



# Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter August 2018

**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.**

## UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### A Wonderful Electric Vehicle Event at Beacon UU Congregation in Summit



Can you make a direct connection from our Seventh Principle (respect for the interdependent web of all existence) to UU's buying electric cars? Well, Paul Rosengren from the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood certainly can!

On Sunday, August 19, The Green Earth Ministry (G.E.M.) of Beacon hosted Paul's inspiring talk entitled, "The Horse Died, Why You (UU) Should Buy an Electric Car" (because technology changes — we have to move with it!). At his presentation during coffee hour, Paul's blend of humor, statistics, and personal experience both entertained and informed his audience. After the talk, everyone went out onto the street for a show-and-tell of six electric cars brought by Beacon members, Paul, and guests. Sitting in driver's seats, peering into trunks, people had a chance to chat with owners about their cars and their driving experiences. Conversation and socializing continued over lunch.

Margaret Babcock, the chairperson of Beacon's G.E.M. said, "It was such a successful event and so much fun. People who hadn't thought of themselves as electric car owners really began to consider that option." Paul Rosengren would be happy to have more opportunities to give his twenty-minute talk. He can be contacted at "plrosengren at gmail.com."



## ***EJTF ACTIVITIES***

### **OUR KEY ISSUES FOR 2018:**

- 1) **Select and support a Renewable Energy Portfolio standard [Done!]**
  - **EJTF position paper:** <https://uufaiathaction.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/03/PositionOn100by2035.pdf>.
  - **Discussion of the bill Gov. Murphy signed into law (Bill 3723):** <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/05/23/murphy-signing-radically-alters-nj-s-energy-policies-protects-nuclear/>. [Not totally what we'd supported, but it is definitely a step in the right direction.]
- 2) **Address the problem of lead in NJ water [More about this in a future newsletter]**
  - **EJTF position paper:** <https://uufaiathaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Position-Paper-Lead-in-Drinking-Water.pages.pdf>
- 3) **Promote low-income Community Solar in NJ [Ongoing]**
  - EJTF is participating in Stakeholder meetings to create NJ's new program (see p. 4)

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### **MEETINGS**

**Attended NJ joint committee hearing on single-use plastics and plastic waste (see p. 3)**



*Girl Scouts gave testimony at the hearing*

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**Monthly conference calls; calls and letters/emails to legislators; oral and written comments on legislation; emails and alerts to EJTF members on hot issues.**

## **HOT ITEM!! Plastic Waste: Use it for 15 minutes, live with it forever**

Public Hearing on Plastic Waste - August 23, 2018, Toms River, NJ

A joint legislative hearing was called by NJ Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin and NJ Senator Bob Smith in Toms River Municipal Complex on August 23 to discuss the problem of plastic waste in New Jersey. There were three expert panels — one consisting of academics, one of environmentalists, and one of industry representatives — followed by testimony from the public. There were more than 200 people attending, with 50 asking to give testimony.

The highlight of the day was Bob Smith's announcement that Governor Murphy had notified him that he would veto the five cent plastic bag fee. Other highlights were:

- Testimony of Girl Scouts from Teaneck (pictured on p. 2), one of whom was dressed entirely in plastic bags.
- Princeton Professor Paul Chirik, who explained that propene (from which polypropylene is made) is a byproduct of natural gas processing, and that if it weren't used to make plastic it would simply be burnt, putting carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Nancy Pinkin asked the question that was in every environmentalists' mind: "Isn't this another reason to stop using natural gas?"
- Beth Ravit of the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences described a study of plastics in the Passaic and Raritan Rivers. They found high levels of "microplastics," primarily fragments of larger plastic products, and organic compounds attached to the microplastics. The number of organic compounds was highest in the Passaic (299), followed by the Raritan (255), and then the Raritan and Newark bays (81).
- Doug O'Malley of Environment NJ said that "We can't allow products that we use for only 15 minutes to go into our environment forever."
- Industry representatives emphasized that plastics is a growing industry, with higher wages than most. Plastic wrap also provides a longer shelf life for food. Alternatives to plastic tend to have a higher carbon footprint; any discussion of plastic has to include single-use paper products. Finally, they claimed that faulty waste management is the real problem.
- Our own Ray Nichols gave an excellent presentation, emphasizing the importance of reducing and reusing before resorting to recycling. His time ran out before he could mention a final point, that industry used to take responsibility for glass bottles, using a five cent deposit with a refund on return. We should go back to that approach.
- After the hearing, Senator Bob Smith talked to Ray, thanking him for his very interesting testimony.

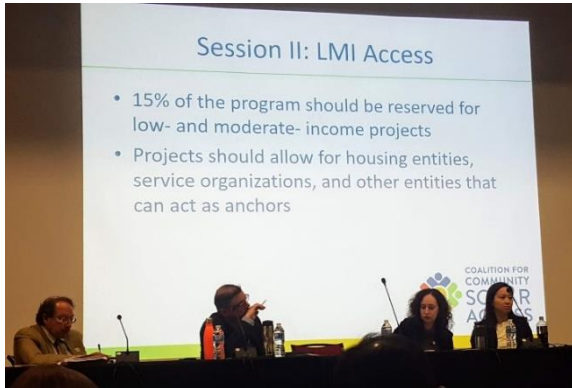
News releases about the hearing:

- <https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/joint-legislative-environment-hearing-toms-river-opens-discussion-single-use-plastics-plastic-waste-new-jersey/>
- <https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/politics/new-jersey/2018/08/23/single-use-plastics-waste-environment-nj/1064421002/>
- <https://www.njbia.org/njbia-comments-on-condition-of-single-use-plastics-and-plastic-waste/>

## ***MORE LINKS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES***

### **COMMUNITY SOLAR**

- BPU Community Solar Stakeholder Meeting – UU Faith Action's Rev. Rob Gregson is quoted: <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/07/25/nj-makes-move-to-bring-solar-power-to-communities-that-have-been-locked-out/>
- NJTV video of BPU Community Solar Stakeholder Meeting: <https://www.njtvonline.org/news/video/community-solar-aims-to-bring-renewable-energy-to-everyone/>



*BPU Community Solar Stakeholder Meeting*

- New Brunswick City Council Approves Community Solar Program: <http://www.njbiz.com/article/20180816/NJBIZ01/180819890/new-brunswick-city-council-approves-community-solar-program>
- TO CHECK STATUS OF ALL 2018 COMMUNITY SOLAR-RELATED NJ LEGISLATION: <https://legiscan.com/gaits/search?state=NJ&keyword=community+ADJ+solar>

### **LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

- Lead in school drinking water report from NJ Future: <https://www.njfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/New-Jersey-Future-Analysis-of-Testing-for-Lead-in-School-Drinking-Water-August-2017.pdf>
- Newark fined for failing to address lead in water service lines: [https://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2018/08/gusciora agrees to dep water quality standards and.html](https://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2018/08/gusciora+agrees+to+dep+water+quality+standards+and.html)
- Newark lead testing: [https://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2018/06/60m to remove lead from newarks water.html](https://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2018/06/60m+to+remove+lead+from+newarks+water.html)
- Some Newark pipes were installed in 1880's: [https://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2018/08/newarks lead level in its tap water is high again.html](https://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2018/08/newarks+lead+level+in+its+tap+water+is+high+again.html)
- Proposed bill for water-use fee for water infrastructure: <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/07/08/are-you-ready-to-spend-billions-to-upgrade-njs-aging-water-infrastructure/>
- Gov. Murphy signed Bill NJ A4120, which authorizes special assessments and bond issuance to replace lead-contaminated water service lines: <http://www.govnetnj.com/GOV/btx?i=8929&s=2018>

## RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- Proposed Meadowlands power plant: <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/2018/07/06/nj-issues-initial-permits-controversial-meadowlands-power-plant/764715002/>
- Another natural gas power plant for Woodbridge?: <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/08/08/another-natural-gas-power-plant-in-the-pipeline-for-new-jersey/>
- NJ Energy Master Plan to be updated for 2019 – stakeholder process begins in September with five public hearings:  
<https://nj.gov/emp/energy/>  
<https://nawindpower.com/new-jersey-plans-path-toward-100-clean-energy-by-2050>
- Wind Power in NJ: How big and how soon?  
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/08/16/wind-power-is-it-a-huge-opportunity-for-new-jersey-and-how-soon-will-it-get-going/>
- Solar on Superfund Site:  
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/07/17/it-was-once-a-superfund-site-now-its-a-solar-farm/>

## PLASTIC BAGS

- Plastic bags fee bill vetoed by Gov. Murphy:  
<http://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.com/2018/08/dramatic-news-break-during-nj-hearing.html#.W4Ci1e-oWpo>
- NJ towns ban plastic bags:  
[https://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2018/08/nj\\_towns\\_that\\_have\\_banned\\_plastic\\_bags.html](https://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2018/08/nj_towns_that_have_banned_plastic_bags.html)
- Recycling won't solve plastic pollution:  
<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/more-recycling-wont-solve-plastic-pollution/>
- What's next for plastic bags in NJ?:  
[https://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/new\\_jersey/with-veto-coming-of-plastic-bag-fee-bill-will-ban/article\\_a4910b53-a704-5318-abd8-527c51c62e0f.html](https://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/press/new_jersey/with-veto-coming-of-plastic-bag-fee-bill-will-ban/article_a4910b53-a704-5318-abd8-527c51c62e0f.html)

## “GREEN AMENDMENT” – Sponsored by UU Nancy Pinkin

- Proposed amendment to NJ Constitution to grant every person the right to a clean and healthy environment:  
<https://legiscan.com/NJ/text/ACR85/2018>





Some Congregations plan to join in the People's Climate Movement "Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice" on September 8<sup>th</sup> in Newark, Jersey City, Red Bank, Morristown\*, or Manhattan

Details at <https://peoplesclimate.org/takeaction/>

\*Note: UU Faith Action is a co-sponsor of the Morristown event at 11 a.m. at Morristown Town Hall

### ***NEW JERSEY ENVIRONMENT-RELATED BILLS PASSED 1/1/2018 – 8/24/2018***

*for bill text: go to [Legiscan.com/NJ](http://Legiscan.com/NJ) and search by bill number.*

NJ A4120 (Passed 8/24/2018) - Authorizes special assessments and bond issuance to **replace lead-contaminated water service lines.**

NJ S1217 (Passed 5/30/2018) - Requires BPU consideration and approval of amended application for qualified **wind energy project offshore** in certain NJ territorial waters

NJ A3723 (Passed 5/23/2018) - Establishes and modifies **clean energy and energy efficiency programs**; modifies State's **solar renewable energy portfolio standards**, adds **Community Solar.**

NJ S2313 (Passed 5/23/2018) - Establishes **zero emission certificate program for nuclear power plants.**

NJ A839 (Passed 4/20/2018) - **Prohibits offshore oil and gas exploration, development, and production** in State waters, and issuance of DEP permits and approvals for activities associated with offshore oil and gas activities

NJ SR29 (Passed 2/26/2018) - **Opposes expansion of oil and natural gas drilling on Outer Continental Shelf.**

NJ S598 (Passed 2/21/2018) - Requires NJ to join U.S. Climate Alliance to uphold **Paris Climate Accord.**

### ***SOME VERY USEFUL NJ ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS LINKS***

NJ SPOTLIGHT: Daily updates on NJ environmental, immigration, budget, and other issues - <http://www.njspotlight.com/>. You can also sign up for updates here: <http://www.njspotlight.com/newsletters/>

ENVIROPOLITICS: Daily environmental and political news, legislation & regulation for New Jersey, Pennsylvania & New York: <http://enviropolitics.com/>. You can also subscribe here: <http://forms.aweber.com/form/59/1934507159.htm>.

ANJEC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Coalitions): News alerts and biweekly news highlights: <https://www.anjecnews.com/news-highlights.html>. You can also subscribe by emailing: [info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org).

UUFaithAction NJ - Environmental Justice Task Force - <https://uufaithaction.org/environment/>  
Chair - Nancy Griffeth; Vice Chair - Ray Nichols

Visit our website for Environmental links and resources / sign up for email alerts / join the EJTF