and emissions in a northeastern urban energy system incorporating renewable sources and storage solutions. It reveals concerning findings about conflicting objectives. The presentation will

describe the model that was built and proposes a methodology to achieve a balanced compromise between cost, energy efficiency, and emissions, aligning climate adaptation with mitigation goals." Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://irving.dartmouth.edu/news-events/news-events/new-energy-series>.

"Understanding the DEP Regulatory Process I" - Hybrid
3/6/2024, 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 (EJ) 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. Two seminars related to the regulatory process will take place: the first on **3/6/2024** (rescheduled from 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 the second on **4/20/2024** 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>.

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

The "Pinelands Short Course," a much-touted daylong event featuring educational presentations that explore the unique history, ecology, and culture of the Pinelands, is being held on 3/9/2024. 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>.

NJDEP Proposed Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map
Comments Due 3/9/2024

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is accepting online comments 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/> and also see news article on [p. 19](#).) 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. **The form for making comments, due by 3/9/2024, is available here:** <http://tinyurl.com/26bw2hwh>.

"Draw the Line for Real Clean Energy Solutions in NJ" Rally and Lobby Day
3/11/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Trenton, NJ - In-person

Join EmpowerNJ (a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**) at the NJ state capitol on 3/11/2024 for a rally and lobby day for 100% truly clean energy by 2035. "We're in a climate emergency, and three bills are under consideration in the NJ Legislature that could make or break NJ's transition to truly clean, zero emissions energy.

- **The Clean Energy Standard** (S237/A1480) could move NJ onto 100% truly clean energy by 2035, if the right amendments are made to reduce air pollutants, protect environmental justice communities, and create in-state green jobs.
- **The Unaffordable Dirty RNG Gas bill** (S2275/A1462) would give away billions in new subsidies to the fossil fuel industry for dirty & expensive "renewable" natural gas and keep us on dirty energy for decades. It must be stopped!
- **The Low Carbon Fuel Standard** (S2425/A3645) [which] has many of the same problems as the RNG bill. It would perpetuate the

use of fossil fuels, raise consumer costs, and undercut real solutions to electrify New Jersey's transportation sector....

On March 11, a joint hearing will be held on the Clean Energy Standard bill by the Senate Environment & Assembly Telecommunications Committees. This is the first time this bill will be heard by the Assembly Telecommunications Committee, and our first big opportunity of the new legislative session to push for amendments to strengthen the bill." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/draw-the-line-for-real-clean-energy-solutions-in-nj/>.

"The Next Climate Frontier - Industrial Decarbonization"
3/13/2024, 2:15 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

"Heavy industries like steel, cement, and chemicals are among the largest emitters of carbon dioxide, accounting for 23% of global greenhouse gas emissions.... Join LightWorks at Arizona State University, ASU's Electrified Processes for Industry Without Carbon - EPIX, funded by DOE, and the Security and Sustainability Forum, and be part of an enlightening discussion about overcoming barriers to accelerate industrial decarbonization." Topics will include: the speed at which the transition can occur, the capital required, and how this capital can be allocated most effectively; and, economic implications including how the cost of carbon might influence behavior and employment. Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Policy--Technology-and--Money-to-Decarbonize-Industry---March-13th-Webinar.html?soid=1102306387692&aid=yehtpTw0DqO>.

Liberty State Park Design Task Force Public Meeting - Hybrid
3/19/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Jersey City, NJ - In-person & on Zoom

"At this meeting, the [Liberty State Park (LSP) Design] Task Force will continue to consider and provide advice to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (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). Registration for in-person attendance is voluntary, but recommended. To attend virtually, you must register to receive a Zoom link; the registration link will be available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/event/liberty-state-park-design-task-force-public-meeting-3/>. Note: there is no mention of an open public comment period at this meeting, such as is to be provided at the 3/2/2024 LSP Design Task Force public meeting described on [p. 6](#).

"Option Green: Home Energy Conservation with PSE&G" - Hybrid
3/20/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.
East Brunswick, NJ - In-person & on Zoom

This program, part of the Option Green series in co-partnership with the Friends of the East Brunswick Environmental Commission, consists of a PSE&G presentation that will include: detailed information about the different types of residential home energy assessments, rebates and discounts; PSE&G's online Marketplace; the residential electric vehicle charging program; and a brief overview of the small business direct install program. Additional information and the link to register to attend via Zoom are available here:

<https://ilove.ebpl.org/adults/events/option-green-home-energy-conservation-pseg-hybrid/2024-03-20-230000-2024-03-21-001500>.

"Energy Resources & Energy Conversion Technologies"
3/21/2024, 12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Princeton, NJ - In-person

This talk, presented by the Princeton Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment, will be given by Dr. Vijay Modi, who "works closely with city and national agencies/utilities to understand how energy services can be more accessible, more efficient, and cleaner. Modi's areas of expertise are

energy resources and energy conversion technologies. His recent project on mini-grids provides a unique understanding of consumer behavior, demand for energy, and business models for deploying energy solutions and energy efficiency. While his early work was on computational fluid dynamics and micro-electro-mechanical systems, his recent work has been on energy infrastructure design and planning, solar energy, energy efficiency in agriculture, and data analytics spanning urban settings to remote rural settings." Additional information will be available here: <https://acee.princeton.edu/events/2024-highlight-seminar-vijay-modi/>.

"2024 Sustainable Energy in America Factbook" - Webinar
3/21/2024, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) invite you to a briefing about the 12th edition of the Sustainable Energy in America Factbook. The Factbook provides valuable year-over-year data and insights on the U.S. energy transformation, with an in-depth look at the energy efficiency, renewable energy, and natural gas sectors, as well as transmission, digitalization, micro-grids, offshore wind, hydrogen, renewable natural gas, and more. Panelists will explore the impact of supply chain trends as well as permitting and siting processes on U.S. clean energy deployment. They will also highlight investment figures resulting from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act." The Factbook, published by BloombergNEF and BCSE is available to download by registering here: <https://bcse.org/market-trends/>. Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/032124factbook>.

"World Water Day: Water is Life" with UU Ministry for Earth - Webinar
3/21/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

This webinar is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUMFE), which states "World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness that 2.2 billion people live without access to safe water. We are honored to welcome Rev. Dr. Clyde Grubbs and Rev. Karen

Van Fossan into a conversation on this important and sacred day. They are defenders and protectors of water; two spiritual leaders in our UU movement who will help us build a heart-centered approach to a right relationship with Mother Earth and her waters." Additional information and registration is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/yt3mx8u6>.

"Electrify Your Home - With Help of the IRA - a New Jersey Focused View"
- Webinar
3/21/2024, 7:00 p.m.

In this webinar sponsored by the Building Electrification Committee of the Sierra Club NJ Chapter, Ernest Dorflinger will provide "easy to understand directions to start a multi-step long time horizon Home Electrification Project." Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002IFmSAAW&mapLinkHref=>.

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 are Early Registration Rates available until 3/1/2024: full access = \$80, in-person only = \$60, and virtual only = \$30; check website for current rates.**

"Designing Effective Environmental and Conservation Policies: The Role of Collective Approaches" - Hybrid
3/25/2024, 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Princeton, NJ - In-person, & Livestreamed

This talk, presented by the Princeton University Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment (C-PREE), will be given by Dr. Kathleen Segerson, a Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Segerson "is an environmental economist, with a strong interest in collaborative interdisciplinary work. Her research within economics is primarily applied theory focused on the incentive effects of alternative environmental and conservation policy instruments, with applications to groundwater contamination, hazardous waste management, land use regulation, climate change, nonpoint pollution from agriculture, and protection of marine species." Additional information is available here:

<https://cpree.princeton.edu/events/2024/designing-effective-environmental-and-conservation-policies-role-collective-approaches>.

"Multisolving: Actions That Protect the Climate While Improving Health, Equity, and Biodiversity" - Webinar
3/26/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. & "Climate Action Now" App Action Party
8:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

This webinar is presented by Elders Climate Action. "Multisolving means acting in ways that address several problems at once, and climate protection is rich with opportunities for multisolving. This webinar will share examples of multisolving, touch on what might get in the way of multisolving, and share some of the practices seen in effective multisolving. The webinar will be interactive and will include a chance to explore FLOWER, a soon-to-be-released interactive online tool for multisolving." 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." Additional information about the webinar, and a QR code to set up the Climate Action Now app in advance, are available here: https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc_march24/.

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 March 2024 are listed below; descriptions of these and future sessions are available here: <https://www.lwvnj.org/training>.

LWVNJ - "Understanding the State Budget Process"
3/12/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- via Zoom

"Each year the Executive and Legislative Branches work together to approve a new state budget and determine how the state's resources will be allocated. This process is complex and can be difficult to follow. During this training experts will walk you through how government agencies and the Office of Management and Budget collaborate to determine policy and program priorities, review important fiscal deadlines, and help you understand the ins-and-outs of this important government exercise." Registration is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/hn7n2v26>.

LWVNJ - "Understanding NJ Local Government" - via Zoom
3/19/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

"Most people know that the actions that federal and state governments take can have major implications on the lives of millions of Americans. But what about local government? In New Jersey, thousands of municipal and county government officials are responsible for making critical daily decisions and delivering essential services to the communities they serve. Despite the tremendous power that local government has over our daily lives, most people know little to nothing about what it does or how it works. Join this training to learn about the structures and powers of the local

government bodies that are making decisions for your community." Registration is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/56v6x8a2>.

Cornell "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars - via Zoom **Various dates**

The Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability presents a seminar series that "provides important views on the critical issue of climate change, drawing from many perspectives and disciplines. Experts from Cornell University and beyond present an overview of the science of climate change and climate change models, the implications for agriculture, ecosystems, and food systems, and provide important economic, ethical, and policy insights on the issue." Talks scheduled for March 2024 are listed below. Links for additional information and to attend via Zoom are shown after each title.

- **"The Place of Human Values in Climate-risk Research"** - 3/4/2024, 2:55 p.m. - 4:10 p.m., https://events.cornell.edu/event/casey_helgeson_the_place_of_human_values_in_climate-risk_research
 - **"Meeting the Net-zero Challenge: Corporate Climate Impact at Scale With the Voluntary Carbon Market"** - 3/11/2024, 2:55 p.m. - 4:20 p.m., https://events.cornell.edu/event/dr_jennifer_jenkins_meeting_the_net-zero_challenge_corporate_climate_impact_at_scale_with_the_voluntary_carbon_market
 - **"Climate Intervention - What Do We Know, What Do We Need to Know, Should We Know It?"** - 3/18/2024, 2:55 p.m. - 4:10 p.m., https://events.cornell.edu/event/daniele_visioni_climate_intervention_-_what_do_we_know_what_do_we_need_to_know_should_we_know_it
 - **"The Next Phase of Business Sustainability"** - 3/25/2024, 2:55 p.m. - 4:10 p.m., https://events.cornell.edu/event/andrew_hoffman_business_education_as_if_people_and_the_planet_mattered
-

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/>.

VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

EmpowerNJ "All Hands Legislative Briefing & Campaign Strategy Session" **- Video of Webinar**

EmpowerNJ, a coalition of which **EJTF is a member**, held an "All-Hands Legislative Briefing & Campaign Strategy Session" on 2/6/24. As described by EmpowerNJ, "During this session, EmpowerNJ policy experts presented about the clean energy and unaffordable dirty gas bills and the dirty energy technologies we're fighting to stop, and reviewed our victories and updates from 2023's 'lame duck' legislative session. We then moved on to discussing our plans to win 100% truly clean energy and stop expensive subsidies for dirty gas in the 2024 legislative session." The video is available here: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/okDD4GXnEI0VhhC14UYGz64t3cKkVPFFUmJFaWm-LqBPDkYXOEYs_ENMgLTvJaauv7xBAVLeeFQxuRK.U4q85H41-RqD0H0K.

"Hydrogen Hub and MACH2" **- Video of Webinar**

The Delaware Riverkeeper Network sponsored this talk on the hydrogen hub planned for the Delaware River Watershed. As described on their website, "... the Department of Energy Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations announced the earmarking of \$7 Billion in federal funding for "hydrogen hubs" across the nation, utilizing the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Act of 2021.... one in the Delaware River Watershed called Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub (MACH2)..." This webinar covered hydrogen production and use, its implications for the environment and the climate, and "what we can do to prevent hydrogen hub pollution and the public health and safety threats it entails." Speakers included: Scientist and Hydrogen Expert Dr. Robert W. Howarth;

Delaware Riverkeeper Maya van Rossum; Karen Feridun, Co-Founder of Better Path Coalition; Delaware Riverkeeper Network Deputy Director Tracy Carluccio; and Delaware Riverkeeper Network Advocacy and Policy Coordinator Anneke van Rossum. The video is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8u74Kz_OGs&t=20s.

**"New Jersey's Climate Future:
The Science, Politics & Planning"
NJ Spotlight News Virtual Roundtable
Series Session 1: "Storm Flooding"
- Video of Webinar**

NJ Spotlight News is presenting a virtual roundtable series on NJ's Climate Future. It is planned to 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 first session, "Storm Flooding," dealt with storm flooding and water infrastructure effects on water quality, housing, environmental justice, and state economics. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F579XCMZQY>.

"Energy Earthshots: The Frontier of Climate Innovation" - Video of Webinar

This briefing, sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), provided 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 shared the latest updates on each Earthshot's progress and how they "complement each other to advance a

just and equitable transition to clean energy." The video is available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/020124doe>.

"The Greatest Transformation in Human History" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), was 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." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jjipY25D9E>.

**"The Pathway to Achieve a Net-zero Economy in the U.S. by 2050"
- Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Princeton University Plasma Physics Laboratory "Science on Saturday" series, was 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 video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gpxl4VdJ3q8>.

"Blue Carbon as a Natural Climate Solution" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, hosted by OCTO (Open Communications for the Ocean - a nonprofit organization "advancing marine conservation and

management"), was 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 [examined] the potential for BCEs to act as carbon sinks, as well as the opportunities and challenges to protect or restore ecosystems for this function." The video is available here: <https://octogroup.org/blue-carbon-as-a-natural-climate-solution/>.

"Spillover Benefits from Electric Vehicle Charging Stations to Local Businesses" - Video of Webinar

This talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," was 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 [discussed] her research on local benefits of EVCS [electrical vehicle charging stations] in terms of increased revenues for businesses near new EVCS establishments. She [also talked] 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." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5-2YKTJm-S>.

"The Next Generation of Clean Homes Will Be Electric: How Do We Make a Just Transition? What Does It Mean for Our Health?" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was part of the Rutgers University Center for Environmental Exposures and Disease (CEED) 6th Annual Environmental Health and Justice Summit. "Using fossil fuels for energy has affected our health, created environmental injustices in frontline communities and promoted climate change." In this webinar, activists and academics presented information on "what needs to happen in order for us to live healthier lives and

protect future generations." It was presented by: Jose Guillermo Cedeno Laurent, MSc, ScD, Assistant Professor Rutgers University; Halimah Shabazz, Special Projects Manager and environmental justice advocate with the **EJTF partner** NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA); and Elyse Pivnick, MCP, Senior Advisor, Isles, Inc. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCHH1kNeN0>.

"Innovations in Weather Forecasting for a Changing Climate" - Video of Webinar

This briefing by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), provided information "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 [discussed] 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." The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/021524weather>.

"What Can Social Sciences Do for Energy Efficiency" - Video of Presentation

This presentation, part of the monthly NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Meeting in January 2024, was given by Dr. Rachael Schwom of the Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute. The presentation covered the ways social science can tell about people's motivations to undertake reduced energy consumption and the constraints on their undertaking it, as well as how to create opportunities for energy saving that tap into the motivations and recognize or overcome the constraints. The video is available here: <https://trccompanies.zoom.us/j/6IUsI00KrvzVtudQSV8eeTOxFY7YGQ7yPcdMsMwIQ5TbAV7E7BefboIYml4IhEWtbFr.1WI-LoooHrLkRPw> (the presentation begins at minute 00:31:23).

"Decarbonizing the Energy System for a Cleaner and Healthier Future" - **Video of Webinar**

This talk is part of the Princeton University Plasma Physics Laboratory "Science on Saturday" series and was 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 video is available here:

https://mediacentral.princeton.edu/media/SOS17February2024_Wpeng/1_x303quef.

"Small Modular Reactors and Other Nuclear Fantasies" - **Video of Webinar**

In this webinar presented by the Princeton University Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment (C-PREE), M.V. Ramana addressed the following topics: "What are Small Modular (Nuclear) Reactors? Why Small Modular Reactors? Nuclear Energy Today; "Happy Talk;" Reality Check; and Why these claims? The video is available here:

<https://cpree.princeton.edu/events/2024/small-modular-reactors-and-other-nuclear-fantasies>.

"Governing Green Transformative Innovation" - **Video of Webinar**

"Transformative innovation is the process of developing and implementing new ideas that lead to structural societal change and green transformative innovation directs the new ideas and structural change at the myriad challenges to climate stabilization." In this Dartmouth College "New Energy: Conversations with Early-Career Energy Researchers" talk, Dr. Tyler Hansen, Research Associate at Dartmouth College, focused on the Danish energy islands, "an early-stage massive green innovation project with the potential to transform offshore wind deployment, transmission planning and operation, and power-to-X development (conversion of green power to

hydrogen and other chemicals)." The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSjly8Bi_Xs&list=PLXnV377qgwcfm_NhVIjX9A8ZPbuSpn11-8&index=2.

Eco-Logic Radio Shows **"Combatting Greenhouse Gas Deniers" and "Incineration: A False Solution"** - **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:

- **"Combatting Greenhouse Gas Deniers"** - <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=46942>
- **"Incineration: A False Solution"** - <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=46945>

"How Can Ordinary People Make a Difference to the Climate Crisis?" - **Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" seminar series at Cornell University, was presented by Dr. Caroline Levine, the David and Kathleen Ryan Professor of Humanities at Cornell University, and author of "The Activist Humanist: Form and Method in the Climate Crisis." In this seminar, she focused on how social change happens, shifting attention from the power of individual consumers to the effectiveness of groups. The video is available here: <https://atkinson.cornell.edu/media/how-can-ordinary-people-make-a-difference-to-the-climate-crisis/>.

"Heat Waves: Extreme Events in a Warming World" - **Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" seminar series at Cornell University, was presented by Dr. Lucas Vargas Zeppetello, assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. "Among the most consequential environmental hazards, heat waves are complicated phenomena that involve relationships

between the atmosphere, the land surface, and the biosphere." This seminar addressed "how heat waves are changing across the global land surface, why this might be happening, and what it means for human exposure to dangerous levels of heat stress." The video is available here: <https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/media/heat-waves-extreme-events-in-a-warming-world/>.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

[covering 1/27/2024 – 2/26/2024]

NJ Transit Budget-related Issues

NJ Transit has announced a proposed 15% fare increase for 7/2024, with probable additional annual increases of 3% for the foreseeable future. EJTF joins with others to advocate for a dedicated revenue stream for NJ Transit, one which does not include raiding the NJ Clean Energy Fund as has been done for a number of years. Issues with NJ Transit funding relate to **EJTF's goals** regarding both **Environmental Justice** and **Climate Change** (see news stories below).

People of Color, Low-Income Riders Will Be Hurt Most by NJ Transit Fare Hikes, Advocates Say -

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/no-transit-fare-hikes-would-hit-hardest-people-of-color-low-income-riders/>

Critics: Fare Hike Highlights Need to Rethink NJ Transit Funding -

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/njtransit-fare-hike-funding-critics-reform-dedicated-revenue-stream-state-subsidy/>

Backlash Grows Over Higher Tolls and NJ Transit Fares -

4-1/2-minute news video - <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/backlash-grows-over-higher-tolls-nj-transit-fares/>

Give More Money to NJ Transit to Help in Fight Against Climate Change? -

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/environmental-advocates-argue-better-nj-transit-funding-would-benefit-climate/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

Murphy Administration Announces Launch of Groundbreaking School Bus Electrification Program to Protect Health of Children and Communities

In 2022, Gov. Murphy signed legislation requiring the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement a three-year "Electric School Bus Program" to provide up to \$45 million in funding over the three years, to replace diesel school buses with battery-electric school buses and to install associated charging infrastructure across the state. The DEP has now launched the program, announcing the availability of grants to school districts and school bus contractors for these purposes. The new program will also fund pilot projects that use the battery on the bus to provide power to a building during off-peak hours when the bus is parked. There are around 21,700 school buses currently registered in NJ, 99% of which run on fossil fuels. (Also see the article below, describing \$19 million provided in federal funds for electric school buses.)

https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0002.htm

EPA \$19 Million Grant Will Put Clean School Buses on the Streets of New Jersey

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the award of \$19 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Funds to help secure electric school buses for five school districts in NJ, including in Union City, Elizabeth, Newark, Bloomfield Township and Lakewood Township. The transportation company, Van-Con, Inc., will receive the funds, for the purchase of 42 electric school buses and 28 bus chargers. (Also see the related 4-minute news video with U.S. Senator Cory Booker and EPA Region 2 Chief of Staff Olivia Glenn in Union City, NJ, here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/feds-deliver-19m-for-electric-school-buses-in-nj/>.) This effort will dovetail with NJ's launch of its "Electric School Bus Program" (see the article above).

<https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/epa-19-million-grant-will-put-clean-school-buses-on-the-streets-of-new-jersey/>

Poll: Majority of NJ Residents Oppose Electric Vehicle Plan

This 2-minute news video describes the results of a Rutgers-Eagleton poll (available here: <https://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Rutgers-Eagleton-Poll-Electric-Vehicles-02.16.24-FINAL-EMBARGOED-PDF.pdf>) regarding NJ's plan to phase out the sale of new gas-powered vehicles completely by 2035. The poll found that "Demographics play a significant role in how New Jerseyans feel about the issue. Support for the 2035 mandate is strongest among Democrats (68 percent) and reaches a majority for groups who historically lean Democratic, such as Black residents (53 percent); residents who are multiracial or of backgrounds other than white, Black, or Hispanic (57 percent); those age 18 to 34 years old (53 percent); urbanites (55 percent); and those who have done graduate work (56 percent). Republicans are the least likely of any group to support the mandate (15 percent) and the most likely - by far - to oppose it (80 percent)."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/poll-majority-of-nj-residents-oppose-electric-vehicle-plan/>

LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

Aid Groups to Get Small Grants to Curb Hunger in Big Ways

The Community Food Bank of NJ (CFBNJ), with lead support from the NJ Department of Agriculture and additional funding from the Partners for Health Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is providing \$3.2 million in grant funding to 80 community organizations (a list of recipients is available here: <https://cfbnj.org/cfbnj-awards-more-than-3-2-million-in-grants/>). According to CFBNJ, "The Network Investment Grant Initiative is a multi-year effort by CFBNJ to increase the capacity of local food assistance organizations, especially those in underserved communities, including food pantries, child and senior feeding programs, and more."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/nj-hunger-aid-groups-share-3-2m-to-curb-food-insecurity/>

Census of Agriculture Reveals Increase in Number of Farms in New Jersey

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture 2022 Census of Agriculture released Tuesday shows that New Jersey's agricultural industry added 115 new farms, leaving the Garden State just short of the 10,000 farms mark at 9,998. The increase went against the national trend, which showed a 7 percent decrease in the number of farms in the U.S. The amount of land in farms for New Jersey decreased to nearly 712,00 acres, down from the 2017 census number of 734,000 acres almost even with the national average, which saw a decrease of 2 percent. The expense to farm in New Jersey increased by an average of \$37,000 per farm per year, which was well below the national average increase of more than \$60,000 per farm."

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/press/2024/approved/press240215.html>



Sherrill Highlights Importance of Native Plants in NJ

This 4-minute news video describes a roundtable discussion among environmental advocates and government officials regarding the importance of a law proposed by NJ U.S. Representative Mikie Sherrill, the "Building Native Habitats at Federal Facilities Act." The discussion focused on native plants as a key to rehabilitating ecosystems, impacting their resilience, and resulting flood protection and adaptability to climate change.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/sherrill-highlights-importance-of-native-plants-in-nj/>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Voters May Get to Say No to New Natural-Gas Power Plants

A proposal in the legislature (SCR-11) would add the following language to Article I of the NJ Constitution: "No person shall construct or reconstruct, and the State shall not permit or otherwise approve the construction or reconstruction of, any new electric power generation facility in the State that produces electric power, in whole or in part, from the combustion of coal, natural gas, oil, or petroleum products. The prohibition in this paragraph shall not apply to the repair or maintenance of an electric power generation facility in existence prior to the adoption of this amendment." To be put on the ballot this year would require approval of at least two-thirds of voting members of both the Senate and Assembly.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/nj-lawmakers-consider-ballot-question-enabling-voters-approve-or-block-new-gas-power-plants/>

Tammy Murphy Opposes Controversial Plan for Power Plant in Newark

Starting at minute 1:01 in this 5-minute news video, coverage is provided of a stand U.S. Senate candidate Tammy Murphy has taken opposing the proposed Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) power plant in the Ironbound section of Newark. See

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/tammy-murphy-opposes-controversial-plan-for-power-plant-in-newark/>. (Note: The permit for the plant is under review by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP): see DEP Commissioner LaTourette's viewpoint at minute 9:19 of the video interview available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/new-jersey-climate-issues-liberty-state-park-shawn-la-tourette-vin-gopal-school-funding/>.)

OFFSHORE WIND

Six Offshore Wind Turbine Sites Planned off Barnegat Light, Draw Large Crowd to Toms River

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the agency responsible for offshore renewable energy development in Federal waters, held an in-person public session in Toms River, NJ regarding the regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) it is preparing for the six NJ and NY Offshore Wind lease areas in the "NY Bight." Attendees include offshore wind proponents (like ten members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) - see [p. 1](#) and [p. 2](#)) and also its opponents. **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** is quoted at the end of the article, as follows:

"New Jersey needs to move away from fossil fuels, which lead to climate change and harm people in New Jersey's vulnerable communities... Offshore wind plays a role in the switch to clean energy... 'Flooding and heat' are major impacts of climate change felt across the state, from homes flooded in Manville to fossil fuel air pollution causing harm in northern New Jersey. People are working in the fields and on the farms. They literally are dying of heat." See

<https://www.app.com/story/news/local/land-environment/2024/02/09/offshore-wind-energy-nj-ny-bight/72529663007/>.

A 4-minute news video of the BOEM public session (available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/feds-host-hearing-on-regional-offshore-wind-plans/>.) gives both proponents' and opponents' views, and there is a brief glimpse of one of the Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) members, Irene Tysh, at minute 0:51.

Better Days Ahead for Offshore Wind, Advocates Argue

The Sweeney Center at Rowan University held its annual conference on the state of offshore wind. (A 4-minute news video is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/state-policy-makers-reaffirm-commitment-to-offshore-wind-industry/>.) Keynote addresses were given by the heads of the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA). Panel discussions included wind industry developers and experts, who expressed optimism but acknowledged that the start of a new industry always included unforeseen issues.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/glenrock-associates-american-clean-power-association-board-of-public-utilities-bpu-leading-light-wind-attentive-energy-biden-administration-tax-credits-inflation-reduction-act-gov-phi-murphy-orsted/>

Offshore Wind Foes Welcome Push to Site Projects Further off NJ Coast

The "Save Long Beach Island" group, that has filed lawsuits to block NJ offshore wind projects in the past, has praised the latest projects that the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) approved. Their favorable view of these projects is due to the fact that they will be virtually out of view, as they are planned to be 40 miles offshore.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/league-of-conservation-voters-of-new-jersey-long-beach-island-environment-new-jersey-40-miles-coast-beach-shore-based-tourism-long-beach-island-save-long-beach-island-slibi-shell-energies-and-edf-renew/>

\$164M = New Funding for Paulsboro Monopile Manufacturing Plant by Offshore Wind Developers

The two projects recently approved in the NJ Board of Public Utilities' (BPU) third offshore wind solicitation will, among other benefits to the state (see BPU Fact Sheet, available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/5n8abbn5>), provide \$164 million for expanding the Paulsboro Marine Terminal's monopile manufacturing facility. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/2-new-nj-offshore-wind-developers-to-add-164-million-expansion-paulsboro-monopile-plant/>

Feds' Plan Aims to Help Whales and Offshore Wind Farms Coexist

This 4-minute news video describes a final "North Atlantic Right Whale and Offshore Wind Strategy" recently issued by the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries agency. Marine mammal advocates welcome the strategy, but express concern about how it will be implemented and enforced.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/feds-plan-aims-help-whales-and-offshore-wind-farms-coexist/>



Photo Credit: NOAA Fisheries

CLIMATE CHANGE

Lawmakers Push for More Incentives to Achieve Clean-Energy Goals

On 2/5/2024, the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee approved the following bills: S-209 - "Provides corporation business tax credit for retrofit of existing warehouses with solar-ready zone once solar panels are installed"; S-210 - "Provides corporation business tax and gross income tax credits for purchase and installation of electric vehicle charging stations and for commercial zero emission vehicle fleet conversions"; S-212 - "Directs NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to update interconnection standards for Class I renewable energy sources and develop fixed fee structure for interconnection costs"; S-225 - "Establishes incentive program for installation of energy storage systems"; and S-1392 - "Establishes Office of Clean Energy Equity in BPU; directs establishment of certain clean energy, energy efficiency, and energy storage programs for overburdened communities; makes change to community solar program."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/nj-lawmakers-eye-incentivizing-clean-energy-goals/>

NJ Joins Nine-State Push to Speed Move to Electric Heat Pumps

Residential buildings are the second-highest emitters of greenhouse gases in NJ, after vehicles. Electric heat pumps would address this problem, and environmental agencies in nine states, including NJ, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU - available here:

<https://www.nescaum.org/documents/buildings-mou-final-with-signatures.pdf>) to accelerate the transition to zero-emission buildings. The MOU, developed through the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) multistate working groups, was signed by officials in CA, CO, ME, MD, MA, NJ, NY, OR, and RI. It is not legally binding and does not commit funding, but it calls for heat pumps to make up 90% of residential heating, air conditioning and water heating sales in these states by 2040.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/gov-phil-murphy-fuel-merchants-association-of-new-jersey-department-of-environmental-protection-commissioner-shawn-latourette-new-jersey-board-of-public-utilities-new-jersey-conservation-foundation-e/>

Environmentalists Lay out Green Priorities for New Session

In this 4-minute news video, environmental advocates describe their priorities for the new legislative session, as provided at a press conference and committee hearings. Their five main goals were given as: 100% clean energy by 2035; an upgraded power grid; open-space preservation; reduction of transportation-related pollution; and same-day voter registration.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/environmentalists-lay-out-green-priorities-for-new-session/>

Opinion: Don't Give Gas Utilities a Blank Check to Pursue Dubious 'Alternative Fuels'

This opinion piece (by Anjuli Ramos-Busot, the director of the NJ chapter of the Sierra Club and a co-chair of Clean Energy Action Now, and Eric Miller, the director of the NJ Energy Policy, Climate & Clean Energy Program at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and a co-chair of Clean

Energy Action Now) states many reasons to oppose the "Dirty Gas Bill" (A-1462/S-2275) that "Directs BPU [NJ Board of Public Utilities] to establish program concerning renewable natural gas; provides gas public utilities with customer rate recovery mechanism for costs associated with program."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/op-ed-nj-should-not-give-gas-utilities-blank-check-renewable-natural-gas-dubious-alternative-fuels/>

FOREST HEALTH

Will DEP's Plans for Wharton State Forest Solve Its Off-Road Battles?

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has developed a proposed Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map, which designates "legal routes for street-legal vehicle usage, while protecting culturally and ecologically sensitive areas." According to the DEP, 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. Online comments are being accepted until 3/9/2024 (see [p. 7](#) in "Future Events" section).

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/01/wharton-state-forest-department-of-environmental-protection-dep-off-road-vehicles-nature-lovers-birders-hikers-map-proposal-pinelands-preservation-alliance-conservationists-open-trails-new-jersey-chri/>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

Investigation Launched Into Faulty Lead Line Replacements in Newark

Newark, NJ had been held up as a national model for replacement of lead in all water service lines, but recent inspections found that, in at least three cases, only a partial replacement had been done. Partial replacement meets federal requirements but not NJ requirements, which call for complete replacement. Notices were mailed to all Newark residents, but they were told that drinking water is safe due to ongoing treatment that will remain in place. Additional inspections are being performed, and any line where lead is found will be replaced

immediately. See <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/newark-investigates-extent-flawed-lead-line-replacement-program/>. (Also see NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette's viewpoint at minute 6:39 of the video interview available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/new-jersey-climate-issues-liberty-state-park-shawn-la-tourette-vin-gopal-school-funding/>.)

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

DEP Releases New Jersey's 2022 Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report

The Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) draft New Jersey Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report for 2022 (available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wms/bears/integrated-wq-assessment-report-2022/>) is issued every two years to meet federal requirements for a statewide assessment of water conditions. Findings from the recently-issued report include that "Statewide long-term trends over a 35-year period show total phosphorus and total nitrogen improving; however, nitrate, total dissolved solids (TDS), and chloride show increasing concentrations." In most categories of designated water use, the number of water bodies failing to meet the water quality standard for that use exceeded those that supported that use. For drinking water supply, the report stated that 58% of waters did not meet that use, exceeding the 28% that did meet the standard, while 14% had insufficient information to determine whether they qualified. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0205pn.htm

POLLUTION

EPA Proposes Stricter Standards for Soot Pollution

Over the opposition of industry groups, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued new standards for fine particulate matter ("soot"). NJ has seen an increase in soot pollution, which

disproportionately affects people of color and low-income in NJ. According to the EPA press release: "By strengthening the annual health-based national ambient air quality standard for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from a level of 12 micrograms per cubic meter to 9 micrograms per cubic meter, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's updated standard will save lives - preventing up to 4,500 premature deaths and 290,000 lost workdays, yielding up to \$46 billion in net health benefits in 2032. For every \$1 spent from this action, there could be as much as \$77 in human health benefits in 2032."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/epa-proposes-stricter-soot-pollution-standards-targets-microscopic-particles/>

Recycling in New Jersey: What Actually Happens to the Items in Your Recycling Bins?

This article describes the recycling process in NJ and what residents need to do to contribute to its success.

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/environment/2024/01/27/nj-recycling-laws-and-process-can-be-complex-we-break-it-down/72241993007/>



Argument Continues Over Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags

This 3-1/2-minute news video focuses on a recent report that in NJ, "plastic consumption has tripled since the single-use plastic ban." The report was commissioned by the American Recyclable Plastic Bag Alliance, a lobbying group that - per Wikipedia - represents the U.S. plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry and lobbies against U.S. local and state plastic bag bans and taxes. However, the director of Clean Ocean Action points out that plastic pollution on beaches has

decreased significantly, and that the study assumes recyclable plastic bags will only be used two to three times, rather than the 125 uses that they are designed for. (Also see the Opinion piece below.)

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/argument-continues-over-ban-on-single-use-plastic-bags/>

Opinion: New Jersey Plastic Bag Ban Is a Leader in Reducing Pollution

In this opinion piece by Jennifer M. Coffey, executive director of the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) and Ed Potosnak, executive director of the NJ League of Conservation Voters (NJLCV), they refute the report (that stated that "plastic consumption has tripled since the single-use plastic ban") described in the news video linked in the article on [p. 20](#), stating that it includes no scientific citations. They further state that NJ's Plastic Pollution Reduction Act is the strongest and most successful in the country.

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2024/02/12/new-jersey-plastic-bag-ban-reduces-plastic-pollution/72511848007/>

Opinion: Addressing Waste Justice in New Jersey

In this opinion piece Jason Ajiake, communications and education manager for **EJTF partner** NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA) and María Guillen, regional communications coordinator for the U.S. and Canada for Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives describe how NJ's "outdated waste infrastructure silently underscores a pressing environmental injustice that requires urgent attention." They provide examples of some ways this waste injustice could be addressed.

<https://newjerseymonitor.com/2024/02/02/addressing-waste-justice-in-new-jersey/>

OTHER

BPU Pulls Plug on Unpopular Nuclear Subsidy

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is not renewing the \$300 million annual nuclear subsidy after its current end date of 5/31/2025, which will

end the utility surcharge that resulted from it. (The subsidy was originally put into place by a bill passed in 2019 to which **EJTF objected in written comments**, available here:

https://uufaitaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018_PSEG_Bailout-2.pdf).

Federally-funded production tax credits are expected to take the place of the state subsidy. See article on [p. 20](#) for information about a potential refund to utility customers.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/new-jersey-bpu-to-eliminate-unpopular-nuclear-subsidy/>

Feds Step in and Look to Cover Some Costs of NJ Nuclear Plants

One result of federal assistance coming to NJ from the Inflation Reduction Act may be a significant refund to utility customers related to the surcharge they have been paying for the \$300 million annual nuclear subsidy. The NJ law that created the surcharge stipulated that any federal assistance received would offset what ratepayers paid, so there may be an eventual large refund for utility customers, estimated by one source to approach \$450 million, including interest.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/feds-step-in-and-look-to-cover-some-costs-of-nj-nuclear-plants/>

Another Clash Over Liberty State Park Revitalization

This 4-1/2-minute news video describes the last-minute cancellation of a Liberty State Park (LSP) Design Task Force public meeting. Recently, a joint letter had been sent to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from the heads of the NJ legislative branches, stating that the LSP Design Task Force did not seem to be taking into consideration views of all members, and reiterating some incorrect information that has been put forth by entities in favor of more development of the park. One example was the erroneous claim that the plan was to flood the interior of the park when in actuality the is to prepare that area to provide a place for floodwaters to go following storms. The DEP issued a rebuttal to that letter, and the cancelled meeting has been rescheduled for 3/2/2024 - see Future Events on [p. 6](#).

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/another-clash-over-liberty-state-park-revitalization/>

Pushing NJ Pension Funds to Unload Fossil-Fuel Investments (Again)

A bill (S-128) that "Prohibits investment by State of pension and annuity funds in, and requires divestment from, 200 largest publicly traded fossil fuel companies" has been reintroduced for the new session of the NJ legislature. This article provides views from those in favor of, and those opposed to, the bill. See

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/another-push-divest-nj-state-pension-funds-fossil-fuel-investments/>. Also see the Opinion piece, "NJ Pension Fund Should Not Be Invested in Big Oil, by Tina Weishaus, co-chair of the DivestNJ Coalition, available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/op-ed-nj-hold-big-oil-financially-accountable-divestment-state-pension-fund/>.

Environmental Pressures in NJ: Chat Box

In the first 12-1/2 minutes of this NJ Spotlight News "Chat Box with David Cruz" video, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette is interviewed about plans for Liberty State Park, the finding of some lead remnants in Newark's lead removal program, and the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) proposed power plant.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/02/new-jersey-climate-issues-liberty-state-park-shawn-la-tourette-vin-gopal-school-funding/>

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.**

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

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.