

A newsletter focused on environmental justice-related events and actions specifically affecting New Jersey.

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

## CONGREGATIONAL and EJTF ACTIVITIES

**UUFANJ at the NJ Climate Superfund Act Rally** in Trenton on 6/2/2025 (photo at right - note **EJTF members Mike Skelly and Peggy Middaugh** holding the UUFANJ banner and singing along with the Solidarity Singers! (Also see the article on [p. 17.](#))



**UUFANJ Board member/EJTF member Nancy Griffeth** (at far left in the photo below) participated in the **100% Clean Energy Rally and Lobby Day** in Trenton on 6/12/2025, in support of the Clean Energy bill. NJ Sen. Bob Smith, and others, spoke. (Also see the article on [p. 18.](#))



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## CONGREGATIONAL and EJTF ACTIVITIES (cont.)

### Unitarian Society of Ridgewood (USR)

From April through June, the Environmental Justice Team of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood (USR) actively participated in a number of events to experience the workings of local utilities, the beauty of a nearby nature center, and literature. As shown in the photos below (L to R) they toured the Village of Ridgewood Pollution Control Department (top row), the Ridgewood Water Department building, and the Ridgewood Recycling Center (second row). They also took a hike at the Closter Nature Center (third row) and had a play reading of the first chapter of *Bambi* by Felix Salten (bottom). At the end of June, they have planned a visit to USR by a Beekeeper Speaker.



## CONGREGATIONAL and EJTF ACTIVITIES (cont.)



- On 5/30/2025, **EJTF member Sally Gellert** (visible above the "D" in "BRIGADE" in the photo above) participated in the Visibility Brigade Movement's first nationwide action, where participants took to highway overpasses across the country, and spelled out "[Your State Initials Here] FIGHTS FASCISM." Sally's group was on the same pedestrian walkway overpass over Route 4 where the Visibility Brigade model was born in 2020 "out of a frustration due to the lack of physical messaging in the real world regarding the existential crisis we face as a nation."
- On 6/14/2025, **UUFANJ Board member/EJTF member Nancy Griffeth** and Bill Griffeth participated in the "No Kings" Rally alongside Route 22 in Mountainside, NJ.



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

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

**Others - send an email to [uufaihactionejtf@gmail.com](mailto:uufaihactionejtf@gmail.com) requesting to receive information about environmental issues and upcoming events.**

| <b>JULY 2025</b><br>(with <a href="#">hyperlinks</a> 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>  |
|   |  | <b>1</b><br><a href="#">NJBPU NJ Clean Energy Program "A New Approach to New Construction"</a><br>- 1:00 p.m.   | <b>2</b><br><a href="#">"Getting Results from Government Records Requests"</a><br>- 6:30 p.m.  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b><br><a href="#">NJDEP Noise Control Rule Proposal Public Hearing</a><br>- 6:00 p.m.  | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b><br><a href="#">NJDEP "Natural Climate Solutions Round 1 Showcase"</a><br>- 11:00 a.m. | <b>10</b><br><a href="#">"LIVING GREEN: All About EVs"</a><br>- 6:30 p.m.   | <b>11</b><br><a href="#">NJBPU NJ Clean Energy Program "A New Approach to New Construction"</a><br>- 1:00 p.m. | <b>12</b><br><a href="#">Fort Lee Repair Cafe</a><br>- 1:00 p.m. |
| <b>13</b><br><a href="#">Jersey City Repair Cafe</a><br>- 1:00 p.m.                     | <b>14</b><br><a href="#">NJBPU Stakeholder Meeting on 3rd Triennium of Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs</a><br>- 9:00 a.m. | <b>15</b><br><a href="#">NJBPU Stakeholder Meeting on 3rd Triennium of Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs</a><br>- 9:00 a.m.<br><br><a href="#">NJ Pinelands Commission Proposed Amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan - Public Hearing</a><br>- 9:30 a.m.<br><br><a href="#">Green Amendment Day - "The Power of State Constitutions for Securing Environmental Rights"</a><br>- 6:00 p.m. | <b>16</b>  | <b>17</b><br><a href="#">"How to Electrify Your RV"</a><br>- 7:00 p.m.  | <b>18</b><br><a href="#">NJBPU NJ Clean Energy Program "A New Approach to New Construction"</a><br>- 1:00 p.m. | <b>19</b>  |
| <b>20</b>   | <b>21</b>  | <b>22</b><br><a href="#">"Heat Vulnerability Across the Lifespan: Exposure, Sensitivity, and Adaptive Capacity to Extreme Heat"</a><br>- 7:00 p.m.  | <b>23</b>  | <b>24</b><br><a href="#">2025 Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO and Policy Forum</a><br>- 9:00 a.m.<br><br><a href="#">"How Does Extreme Heat Threaten NJ's Natural World?"</a><br>- 11:00 a.m. | <b>25</b><br><a href="#">NJBPU NJ Clean Energy Program "A New Approach to New Construction"</a><br>- 1:00 p.m. | <b>26</b>  |
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|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|---|--|--|

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**NJBPU NJ Clean Energy Program  
 "A New Approach to New Construction"  
 7/1/2025, 7/11/2025, 7/18/2025,  
 7/25/2025, all at 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
 - **Webinars****

"New Jersey's Clean Energy Program has made some big changes to our New Construction Program. An overview of these changes will be presented, with Q&A at the end." While much of the program is geared toward non-residential buildings, the "High Performance Pathway" is available for residential buildings to qualify for incentives. According to the NJ Board of Public Utilities webpage: "As of May 1, 2025, the New Construction Program is open. For a period of 6 months, from May 1, 2025, until October 31, 2025, at 11:59 PM EST, projects can be submitted to the New Construction Program OR one of the previous programs: Residential New Construction, SmartStart, or Pay for Performance. The New Construction Program introduces a streamlined approach to building a clean energy future, offering a single-entry point to various pathways to qualify for incentives with greater flexibility. As your building project achieves higher energy efficiency, you can qualify for larger incentives and optional bonuses, making energy efficiency a more cost-effective part of your project." Additional information, including links to fact sheets, is available here:  
<https://njcleanenergy.com/residential/ncp>.  
 Registration is available here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mw33auns>.

**"Getting Results from Government Records Requests" - **Virtual**  
 7/2/2025, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

This community advocacy training is presented by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. "Join us for a community advocacy training on how to successfully request documents and records from the state (NJ, PA) and the federal government. Under specific laws, you have the ability to access public records from certain government agencies which can be a great way to find information about a proposed land development, a pollution clean up, local flooding, regulations, or anything else that you or your community may find important. These laws are meant to be used by the people to enforce government transparency. By learning how, you'll be empowering yourself and your community with the facts to take further action if necessary." Additional information and registration are available here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mt422rzu>.

**NJDEP Noise Control Rule Proposal  
 Public Hearing - **Virtual**  
 7/7/2025, 6:00 p.m.**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the New Jersey Noise Control Council are proposing amendments to the state's Noise Control Rules. The proposed amendments and repeals will update the Noise Control rules to consolidate definitions, amend definitions that are not sufficiently descriptive, and update measurement procedures and sound level measurement device requirements to reflect modern technology in broad use. A public hearing concerning the proposal will be held virtually on 7/7/2025. To provide oral comments at the virtual public hearing, please email the Department at **michelle.feasel@dep.nj.gov** no later than

3:00 p.m. on July 7, 2025, with your contact information. **Written comments are due by August 15, 2025.** Additional information, including how to submit written comments, and links to the rule proposal and to join the virtual hearing, are available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/rules/notice-of-rule-proposals/20250616a/>.

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**NJDEP "Natural Climate Solutions Round 1 Showcase" - Webinar**  
**7/9/2025, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

This webinar is presented by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It will showcase a selection of funded projects from Round 1 of the Natural Climate Solutions Grant Program that funds "on-the-ground implementation of projects that create, restore, and enhance New Jersey's natural carbon sinks, such as salt marshes, seagrass beds, forests, urban parks and woodlands, **and street trees** (emphasis added)." Projects to be presented include: American Littoral Society, Marsh Restoration at the mouth of the Maurice River; Stafford Township, Marsh restoration at Popular Point, **NJ Conservation Foundation, Urban Tree Planting in Trenton;** and Readington Township, Readington Township Meadow Afforestation. The link to register is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ykf9n7wh>.

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**"LIVING GREEN: All About EVs"**  
**7/10/2025, 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.**  
**Montclair, NJ - In-person**

This program is organized by the Gateway Group of the Sierra Club NJ and is sponsored by the Adult School of Montclair as part of their Living Green series. "Have you been considering buying an electric vehicle? Join Bill Beren of the Sierra Club to learn the basics about EVs and discover available incentives in today's financial climate. Audience Q&A [will be included].... Topics covered in the presentation include busting common myths about Electric Vehicles and how to choose the best vehicle and charging station for your family." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdd9pfek>.

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**Fort Lee Repair Cafe**  
**7/12/2025, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Fort Lee, NJ - In-person**

"Join us at the Senior Center [Richard A. Nest Adult Activity Center, 319 Main St.] for our second Repair Cafe! Volunteer repair coaches help you get your beloved but broken belongings back in action. Our volunteers can help repair lamps, small wood furniture, frames, bikes, appliances, textiles, and more. No registration required." Additional information is available here: <https://fortleelibrary.assabetinteractive.com/calendar/repair-cafe-2/>.

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**Jersey City Repair Cafe**  
**7/13/2025, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Jersey City, NJ - In-Person**

"Fix Your Beloved BUT Broken Items For Free With Our Repair Coaches - GYM Grace Church Van Vorst, 39 Erie St." Bring the following: "Bicycles, Clothing, Computers & Digital Devices, Small Electrics, Jewelry, and Wooden Things. Knife & Tool Sharpening also available." Additional information is available here: <https://ww2.jclibrary.org/z3tg>.

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**NJBPU Stakeholder Meeting on 3rd Triennium of Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Program**  
**7/14/2025 & 7/15/2025, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Newark, NJ - In-person & Online**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) "invites all interested parties and members of the public to participate in a hybrid stakeholder meeting to discuss the upcoming third three (3)-year period of the State's energy efficiency ('EE') and peak demand reduction ('PDR') programs pursuant to the Clean Energy Act of 2018 ('CEA')... 'Triennium 3' or 'T3'. The Triennium 3 programs will be administered by the Board and New Jersey's investor-owned electric and gas utilities and over the period July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2030. Staff is currently developing recommendations for Triennium 3. This stakeholder meeting aims to convene a broad set of market actors and interested parties to share their vision for Triennium 3 and solicit specific input regarding key elements being considered for Triennium 3.... The event... will include 1.5 days of structured

facilitated sessions for stakeholder input, presentations of the key takeaways from breakout room discussions to the full group of participants, and networking opportunities. Stakeholders can expect to hear from keynote speakers and State energy leaders who will offer guidance on the role of T3 within a broader policy context. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide input regarding energy affordability, cost containment, programmatic focus areas, involvement of upstream and midstream actors, and market expectations for a 'one stop shop:' a single online destination for energy customers to quickly access comprehensive information on EE program offerings." Additional information, including the registration link and instructions for providing comments, is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2mcc92us>. **Comments are due by 5:00 p.m. on 7/27/2025.**

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**Green Amendment Day 2025 - "The Power of State Constitutions for Securing Environmental Rights"**  
**- Online Forum**  
**7/15/2025, 6:00 p.m.**

"Join Green Amendments Founder Maya van Rossum as she talks with state constitution expert and Rutgers Law Professor Robert Williams to learn the key elements of state constitutions that make them so powerful for addressing our most pressing societal issues from education, to workers rights, to abortion rights, to environmental rights." The official Green Amendment Day 2025 is 7/13/2025, but this forum is being held on 7/15/2025. Registration is available here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGSyExolnHZOBMBY8szZSYKqOpe9fWzWVf5YFyYk0g8zzRbg/vie/wform>. In addition, there will be a "Green Amendment Community Art Gallery" going live on 7/13/2025 (submissions due by 7/10/2025); additional information about the Forum and the Art Gallery is available here: <https://forthegenerations.org/national-green-amendment-day/>.

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**NJ Pinelands Commission Proposed Amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan**  
**- Public Hearing**  
**7/15/2025, 9:30 a.m. - Virtual**

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission is holding a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The amendments relate to: application fees; the expiration of Certificates of Filing and Waivers of Strict Compliance; Regional Growth Areas and the Pinelands Development Credit program; and minor clarifications and updates. The proposal also includes an amendment to the Pinelands Land Capability Map to reflect the redesignation of the Black Run Watershed in Evesham Township from a Pinelands Rural Development Area to a Pinelands Forest Area. [See the article "**Essential Pinelands Waters Under Renewed Development Threat - Environmentalists Fear Proposed New Rule Is 'Too Little, Too Late'**" on [p. 16](#).] The NJ Register Notice (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yukzjk9h>) contains very detailed information about the proposed amendments, their history, and how to view the Livestream and to provide written comments. **Comments are due by 8/15/2025.** The Rule Proposal is available here: [https://nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/amend/PRN\\_2025-063\\_57\\_NJR\\_1210.pdf](https://nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/amend/PRN_2025-063_57_NJR_1210.pdf) and the amended Land Capability Map is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdz57btx>.

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**Sierra Club NJ Monthly Building Electrification Webinar - "How to Electrify Your RV" - Virtual**  
**7/17/2025, 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.**

This event is organized by the Jersey Shore Group of the Sierra Club NJ. "For a change-of-pace... we welcome Professor Ben Wymore, who describes his adventures in designing and living in his electrified RV (a house on wheels). He and his family enjoy living in remote sites around the country. On July 17, 2025, Professor Wymore will join us via Starlink from the Sierra Nevada mountains to tell his adventures in design and use of his off-the-grid electrified RV." Additional information, including the link to register, is available here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=701Po00000wgas7IAA&mapLinkHref=>.

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**"Heat Vulnerability Across the Lifespan: Exposure, Sensitivity, and Adaptive Capacity to Extreme Heat" - Webinar**  
**7/22/2025, 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.**

This webinar is sponsored by Elders for Climate Action (ECA). "Extreme heat is responsible for more deaths than all other natural disasters combined, and is also associated with a number of other adverse health outcomes. Unfortunately, due to climate disruption, the frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme heat is increasing. In this National Call, we will discuss heat vulnerability across the lifespan, focusing on heat exposure, heat sensitivity, and adaptive capacity to mitigate the effects of extreme heat. We will review why young children, pregnant adults, older adults, outdoor workers, and those who live in urban heat islands are at particularly high risk during an extreme heat event. We will discuss steps to prepare for hot days, as well as review the symptoms and signs of heat-related illness. We will end with an evaluation of work in progress to improve individual and community resilience to extreme heat." Additional information and the link to register are available here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y9zunutu>.

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**2025 Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO and Policy Forum**  
**7/24/2025, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**  
**- Livestream**

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the House and Senate Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Caucuses invite you to join us for the 28th Annual Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO and Policy Forum (EXPO 2025). Top-level speakers will showcase technologies and solutions that reduce carbon emissions, save households money, improve the economy, build resilience, and protect our security interests." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here:  
<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/expo2025>.

**"How Does Extreme Heat Threaten NJ's Natural World?" - Webinar**  
**7/24/2025, 11:00 a.m.**

NJ's Interagency Council on Climate Resilience is hosting a webinar "featuring a panel of ecology and natural resource experts to discuss the impact that extreme heat has on NJ's ecosystems and natural spaces, specifically plants and wildlife, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, disease carrying vectors, and natural resources." The moderator is Terry Doss, CERP, Co-Director & Chief Restoration Scientist, Meadowlands Research & Restoration Institute, New Jersey Sports & Exposition Authority, and panelists are: Dr. Samir Patel, Senior Research Biologist, Coonamessett Farm Foundation; Dr. Jennifer Krumins, Science Director, Pinelands Preservation Alliance; and Dr. Dina Fonseca, Chair, Department of Entomology, Rutgers University. Registration is available here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/bp673kr7>.

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**"People's Forum On Home Energy"**  
**7/31/2025, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**  
**Newark, NJ (location TBA) - In-person**

This event is sponsored by **EJTF partner** NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA). "Join us in Newark, NJ for a collaborative discussion on energy efficiency in your homes and learn about the cost-savings of energy efficient appliances. Attendees will be entered in a raffle to win a brand new air conditioning unit!" Additional information will be available here:  
<https://njeja.org/event/peoplesforum-home-energy/>.

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**City of Paterson EJ NJDEP Community Engagement Session - Hybrid**  
**7/31/2025, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**  
**- In-person (location TBD) & on Zoom**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is partnering with Paterson Alliance to hold the Paterson Environmental Justice Community Engagement Session. From the DEP Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) news release: "DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette and DEP Office of Environmental Justice Director Kandyce Perry will meet with residents in Paterson's overburdened communities to discuss environmental justice concerns, share resources, and answer questions. Member organizations of Paterson Alliance's newly

established Environmental Justice Working Group will highlight efforts to address environmental justice issues locally, and how residents can get involved." Registration is available here: <https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/8oqbUBGsS7-5uZmVxDfI9g>.

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## **VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS**

### **"The Hidden Culprit Behind Your High Energy Bills: PJM 101"** **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by the Sierra Club Delaware Chapter, and provided information "about PJM's planning failures to connect cheaper, clean energy and what we can do to hold them accountable." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/LBdmCfms1ks>.

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### **"Introduction to Lobbying for the Planet" -** **Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by the Sierra Club NJ. It focused on learning to be a legislative advocate for NJ's environment and taking grassroots action at the Statehouse in Trenton. "Citizen lobbying provides people with the opportunity to advocate for themselves and their communities, and make a difference in New Jersey. This presentation [introduced] how a bill becomes law, explain[ed] where we can have a voice, and [how to] build relationships to influence change." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxIYOsnTLAQ>.

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### **"Extinctopedia - A Discovery of What We Have Lost, What Is at Risk, and What to Do About It" with Smithsonian Scientists** **- Video of Webinar**

The East Brunswick Public Library hosted this online program in which Smithsonian scientists discussed the Smithsonian's book, *Extinctopedia*. "*Extinctopedia* tells a complex story, not just of those who are extinct but also of those in greatest peril, with explanations of what threatens their survival. It is also a story of hope - hopes for animals that have been rediscovered, hope in the form of newly-discovered animals, and hope that we might hear the warning call and act to preserve the amazing biodiversity of our fragile

planet for future generations to come." The video is available here: <https://library.org/ebpl/76603>.

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### **Pinelands Webinar Series - "Our Land, Our Water" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar continued the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) monthly webinar series "exploring the vital work of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) and how you can help protect this unique ecosystem. These free public webinars are based on our 35th anniversary State of the Pinelands Report [available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2hhf93y3>]." This webinar focused on "'Our Land, Our Water.' When it rains, where does all the stormwater go? In natural landscapes, the earth absorbs it like a sponge, but in developed areas, paved surfaces and manicured lawns send water rushing into buildings and waterways - causing flooding and pollution." The webinar presented a "deep dive into the unique ecology of the Pinelands and how development has impacted its delicate balance... [including] how fertilizer and irrigation affect this ecosystem compared to surrounding regions and... practical solutions that towns and individuals can implement." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJfUDHiFLqc>.

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### **"From No Man's Land to Public Land"** **- Video of Webinar**

This Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) webinar presented "a discussion of natural land preservation in the New Jersey Pine Barrens and the USA. In this guided discussion, we [sought] to better understand the history and politics of establishing large natural parks and forests in the New Jersey Pine Barrens and the rest of the United States. We [explored] the lessons learned from the almost 200-year effort to create large National Parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite, and how those lessons have and have not been applied in the Pines. This discussion [sought] to empower you in evaluating the approach to land preservation and land management decisions affecting the parks that you care about most." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYssEAJpVSM&t=15s>.

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## Option Green: "Recycling and Waste Reduction" - Video of Webinar

"Steven Rinaldi from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's [DEP] Sustainability program [presented] a lecture on 'Recycling and Waste Reduction: History, Trends, Innovations and Interesting Stuff.' This presentation [looked] at recycling in New Jersey over the years with a focus on collection program and recycling market issues, as well as hot issues in waste management. Innovations in recycling [were also] explored, as [were] interesting waste reduction initiatives." This event was part of Option Green's WeCycle series co-sponsored by the Friends of East Brunswick Environmental Commission and the East Brunswick Sustainability Task Force. The video is available here: <https://ilove.ebpl.org/adults-teens/events/option-green-recycling-and-waste-reduction-hybrid/2025-05-28-230000-2025-05-29>.

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## "Climate Change Impacts of the Military" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was presented by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economy (UUJEC) [of which **EJTF member Sally Jane Gellert is a Board of Trustees Cochair**]. "Neta C. Crawford is the author of 'The Pentagon, Climate Change, and War: Charting the Rise and Fall of U.S. Military Emissions' (MIT Press, 2022). Crawford is also the author of three other books, 'Accountability for Killing: Moral Responsibility for Collateral Damage in America's Post-9/11 Wars' (2013), 'Soviet Military Aircraft' (1987) and 'Argument and Change in World Politics' (2002), named Best Book in International History and Politics by the American Political Science Association. She has written more than two dozen peer reviewed articles on issues of war and peace. Dr. Crawford has served on the governing Board of the Academic Council of the United Nations System and on the Governing Council of the American Political Science Association. Dr. Crawford was elected into the American Academy of Arts and Science in 2023." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEk07KyqMPo>.

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## "Shifting Gears: Policies for a More Sustainable Highway System" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was presented by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI). It "focused on the past, present, and future of the U.S. highway system.... highlight[ing] how the country's highways can be maintained in the context of a changing climate, from increasing preparedness for extreme weather events to building out electric vehicle charging corridors. Panelists [highlighted] opportunities for federal policy to help relocate highways to reconnect communities, use cool pavement and climate-smart building materials, and manage toxic runoff from roads.... [and also identified] opportunities to optimize federal funding to improve the way the country's highways connect people." The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/061325transportation>.

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## "Beating the Heat: A 2025 Heat Policy Agenda" - Video of Webinar

This webinar was presented by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the Federation of American Scientists. It focused on "how federal policies can bolster resilience to extreme heat at the state and community level.... [It highlighted] the Federation of American Scientists' 2025 Heat Policy Agenda [available here: <https://fas.org/publication/2025-heat-policy-agenda/>], which outlines policy considerations for Congress and the Administration to prevent infrastructure damage, economic impacts, and loss of life from heat. Speakers [described] opportunities to safeguard critical infrastructure such as our energy systems, improve productivity, and improve federal and subnational coordination on heat preparedness, management, and resilience." The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/061725heat>.

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## "Harnessing Collaboration for a Decarbonized Future" - Video of Webinar

In this Elders Climate Action (ECA) monthly National Call for May, Panama Bartholomy, Executive Director of the Building Decarbonization Coalition "[encouraged] us to forge local alliances,

create successful relationships with staff and legislators at all levels, and coordinate with industry actors to establish the conditions for a smooth, equitable transition from fossil fuels. He [shared] his organization's focus on new and existing buildings, and [gave] some very useful tips for working with local and state legislative bodies." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddLCixDIDAY&t=2s>.

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### **"From Individual Behavior to Collective Action: Behavior Change in the Climate Crisis" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, was presented by Dr. Neil Lewis, Jr., "a Nancy and Peter Meinig Family Investigator in the Life Sciences, and Associate Professor of Communication, Medicine, and Public Policy at Cornell University and Weill Cornell Medicine. His research examines how people's social contexts and identities influence how they make sense of the world around them, and the implications of those meaning-making processes for their motivation to pursue a variety of goals in life." Abstract: "Climate change is fundamentally a collective problem - the issue will affect everyone in some way. Because of this, behavioral scientists have studied a variety of ways to get people from a broad range of backgrounds to engage with the issue of climate change; they have done this in attempts to mitigate (or adapt to) the climate crisis. Some have taken individual-focused approaches that target individual level behavioral changes, others have taken more collective approaches - attempting to mobilize large groups of people. In this talk [Dr. Lewis presented] research on the efficacy of these different strategies, and their implications for interventions and policies to address the climate crisis." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbmwHLsVP5c>.

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### **"Energy Capital, Discursive Power and the Shaping of Energy Futures"**

#### **- Video of Webinar**

This talk, part of the Dartmouth "New Energy Series," was presented by Dr. Megan Egler, Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Integrated Energy Systems, University of Victoria. "Whether it's the Premier of Canada's oil country reviving a decades-old slogan to portray climate action akin to people 'freezing in the dark', or a solar developer leveraging the harmful legacies of coal mining in Appalachia to promote new solar projects, powerful narratives are being wielded to shape energy futures - and often in ways that reinforce existing power dynamics. Drawing on her research and experiences in historical fossil fuel producing regions across Canada and the US, Dr. Egler's talk [explored] how energy capital exploits the people, histories, and landscapes of these regions to control narrative and define the terms of energy's future." The video is available here:

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

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### **Sierra Club NJ Monthly Building Electrification Webinar - "How Princeton Univ. Will Become Carbon Neutral by 2046"**

#### **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by Ted Borer, President, Borer Energy Engineering, who retired in 2025 as Princeton University Energy Plant Director. "Princeton University is starting with old inefficient steam pipe heating, separate cooling systems, and Stealth Fighter jet engine for electricity for its small city of buildings. Princeton Univ. is transitioning to solar everywhere, highly efficient heat pumps to combine water heating/cooling, and earth storage (geoexchange) with 100s of 800 foot bore holes to store heat for winter, and store cold for summer. This talk also [described] practical, actionable things that each individual can do to lower their own carbon footprint." The video is available here:

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

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## **"Like Trains? Then Choo-Choose to Learn About Federal Rail Policy"** **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI). It "[explored] the past, current, and future role of rail in the U.S. transportation sector and highlight[ed] key rail programs under the surface transportation bill. Speakers also describe[d] opportunities to modernize railways through electrification, faster trains, track expansion, and safety improvements." The video is available here: <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/052825trains>.

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## **Eco-Logic Radio Show: "Forests - Health & Economic Benefits"** **- Recording of Radio Show**

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI aired this recent show related to EJTF's goals (**co-hosted by EJTF member Sally Gellert, and featuring EJTF member Peggy Middaugh**). "Trees and especially forests, have so many health and economic benefits that we couldn't describe them all in one hour. And yet, they are under threat In the proposed federal budget bill, which may be big, but is far from beautiful. We [went] into detail with our guests on the wonderful benefits of trees and what to do to protect them. Not all forests are remote wilderness; some are urban forests and street trees. Wherever they are, trees help cool our environment, produce oxygen, and provide a respite from everyday stress and a mitigation to climate chaos." The recording is available here: <https://www.wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=58065>.

Note: The Eco-Logic radio 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>.

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## **"Climate Policy at a Crossroads: Insights and Next Steps" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES). "The first several months of the second Trump Administration have featured a whole-of-government approach to rolling back climate and clean energy actions, including an executive order attempting to curb state and local climate actions.

To discuss the importance of state policy at this crossroads of climate action... [was] former Governor Jay Inslee of Washington State, who ushered in such a climate law, the Climate Commitment Act. [He reflected] on this aspect of the current political moment, as well as other salient aspects of the current moment for those seeking to advance climate legislation at the state, federal, and international levels. As a former Member of Congress, presidential candidate, and lifelong climate advocate, Governor Inslee brings a unique and wide-ranging perspective on this high-stakes moment for U.S. and global climate action." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRNs9Ff6WkE>.

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## **"Funding Disaster Resilience"** **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar presented by Rebuild by Design featured a conversation with Amanda Devecka-Rinear, the founder and executive director of The NJ Resource Project and The NJ Organizing Project. The first 8-1/2 minutes of the webinar included a description of Rebuild by Design's new report "Flood Risk = Financial Risk" (see the article on [p. 18](#)). For the remainder of the webinar, Amanda Devecka-Rinear discussed the complex area of disaster aid funding and how her organizations work "to direct hundreds of millions of dollars to ensure full and fair recovery for families." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frhnKBLXw34>.

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## **NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES [covering 5/26/2025 – 6/25/2025]**

Two sources of additional NJ environmental articles and stories - many of them uplifting - that you may want to check into are available at **NJ Sustainability Reporting Hub** (<https://srhub.org>) and **South Jersey Climate News** (<https://sjclimate.news>).

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## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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### NJDEP Issues First Environmental Justice Law Decision

[Note: previous environmental justice (EJ) types of decisions (e.g., for the PVSC power plant - see article on [p. 14](#)) were made under the purview of an Administrative Order enacted prior to the issuance of rules implementing NJ's EJ Law.] From the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) news release: "On June 5th, NJDEP issued its first EJ Law Decision (available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/ej/safety-kleen-ej-decision-20240528.pdf>) under NJ's Environmental Justice Regulations, which details conditions for permit approvals regarding the proposed expansion of Linden Recycle Center in Union County. In addition to onsite pollution control measures outlined in the applicant's Environmental Justice Impact Statement, NJDEP is requiring the facility to develop an anti-idling program, conduct a fleet evaluation, and implement a community engagement plan." Additional information is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/ej/meetings/> (search for "Safety Kleen").

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### Environmental Justice Advisory Council Public Meeting Notes Now Available

From the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) news release: "On April 9th, NJDEP's Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC) held its first public meeting to discuss environmental issues facing overburdened communities (OBCs) that require more attention, and to help inform the Council's future projects, and advising decisions for various environmental justice initiatives. Commenters highlighted odors, waste management, access to green space, site remediation and public health planning, environmental education, flooding, and equitable urban design as priority issues." The public meeting notes are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/ej/2025.09.04-ejac-public-meeting-minutes-1.pdf>.

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## ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

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### NJ's EV Industry in Limbo as State Joins Suit Against Trump Policy

This **5-minute news video** addresses the potential impact on NJ of the President's signing a Congressional Resolution that states disapproval of three U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) waivers that enabled CA's Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII) standards, and two other CA clean energy vehicle standards, all of which have also been adopted by NJ. See <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/njs-ev-industry-in-limbo-as-state-joins-suit-against-trump-policy/>.

**A lawsuit has been filed by NJ and 10 other states**, challenging the legality of this approach. From the press release: "New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin today [6/12/2025] joined a coalition of 11 attorneys general in suing the federal government to challenge the unprecedented and unlawful use of the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to disapprove state Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII), Omnibus, and Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) standards, which California had issued under the Clean Air Act and New Jersey subsequently adopted. The lawsuit challenges the federal government's decision to break basic procedural norms... Waivers under the Clean Air Act, which allows for California and other States to adopt their own clear air rules, have never been subject to the CRA.... The actions taken here contradict the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office and Senate Parliamentarian, who both determined that the CRA's process to disapprove federal regulations does not apply to these waivers." See <https://www.njoag.gov/attorney-general-platkin-joins-lawsuit-challenging-trump-administration-attack-on-clean-vehicles-program/>.

In this **6-minute news video interview with Doug O'Malley**, director of Environment NJ and president of ChargEVC-NJ, he sounds a more positive note about the future of EVs in NJ. See <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/congress-blow-to-electric-cars-felt-in-nj/>.

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## NJ's Plan to Widen the Turnpike Can Really Break Your Heart

This article is from *Streetsblog NYC* ("Streetsblog connects people to information about how to reduce dependence on private automobiles and improve conditions for walking, biking, and transit - one of the great equity issues of our era"). The author quotes a number of public comments from a 2-1/2-hour NJ Turnpike Authority Commission public hearing on the \$11-billion expansion of the Turnpike between the Newark-Bay Bridge and the Holland Tunnel.

<https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2025/06/02/njs-plan-to-widen-the-turnpike-can-really-break-your-heart>

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### FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

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#### Residents Urged to Oppose Return of NESE Pipeline Project by Registering as Intervenors

From *TAPinto Franklin Township*: "A pipeline project once shelved amid environmental opposition has returned - and local advocates are mobilizing to stop it again. Williams/Transco has refiled with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for expedited approval of the Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) project, which includes a new gas-powered compressor station in Franklin Township near Trap Rock Quarry, a 3.5-mile pipeline segment in Old Bridge, and 23 miles of pipeline beneath the Raritan Bay and New York Harbor." A video of a rally against the project is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZQnyu0AAOU>.

The Franklin Township mayor is encouraging citizens to file with the FERC as "Intervenors" in the project, which would give them the right to participate in the federal review process, submit formal objections, and challenge decisions in court. **UUFANJ has submitted a Motion to Intervene.** <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/franklin-township/sections/government/articles/residents-urged-to-oppose-return-of-nese-pipeline-project-by-registering-as-intervenors>

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## Controversial Power Plant for Newark Gets Go-Ahead

The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) voted to award a contract to build the controversial gas-fired power plant that has been a source of contention since it first was proposed in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy in 2012. It would be the fourth such plant in the overburdened Ironbound neighborhood. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) previously gave its approval to PVSC, under the purview of an Environmental Justice (EJ) Administrative Order enacted prior to the issuance of rules implementing NJ's EJ Law, and the approval contained conditions related to EJ considerations. Only one more final permit is needed - a federal air permit - which is under review by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, a petition asking EPA to disapprove the permit was filed with the EPA by a constituent - interestingly, the petition cites DEP's "improper use" of the EJ Administrative Order (description of petition available here: <https://bwolfe.substack.com/p/trump-epa-urged-to-kill-woke-nj-dep>). If the federal air permit is granted by EPA, DEP can issue a final decision to proceed.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/against-strong-local-opposition-passaic-valley-sewerage-commission-oks-new-backup-power-plant/>

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#### Officials Weigh Final Decision on Giant Petroleum Storage Caverns

This article includes information about the plan to build two underground storage cavern systems to LPGs (liquid petroleum gases, such as butane, propane and ethane) in Gibbstown, NJ on the Delaware River. Storage of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) would not be allowed. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued a draft construction permit, and the public comment period has closed. There is opposition from environmental groups, including the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. DEP will be issuing a "Response to Comment" document that will be published in the NJ Register along with its final decision.

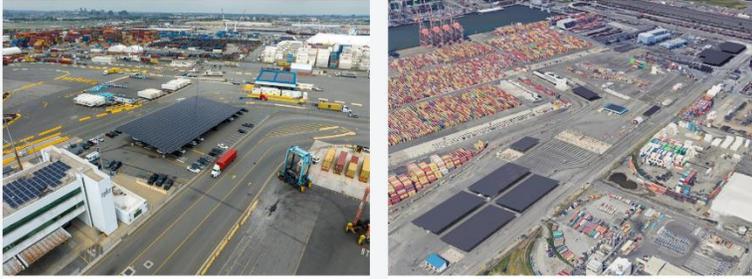
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/giant-petroleum-storage-caverns-proposed-gibbstown-nj/>

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## RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)

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### **New Solar Energy Installation at East Coast's Largest Seaport Completed; Capable of Generating up to 50 Percent of Port Newark Container Terminal's Annual Energy Needs**

From the press release: "The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Port Newark Container Terminal (PNCT) and the city of Newark today [6/12/2025] announced the completion of a 7.2 megawatt (MW) solar installation at PNCT [photos courtesy PNCT; additional photos available here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/panynj/albums/72177720326669479>]. The solar installation now generates 50 percent of the terminal's annual energy needs, greatly reducing emissions and improving air quality. In addition to generating power for terminal operations, the system has the ability to feed excess power into the regional utility grid, providing clean energy to the city of Newark and nearby areas. PNCT is one of the world's only container terminals to implement in-terminal renewable energy production of this magnitude, a significant component of PNCT's broader strategic initiative to develop an energy microgrid operating at net-zero emissions. It also aligns with the Port Authority's industry-leading net-zero goals. The agency has committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to facilitating its tenants and operating partners in reaching the same goal in the same timeframe." <https://www.panynj.gov/port-authority/en/press-room/press-release-archives/2025-press-releases/new-solar-energy-installation-at-east-coast-s-largest-seaport-completed.html> (click on page to load)

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## **Murphy Applauds Community Solar Program as Energy Costs Climb**

In this 4-minute news video, Gov. Murphy and others extoll the virtues of the community solar program in NJ. Community solar is a way to reduce costs for ratepayers - especially low-income residents - in light of planned rate hikes. Projects can also come on-line faster than any other source of energy, they result in good jobs, and no one cries "NIMBY" about solar panels on warehouse rooftops. They can either power the warehouse where they are located, feed the electric grid, or do both. The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) recently expanded the program. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/murphy-applauds-community-solar-program-as-energy-costs-climb/>

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## **N.J. Takes Charge: Launches Landmark Energy Storage Program To Lower Long-Term Costs and Strengthen Power Grid**

From the press release: "The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPUB) today [6/18/2025] approved Phase 1 of the Garden State Energy Storage Program (GSESP). This transformative effort, formerly known as the New Jersey Storage Incentive Program (NJ SIP), is designed to significantly expand the amount of grid-scale energy storage capacity in New Jersey. This ambitious program directly addresses demand growth and limited supply, the root causes of recent rate increases, while simultaneously building a major part of the state's clean energy future. GSESP is a multi-phase program designed to deploy 2,000 megawatts (MW) of energy storage by 2030, a mandate established by the Clean Energy Act of 2018. Energy storage systems are crucial for integrating intermittent renewable energy sources like solar, strengthening grid resilience against outages, and reducing carbon emissions." <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2025/approved/20250618solar.html>

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## LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

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### Essential Pinelands Waters Under Renewed Development Threat - Environmentalists Fear Proposed New Rule Is 'Too Little, Too Late'

This article describes threats to the headwaters of the Black Run Creek in Evesham Township, which are among the most pristine reaches of the Pinelands National Reserve; a stretch of wetlands, streams and cranberry bogs where threatened species like the bobolink and the Eastern box turtle live and breed amid grasslands and cedar swamps. It is under threat from developers who have plans to bulldoze around 800 acres of privately owned land in the Black Run headwaters and build up to 270 new homes. The NJ Pinelands Commission has proposed amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). Among other things, the amendments would severely restrict development in the Black Run headwaters by officially redesignating 2,440 acres of the watershed from "rural development" to "forest area." That new designation would limit development to a single house for every 25 acres, cutting the proposed 270-unit project to about 35 units. The NJ Pinelands Commission is holding a Public Hearing on the amendments (see "Future Events" on [p. 6](#)) and public comments are due by 8/15/2025.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/could-proposed-new-rule-save-essential-pinelands-waters-under-development-threat/>

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### New Jersey Joins Global Commitment to Preserve 30% of Natural Lands by 2030

From Gov. Murphy's press release: "Today [6/3/2025] Governor Phil Murphy announced that New Jersey has joined the High Ambition Coalition [HAC] for Nature and People, a group of member states, territories, and countries committed to conserving 30% of their land by 2030.... As a leader in land and water conservation, New Jersey has already protected more than 1.6 million acres of open space - more than 30% of the state's total land.... Established in 2021, HAC is an intergovernmental group of 120 countries, including the United States since 2022, who have voluntarily committed to the 30x30 goal. To

realize this global vision, an HAC Subnational Taskforce was created in 2022 with the same commitment. Through conservation and preservation projects, New Jersey is the first state in the continental U.S. to meet the 30x30 goal. Membership in the High Ambition Coalition continues this legacy. New Jersey joined other subnational members including California, Quebec, Sao Paulo, Campeche, Wales, Scotland, Catalonia, Ile-de-France, and Massachusetts."

<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250603c.shtml>

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### Farm-To-Community Model to Address Food Insecurity

A launch event took place in Newark for "Harvest," a farm-to-community distribution center, touted as a first-of-its-kind initiative. It is planned to open in December in the heart of the Halsey Creative and Commercial Corridor in Downtown Newark, and is a collaboration between RWJBarnabas Health and Newark-based farm-to-city social enterprise Urban Agriculture Cooperative (UAC). According to RWJBarnabas Health, it "brings together the power of healthcare, agriculture, education, and economic development under one roof to improve health outcomes across the Greater Newark area and beyond." Besides distributing food straight from farms to food banks and soup kitchens, "Harvest" is planned to include: a commercial kitchen; healthy cooking education and demo spaces; as well as consultation, wellness and nutrition spaces (additional information is available here:

<https://www.rwjbh.org/why-rwjbarnabas-health-social-impact/harvest-farm-to-community-center/>). As Newark mayor Ras Baraka noted, "I also think it's great because not all the time are you going to get a health care institution that's interested in you NOT going into the hospital...."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/farm-to-community-model-to-address-food-insecurity/>

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### New Jersey Department of Agriculture Distributes Summer EBT Benefits to More Than 693,000 Eligible Children

NJ is participating in the second year of this permanent Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) program. The program, provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides food dollars to low-income families with

school-aged children, over the summer months when school breakfasts and lunches are not being provided. NJ is providing families with \$120 per eligible child for the summer to buy nutritious food at grocery stores, farmers markets, or other authorized retailers.

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/press/2025/approved/press250623a.html>



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## Do Federal Cuts Imperil Summer Meals Programs for Children?

This article describes the food insecurity of one in seven children in NJ, as well as how the summer meals program and the Summer EBT program (see article on [p. 16](#)) have worked to address this in the past, and how proposed federal cuts to food programs and Medicaid may have a ripple effect on these programs in the future.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/potential-federal-cuts-may-imperil-nj-childrens-access-to-healthy-food-during-summer/>

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## OFFSHORE WIND

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### Atlantic Shores Withdrawal Jolts NJ's Offshore Wind Plans

This 1-1/2-minute news video briefly summarizes the cancellation (for now) of the Atlantic Shores 1 offshore wind project. The company has petitioned the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to terminate its Offshore Wind Renewable Energy Certificate (OREC), which would have funded the project. The petition, which lays out the reasons for this request in detail, is available here:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/874225921/OREC-Petition>. Key reasons involve the new federal Administration's impediments to offshore wind and their ripple effects in the State. Although the

project had received all necessary permits to proceed from both the federal government and the state, the federal government withdrew a previously-approved critical permit without explanation. The company says this is a "reset" and not the end of the project for all time. U.S. Representative Van Drew viewed Atlantic Shores 1's withdrawal as "a huge win for South Jersey."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/atlantic-shores-withdrawal-jolts-njs-offshore-wind-plans/>

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## CLIMATE CHANGE

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### Over 100 Rally at Statehouse to Demand Action on NJ Climate Superfund Act

From the Clean Water Action press release: "Today [6/2/2025] more than 100 New Jerseyans [including UUFANJ - see [p. 1](#)] - backed by dozens of environmental, labor, faith, and community organizations - rallied at the Statehouse Annex to call for urgent action on the New Jersey Climate Superfund Act (S3545/A4696). The bill has already cleared the environmental committees in both legislative chambers, and advocates are now demanding swift passage by the full Assembly and Senate. Modeled after laws passed in New York and Vermont, the Climate Superfund Act would require fossil fuel giants like ExxonMobil, Shell and BP to pay for their share of the climate destruction they've caused in New Jersey.... Revenue from the bill would be used to fund climate-resilient infrastructure projects across the state." (Also see the video interview in the article below.)

<https://cleanwater.org/releases/over-100-rally-statehouse-demand-action-nj-climate-superfund-act>

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### Environmentalists Rally for the Climate Superfund Act

In this 5-minute news video interview, Matt Smith, NJ State Director for Food & Water Watch, described the benefits of the Climate Superfund Act, a bill, currently passing through the NJ legislature, that would create the Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program. The program would shift the cost of climate disasters from NJ taxpayers onto the corporations responsible for the climate crisis itself, he said.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/environmentalists-rally-for-the-climate-superfund-act/>

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## Climate Advocates and Legislative Leaders Rally at Statehouse to Call for 100% Clean Energy by 2035 Legislation

From the Sierra Club NJ press release: "A coalition of environmental advocates [**including UUFANJ/EJTF** - see [p. 1](#)] , legislative leaders, and community organizations met on the Capitol Steps to call for Governor Murphy and the state Legislature to support legislation that would ensure New Jersey moves to 100% clean energy by 2035 to fight climate change and lower energy costs for working families and local businesses.... [and] create good-paying local union jobs.... " <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2025/06/climate-advocates-and-legislative-leaders-rally-statehouse-call-100-clean>

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## Shore Flood Control Plan Hits Political Headwinds

This 5-1/2-minute news video focuses on opposition by NJ coastal communities' officials to the planned NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) "Resilient Environments and Landscapes" (REAL) rules for adapting to, and mitigating, the effects of climate change. The NJ Conference of Mayors sent a letter to Gov. Murphy, which cited that over 130 municipalities have signed a "Mayor's Pledge" (available here: [https://newjerseyconferenceofmayors.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025\\_ETR\\_and\\_REAL\\_Mayors\\_Pledge\\_Fillable.03-1.pdf](https://newjerseyconferenceofmayors.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025_ETR_and_REAL_Mayors_Pledge_Fillable.03-1.pdf) in support of delaying the implementation of the REAL rules and asking that they be involved in revising the regulations "in a way that balances environmental resilience with economic viability and local planning needs." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/shore-flood-control-plan-hits-political-headwinds/>

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## Increased Flooding Could Lead to 'Climate Migration' in NJ

This 5-minute news video discusses the findings of new research, contained in a report "Flood Risk = Financial Risk" by Rebuild by Design (the report is available here: <https://rebuildbydesign.org/nj-flood-risk/>, and a 21-minute video explanation of the report and its findings is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxsOdcWK--Y>). The report identifies, among other findings, that

about half of the 1.3 million NJ residents who live in high-risk flood zones are low-income residents who would not have the resources to relocate. Also, any "climate migration" would exacerbate NJ's affordable housing shortage. It also finds that "by 2050, nearly 1 in 6 land parcels statewide will be exposed to high flood risk, threatening \$435.9 billion in (today's) property value and \$5.9 billion in annual property tax revenue.... (A parcel is a privately or publicly owned piece of land, recorded in tax records.)" The report emphasizes that planning for the expected flood risks take place as soon as possible, and also provides recommendations.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/rebuild-by-design-report-says-nj-residents-can-expect-climate-migration-in-near-future/>

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## NJ's Shore Towns Confront an Unrelenting Foe: Sea Level Rise

This article gives comprehensive descriptions of how sea level rise is already affecting NJ shore towns - including from "sunny day flooding" - and some novel responses to deal with it - e.g., residents in West Wildwood are raising their driveways with concrete ramps high enough to withstand the rising waters and the need to move vehicles to higher ground. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/jersey-shore-sea-level-rising-sunny-day-flooding-new-nj-regulations/>

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## Delaware Estuary Now Under Pressure From Trump Administration

In a unanimous vote, all of the Delaware River Basin Commission's (DRBC) Commissioners voted to approve a resolution "to restrict the Commission's use of federal funds awarded through the United States Army Corps of Engineers" to "not be used directly or indirectly to support programs or policies that advance the principles of 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' or the concept of 'climate change.'" The vote was a surprise, since the meeting agenda stated only that it was "A RESOLUTION for the Minutes concerning the Commission's use of Federal funds" with no details given. The Resolution (available here: [https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ResForMinutes061125\\_FedFunds.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ResForMinutes061125_FedFunds.pdf)) states that "WHEREAS, in April 2025, the United States Army Corps of

Engineers (the 'Corps') informed the Commission that to earn a Corps 'capability determination' of more than \$0... the Commission must not use federal funds awarded through the Corps to support policies or programs that advance the principles of 'diversity, equity and inclusion' or the concept of 'climate change.'" According to the DRBC, the resolution does not affect other sources of federal grant funding.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/critics-fear-delaware-estuary-environmental-protections-at-risk-from-trump-administration/>

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## FOREST HEALTH/URBAN FORESTRY

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### NJ Conservation Foundation Preserves 118 Acres in the Delaware Bay Watershed

"New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJ Conservation) announced today [6/18/2025] that it has preserved 118 acres of open space in Vineland, Cumberland County. Its proximity to other conservation lands made the protection of this forested property critical to ensure wildlife habitat connectivity and also enhance the region's resilience to the impacts of climate change.... The preserved land has been designated as a 'core area' by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) project. CHANJ represents a strategic plan for wildlife conservation by identifying key areas and actions needed to achieve habitat connectivity throughout New Jersey.... The property also sits within the state-designated Pinelands Area."

[https://www.njconservation.org/press\\_release/nj-conservation-foundation-preserves-118-acres-in-the-delaware-bay-watershed/](https://www.njconservation.org/press_release/nj-conservation-foundation-preserves-118-acres-in-the-delaware-bay-watershed/)

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### JCP&L Employee Volunteers Plant Thousands of Donated Trees in N.J.

From the JCP&L press release: "Employee volunteers from Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L), a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp., ... have planted more than 2,000 company-donated trees across JCP&L's New Jersey service territory in 2025 as part of the company's commitment to the environment and sustainability. JCP&L is more than two-thirds of the way towards eclipsing last year's total of 2,795 trees, with 2,174 trees donated and planted to date. The work is part of a larger effort by FirstEnergy, which is on pace to

pass its goal of donating 25,000 trees in 2025 across its five-state service territory. So far this year, nearly 23,000 trees have been planted." Additional information, including about where trees have been planted and about other events such as tree donations, is available here:

[https://www.firstenergycorp.com/newsroom/news\\_articles/jcpl-employee-volunteers-plant-thousands-of-donated-trees-in-nj.html](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/newsroom/news_articles/jcpl-employee-volunteers-plant-thousands-of-donated-trees-in-nj.html).



### As Wildfires Increase, NJ Considers Public-Health Impact

This article examines health effects in NJ from wildfires in NJ and in Canada. It addresses the relationship between air pollution levels and hospital data, as shown in a NJ Department of Health Environmental and Occupational Health Surveillance Program study (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/k3rp5jdt>). The role of particulate matter, including chemicals it contains, is also examined.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/wildfire-public-health-risks-in-new-jersey/>

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### Opinion: What Yellowstone Can Teach NJ About Protecting Public Lands From Wildfires

In this piece Jason Howell, public lands advocate at the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA), describes how steps are needed to prevent such fires as the Jones Road fire that was started by illegal off-road vehicle users in an area where no motor vehicles are allowed. He states that the first step (which has already been taken for Wharton State Forest) is to produce a comprehensive map showing which areas are off-limits to off-road vehicle use.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/op-ed-yellowstone-could-teach-nj-how-to-protect-public-lands-from-wildfires/>

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## POLLUTION

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### **Murphy Administration Launches Green Transportation Planning Grant Program as Part of Commitment to Reducing Air Pollution in New Jersey**

From the press release: "The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection today [6/19/2025] announced the award of nearly \$1 million in transportation planning grants as part of a newly launched effort to identify and develop local transportation solutions that will reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles that impact communities. The eMobility planning.... grants will help four Transportation Management Associations work with partner communities to develop solutions to help alleviate traffic congestion and connect residents to jobs, educational opportunities, medical services, and other resources. If the solutions include electric shared-use transportation such as car shares, ride shares, or fixed route shuttle services, the Associations will then be encouraged to apply for additional funding from DEP's eMobility program to implement those solutions." The list of recipients is in the press release, available here: [https://dep.nj.gov/newsrel/25\\_0032/](https://dep.nj.gov/newsrel/25_0032/).

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### **Dozens of Sites May Soon Release More Air Pollution in NJ. Here's Why**

A bill, (S.J. 31) was passed by the U.S. Congress and is awaiting Presidential signature; since the White House previously issued a Statement of Administration Policy in strong support of its passage, is likely that it will be signed into law. From *NJ Spotlight News*: "The president is poised to sign legislation into law to allow roughly 1,800 polluting sites nationwide, like mills, power stations, chemical plants and oil refineries, to increase the volume of hazardous air pollutants they can release. Congress passed the bill, almost entirely along party lines, this spring, in votes to roll back limits on the amount of so-called super pollutants facilities can emit by striking down a rule the Environmental Protection Agency issued in 2024 to curb these emissions. These pollutants include mercury, lead, arsenic and dioxins, compounds that can interfere with the human

body's immune system. 'What it will mean for the public is more hazardous air pollution from industrial facilities that cause cancer, brain damage, birth defects, infertility, heart attacks, strokes and even premature death,' John Walke, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental and legal advocacy group, said in an interview with NJ Spotlight News. New Jersey is downwind of heavily industrialized states, including Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/dozens-sites-may-soon-release-more-air-pollution-in-nj-after-congress-rolls-back-new-epa-standard/>

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## EDUCATION and YOUTH-RELATED

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### **Water Trail on Cooper River to Advance Environmental Education in Camden**

An event was recently held in Camden, NJ to officially open a 15.5-mile water trail on the Cooper River - a river that many didn't even know existed, or if they did they thought it was prohibitively polluted. The trail is the culmination of eight years of work by Upstream Alliance, a nonprofit organization that provides environmental education for young people in underserved areas such as Camden. The trail has been designed "to make the river more accessible to the public, to show people that the river is not the trash-choked wilderness that they may have thought, and to highlight a natural gem in a dense urban landscape." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/camdens-cooper-river-water-trail-opens-access-to-natural-gem-in-dense-rban-setting/>

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### **Holmdel Student Launches Initiative To Protect Shorebirds, Environment**

Emma Lynn, a 16-year-old Holmdel High School student, wanted to do something to address the problem of an increase in plastics she saw at local beaches. Using hand-screen printing, she created hundreds of "Bags for Birds" reusable recycled cotton tote bags. She has given them out at Earth Day events, through local libraries, and through visits to elementary school classes. Each bag includes a note suggesting many uses for the bag, and a bookmark that serves as a guide to identify

common shorebirds. She received a grant provided by the Holmdel Foundation for Educational Excellence, and support from the Student Environmental Advocates and Leaders Program (SEAL) through Clean Ocean Action. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/lifestyle/lifestyle-buzz/holmdel-student-launches-initiative-to-protect-shorebirds-environment/ar-AA1FIXQZ>

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## Eight New Jersey Schools Recognized For Innovative Climate Action Projects

From *Sustainable Jersey*: "The Drumthwacket Foundation and Sustainable Jersey recognized eight student teams from middle and high schools across New Jersey for their projects in the 2025 New Jersey Student Climate Challenge. These action projects, designed and completed by students, addressed local impacts and causes of climate change and were presented through original digital story videos." See <https://tinyurl.com/bdfcvjsa>. Detailed descriptions of the winning teams and their projects, and links to the videos, are available here: <https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/events/nj-student-climate-challenge/>.

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## OTHER

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### What's up With NJ's Electricity Prices?

This 20-minute podcast is part of the *NJ Spotlight News* "Under the Dome" project. In this episode, "Hosts Maddi Ference and John P. McAlpin dive into why electricity bills are rising in New Jersey. They explain the state's complex power grid, transmission system and energy auctions. How are AI data centers playing a part in why you're paying more? What are lawmakers doing to help cut costs? And don't forget the politics and blame game." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/podcast/hey-nj-podcast-examines-njs-high-electricity-costs/>

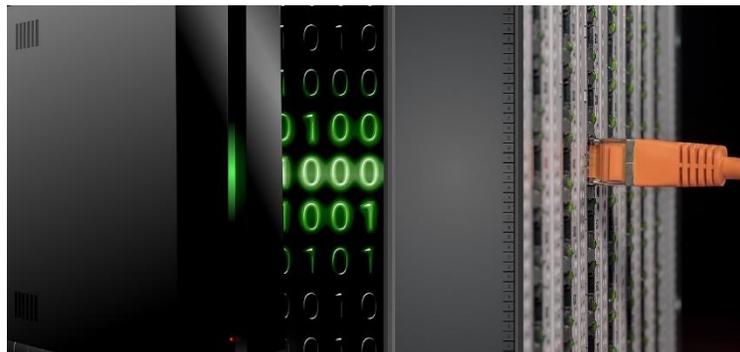
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### NJ Scrambles to Curb Energy Costs

This article describes a number of bills currently in the legislature that address a myriad of issues related to energy costs in NJ, including: harnessing ocean power from waves; regulating large data centers; establishing of a nuclear power advisory commission; revising the community

solar program; and urging federal regulators to reject the results of the recent regional electricity pricing auction. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/affordability-concerns-nj-lawmakers-target-rising-energy-costs/>

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### NJ Lawmakers Target Energy-Hungry AI Data Centers

This 5-minute news video describes a bill (A5462/S4307), that has been reported out of committees in both the Assembly and the Senate, that "Requires electric public utilities to develop and apply special rules for certain data centers to protect non-data center customers from increased costs." This bill aims to balance NJ's desire to become a national AI hub with the increased energy demands associated with AI data centers. Because grid operator PJM Interconnection bases its future supply and demand costs on forecasting how much energy is going to be necessary, the predicted increase in energy required by AI data centers factors into energy costs that are passed on to ratepayers. This bill would require "each electric public utility [to] file an application with the Board of Public Utilities to establish a tariff to be established for the provision of electricity to 'large load' data centers.... The tariff shall be designed to: (1) ensure that non-data center ratepayers are protected from any increased costs that result from increased electricity demand caused by 'large load' data centers; and (2) incentivize "large load" data centers to develop and utilize methods to increase energy efficiency, including through the use of technologies that capture and utilize the heat produced..." There has been pushback from some legislators, and from business interests who say it unfairly targets just one large energy user (i.e., AI data centers), while there are others such as manufacturing and hospitals. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-lawmakers-target-energy-hungry-ai-data-centers/>

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## Smith, Burzichelli Bill to Stimulate Transmission-Scale Energy Storage Development Advances

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee has advanced legislation to require the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) "to establish a program to procure and provide incentive awards for the development of transmission-scale energy storage systems with a reasonable likelihood of successful and timely completion.... '[T]ransmission-scale energy storage system' means an energy storage system, with an installed capacity of at least 5 megawatts of alternating current (MW AC), that is interconnected with the PJM Transmission Network and situated inside a Transmission Zone in New Jersey or is otherwise located in New Jersey and qualified to provide energy, capacity, or ancillary services in the wholesale markets established by PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. (PJM)." The program would be funded through the establishment of a special, non-lapsing fund referred to as the "Energy Storage Fund", administered by the BPU and credited with \$60 million from the revenues of the societal benefits charge annually until the final award period is complete. The Fund would also be credited with any monies appropriated by the Legislature, any return on investments deposited in the funds, and monies made available from other sources such as federal funding.

<https://www.njsendems.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=867>

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## New Challenges Expand Scope of Holmdel Environmental Inventory

From *The Two River Times*: "After nearly two decades of suburban expansion, shifting land use and increasing environmental concerns, the [Holmdel] township's environmental commission has released the long-awaited update to its Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) – an essential document that provides a detailed inventory of the town's natural assets and vulnerabilities, essentially a lens for officials to evaluate development decisions in town. The new ERI draft was developed with a grant from Sustainable Jersey and prepared by planning consultants from the Boonton-based nonprofit Land Conservancy of New Jersey. It replaces the previous version finalized in 2000. With this update, Holmdel joins a growing number of

municipalities, such as Red Bank and Tinton Falls, among others, that have reassessed their environmental planning amid rising development pressures and climate volatility." Given the shifts in climate and development, the new ERI document is considered as not just an "update," but as a completely new document. Residents are encouraged to provide feedback on the draft.

<https://tworivertimes.com/new-challenges-expand-scope-of-holmdel-environmental-inventory/>

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## Opinion: Our Electrical Grid Is Broken and We Are Paying the Price

This piece is by Senator Andrew Zwicker, who is the head of Strategic Partnerships and Public Engagement at Princeton University's Plasma Physics Laboratory and a Fellow of the American Physical Society. It is interesting to contrast it with the opinion piece below, by a PJM spokesperson. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/sen-andrew-zwicker-proposes-solutions-to-njs-broken-electrical-grid/>

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## Opinion: PJM Interconnection Rejects Blame for Electricity Price Increases

It is interesting to contrast this opinion piece by Jeff Shields, senior manager of external communications with PJM Interconnection, with the opinion piece by Sen. Zwicker above. In this piece, the author describes PJM and its history, and gives his views of the reason for increased prices.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2025/06/pjm-interconnection-says-not-to-blame-for-nj-electricity-price-increases>

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**See [p.23](#) for "STEPS BEING TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE NJ RATEPAYER COSTS"**

## STEPS BEING TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE NJ RATEPAYER COSTS

A tenfold increase in the PJM Interconnection auction's cleared price (i.e., a price reflecting the point where demand and supply are in equilibrium) has resulted in an increase of around 20% (or, \$25/month) in ratepayer bills, starting 6/1/2025. Gov. Murphy, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU), and utility companies have implemented the following steps to address this (an explainer video from the BPU is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DU1ZFLPb2zY>):

- Utility bill deferrals of \$30 for two months, to be given to all residential customers by the utility companies, at the BPU's request. The credits will come off the July and August bills and must be paid back by the customers in \$10 interest-free installments over the next six months, from September through February. See the 1-1/2-minute news video: "Utilities Agree to Defer Small Portion of Electric Bills" <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/utilities-agree-to-defer-small-portion-of-electric-bills/>, and the BPU press release: <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2025/approved/20250618relief.html>.
- \$100, to be given once to all residential customers, from a \$430 million ratepayer relief package announced by Gov. Murphy and legislative Democrats. The package includes funds from the Clean Energy Fund, the BPU's share of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) proceeds, and the Solar Alternative Compliance Payment account; the details need to be approved by the BPU. See the video: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/murphy-announces-430m-in-relief-for-rising-electricity-rates/> and the press release: <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250605a.shtml>.
- About \$150, to be given to low to moderate income customers, also from the \$430 million ratepayer relief package (see paragraph above). This includes a \$25 per month bill credit paid for by state subsidies from August through February.
- \$20 to \$200 per month, to be given to low-income customers, from the universal service fund, which is funded by ratepayers. The BPU recently increased the minimum benefit from \$5 to \$20 and the maximum benefit from \$180 to \$200, and made other changes to try to increase enrollment. See the press release: <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2025/approved/20250618.html>.

## EJTF's GOALS for 2024/2025

- 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.**
- 5. Advocating for a better understanding of the interconnected web of life by influencing education for people of all ages, including public school curriculum of K-12 students.**

## **MORATORIUM MONDAYS CONTINUE**

**Please continue to contact Gov. Murphy every Monday and urge him to declare a climate emergency moratorium on fossil fuel projects! These efforts have been successful in that a number of projects have been stopped or delayed in the past. Either call through the EmpowerNJ number (866-586-4069) to get coaching on the topic of the week, emphasizing what is in the news, or call directly to the governor's office (609-292-6000). Over 50 environmental, citizen, faith, and progressive groups in NJ are calling on Governor Murphy to enact a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in NJ until there are rules in place to achieve 100% clean energy goals.**

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

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