

Environmental Justice Task Force Newsletter

September 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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

UUFANJ FALL ISSUES CONFERENCE – October 20, 2018

UU FaithAction’s Fall Issues Conference takes place on Saturday, October 20, 2018 from 10:00 am until 4:00 p.m., at the Beacon UU Congregation in Summit. The conference features a keynote speaker, issues-related break-out groups, and a working lunch.

The Fall Issues Conference is the premier opportunity for UUs from across New Jersey to become involved in the most pressing social justice concerns facing our state. It is the time each year when each of the six UUFANJ volunteer Task Forces decides on its advocacy, education and legislative priorities for the coming year.



There will be six break-out groups during the working lunch to cover the issues UUFANJ advocates for: Environmental, Criminal, Reproductive, Economic and Immigrant Justice, and Gun Violence Prevention. The Conference is free, with a requested contribution of \$15 at the door to cover lunch and administrative expenses. You can register on the UUFANJ website - <https://uufaithaction.org/>

UU CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

People’s Climate Movement Marches - “Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice”



March in Red Bank

UU congregations joined in the September 8, 2018 marches, including those in Morristown (co-sponsored by UU Faith Action) and Red Bank. The UU Congregation of Monmouth County joined about 100 people to march in Red Bank. They marched from Riverside Park along the Navesink River, through the downtown, ending in Marine Park, led by a group of 5 drummers! At Marine Park many different people - mostly environmentalists and local politicians - gave short speeches, and there were tables with environmental information. The threatening rain very obligingly didn’t materialize, and thankfully neither did the heat!

People's Climate Movement Marches - "Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice"



March in Morristown



Red Bank March

In Morristown, the UU Ocean County Congregation and Beacon UU Congregation in Summit marched, along with about 400 people. The high points of that event were Amy Goldsmith of Clean Water Action explaining how the trucks in the port of Newark are befouling the air, and Nicky Sheats, President of the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA), explaining the opposition of NJEJA to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

NEW JERSEY ENVIRONMENT-RELATED BILLS PASSED 1/1/2018 – 9/25/2018

for bill text: go to [Legiscan.com/NJ](https://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.**

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

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-alterns-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**
 - **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 participated in Stakeholder meetings to create NJ's new program, and will continue to participate as the proposed rule is issued for comment shortly.**

MEETINGS

Attended stakeholder meetings, provided oral and written comments on NJ Energy Master Plan sessions on: "Clean and Renewable Power," "Reducing Energy Usage," and "Clean and Reliable Transportation."



NJ Board of Public Utilities "Clean and Renewable Power" stakeholder meeting for NJ Energy Master Plan

9/7 - Clean & Renewable Energy

[Rev. Ronald Tuff of Greenfaith testified with EJTF, and called for hearings to be held nearer Newark to make these meetings accessible to more people.]

I am Nancy Griffeth from Unitarian Universalist Faith Action. Thank you for letting me speak today.

Thirty years ago, we could have fixed this easily. Ten years ago, we had a good start on it. But very little was actually done. Now, we face increasing damage and danger from climate change. We must move quickly now, perhaps even more quickly than we believe we can. Here are the essential things that UU Faith Action urges: Don't allow any more fossil fuel infrastructure to be built. A discussion point raised the question of "stranded assets." Investments in fossil fuel infrastructure will all be stranded assets, so let's not invest there any more. It's time for all our investment to be going to clean, renewable energy.

But the cleanest energy is no energy, so please emphasize energy efficiency. Let's reduce our use of energy.

The transportation sector is the biggest user of energy, so we must focus there. Encourage use of electric vehicles, while converting the electrical grid to renewable energy. Convert state fleets and NJ Transit to electric vehicles. Require trucks to reduce emissions and convert to electricity as quickly as possible.

Poorer communities are overburdened by emissions from vehicles and power plants and by the consequences, like flooding, of climate change. We need to take action to lift this burden. As we convert to new industries, supporting new forms of energy, we must include them in the benefits with job training and jobs and with community-based sources of energy such as Community Solar.

The cost in dollars may be high, but the cost in human suffering will be much higher if we do too little.

9/14 - Reducing Energy Consumption

I'm Nancy Griffeth from Unitarian Universalist Faith Action. We're partners in Jersey Renewals.

Thank you for giving emphasis to reducing energy consumption and for the good work that the Office of Clean Energy has been doing. We have been impressed with the BPU's efforts to help New Jerseyans reduce their energy use.

However, conversations with people in the building industry told us that there is a problem with the Societal Benefits Charge. A contractor said that he works in both Short Hills and Elizabeth, and that almost all the rebates go to Short Hills. But since everyone pays the societal benefits charge, this amounts to a transfer of wealth from poorer communities to wealthier ones.

We appreciate the motivation of the Societal Benefits Charge, and we believe this side effect is entirely unintentional. We also believe that it's important to incentivize energy reduction, but we want to incentivize in a way that rewards all citizens for their efforts, not just the wealthy ones.

So, we challenge the BPU, and all of the environmental justice advocates here in the room, to come up with approaches that will encourage and reward energy efficiency in LMI households as well as in rich ones.

There are a number of other issues that we addressed in our comments, including improving and electrifying NJ Transit and state fleets, modifying the building code to encourage green buildings, and other things. I'm sure that you'll hear a lot about these in subsequent comments, but we wanted to emphasize the importance of rewarding energy efficiency in disadvantaged communities as much as in wealthy ones.

LINKS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES

COMMUNITY SOLAR

- Summary of proposed draft NJ Board of Public Utilities rule:
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/09/05/pilot-community-solar-project-could-be-getting-its-moment-in-the-sun/>
- 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 (and other drinking water issues)



- NJ becomes first state to regulate the PFAS class of chemicals in drinking water:
http://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.com/2018/09/nj-becomes-first-state-to-establish.html#.W6qCse_QZD9
- NRDC and other suing Newark over clean water file motion for immediate action:
https://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.com/2018/08/nrdc-others-sue-newark-over-lack-of.html#.W6p8Gu_QZD9
- Description of bill NJ A4120, signed 8/24/2018, which authorizes special assessments and bond issuance to replace lead-contaminated water service lines:
https://enviropoliticsblog.blogspot.com/2018/08/residential-lead-water-line-replacement.html#.W6p7Ve_QZD9
- 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>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

- Growing opposition toward Meadowlands power plant:
<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/environment/2018/09/21/opposition-grows-towards-meadowlands-power-plant-power-new-york/1366456002/>
- Amazon unveils 12,654 rooftop solar panels at its Edison facility:
http://www.roi-nj.com/2018/09/24/real_estate/amazon-in-push-for-green-energy-unveils-rooftop-solar-panels-at-edison-location/

- NJ Energy Master Plan to be updated for 2019 – stakeholder process continues:
<https://nj.gov/emp/energy/>
- Differences raised on energy mix in NJ Energy Master Plan hearing:
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/09/09/sharp-divisions-over-nuclear-natural-gas-in-states-new-energy-plan/>
- NJ begins process related to modernizing the grid:
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/09/24/modernizing-the-grid-in-nj-vital-to-achieving-clean-energy-targets/>
- Bus fleet electrification raised at NJ Energy Master Plan hearing:
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/09/11/nj-urged-to-electrify-transit-sector-rapidly-starting-with-bus-fleet/>
- Bill proposed to spur electric vehicle charging stations:
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/09/18/trying-to-spur-electric-vehicles-in-nj-with-rebates-wave-of-fast-charging-stations>

PLASTIC BAGS

- Bill introduced to ban plastic carryout bags, straws, and food containers:
<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/09/25/lawmakers-plan-to-ban-plastic-carryout-bags-straws-food-containers/>
- Text of bill introduced to ban plastic carryout bags, straws, and food containers:
<https://legiscan.com/NJ/text/A4349/id/1817797>
- Another city bans single-use plastics (plastic bags, plastic straws, Styrofoam and polyethylene):
<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/land-environment/2018/09/19/plastics-ban-lambertville-nj/1352203002/>

“GREEN AMENDMENT” – Sponsored by UU Nancy Pinkin

- Proposed amendment to NJ Constitution to grant every person the right to a clean and healthy environment (proposed in Assembly by Assemblywoman Nancy Pinkin on 1/9/2018:
<https://legiscan.com/NJ/text/ACR85/2018>

[Senate “Green amendment” bill (SCR124) also introduced, by Senator Linda R Greenstein on 8/27/2018]

