



UUFANJ ANNUAL MEETING 5/11/2024 - See [p. 7.](#)

<https://www.uufaithaction.org/blog>

EDUCATE • ADVOCATE • MOBILIZE

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

• NJ Climate Action Gathering

The first-ever statewide NJ Climate Action Gathering event (**co-sponsored by UUFANJ**) took place 4/13/2024 and the excitement and significance of this climate and energy gathering was evident throughout the day. Over 175 people attended, to celebrate recent victories to stop gas plants and pipelines and to strengthen the movement to build a just transition off of fossil fuels. A wide variety of organizations and age groups were represented, including a number from UUFANJ (**EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** and **EJTF member Mike Skelly** are at the back far left in the photo at left). Also see [p. 2](#), and the video linked on [p. 12](#).



Photo by Food & Water Watch - NJ

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There were over 26 sponsors, and panelists included representatives from environmental justice, climate justice, and labor organizations. Breakout sessions included information on climate legislation and what needs to be included and excluded to effect an effective and equitable transition to clean energy in New Jersey.



Photos by Michael Skelly

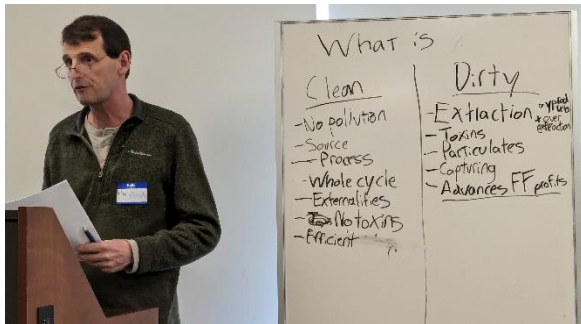
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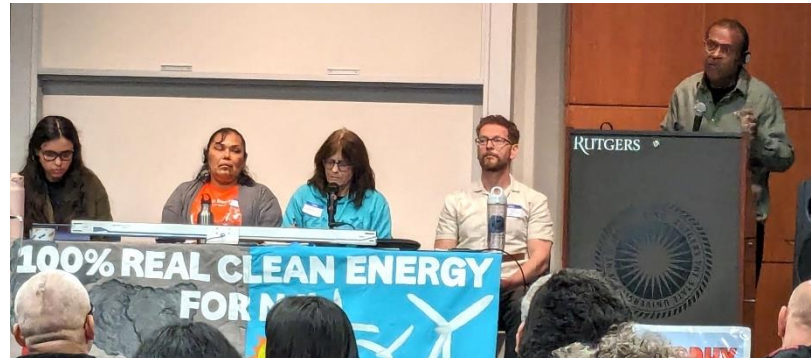
EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

• NJ Climate Action Gathering (cont.)

According to those in attendance, the NJ Climate Action Gathering was very uplifting, included music and dancing (see photo below and video linked on [p. 12](#)), and inspired people to become more active for the cause. It was bilingual, with earphones providing instant, live translation to and from English and Spanish. Many of EJTF's partners were front and center, including the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA) and the Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC). Also participating was the new "New Labor" organization that represents Hispanic workers and workers from diverse labor areas. A number of UUs enjoyed the day, including **EJTF member Mike Skelly** (Dorothea Dix UU Community of Bordentown), Susan Druckenbröd (UU Church in Cherry Hill), Cynthia Gutierrez Bernstein (Beacon UU Congregation of Summit), Barry Bendar (UU Ocean County Congregation) and **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** (UU Ocean County Congregation).



*Dave Pringle of Empower NJ, a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**, is shown above speaking at the breakout session on climate legislation.*



The Keynote Panel, shown above, included (L-R): Brooke Helmick, NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA); Reynalda Cruz Perez, New Labor; Cynthia Mellon, Climate Justice Alliance; Todd Vachon, PhD, Rutgers; and (speaking) Nicky Sheats, Ph.D, MPP, Esq., Director, Kean University's Center for the Urban Environment.

Above and right photos by Michael Skelly



Screenshot from Food & Water Watch - NJ video (see [p. 12](#))

• Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF)

The Green Earth Ministry (GEM) of Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) has begun a recycled sneakers collection on site. The program will help keep no-longer-used sneakers out of landfills and incinerators, and generate some funds for their purchase of environmentally smart products. A win-win!
For information about how you or your congregation can participate, see <https://gotsneakers.com>.



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

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

MAY 2024						
(with hyperlinks to details on the following pages)						
<i>Sun.</i>	<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>
			1 NJDEP Public Hearing - Single-use Plastic Bags Proposed Rules - 9:00 a.m. "Implementing NJ's Priority Climate Action Plan" - 12:00 p.m.	2 BOEM Environmental Justice Forum - 10:30 a.m. "The Ocean and Offshore Wind" - 7:00 p.m.	3 NJ 2024 Sustainability Summit - 9:00 a.m.	4 New Jersey Mushroom Fest - 10:00 a.m. NJDEP Annual Big Tree Hunt Kickoff Event - 10:00 a.m.
5 Interfaith Climate March from Grief to Hope - 1:00 p.m.	6 "Making Climate Policy Models More Decision-relevant" - 2:55 p.m.	7 "Sustainability Governance in the Anthropocene: A Symposium" - 8:30 a.m. NJ WasteWise Business Network Meeting - 10:00 a.m. Draft New Jersey Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan - 1:00 p.m.	8 DRBC 2Q Public Hearing - 1:30 p.m. "Inflation Reduction Act Benefits" - 6:00 p.m.	9 NJ Community Forestry Council - 10:00 a.m.	10	11 UU FaithAction NJ (UUFANJ) Annual Meeting - 10:00 a.m. Liberty State Park - Open House on Phase 2 Master Plan - 11:00 a.m.
12 Input Due: Liberty State Park Phase 2 SURVEY	13	14	15	16 NJBPU Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Meeting - 1:00 p.m.	17 "Climate Disinformation: Why We're Vulnerable" - 1:00 p.m.	18 "Educators' Open House" (NJSOC) - 9:00 a.m. "Ocean Fun Days" - 11:00 a.m.
19 "Ocean Fun Days" - 11:00 a.m.	20 2024 NJ Energy Master Plan Public Hearing - 9:30 a.m. "Down to Earth Soil Management" - 6:30 p.m. "An Open Classroom, The Community Garden" - 7:30 p.m. Comments Due: Draft New Jersey Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan	21 Liberty State Park - Design Task Force Public Meeting - 6:00 p.m.	22 "Microwaving Glass: Harder Than We Thought" - 12:00 p.m. 2024 NJ Energy Master Plan Public Hearing - 6:00 p.m. International Day for Biological Diversity: "Creator as Anchor; Collapse as Teacher" - 7:00 p.m.	23 "Offshore Wind for New Jersey: the Opportunities and Challenges" - 6:30 p.m. "Cities Leading the Way on Nature-Based Solutions" - 2:00 p.m.	24	25 Montclair Eco-Fair - 9:30 a.m.
26	27	28 NJ Bike & Walk Summit - 8:00 a.m.	29 2024 NJ Energy Master Plan Public Hearing - 9:30 a.m.	30		

FUTURE EVENTS

NJDEP Public Hearing on Proposed Rules Codifying the Legislation Restricting Single-use Plastic Bags (etc.) 5/1/2024, 9:00 a.m. - Virtual Comments Due 5/31/2024

According to the rule proposal published in the NJ Register on 4/1/2024 (available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/rules/proposals/proposal-20240401a.pdf>), "To minimize single use plastic pollution, the Legislature passed N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.126 et seq. (the Act), which became effective on November 4, 2020, and was amended effective March 25, 2022. The Act prohibits stores and food service businesses from providing single-use plastic bags to customers, grocery stores from providing single-use paper bags to customers, and individuals and food service businesses from providing polystyrene foam food containers. While the Act also restricts the distribution of single-use plastic straws, this is addressed in the Department of Health rules at N.J.A.C. 8:24-10.4. **The Department [the NJ Department of Environmental Protection] is now proposing new chapter N.J.A.C. 7:26L, Certain Single-Use Paper and Plastic Bags, and Polystyrene Foam Food Service Products, to implement the Act. In addition to restricting single-use carryout bags and polystyrene foam, the proposed rules include exemptions and waiver provisions for polystyrene foam food service products.**" A public hearing is being held 5/1/2024 and written comments are due 5/31/2024. Additional information and the link to join the public hearing are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/rules/notice-of-rule-proposals/20240401a/>.

"Implementing NJ's Priority Climate Action Plan: Climate Mitigation Funding Opportunities for NJ Local Governments" - via Zoom 5/1/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

NJ published its "Priority Climate Action Plan" (PCAP - available here: https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/climatechange/nj_pcap_final-1.pdf) for submission to the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a requirement of its

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program. The PCAP "outlines 12 priority measures and dozens of

enabling actions to reduce greenhouse gases and mitigate climate change.... Recognizing the pivotal role local governments play in helping the State meet its climate change goals, this webinar will highlight priority actions in New Jersey's PCAP along with resources and funding opportunities to support local implementation. While the webinar will be focused on opportunities for local governments, all are welcome to attend as several opportunities are available to community-based organizations, School Districts, and other entities." Registration for the webinar is available here: https://rutgers.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HCj11y1mQoWgn9MxUmPTAA.



"The Ocean and Offshore Wind" 5/2/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. - via Zoom

New Jersey Wind Works (a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**) is presenting this webinar in which Pinelands Preservation Alliance's Policy Director, Heidi Yeh, Ph.D, will explain the science of offshore wind including how the ocean impacts our climate. "This webinar is part of a larger effort to support our fight for clean energy and debunk misinformation, and is geared toward the general public. The ocean is one of our greatest allies in the fight against climate change: how does offshore wind contribute to this partnership?.... how big of a benefit will offshore wind development be in the climate fight?" Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://bit.ly/3vVdRAQ>.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Environmental Justice Forum
5/2/2024, 10:30 a.m. - **Virtual**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) "created the New York and New Jersey (NY & NJ) Offshore Wind Environmental Justice Forum (EJF) to advance meaningful engagement with environmental justice communities around the environmental review of offshore wind development in the NY Bight region.... Join the BOEM Spring Environmental Justice Forum to share your opinion and expertise as BOEM works to convene EJ communities and advocates to guide the rollout of their offshore wind projects." Registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2486du56>.

NJ 2024 Sustainability Summit
5/3/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Holmdel, NJ - **In-person**

"The New Jersey Sustainability Summit is a momentous event in our state, drawing change-makers from across the political, private, and public sectors. This exceptional one-day forum spotlights the successes and lessons learned from the people and projects that are helping New Jersey realize a more sustainable future. 2023 Summit attendees walked away with tangible resources and strategies to assist with their own community initiatives. This is your opportunity to do the same. We invite all who are interested to be ready to deepen their understanding and expand their network." Registration fees (including breakfast and lunch) are as follows: **\$45 - elected and appointed officials, green team volunteers, and public & nonprofit employees; and \$150 - all other attendees.** Links to additional information, the agenda and list of sessions, and to register, are available here: <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/index.php>.

New Jersey Mushroom Fest
5/4/2024, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Asbury Park, NJ - **In-person**

"Join NOFA NJ [EJTF partner Northeast Organic Farming Association of NJ] and collaborating farms and partners in Asbury Park for an engaging day full of educational workshops, culinary demos, and

lots of fun with fungi! Keynote Address, beginner & advanced educational workshops, culinary demonstrations, grow your own kit, food, refreshments, and more." **\$60 per person/\$50 for Members** of NOFA NJ or NJ Mycological. Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://nofanj.org/event/mushroomfest2024/>.



2024 BIG TREE EVENT
@ FOREST RESOURCE EDUCATION CENTER
495 Dick Connor Blvd. • Jackson, NJ 08527

NEXT SATURDAY
MAY 4
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. • rain or shine

A KICK OFF EVENT FOR THE ANNUAL BIG TREE HUNT

BANDS FOR THE DAY
Sawmill Run Old Time String Band - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Fish & Whistle - 11:45 a.m. - 2 p.m.

THINGS TO DO

- Forestry Crafts
- Birding Hike
- Lichens, Mosses, Liverworts and Fungi
- Big Tree Measurements
- Reptiles Exhibit
- Football Tire Free Throw
- Cornhole
- Wheel of Forestry
- Woodworking
- Sugaring Table
- Tee Shirts to 1st 70 people

LEARN EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO FIND, MEASURE & REPORT A BIG TREE NEAR YOU.
The Big Tree Hunt encourages people to locate big trees throughout New Jersey. The event has prizes for the 3 biggest trees located and runs until June 4, 2024. For more information or to register for the event email joseph.bonnett@dep.nj.gov.

NJDEP Annual Big Tree Hunt Kickoff Event
5/4/2024, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Jackson, NJ - **In-person**

NJDEP Annual Big Tree Hunt
5/4/2024 - 6/4/2024
Statewide - **In-person**

Join the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) NJ Forest Service's fourth annual Big Tree Hunt, taking place from 5/4/2024 to 6/4/2024. The kickoff event is 5/4/2024 at the NJ Forest Service Forest Resource Education Center in Jackson, NJ. Prizes will be given for the 3 biggest trees found during the month-long hunt. According to the DEP, "New Jersey takes pride in its big trees and for good reason. These mammoth trees are not just tree resources; they are mega tree resources providing up to 600 times the environmental benefits of typical trees...." Additional information and the registration link are available here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-big-tree-hunt-tickets-867678568957>.

Interfaith Climate March from Grief to Hope
5/5/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Montclair, NJ - In-person (rain or shine)

This march is "organized by a growing interfaith group of Essex County congregations concerned about climate change as an urgent moral issue.... March with us in downtown Montclair as we move through grief about all that has already been lost due to climate change, protest bank funding of fossil fuels, find connection and hope in our interfaith environmental communities, joyfully celebrate our vision of a sustainable future for all, and take action to demand 100% Clean Energy in NJ." Registration is available here:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxIoeHVvCUCaoXGTJBrg5NSOsKcR-U3Vby0zGUbbTF2RNfqq/viewform>.

"Making Climate Policy Models More Decision-relevant"- via Zoom
5/6/2024, 2:55 p.m. - 4:10 p.m.

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, will be presented by Dr. Wei Peng, an assistant professor in the School of Public and International Affairs and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment at Princeton University. "Efforts to achieve decarbonization targets often fall short. Integrated assessment models (IAMs) have been used widely to assess current policies and quantify the additional efforts needed to close the gap. Yet, IAMs still lack adequate considerations of socio-political factors that are central to climate policy making. This makes them overly abstract and simplistic to inform concrete decisions by national and subnational policymakers. In this talk, [Dr. Peng] will discuss... research focused on three areas to make IAMs more decision-relevant..." Additional information and the Zoom link are available here:
https://events.cornell.edu/event/wei_peng_making_climate_policy_models_more_decision-relevant.

"Sustainability Governance in the Anthropocene: A Symposium" - Hybrid
5/7/2024, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
New Brunswick, NJ - In-person (register by 5/1/2024) & via Zoom

Presented by the Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute, this symposium will address: "How can we manage major challenges like climate change, food security, and biodiversity loss in the face of accelerating human pressure, increasing complexity, and persistent inequality? Join us... for a day-long symposium featuring globally renowned social scientists discussing how different governance systems are experimenting, learning, failing, and succeeding at managing resources under stress." Additional information and links to register are available here:
<https://rcei.rutgers.edu/event/sustainability-governance-in-the-anthropocene-a-symposium/>.

NJ WasteWise Business Network Meeting
5/7/2024, 10:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - Virtual

"The New Jersey WasteWise Business Network is a free educational program designed to help businesses and other organizations learn how waste reduction, recycling, and recycled product procurement not only help the environment, but also their bottom line." Some of the topics to be presented at this webinar/meeting are "Helpsy's Clothing Reuse and Recycling Program," "Advancing Compost Manufacturing, Compost Utilization and Organics Recycling in New Jersey," "L'Oreal USA's Award-Winning Waste Reduction, Recycling and Recycled Product Procurement Initiatives," and "The Environmental and Economic Benefits of Refurbished Toner Cartridges and Sustainable Printing." Links to the agenda and to register are available here:
https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/ww_events.htm.

Draft New Jersey Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan - Webinar
5/7/2024, 1:00 p.m.
Comments Due: 5/20/2024

The draft NJ Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan ("the Plan") is now available for public review (available here: https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/bcrp/extreme_heat_rap_041824_scre

[n-1.pdf](#)). According to the press release, "The Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan – only the third of its kind in the country – will direct efforts across state government to mitigate the effects of extreme heat, one of the deadliest climate-related hazards facing New Jerseyans. One of the key actions in the plan is the launch of an enhanced iteration of Heat Hub NJ user-friendly online resource [available here: <https://heat-hub-new-jersey-njdep.hub.arcgis.com/>] to help the public better understand and become more resilient to the impacts of extreme heat in New Jersey." The Plan is made up of 133 actions, organized thematically into twenty focus areas. Actions included in the Plan are designed to address community health, equity and justice, research needs, coordination of government, and funding, financing, and investment needed to implement the action. For example, there is a recommended action to Improve Outdoor Worker Safety in Agriculture Sector. A public webinar will be held 5/7/2024 to provide an overview of the draft Plan and allow the public to provide verbal feedback. **Written feedback is due by 5/20/2024.** Additional information, including the link to register for the webinar, and the link to provide comments, is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/climatechange/resilience/resilience-action-plans/>.

Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Second Quarter 2024 Public Hearing 5/8/2024, 1:30 p.m. - via Zoom

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) will hold its second-quarter public hearing on Wednesday, 5/8/2024. Additional information will be available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/meetings/upcoming/>.

"Inflation Reduction Act Benefits" 5/8/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Webinar

"Join New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New York LCV [League of Conservation Voters] organizations to learn how you can save money on energy and how your organization can apply for grant opportunities in the affordable clean energy plan (Inflation Reduction Act). We will be joined by WE Act for Environmental Justice who is partnering with the EPA [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] to provide technical assistance

to groups interested in applying for federal grants." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://www.mobilize.us/njlcw/event/610785/>.

NJ Community Forestry Council 5/9/2024, 10:00 a.m. - Hybrid Robbinsville, NJ - In-person & Online

"The NJ Community Forestry Council (Council) to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is comprised of members appointed by the State Forester, with expertise or interest in trees, forestry, or tree or forest management, maintenance, or care. The Council advises the State Forester, the Division of Parks and Forestry and the DEP.... in promoting, supporting and advancing healthy, safe and sustainable urban and community forests in New Jersey." The meeting agenda will deal with implementing the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, the No Net Loss Reforestation Act, and issues concerning urban and community forestry and the forest and tree resources. Additional information, including the agenda for the meeting, will be available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/urbanandcommunity/njcommunityforestrycouncil.html>.



UU FaithAction NJ Annual Meeting - Hybrid 5/11/2024, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Summit, NJ - In-person & Online

The UU FaithAction NJ (UUFANJ) Annual Meeting will be held on May 11th, 2024, and will be hosted at the Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit, NJ and online. At the Annual Meeting, congregational delegates will vote on the proposed FY 2024-2025 budget and nominees to our Board of Trustees. We will also celebrate the past year and prepare for the year ahead. All New Jersey

UUs are encouraged to attend! Additional information including the meeting schedule and the link to register are available here: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/event/annual-meeting-3/>.

**Liberty State Park - Open House on the LSP-South (Phase 2) Master Plan
5/11/2024, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Jersey City, NJ - In-person**

This Open House is being presented by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It will focus on gaining public feedback on the Liberty State Park (LSP) South (Phase 2), which encompasses "Preparation of a holistic master plan for the phased improvement of the park's waterfront and southern areas, which would include development of an outdoor athletics hub within the park's interior section upon completion of the (Phase 1A) cleanup." DEP is also conducting a survey prior to the Open House (see article below). Additional information is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/event/liberty-state-park-open-house-on-the-lsp-south-phase-2-master-plan/>.

**Liberty State Park Phase 2 - Holistic Long-Term Master Plan - SURVEY
Input Due 5/12/2024**

As the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) prepares for the 5/11/2024 Open House on the Liberty State Park (LSP)-South (Phase 2) Master Plan (see article above), they are conducting a survey about current uses and future ideas for this area, which would include development of an outdoor athletics hub. This survey will be open until 5/12/2024 and is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/comment/>.

**NJBPU Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Meeting - Webinar
5/16/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) monthly Clean Energy Program Energy Efficiency Stakeholder meeting will be held as a webinar on 5/16/2024. The agenda includes a presentation by a guest speaker on Heat Pump Water Heaters, and an update on the NJ "Whole House Pilot Program" is planned. [Note: as described in NJ's "Priority

Climate Action Plan" (PCAP), "'Whole House' refers to a holistic approach to healthy housing, incorporating and coordinating energy efficiency improvements while remediating health and safety hazards that pose a threat to human health and too often cause efficiency upgrade work to be deferred or delayed. These hazards include water intrusion, mold, asthma triggers, asbestos, radon, slip-and-fall risks, pests, electrical deficiencies, lead-based paint, lead service lines, and other existing toxins and contaminants. To date the State is piloting the Whole House program in Trenton, New Jersey, with partners including PSE&G, CMC (PSE&G's Comfort Partners implementer), Isles Inc., and Habitat for Humanity. NJBPU is pursuing enrollment of 100 homes in the pilot program and looking for 20-30 candidates for electrification."] Additional information about the stakeholder meeting and the link to register are available here: <https://www.njcleanenergy.com/stakeholdergroups/energy-efficiency>.

**"Climate Disinformation: Why We're Vulnerable, How We Can Protect Ourselves and Others, and Actions We Can Take Now"
5/17/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Online**

"In the past five years, the threat posed by the spread of disinformation on a range of contentious political issues has become undeniable, but the challenge posed by climate-related disinformation is a decades long concern." This webinar, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Regional Collaboration Network, will be presented by Dr. Megan K. McBride, a Research Scientist at CNA (a DC-area, non-partisan, non-profit research and analysis organization). Additional information including issues to be covered and registration are available here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2422254240476587350>.

**"Educators' Open House" - NJ School of Conservation (NJSOC) Program
5/18/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Sandyston, NJ - In-person**

"Spend a day at the NJ School of Conservation learning about the outdoor field experiences we have to offer to you and your students. We'll

highlight upcoming professional development workshops, online resources and volunteer opportunities. Then, you'll get to "be a student for the day" and participate in several of our most popular field experiences, learn how they support New Jersey's student learning standards, including the new Climate Change standards and Social Emotional Learning Competencies, and find out how you can continue to build on the experience back at your own school. Classes will include Nature Art & Poetry (with climate change emphasis), Metalsmithing, Water Ecology, and Archery." Lunch will be provided. Additional information and the link to register and pay a **\$20 deposit (refundable after attending the event)** are available here:

<https://njsoc.org/event/educators-open-house-3/>.

21st Annual "Ocean Fun Days" - In-person
5/18/2024, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Island Beach State Park, Seaside Park, NJ
5/19/2024, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Sandy Hook, NJ

"We're celebrating 21 years of ocean discovery, coastal stewardship and energy conservation. Ocean Fun Days is an eco-friendly event the whole family can enjoy! Includes an Energy Scavenger hunt featuring the BPU [NJ Board of Public Utilities]!" Additional information is available here: <https://oceanfundays.org>.

"Down to Earth Soil Management"
5/20/2024, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Webinar

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, will be presented by Bill Errickson, Rutgers University. "...We will look at soil health and how it is defined as the continued capacity to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Maintaining soil health is an essential component of a productive and thriving garden that is more resistant to disease and abiotic stress. This presentation will highlight the important ecological roles of soil organisms as they relate to the physical and chemical properties of soil in home-scale and community gardens. Topics will include proper methods of soil testing, optimizing soil fertility, and practices to support soil organism biodiversity through increasing soil

organic matter." Registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfveywf>.

"An Open Classroom, The Community Garden" - In-person
5/20/2024, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ

This talk, sponsored by the Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club, will be presented by Jose German-Gomez, founder and CEO of the Northeast Earth Coalition. "Jose is well known as an environmental activist in northern New Jersey as well as an educator in sustainable & Eco-friendly communities and organic gardening." Additional information about his background and this talk is available here: <https://nearth.org/events/a-journey-toward-a-greener-future/>.

2024 New Jersey Energy Master Plan
Public Hearings - Virtual
Various dates

The NJ Board of Public Utilities has announced the following: "Staff of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("NJBP") will be holding a series of virtual public hearings on the 2024 New Jersey Energy Master ("EMP") Plan. The 2024 EMP will serve as a whole-of-government progress report on the goals and strategies in the 2019 EMP, outline the changing landscape of State and federal support for climate action, and determine the basis for the development of actionable next steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximize clean energy uptake economy-wide. The 2024 EMP will be a public-facing document that incorporates progress information acquired through inter-agency collaboration and stakeholder feedback to build upon the 2019 EMP and help New Jersey reach its goal of 100% clean energy by 2035, amongst other key clean energy and climate goals and benchmarks." The public hearings will be held on the following dates and will focus on the selected areas noted:

- **Hearing #1 – 5/20/2024, 9:30 a.m.** · Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 1, 2, and 5 listed in the 2019 EMP.
- **Hearing #2 – 5/22/2024, 6:00 p.m.** · Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 3 and 4.

- **Hearing #3 – 5/29/2024, 9:30 a.m.** · Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 6 and 7.
- **Hearing #4 - 6/3/2024, 1:00 p.m.** · Recap of Hearing #1, Hearing #2, and Hearing #3, and next steps in the development of the 2024 EMP.

More information, including details on how to register for the virtual public hearings, are included in the Public Notice (for Hearings #1, #2, and #3) and the revised Public Notice adding Hearing #4 (see links below). Stakeholders and members of the public are invited to provide brief comments at these meetings orally, as well as more detailed written feedback following the hearings on the matters addressed during each respective hearing. **The deadline for comments is 5:00 p.m. on June 12, 2024.**

Public Notice for Hearings #1, #2, and #3:

<https://tinyurl.com/3buy7k6a>

Revised Public Notice for Hearing #4:

<https://tinyurl.com/3v76b9ne>

Liberty State Park - Design Task Force Public Meeting

5/21/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Jersey City, NJ - In-person

"The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection [DEP] will host a public meeting of the Liberty State Park (LSP) Design Task Force 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." [Videos of previous LSP Design Task Force public meetings are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/design-task-force/>.] Registration information is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/event/liberty-state-park-design-task-force-public-meeting-20240521/>.

"Microwaving Glass: Harder Than We Thought" - via Zoom

5/22/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

In this talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," Dr. Ralph Behrend, Research Associate and work group leader for thermo process engineering at the professorship for gas and heat technology at the Technical University

Bergakademie Freiberg, will share his research. "Industrial heating is responsible for around 1/3 of the world's energy demand. Most of the necessary heat is supplied by combustion of natural gas, coal, and oil. For carbon neutral production a retrofit to renewable heat sources will be key. While hydrogen as replacement fuel could be possible, it would be even better to go all electric. But high temperature processes are hard to retrofit with conventional electric heaters. For some processes, like glass melting, microwave heating is a viable alternative: It enables high energy densities, extremely fast heating, and high temperatures. It is also very complicated to implement on large scale and it is hard to implement." Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://irving.dartmouth.edu/news-events/news-events/new-energy-series>.

International Day for Biological Diversity: "Creator as Anchor; Collapse as Teacher"

5/22/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

- via Zoom

"Join UU Ministry for Earth for poetry, song and story to honor International Day for Biological Diversity with Dr. Lyla June Johnston.... an Indigenous musician, author, and community organizer of Diné (Navajo), Tsétséhestâhese (Cheyenne) and European lineages. Her multi-genre presentation style has engaged audiences across the globe towards personal, collective, and ecological healing. She blends her study of Human Ecology at Stanford, graduate work in Indigenous Pedagogy, and the traditional worldview she grew up with to inform her music, perspectives and solutions. Her doctoral research focused on the ways in which pre-colonial Indigenous Nations shaped large regions of Turtle Island (aka the Americas) to produce abundant food systems for humans and non-humans." Registration is available here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqcO6ppzqiE91gSZOPzQ7hiS7SIu9VtcQs>.

"Offshore Wind for New Jersey: the Opportunities and Challenges"

5/23/2024, 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, will be

presented by Kris Ohleth of the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind organization. "... We will look off New Jersey's coast to learn more about offshore wind energy. The offshore wind industry started approximately 30 years ago in Europe and is rapidly developing in the United States, including off New Jersey. Join us to learn more about the opportunities and challenges associated with developing offshore wind off New Jersey's coast. Our featured speaker, Kris Ohleth, has more than 20 years' experience working in the offshore wind sector and brings a wealth of knowledge on this emerging industry." Registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfveywf>.

"Cities Leading the Way on Nature-Based Solutions" - Webinar
5/23/2024, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) invites you to a briefing about climate solutions from small- and medium-sized cities. Cities around the country are taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.... During this briefing, speakers will focus on nature-based solutions in cities - from parks that help manage stormwater to urban trees that can reduce summer temperatures across entire neighborhoods. Panelists, including city government officials, community leaders, and federal agency partners, will highlight equitable and community-designed climate solutions from the places they live and work and describe the intersection points with federal policy and programs." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/052324cities>.

Montclair Eco-Fair
5/25/2024, 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Montclair, NJ - In-person

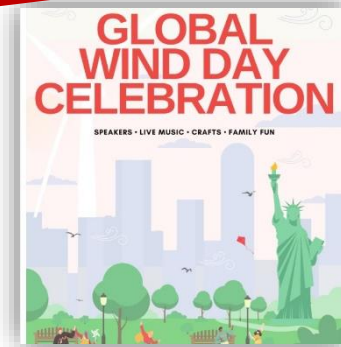
"This is a community event that you will want to be part of. Join local environmentalists and community activists in an outdoor event with environmental displays. Come and learn about gardening for pollinators and butterflies, native plants, edible landscapes, community gardens, environmental restoration, composting, and volunteer opportunities. Enjoy live music by local performers." Additional information is available

here: <https://neearth.org/events/montclair-eco-fair-may-25-2024/>.

NJ Bike & Walk Summit
5/28/2024, 8:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
Edison, NJ - In-person

The NJ Bike & Walk Coalition's annual Summit "is New Jersey's statewide meeting of bicycle and pedestrian advocates, elected officials and state, county, and municipal leaders, transportation and urban planners, bike shop owners and managers, cycling, walking, fitness and health enthusiasts and experts, recreation, trails and club leaders and others who are interested in making our state a better place to live." It includes workshops, speakers, and round-tables. Additional information including links to the program description and to register (**General Admission - \$85; Student Admission - \$45**) are available here: <https://njbwc.org/summit-2024/>.

Save the dates!



Global Wind Day Celebration
6/15/2024, 11:00 a.m.
Jersey City, NJ - In-Person

New Jersey Wind Works (a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**) is hosting a Global Wind Day Celebration at Liberty State Park along with the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club and other environmental and environmental justice partners. The event "will show support for responsible offshore wind development and clean energy more broadly at Liberty State Park. This family-friendly event will have music, a speaking program, offshore wind coloring books, pinwheels and kites,

and more, all with the iconic New York City skyline and Lady Liberty in the background! We encourage folks to bring family and friends and make the day at one of New Jersey's most treasured urban state parks and enjoy the June sunshine and outdoors with us." Additional information and a link to RSVP are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5hfcjy>.

New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference - Hybrid
6/5/2024 - 6/6/2024 - Virtual
6/7/2024 - New Brunswick, NJ - In-person

New Jersey Future and the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association are presenting the annual New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference convening virtually on June 5–6 and in person on June 7 at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick. "The 2024 New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference will feature a multitude of timely sessions and bring together hundreds of visionary New Jersey professionals, elected officials, and community activists who share a passion and commitment to the Garden State. Together we can reimagine land use to optimize efficiency, promote sustainable growth, and bolster community resilience in a rapidly changing environment!" Additional information and the link to register (**\$350 for non-members**) are available here: <https://site.pheedloop.com/event/njprc24/home>.

VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

NJ Climate Action Gathering
- Video of Keynote

This first-ever statewide NJ Climate Action Gathering event (**of which UUFANJ was a sponsor**) provided "a chance for all to learn about the work happening in New Jersey to facilitate a just transition off of fossil fuels, share skills and knowledge, learn about how to win campaigns, build community with one another, and step into action!" (See [p. 1](#) and [p. 2](#).) The video is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/FoodandWaterWatchNJ/videos/1427069991508178/>.

Eco-Logic Radio Shows:
"Family Farms and Slow Foods" and
"Efficiency Is Decarbonization"
- 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:

- **"Family Farms and Slow Foods"** - <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=48398>
- **"Efficiency Is Decarbonization"** - <https://www.wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=49290>

"Oceanographic and Ecological Research to Inform Offshore Wind Development in New Jersey" - Video of Webinar

This presentation was sponsored by the East Brunswick Public Library as part of its "Option Green" series. "With offshore wind construction scheduled to begin soon in this region, it is critical that oceanographic and ecological baseline monitoring begins quickly and considers time scales of natural variability from seasons to years." This presentation, by Dr. Grace Saba, an Associate Professor who leads a research group in the Rutgers Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences, focused on how the offshore wind team at Rutgers University's Center for Ocean Observing Leadership (RUCOOL) works to develop and advance the science that informs decision-making around offshore wind, through research using both observations and models, and extensive engagement with stakeholders. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SH5Lb9eh4vw&t=3s>.

"Garbage in the Garden State"
- An Earth Day Program - Video of Webinar

At this event sponsored by the Jersey City Public Library, Dr. Jordan P. Howell of Rowan University, author of 2023's "Garbage in the Garden State," discussed the history of waste management in New Jersey. "Acknowledging Earth Day 2024's theme of 'Planet vs. Plastics' special attention

[was] paid to New Jersey's history of recycling, and plastic recycling in particular." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLg8COxlqkA>.

"How to Kill a Powerline: Utility-on-Utility Violence and Electricity Capital in Energy Infrastructure Disputes" **- Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," was presented by Maddy Kroot, PhD candidate in Clark University's Graduate School of Geography. In contrast to the usual NIMBYism impeding energy transitions, "This talk explore[d] a different driver in project delays and cancellations: 'utility-on-utility violence.' Drawing on doctoral work on two controversial high-voltage transmission lines in northern New England, the talk explore[d] how incumbent electricity capital effectively weaponizes the mandate for public participation in infrastructure permitting to block new energy sources from entering the grid and jeopardizing the profitability of existing assets." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFFKI2dFrNQ>.

"Environmental Justice & Community Organizing 101" Training **- Video of Session**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3UPTj5jOkI>.

"Navigating the DEP: A Series of Environmental Seminars for Overburdened Communities" - Videos of Seminars

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in partnership with the Environmental Justice (EJ) Advisory Council's Environmental Education Committee, presented "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. Links to videos of the four seminars are available, or will be available, here: <https://dep.nj.gov/ej/seminars/>.

Here are the topics of the seminars:

- Navigating the DEP Seminar 1 - Overview of Environmental Planning and Monitoring
 - Navigating the DEP Seminar 2 - Understanding the Regulatory Process I
 - Navigating the DEP Seminar 3 - Understanding the Regulatory Process II
 - Funding Our Futures - Navigating State and Federal Grants for Environmental Justice Communities.
-

"Navigating Global Challenges to Accelerate the Energy Transition" **- Video of Summit (8 hours)**

"The Columbia Global Energy Summit... hosted by the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University SIPA, is an annual event dedicated to thought-provoking discussions around the critical energy and climate challenges facing the global community. This year's day-long Summit [addressed] myriad issues at the heart of today's complex geopolitical, environmental and economic landscape, including the impact of climate change and the energy transition on geopolitics and security; the outlook for clean energy deployment in the face of growing policy support, as well as challenges such as interest rates, permitting reform and trade conflict; pathways to mobilize finance for clean energy in emerging and developing economies; energy justice imperatives; and the impact for energy and climate policy in key elections around the world in 2024." The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aA9oSpuDZ_4&t=4s.

"The National Security – Climate Adaptation Nexus" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), dealt with the impacts of climate change on U.S. national security. "Climate change impacts - from extreme heat to wildfires and flooding - affect people's homes and communities, as well as supply chains, the electric grid, military installations, and other critical infrastructure across the country. Effective adaptation actions can help address these

EPA National Environmental Justice Community March 2024 Engagement Call - Video of Online Call

widespread and costly vulnerabilities. Panelists [discussed] climate adaptation already happening at the local level around the country and the range of federal programs designed to support these efforts. They also highlight[ed] ways that federal policy can advance national-level coordination on adaptation to safeguard critical infrastructure, and protect and improve people's lives." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esw9rJqQdcU>.

"Filtered Water: Preventing Billions of Plastic Bottles from Flooding U.S. Communities" - Video of Webinar

A panel of expert scientists and community advocates, including Deandrah Cameron, Policy Manager at New Jersey Future, presented this webinar sponsored by the Plastic Pollution Coalition. The panel discussed "how proactive distribution of filters is a sustainable and affordable solution for providing clean water to the millions of people in the U.S. waiting to undergo the replacement of toxic lead pipes." The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1RLT_nAeSQ.

2024 New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference - Links to Slides/PowerPoint Presentations

"The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative (NJCRC) co-hosted their first New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference from March 12-14 at Monmouth University in West Long Branch. With a theme of 'Adapting to Change - Creating Resilient Communities,' the event gathered 300 attendees and nearly 150 speakers for three days of wide-ranging discussions on the challenges facing the state's diverse communities and coastal environments." Links to the slides and PowerPoint presentations from the conference, some of which (e.g., "Overview of Offshore Wind Research and Monitoring Initiative (RMI)") provide a comprehensive level of detail, are available here: <https://nj-crc.org/2024-conference>.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites Environmental Justice (EJ) advocates to participate in its National EJ Community Engagement calls. "The purpose of these calls is to inform communities about EPA's environmental justice work and enhance opportunities to maintain an open dialogue with environmental justice advocates." This call included regulatory updates from the EPA Office of Air Quality and Planning Standards (OAQPS), a National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) update, and an External Civil Rights update. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwA-ewrExtM>.

"Multisolving: Actions That Protect the Climate While Improving Health, Equity, and Biodiversity" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was 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 [shared] examples of multisolving, touch[ed] on what might get in the way of multisolving, and share[d] some of the practices seen in effective multisolving." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4Kq6lbLdR8>.

"The Climate Adaptation & Mitigation Clash - A 3-Dimensional Trade-off Analysis between Efficiency, Cost, and Emissions for a Northeast Urban District Energy System that Incorporates Distributed Energy Resources" - Video of Webinar

This talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," was 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 focus[ed] on the trade-offs among cost, efficiency, and emissions in a northeastern urban energy system incorporating renewable sources and

storage solutions. It revealed[ed] concerning findings about conflicting objectives. The presentation [described] the model that was built and propose[d] a methodology to achieve a balanced compromise between cost, energy efficiency, and emissions, aligning climate adaptation with mitigation goals." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo4BXf-rLM>.

"Designing Effective Environmental and Conservation Policies: The Role of Collective Approaches" - Video of Talk

This talk, presented by the Princeton University Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment (C-PREE), was 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." The video is available here:

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

"Demystifying Ocean Carbon Dioxide Removal" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the World Resources Institute (WRI), dealt with ocean carbon dioxide removal (CDR). "Reaching global climate goals will require not only deep and rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, but also large-scale removal of excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. While federal funding for research, development, and demonstration of land-based CDR approaches and technologies has increased significantly in recent years, the ocean also presents opportunities for carbon removal. The ocean covers 70% of the Earth and serves as its largest carbon sink, holding 42 times the carbon in the atmosphere. Ocean CDR - the

practice of removing and storing carbon from the ocean - is garnering increasing scientific, governmental, and private sector interest. At the same time it presents uncertainties related to efficacy, ecosystem impacts, and governance, which decision-makers must understand in order to determine if and how the practice could be scaled up as a climate solution." Panelists discussed the current state of ocean CDR, including the status of different approaches; the policy and regulatory landscape; research gaps; and the importance of responsible scaling. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlYv2Wk76qc>.

"Climate Intervention - What Do We Know, What Do We Need to Know, Should We Know It?" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, was presented by Dr. Daniele Visoni, an Assistant Professor in the Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department at Cornell University. "Climate intervention (or climate engineering, or geoengineering) is a topic that is gaining prominence in mainstream climate policy discourse, especially as the chance of remaining below 1.5 °C of warming above preindustrial levels fades. It is defined as any deliberate, large scale intervention in the climate system aimed at reducing the harmful effects of the increase in greenhouse gases. As an umbrella term, it usually includes both large scale methods of CO₂ removal from the atmosphere (Carbon Dioxide Removal, CDR) and methods aimed at reducing the incoming sunlight in order to cool the planet (Solar Radiation Modification, SRM)." In this talk, Dr. Visoni gave an overview of SRM methods, and focused on the diverse sets of challenges they present: technological, ethical and related to governance. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btu6BDL-ugY>.

"The Next Phase of Business Sustainability" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, was presented by Dr. Andrew Hoffman, the Holcim (US) Professor of Sustainable Enterprise at the University of

Michigan. "Business sustainability has come a long way. From the dawn of the modern environmental movement and the establishment of environmental regulations in the 1970s, it has become a strategic concern driven by market forces today. But, the era of corporations integrating sustainable practices is being surpassed by a new age of corporations actively transforming the market to make it more sustainable. The first phase of business sustainability, what we call 'enterprise integration,' is founded on a model of business responding to market shifts to increase competitive positioning by integrating sustainability into preexisting business considerations. By contrast, the next phase of business sustainability, what we call 'market transformation,' is founded on a model of business transforming the market. Instead of waiting for a market shift to create incentives for sustainable practices, companies are creating those shifts to enable new forms of business sustainability." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRb9FT9siZ8>.

"Zero-Carbon Electricity: The Key to the Clean Energy Transition" **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, was presented by Dr. Karl Hausker, a Senior Fellow in the Climate Program at the World Resources Institute. "To avoid worsening impacts of climate change, the United States and the world as a whole must dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years, and carbon dioxide emissions must be virtually eliminated by mid-century. This will require the electricity sector to play a pivotal role in the transformation of how we produce and consume energy. We need to switch completely to zero- and low-carbon means of producing electricity, while switching from fossil fuel combustion to use of electricity in a variety of applications in buildings, transportation, and industry." This webinar explored the issues, challenges, and opportunities in the electricity sector as we transition to clean energy. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg0JSTZ0vhM>.

"Fire's Role in Ecosystem Health" **- Video of Webinar**

Part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, this webinar was presented by Jeremy Webber with the NJ Forest Fire Service. "This session explored how prescribed fire not only aids in protecting life and property from the catastrophic wildfire, but also how it supports ecosystem health. Prescribed fire used appropriately can benefit habitats for both flora and fauna, while also supporting hazardous fuel and invasive plant species mitigation efforts. Lastly, [the webinar] explored the unfamiliar benefits of how a wildfire essentially promotes habitat diversity and natural environmental processes." The video is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3QgIb-wf_I.

"15-Minute Neighborhoods: A Pathway to Creating Healthier, More Just, Resilient, & Sustainable Communities in New Jersey" - Video of Webinar

In this webinar, Jon Carnegie, Executive Director of the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University, presented a summary of a two-year study [available here: <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/NJSPL-15-Minute-Neighborhoods-Apr-2024.pdf>] "designed to investigate how a comprehensive, multi-goal planning and policy framework can be used to achieve carbon-neutral transportation choices that simultaneously support healthy, just, and resilient communities for all New Jersey residents.... The 15-minute neighborhood concept gained visibility as the global pandemic demonstrated that local access to basic life needs is critically important. In addition to being an important contribution to New Jersey's efforts to achieve its goals of reducing pollution that causes climate change, 15-minute neighborhoods provide residents with easy access to parks, schools, gathering places, social services, places to buy healthy fresh food, and, in some cases, public transit, within a comfortable walk or bike ride." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OldQ1aAPOBg>.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

[covering 3/27/2024 – 4/26/2024]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

AG Platkin and DEP Commissioner LaTourette Announce Resolution of Two Environmental Lawsuits and the Filing of Six New Enforcement Actions, Including Four in Environmental Justice Communities

From the joint press release: "New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette announced the settlement of one environmental justice lawsuit, a court order piercing the corporate veil and finding individual liability in another case, and the filing of six other cases, including efforts to remedy historic toxic legacies and restore sensitive natural resources. Four of the new lawsuits seek to enforce environmental law in and around communities considered overburdened under New Jersey's Environmental Justice Law." Details are provided in the press release, available here: <https://www.njoag.gov/ag-platkin-and-dep-commissioner-latourette-announce-resolution-of-two-environmental-lawsuits-and-the-filing-of-six-new-enforcement-actions-including-four-in-environmental-justice-communities/>.

EPA Announces Online Collection of Environmental Justice Resources

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has launched its Environmental Justice Clearinghouse (available here: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/forms/ej-clearinghouse>), "a first-of-its-kind online collection of resources related to environmental justice," according to the EPA press release. It is envisioned to be "a public, internet-based, whole-of-government clearinghouse composed of culturally and linguistically appropriate and accessible materials related to environmental justice." A form for including resources is available on the Clearinghouse website shown above. <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-online-collection-environmental-justice-resources>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

EV Sales in NJ Rose Substantially in 2023

This article describes the overall growth in EV sales in NJ between 2022 and 2023, with significant growth occurring in plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. With 154,153 EV registrations, NJ is proceeding toward its goal of 330,000 EVs at the end of 2025. However, another measure of EV sales finds them falling short of the requirements mandated by law of the number of EVs to be sold in the state.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/ev-sales-in-nj-rose-substantially-in-2023/>



EPA Sets Stricter Pollution Standards for Heavy-Duty Trucks, Buses

New U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for heavy-duty truck greenhouse gas emissions in model years 2027 through 2032 are "more than 80% stronger" than previous rules, according to EPA. NJ has a law regarding electrification of medium- and heavy-duty trucks, but it only applies to those bought and registered in NJ; many out-of-state trucks cause pollution in NJ, significantly in environmental justice areas, so it is hoped that the EPA standards will positively impact that situation.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/03/epa-sets-new-stricter-heavy-duty-truck-bus-pollution-standards/>

LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

Governor Murphy Announces Ed Wengryn as New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture

Gov. Murphy approved the appointment by the State Board of Agriculture of Edward Wengryn, a more than 20-year veteran of the New Jersey Farm Bureau, to head the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA). NJ's Secretary of Agriculture is the Department's executive officer, Chair of the State Agriculture Development Committee, and a member of the Governor's cabinet. **EJTF partner** NOFA-NJ (Northeast Organic Farming Association of NJ) has worked with him previously and is very optimistic about his views for the future of NJDA; in fact, his first appearance in his new position was to talk to their monthly meeting.

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/press/2024/approved/press240322.html>

Murphy Administration Celebrates Earth Week by Proposing \$117 Million in Green Acres Program Investments in Parks, Community Recreation and Open Space

From the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) press release: "Governor Phil Murphy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette today announced \$117 million in recommended Green Acres funding for development and enhancement of parks and preservation of open space. Representing the highest level of Green Acres project funding since 2009, the DEP's recommended funding package reflects the Administration's commitment to overburdened communities and inclusive recreation." While the funding focuses on recreation opportunities, several community gardens are also included in the projects recommended for funding. Recommendations will now be submitted to the Garden State Preservation Trust for review before being sent to the Legislature for approval.

https://nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0014.htm

From Scraps to Soil: What is Compost?

This article describes the Mercer Educational Gardens (MEG) in Pennington, NJ, which have installed 21 different types of compost areas in

order to teach people about at-home composting methods (a list and description of the different composting types is available here:

<https://mgofmc.org/here/wp-content/uploads/Compost-Bins-2019rev2.pdf>). The gardens are maintained and supported by the Rutgers Master Gardeners with help from the Mercer County Parks Commission, and focus on composting of garden and household refuse and on plant selection and culture for various types of gardens. <https://srhub.org/2024/04/18/from-scraps-to-soil-what-is-compost/>

'Food Pharmacy' Offers Medication and Healthy Groceries All in One Place

This article (which includes a 3-minute video) describes an in-house pharmacy and food bank, staffed with trained dietitians, at a clinic in Newark provided through a partnership between Saint James Health and RWJBarnabas Health. Included in the services, besides providing local fresh food, bakery items, and non-perishable food, is counseling on healthy food choices, appropriate portions (using food models), and food preparation methods.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/newark-nj-food-pharmacy-provides-medication-groceries/>

Food Truck: Trenton Area Soup Kitchen Hits the Road

This 4-minute news video describes the new food truck launched by the nonprofit Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). Although TASK currently has 36 sites where they serve hot meals, they found that there are areas where it is difficult for people to access those, so they are bringing the meals to some of the other areas where transportation is an issue. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/food-truck-trenton-area-soup-kitchen-hits-the-road/>

Home Delivery, Online Shopping for NJ Users of WIC Nutrition Program?

This 5-minute news video describes a budget proposal by the NJ Department of Health (DOH) for \$2.9 million in state funding over and above federal funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), to enable WIC clients to order online and have groceries delivered to them. The

federal government will provide funding to cover the online ordering option, but will not provide funds for delivery services. This video describes positive and negative viewpoints related to WIC online ordering and delivery.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/nj-proposes-home-delivery-plus-online-shopping-options-wic-nutrition-program/>

NJ Spotlight News' "The Change Project" - Hunger and Food Insecurity in NJ

"The Change Project" is a NJ Spotlight News series "examining NJ's social and economic challenges - and focusing on promising actions that have led to positive change." This installment of the series is focusing on Hunger and Food Insecurity in NJ, with the following parts:

The Change Talks: Hunger & Food Insecurity - 1-hour video of panel discussion on NJ's incorporation of ideas from other states to combat hunger and food insecurity
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/the-change-talks-hunger-food-insecurity-new-jersey/>

NJ Food Pantries Are on the Front Lines of Relief - with 3-minute video
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/nj-food-pantries-front-lines-food-relief-network/>

Facing Increased Demand, Can NJ's Complex System of Food Aid Keep Up? - with 1-1/2-minute video
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/nj-food-insecurity-grows-food-banks-government-agencies-philanthropies-try-to-adapt/>

Food Pantries Face Higher Demand After COVID-19 - 5-1/2-minute news video
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/the-change-project-food-pantries-face-higher-demand-after-covid-19/>

Opinion: NJ Must Strengthen Food Aid System - by Randi Tepper, Chief Executive Officer of The Tepper Foundation
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/op-ed-nj-must-strengthen-food-aid-system/>

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Williams Transco Notifies FERC It Will Not Seek Further Extension of Federal Approval For NESE Fossil Gas Pipeline Project

"Eastern Environmental Law Center ('EELC') is pleased to share that Williams Transco has formally notified regulators that it will not seek further extension of federal approval for the 'Northeast Supply Enhancement' ('NESE') fossil gas pipeline project before that approval expires in May. NESE was designed to expand Transco's existing fossil gas transmission system through Pennsylvania and New Jersey to New York." Environmentalists including the NJ League of Conservation Voters (LCV) have stated that they are thrilled that this project will not move forward. **UUFANJ** had previously provided comments to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) stating that "The DEP must not permit this project for two reasons: First, the project is not needed and, second, the project doesn't serve any health purpose, rather it creates challenges to the health of New Jersey residents."

<https://easternenvironmental.org/williams-transco-notifies-ferc-it-will-not-seek-further-extension-of-federal-approval-for-nese-fossil-gas-pipeline-project/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)

Governor Murphy Celebrates Earth Week by Laying Out New Landmark Solar Investments, Putting New Jersey One Step Closer to Achieving 100% Clean Electricity by 2035

In this press release, Gov. Murphy summarizes the NJ Board of Public Utilities' (BPU) approval of multiple solar projects as well as the federal "Solar for All" funds awarded to NJ (see articles on p. 20 [here](#) and [here](#)). (A related 1-1/2-minute news video is available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-reaches-major-solar-power-benchmark/>.) Gov. Murphy also highlighted the recently-announced 225 megawatts of community solar and the re-opening of the Community Solar Energy Program for an

additional 275 megawatts, being considered by the BPU Board. He also announced that the BPU is anticipated to launch the Dual-Use Solar Pilot Program this summer, which may award up to 200 megawatts of solar capacity combined with active agricultural or horticultural production.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240426.shtml>

BPU Gives Nod to Raft of Solar Projects, Adding 300 Megawatts to Clean-Energy Mix

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) approved eight of fourteen bids submitted, mostly for grid supply projects, plus a project to build 80 megawatts of energy storage capacity. This is in contrast to last summer, when the BPU rejected all such bids submitted as being too expensive. To accomplish the 300-megawatt figure, the BPU reallocated capacity from other types of solar projects.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/nj-bpu-approves-new-solar-grid-supply-projects-energy-storage/>



Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$7 Billion 'Solar for All' Grants to Deliver Residential Solar, Saving Low-Income Americans \$350 Million Annually and Advancing Environmental Justice Across America

On Earth Day 2024, according to its press release, "the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] announced 60 selectees that will receive \$7 billion in grant awards through the 'Solar for All' [SFA] grant competition to deliver residential solar

projects to over 900,000 households nationwide. The grant competition is funded by President Biden's Investing in America agenda through the Inflation Reduction Act, which created EPA's \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund." The grants were provided "to develop long-lasting solar programs that enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy and benefit from distributed residential solar, lowering energy costs for families, creating good-quality jobs in communities that have been left behind, advancing environmental justice and tackling climate change." The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) will receive over \$156 million (details are provided in Gov. Murphy's press release, available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240426a.shtml>) for residential solar, multi-family housing solar and storage, residential-serving community solar, and technical assistance and workforce development in its NJ SFA program that tackles the major barriers that have prevented the adoption of solar energy by low-income and disadvantaged households.

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-7-billion-solar-all-grants-deliver-residential>

OFFSHORE WIND

NJ Looks to Advance Efforts to Build Offshore Wind Transmission

In 2022, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) approved a historic approach to offshore wind transmission, consisting of a single onshore point to which multiple offshore wind projects would connect. The BPU solicitation for the next phase just closed. That solicitation was for proposals for "pre-build infrastructure" to protect underground cables, sited primarily under roadways, that would extend from the single connection point at the Sea Girt National Guard Training Center to a Jersey Central Power & Light substation in Howell Township.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/nj-looks-to-advance-efforts-to-build-offshore-wind-transmission/>

New Jersey to Fund Research on Offshore Wind Impacts on Whales

Under the auspices of the NJ Offshore Wind Research & Monitoring Initiative (RMI) funded through projects approved in NJ's offshore wind energy solicitations, \$3.7 million has been awarded "for scientific research projects being undertaken to ensure ecologically responsible development of offshore wind energy" (from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) press release, available here: https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_00325.htm).

The projects funded include "an aerial survey of whales, a whale satellite-tagging study, a study of seasonal water-mixing dynamics, the expansion of an existing tracking system for birds and bats, and a study focused on sea turtle behavior and health." Additional details are provided in the DEP press release linked above.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/new-jersey-to-fund-research-on-offshore-wind-impacts-on-whales/>

Long Beach Township Humpback Whale Necropsy

[Warning: this article begins with a photo of a severely injured dead whale.] From the Marine Mammal Stranding Center: "On Thursday April 11th at 6:45 am the Marine Mammal Stranding Center responded to a deceased Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) in the surf at 51st street in Long Beach Township, NJ.... Initial findings showed evidence of bruising around the head with a hematoma present, multiple fractures of the skull and cervical vertebrae, numerous dislocated ribs, and a dislocated scapula. These injuries are consistent with blunt force trauma. Most of the major internal organs were liquified, with only the heart identifiable. Scars from a previous entanglement unrelated to the stranding event were present around the peduncle, flukes, and right front pectoral flipper. Samples were collected and will be sent for histopathologic analysis."

<https://mmsc.org/mmsc-media-center/f/update-long-beach-township-humpback-whale-necropsy>

Offshore Wind Ports Took a Hit When Developer Pulled Out. Why N.J. Is Still Hopeful

This article gives the history of NJ's two existing wind ports, the impact on them when Ørsted cancelled its offshore wind projects, the effect of the projects currently under development, and a potential timeline for the wind ports' operations. <https://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/2024/03/offshore-wind-ports-took-a-hit-when-developer-pulled-out-why-nj-is-still-hopeful.html>

CLIMATE CHANGE

Green Groups Urge Murphy to Publish Climate Rules Without Further Delay

On 4/5/2024, thirty-one environmental groups sent a letter (available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/123/2024/04/Gov-Murphy-PACT-Letter-2.pdf>) to Gov. Murphy asking that the NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (PACT) Resilient Environment and Landscape (REAL) rules be filed by Earth Day 2024 (i.e., 4/22/2024). PACT was first announced in Gov. Murphy's January 2020 Executive Order 100. The letter points out that the rules need to be issued soon for them to be able to be adopted during the Murphy administration.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/coalition-for-the-delaware-river-watershed-association-of-new-jersey-environmental-commissions-american-littoral-society-environment-new-jersey-new-jersey-business-industry-association-njbia-seal-le/>

NJEDA Establishes New Jersey Green Bank to Advance Climate Goals

From the NJ Economic Development Agency (NJEDA) press release: " the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Board approved the creation of the New Jersey Green Bank (NJGB), which will make investments in the clean energy sector.... (t)he NJGB will make investments through debt, credit enhancements, and other financial vehicles to attract private capital to enable the state to reach its climate goals.... The NJGB will be dedicated to investing in projects, technologies, and companies that align with the State's climate goals, including in areas

such as zero-emission transportation, building decarbonization and resiliency, and clean energy generation and storage. Examples of projects that the NJGB may invest in include solar power, onshore and offshore wind, all electric heat pumps and geothermal, and battery storage, among others. Investments made by the NJGB must demonstrate benefits for the state; be new rather than seeking refinancing; and lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions or other co-pollutants." <https://www.njeda.gov/njeda-establishes-new-jersey-green-bank-to-advance-climate-goals/>

DCA Announces More Than \$34 Million in Resilient Communities Program Grant Awards

From the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) press release: The DCA "announced the award of \$34.47 million in Resilient Communities Program grants to 10 local governmental entities to help them make public infrastructure more resilient to current and future natural disasters.... The grants are... funded with federal Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) monies that the State received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Hurricane Ida recovery initiatives." Among the criteria on which applications were scored were: Protects and benefits disadvantaged communities; Is a cost-effective solution to natural hazard risk; Promotes resiliency through ancillary or triple bottom line benefits (social, environmental, and economic benefits); Considers climate change and future conditions; Is designed and scoped with public input and meaningful stakeholder engagement; Incorporates nature-based solutions; and Is ready for construction to begin within a short time. The list of grant recipients is available in the press release, here: <https://nj.gov/dca/news/news/2024/approved/20240419.shtml>.

97.6M = Metric Tons of Greenhouse Gases Emitted by NJ in 2021

Every two years, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issues the NJ Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report (the 2024 report is available here: [https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/ghg/2024-ghg-](https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/ghg/2024-ghg-inventory-report.pdf)

[inventory-report.pdf](https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/ghg/2024-ghg-inventory-report.pdf)). The latest report shows that NJ's estimated greenhouse gas emissions for 2021 were 97.6 million metric tons, which accounted for 1.7% of gross emissions in the U.S. and 0.3% of emissions in the world. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/97-6m-metric-tons-greenhouse-gas-emitted-nj-in-2021/>

Examining NJ's Climate Goals: Chat Box

Starting at minute 11:30, in this NJ Spotlight News Chat Box, NJ Spotlight News senior correspondent David Cruz interviews NJ environmental and environmental justice advocates Anjuli Ramos-Busot, director of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Marcus Sibly, an environmental and social justice activist and Chairman of the New Jersey Progressive Equitable Energy Coalition. They discuss where New Jersey stands on "meeting its climate goals on clean energy, electric vehicles and environmental justice" and "what the state's action plan for the future should be." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/examining-nj-climate-goals-chat-box-essex-county-covid-19-vaccine-program-controversy/>



DEP Chief Reflects on NJ's Clean-Energy Transition

In this 10-1/2-minute NJ Spotlight News interview, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette describes the approach NJ is taking to address the various aspects of transitioning to a clean energy future, emphasizing a focus on the "big picture" rather than on specific projects. He also discusses the recent federal rules related to PFAS "forever chemicals," pointing out that they were basically developed using NJ's PFAS rules and research as a guide. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/dep-chief-reflects-on-njs-clean-energy-transition/>

Opinion: NJ Utilities Have Multi-Pronged Strategy to Meet Clean-Energy Goals

This piece by Richard Henning, president and CEO of the New Jersey Utilities Association, gives a utilities-industry view of multiple ways to address "clean energy," including energy efficiency, biogas/"renewable natural gas" (RNG), carbon capture, "clean hydrogen" and nuclear energy. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/op-ed-nj-utilities-association-leader-says-using-multi-pronged-clean-energy-strategy>

FOREST HEALTH

DEP Caps Earth Week and Celebrates Arbor Day by Awarding Nearly \$8.7 Million in Urban and Community Forestry Grants to Overburdened Communities

According to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) press release: "Building upon the Murphy Administration's commitment to advancing environmental justice and addressing the impacts of climate change on public health, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection today marked Arbor Day and capped its celebration of Earth Week by awarding nearly \$8.7 million in grants to support tree management programs and urban and community forestry training for municipal employees and community volunteers in overburdened communities. Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette announced the award of the Leafing Out grants during the NJDEP Forest Service's Arbor Day tree planting and Earth Week event in Camden, held in partnership with the New Jersey Tree Foundation [of which **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** is a Trustee]. Ten communities, including Camden, each received \$850,000 for tree management programs, while another 12 received a combined total of \$150,000 for municipal employees and engaged community volunteers to attend urban and community forestry-related training events." https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0015.htm

Pick up the Pace on Preserving Land or Pay the Price in Environmental Impact

The NJ Conservation Foundation has issued a study (available here: <https://www.njconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Nature-for-All-A-2050-Vision-for-New-Jersey.pdf>) that relates to **EJTF's fourth goal** this year, of protecting and expanding NJ's public and urban forests. The report calls for a two-pronged approach: preserving high-quality lands before they are developed; and creating a "Green and Healthy Cities" initiative to consider the open space, urban forest, and climate mitigation needs in underserved communities. The report emphasizes that speed is of the essence in accelerating land preservation, and proposes several possible funding mechanisms. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/green-acres-forests-wetlands-parks-trails-farmland-recreational-open-spaces-climate-change-heat-island-effect-drinking-water-revenues-real-estate-transfer-fee-developers-fee-fund-land-preservation/>

NJDEP Forest Fire Service Urges Vigilance During Peak Wildfire Season, Highlights Enhanced Information Resources

According to a NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) press release: "As climate change leads to longer wildfire seasons, the NJDEP Forest Fire Service is providing more tools and resources than ever before to help the public understand and mitigate wildfire risk and have access to timely safety information on ongoing wildfires. Peak wildfire season typically runs from mid-March through mid-May.... The NJ Fire Danger Dashboard [available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/fire/infotools/conditions-restrictions.html>] found on the Forest Fire Service website, is updated frequently with a fire danger rating by county.... The New Jersey Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (NJWRAP) [including a Wildfire Risk Explorer Map, available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycjwub73>] compiles data and resources to assist residents, community leaders and fire professionals in taking actions to mitigate the threat of wildfire risk around their property and in their community." https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0010.htm

EDUCATION and YOUTH-RELATED



Balancing Beauty and Biodiversity: TCNJ's New Native Wildflower Meadow

In Fall 2023, the College of New Jersey (TCNJ) instituted its "College as a Living Lab" program, "which integrates sustainability practices into campus operations through hands-on environmental projects." As part of that program, TCNJ is planning to install a native wildflower meadow to restore native flora, support pollination and local wildlife, and reduce carbon emissions. To manage the space, a pilot organic landscaping management program will also be launched at the meadow site.

<https://srhub.org/2024/03/28/balancing-beauty-and-biodiversity-tcnjs-new-native-wildflower-meadow/>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

NJ Health Department Report Shows Continued Increases in Childhood Lead Exposure Screenings

The NJ Department of Health (DOH) has released its latest annual Childhood Lead Exposure in New Jersey report (available here: <https://www.nj.gov/health/childhood-lead/documents/childhood-lead-2022-annual-report.pdf>), which includes data from state fiscal year (SFY) 2022. The report shows that the NJ emphasis on blood lead screening before 3 years of age seems to have yielded positive results, with a higher percentage of 3-year-old children being tested than in the previous SFY. According to the report, 2,848 children under 6 years of age had elevated lead levels in their blood. <https://www.nj.gov/health/news/2024/approved/20240422a.shtml>

DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)

Feds Finalize Landmark Limits on 'Forever Chemicals' in Drinking Water

This 1-minute news video describes the first-ever federal limits on PFAS "forever chemicals" in drinking water. Six chemicals are addressed in the limits, three of which have been subject to previous limits in NJ, but the federal limits are stricter. \$1 billion in new federal funding will be made available to assist in compliance, bringing that total to \$9 billion, and there are settlements of some lawsuits of chemical companies and others that will also assist in funding the improvements in drinking water systems that will be required. See

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/feds-finalize-landmark-limits-on-forever-chemicals-in-drinking-water/>. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) press release is available here: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-finalizes-first-ever-national-drinking-water-standard>.

Feds List Most Common 'Forever Chemicals' for Superfund Law

In addition to setting drinking water limits for six PFAS "forever chemicals" (see article above), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated two of the PFAS that have been made and used the most in the United States, PFOS and PFOA, as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as Superfund. This will make polluters liable for clean-up costs on designated federal Superfund sites. See

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/federal-order-opens-door-add-forever-chemicals-superfund-list/>.

EPA clarified in a "PFAS Enforcement Discretion and Settlement Policy Under CERCLA" document that they do "not intend to pursue entities where equitable factors do not support seeking response actions or costs under CERCLA, including, but not limited to, community water systems and publicly owned treatment works, municipal separate storm sewer systems, publicly owned/operated municipal

solid waste landfills, publicly owned airports and local fire departments, and farms where biosolids are applied to the land. For these same parties, EPA can use CERCLA statutory authorities when appropriate to enter into settlements that provide contribution protection from third party claims for matters addressed in the settlement." The EPA press release is available here:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-finalizes-critical-rule-clean-pfas-contamination-protect>.

NJ Utilities Face Higher Costs to Conform With New Federal Rules on 'Forever Chemicals'

This article describes the impact on NJ's public water systems of the new federal drinking water limits on PFAS "forever chemicals" and some possible mechanisms that may be used to fund the improvements that will be needed for compliance.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/nj-utilities-face-higher-costs-advocates-hail-epa-pfas-forever-chemical-rules-historic-step-protecting-drinking-water/>

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

92,000 = Number of Houses and Apartments in NJ Certified Under the Energy Star Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has honored the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) with a 2024 ENERGY STAR® Partners of the Year Award, noting that it has been a Sustained Excellence winner for 12 years. According to the EPA press release, which also lists other NJ honorees, (available here:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/us-epa-honors-2024-energy-starr-partners-year-award-winners-new-york-and-new-jersey>), the BPU "incentivized more than 3,900 ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments, for a total of more than 92,000 residential units since joining the program in 2001."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/03/9200-certified-residential-units-by-the-energy-star-program/>

POLLUTION

Rampant Plastics Pollution, Health Threats Take State House Spotlight

This 4-1/2-minute news video describes the rare joint hearing of the NJ Senate Environment and Energy Committee, and the Assembly Environment, Natural Resources, and Solid Waste Committee, that took place on Earth Day 2024. They met to discuss the issue of plastic pollution, "its potential and actual effects on human health, and methods that may be used to protect against, or to mitigate, the negative effects of plastic pollution on human health and the environment." As one potential way to address some of the plastics that are not now recycled, a bottle bill requiring a refundable deposit on plastic bottles was discussed.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/rampant-plastics-pollution-health-threats-take-state-house-spotlight/>

Recycling Changed Drastically for One N.J. Town. Many More Could Follow.

In switching from "single stream" recycling to "dual stream" recycling, South Orange Village, NJ has saved money and increased the quality of recycled items. In "single stream" recycling, all recyclables are mingled together, whereas in "dual stream" recycling, glass and aluminum are picked up some weeks while paper and cardboard are picked up on the other weeks. The cost savings comes from the town getting a better deal on these recyclables and getting money back on recycled paper and cardboard.

<https://www.nj.com/middlesex/2024/03/recycling-changed-drastically-for-one-nj-town-many-more-could-follow.html>

Belmar Embraces Sustainable Lawn Care: A Step Towards Environmental Stewardship

The Belmar Environmental Commission has initiated a "cut it and leave it" campaign for lawn care. This method has been shown to require 25% to 50% less fertilizer, and also returns vital

nutrients to the soil.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/belmar-slash-lake-como/articles/belmar-embraces-sustainable-lawn-care-a-step-towards-environmental-stewardship>

OTHER



PSEG Tells NRC It Plans on Renewing Licenses for Three South Jersey Nuclear Plants

Planning for the future operation of NJ's three nuclear power plants into the 2050's and 2060's, PSEG has notified the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that it will be seeking renewal of their licenses when they expire. PSEG plans to make use of the federal Nuclear Production Tax Credit provided under the Inflation Reduction Act. These anticipated federal funds enabled PSEG to withdraw from a NJ \$300 million a year subsidy that it had been receiving since 2019. The nuclear power plants, two of which will be 80 years old at the end of the renewal extension if it is granted, generate close to half of NJ's electricity and 85 percent of the its carbon-free power, making them a key to achieving the state's "clean energy" goals (which currently include nuclear power as a defined "clean energy" source).

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/pseg-tells-nrc-it-plans-on-renewing-licenses-for-three-south-jersey-nuclear-plants/>

NJ Transit Celebrates Earth Week With Release of First Ever Sustainability Plan

NJ Transit issued the final version of its first ever Sustainability Plan (available here: https://content.njtransit.com/sites/default/files/sustainability/NJ_TRANSIT_Sustainability_Plan_FINAL_WEB.pdf). The plan details the steps and processes NJ Transit is taking "to deliver sustainable, resilient, and equitable public transportation.... the

Sustainability Plan prioritizes environmental responsibility while also highlighting deliverable benefits to customers in the communities it serves." Previously, **EJTF member Michael Skelly** and **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** had provided comments on the draft Sustainability Plan. Their comments are available on the EJTF "Policy Briefs" webpage, here:

<https://www.ufaithaction.org/policy-briefs-and-positions/>. While their specific recommendations do not seem to have been included in the final version, in his comments, Mike did express pleasure that such a plan has been developed, and applauded its spotlight on Environmental Justice and Equity.

<https://www.njtransit.com/press-releases/nj-transit-celebrates-earth-week-release-first-ever-sustainability-plan>

Governor's Plan for Funding NJ Transit Is Getting Scrutiny

This article provides background and explains in detail, with graphs and a table, how the proposed "corporate transit fee" tax that Gov. Murphy included in his budget proposal would impact NJ Transit and how it fits in with other existing taxes. Without the new tax, proposed to be levied on corporations that earn more than \$10 million in annual net profits, NJ Transit is predicted to have close to a \$767 million shortfall in fiscal year 2026. This shortfall would occur despite fare increases that have been approved, as well as continued support from the Clean Energy Fund, NJ Turnpike funding, and a state operating subsidy. See

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/murphy-tax-plan-help-fund-nj-transit-comes-under-scrutiny/>.

Additional information about NJ Transit's fiscal needs is provided in the article "**Cash-Strapped NJ Transit Once Again Is in Budget Spotlight**," available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/corporate-tax-plan-aid-nj-transit-center-stage-nj-budget/> and pushback from the business community is described in the article "**Murphy's Proposed Tax on Top-Earning Companies Draws Heated Response From Business Groups**," available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/murphys-proposed-tax-on-top-earning-companies-draws-heated-response-from-business-groups/> and in the 4-1/2-minute news video "**Push to Use Sales Tax**

Revenue to Help Fund NJ Transit," available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/push-to-use-sales-tax-revenue-to-help-fund-nj-transit/>.

NJEDA Approves Creation of \$7M Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge

According to its press release: "The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Board approved the creation of the Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge. The \$7 million grant program will prepare New Jersey residents for green economy careers, with a particular focus on advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion and serving overburdened communities.... Grants from \$250,000 up to \$1.5 million are available. Awardees may use funds to cover design,

planning, capital, and implementation costs to offer training programs in green economy industries." <https://www.njeda.gov/njeda-approves-creation-of-7m-green-workforce-training-grant-challenge/>

[NJ] Teen Creates AI Solar-Powered Tree to Zap Spotted Lanternflies

An Annandale, NJ high school student has created a solar-powered, self-cleaning "tree" driven by artificial intelligence (AI) that she designed to attract and exterminate spotted lanternflies without using the harmful insecticides that are commonly used. She calls it "ArTreeficial." <https://www.tomorrowstoday.com/smart-technology/teen-creates-ai-solar-powered-tree-to-zap-spotted-lanternflies/>

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.**
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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 Empower NJ 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.