



**NJDEP to propose Climate Change-related Rules: [p. 17](#)**

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

**UU Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Environmental Justice (EJ): Addressing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects in communities of low-income residents or persons of color.**

## EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### • Green Amendment UUFANJ/EJTF Postcard Initiative

EJTF spearheaded a postcard campaign that invited all congregations to participate by sending postcards (shown at right) to their legislators, as well as NJ legislative leaders, to enlist their support for the Green Amendment so that it can be included on the ballot for the next general election. There was great congregational involvement (see [p. 2](#)), and we are very much hoping for success in the legislature! Additional information about the Green Amendment is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/57fvkbmu>.



I urge you as a legislative leader to advance the bi-partisan NJ Green Amendment bills SCR43/ACR119, that grant every New Jerseyan the right to clean water and air and a healthy environment, and make the State the trustee of all its natural resources, protecting them for the benefit of present and future generations.

Please co-sponsor SCR43/ACR119 (thank you if you have ☺). And thank you for caring and continuing to do more to move this forward on our behalf!



Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC); EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh is at right



Some of UUCCH's signed postcards, ready to go!



Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH)

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# EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

## • Green Amendment UUFANJ/EJTF Postcard Initiative (continued)

Over 1,900 postcards were provided to NJ Unitarian Universalist Congregations (see [p. 1](#)), and many congregations had multiple postcard-signing events, including Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF), Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton (UUCP), Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH), Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) and others. UUCCH reported signing and sending 400 postcards, and UUOCC signed and sent 100. In order to be put on the ballot at the next general election, the proposed amendment needs to be agreed to by three-fifths of all the members of each of the respective NJ legislative houses. If it gets just a simple majority (over 50%, but less than 60%) in each house, then it must be approved again during the next legislative year, and then can be put on that year's ballot.

## • UUFANJ Annual Meeting

A number of **EJTF members** attended the Unitarian Universalist Faith Action - NJ's (UUFANJ) Annual Meeting held on 5/11/2024 at the beautiful Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit, and on Zoom. At the Annual Meeting, congregational delegates voted on the proposed FY 2024-2025 budget and on nominees to the UUFANJ Board of Trustees, celebrated the past year, and prepared for the year ahead.



## • Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH)

**Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban Now**  
EarthDay 2024

We, the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill, call for the Cherry Hill Mayor and Town Council to implement an **immediate** ban on gas powered leaf blowers.

**Whereas**, we are living in a CLIMATE CRISIS.

**Whereas**, we only have one planet.

**Whereas**, everyone at every level needs to be solving the CLIMATE CRISIS so that our children and grandchildren will have a liveable planet.

**Whereas**, gas blowers' two-stroke engines, which run on a combination of oil and gas, emit toxic fumes, including carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, and hydrocarbons that contribute to climate change, air pollution and respiratory problems.

**Whereas**, gas powered leaf blowers blow away topsoil, creating impervious surfaces that contribute to flooding, and blast the leaf litter that provides crucial habitat for wildlife, especially pollinators, whose numbers are plummeting.

**Whereas**, those who operate leaf blowers face the highest concentrations of carbon monoxide, particulate matter and extreme and prolonged noise exposure, and are under a significantly increased risk to become seriously ill.

**Whereas**, the extreme noise pollution is significant for both people and wildlife, impacting our ability to enjoy nature and be outdoors peacefully. The noise is a documented deterrent to migrating songbirds, and can delay or disrupt nesting for birds who are already under threat from habitat loss and climate changes. Female birds have more difficulty hearing male birdsongs through low-frequency human noise.

Printed Name	Signature	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (UUCCH), as well as **EJTF members, Sharon Hardy and Walt Nadolny** were instrumental in promoting the UUCCH Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban initiative. They brought a petition (at left) to the Cherry Hill Town Council, and plan to bring it to the Environment Board in June. If other congregations are interested in pursuing such a ban, there is also a petition available online, here: <https://tinyurl.com/rxvnm5hk>. In addition, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) has a very informative brochure about Gas-powered Leaf Blowers, including alternatives to their use, available here: <https://anjec.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Gas-Powered-Leaf-Blowers-V4-11.25-x-8.75-in-1.pdf>.

## ***EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)***

- **EJTF member Christine Dunbar** continues to be extremely active in environmental issues in Sparta Township, Sussex County, and the Paulins Kill Watershed. Recently, as a member of the Sparta Responsible Development (SRD) group, she testified at a NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) public hearing on the "Diamond Chip Logistics Park" application for an amendment to the Sussex County Water Quality Management (WQM) Plan. The proposed amendment is for an on-site discharge to the groundwater wastewater treatment system to serve a proposed warehouse development, which consists of two warehouse buildings totaling 698,000 square feet. Because Christine is part of the SRD group, a Morris/Sussex County Superior Court judge disqualified her and seven other members of SRD who were on the Planning Board from hearing the application when it was to be brought before the Board. Additional information is available here:



<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/sparta/sections/government/articles/8-sparta-planning-board-members-disqualified-from-mega-warehouse-hearing-for-being-in-facebook-group-judge-rules>. At the DEP hearing, community members provided nearly two hours of testimony, which outlined the intensity of the use as a threat to the aquifer - not just from the building and impervious coverage, but also from diesel trucks and trains that will threaten contamination to the water, air, and public health and safety. Comments on the amendment can be submitted to DEP before 6/21/2024.

- **EJTF Goal #2-related Accomplishment - NJ Organic Farming Board**

In 2023, the NJ legislature passed a bill to strengthen organic and regenerative farming in NJ, including the establishment of the NJ Organic Farming Board, and Gov. Murphy signed it into law. EJTF, in accordance with our 2023/2024 Goal #2 regarding promoting regenerative agriculture, and following the lead of our partner organization, the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), had supported the bill through letters and phone calls. We were very pleased that it passed in the legislature with near unanimous approval. (We had even sent postcards to thank the legislators who voted in favor of the bill (see below), and to thank Gov. Murphy.) We are very happy to report that it was announced at the 5/22/2024 Board of Agriculture meeting that Gov. Murphy has approved the first NJ Agriculture Organic Regenerative Board. The board's primary purpose includes developing, administering, and overseeing programs in consultation with the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA) on topics related to organic farming. We are also happy to see that the NJDA's website includes a page for "Organic Sustainable, Regenerative Agriculture (OSRA)," available here: <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/md/prog/jerseyorganic.html>.



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

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

<b>JUNE 2024</b> (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>
<p><b>2</b> <a href="#">"Stop the Turnpike Expansion! Jersey City Community Outreach"</a> - 9:30 a.m. &amp; 3:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">"All Things Farm Bill"</a> - 3:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>3</b> <a href="#">2024 New Jersey Energy Master Plan Public Hearing</a> - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">"Urban Humpback Whales: Coexisting with Our Charismatic Neighbors"</a> - 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>4</b> <a href="#">"Electrify Your Life"</a> - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">NJBPU Public Meeting on "FY25 Clean Energy Program Proposed Program Budgets and Compliance Filings related to Electric Vehicles"</a> - 1:30 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">NJDEP Mercer County EJ Community Engagement Session</a> - 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>5</b> <a href="#">Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) Second Quarter 2024 Business Meeting</a> - 10:30 a.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">"Affordable Home Energy Shot Summit"</a> - 10:30 a.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference</a></p>	<p><b>6</b> <a href="#">"New Rules for Municipal Stormwater Permits"</a> - 12:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">UU Climate Justice Revival "Reimagine Together - From an Extractive Age to a New Era" Information Session</a> - 5:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference</a></p>	<p><b>7</b> <a href="#">New Jersey Planning and Redevelopment Conference</a></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b> <a href="#">Maximizing the Impact of Natural Climate Solutions</a> - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">Intergenerational Climate Action "Learning from Stories for Change"</a> - 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>12</b> <a href="#">NJDEP Public Hearing on "Proposed Electronic Waste Management Rules and Amendments"</a> - 1:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Comments due:</b> <a href="#">NJBPU "Fiscal Year 2025 Straw Proposal for NJ's Clean Energy Program," etc.</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>Comments due:</b> <a href="#">2024 New Jersey Energy Master Plan</a></p>	<p><b>13</b> <a href="#">UU Climate Justice Revival "Reimagine Together - From an Extractive Age to a New Era" Information Session</a> - 5:00 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">"Election Waves: Safeguarding Our Water in the 2024 Election" Clean Water Action Annual Member Meeting</a> - 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>15</b> <a href="#">Global Wind Day Celebration</a> - 11:00 a.m.</p>
<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>22</b></p>
<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b> <a href="#">Intergenerational Climate Action "Success through Collaboration"</a> - 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>
<p><b>30</b></p>						

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

**"Stop the Turnpike Expansion! Jersey City Community Outreach"**  
**6/2/2024, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**  
**& 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**  
**Jersey City, NJ - In-person**

"On June 2nd, thousands of local residents will participate in a mass bike ride through Jersey City for the annual 'Ward Tour' event. This is a perfect opportunity for us to speak with community members who are directly threatened by the turnpike expansion proposal. We will collect petition signatures calling on Governor Murphy

and Hudson County officials to reject this massive polluting project, and to instead invest that \$10B into modernizing and expanding clean and affordable public transit in New Jersey without hiking rates for riders. We'll fan out through the crowd of cyclists before the ride starts and again at the finish line." Training and materials will be provided. Additional information and the link to sign up to attend are available here: <https://www.mobilize.us/fww/event/623840/>.

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**"All Things Farm Bill" - Webinar  
6/2/2024, 3:00 p.m.**

"Join the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (CDRW) in collaboration with the National Audubon Society and National Wildlife Federation (NWF) for an insightful webinar on the Farm Bill. Delve into the critical aspects of this legislation and its profound implications for conservation initiatives and communities across the nation. Don't miss out on this chance to gain valuable insights into the Farm Bill and its pivotal role in shaping conservation efforts." Registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/mwvppakw>.

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**2024 New Jersey Energy Master Plan  
Public Hearing - Virtual  
6/3/2024, 1:00 p.m.**

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

- **Hearing #1 – 5/20/2024** · Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 1, 2, and 5 listed in the 2019 EMP. **The video is available here:** <https://tinyurl.com/4thfdv35>.
- **Hearing #2 – 5/22/2024** · Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 3 and 4. **The video is available here:** <https://tinyurl.com/4xfyphw2>.
- **Hearing #3 – 5/29/2024** · Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 6 and 7. **A link to the video will be available here:** <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/public/>.
- **Hearing #4 - 6/3/2024, 1:00 p.m.** · Recap of Hearing #1, Hearing #2, and Hearing #3, and next steps in the development of the 2024 EMP. **A link to the video will be available here:** <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/public/>.

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

Public Notice for Hearings #1, #2, and #3: <https://tinyurl.com/3buy7k6a>  
Revised Public Notice for Hearing #4: <https://tinyurl.com/3v76b9ne>

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**NJBPU Public Meeting on "FY25 Clean Energy Program Proposed Program Budgets and Compliance Filings related to Electric Vehicles" - Virtual  
6/4/2024, 1:30 p.m.**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is holding a virtual public meeting to discuss the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 ("FY25") program budgets and compliance filings related to electric vehicles, including Charge Up New Jersey. When the FY25 program budgets and compliance filings are released, they will be available here: <https://www.njcleanenergy.com/main/njcep-policy-updates-request-comments/policy-updates-and-request-comments>. **Comments are due 6/12/2024.** Additional information and the links

to register and to provide written comments are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yhysxb9s>.

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**"Electrify Your Life" - Webinar Series  
Session 1: 6/4/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

"Elders Climate Action is hosting a webinar series for elders who want to know how to plan and implement home electrification. Your questions about electrification and ways to help pay for it will be answered." In the first session, Sean Armstrong of Redwood Energy, "a renowned electrification authority," will discuss and compare electrification options for eliminating fossil fuel in your home, how to maximize benefits and minimize installation costs, and the pitfalls to avoid. The critical importance of electrification policy advocacy in addressing the climate crisis will also be reviewed. Additional information and the link to register (a \$10 donation is suggested) are available here: [https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/electrify\\_june/](https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/electrify_june/).

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**NJDEP Mercer County EJ Community  
Engagement Session - Hybrid  
6/4/2024, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Trenton, NJ - In-person & on Zoom**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invites Mercer County residents to attend an EJ Community Engagement Session regarding Environmental Justice. This community engagement session will provide residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet DEP Commissioner LaTourette and EPA Region 2 Deputy Regional Administrator Arcaya and discuss environmental justice issues in Mercer County. It is one of a series being conducted by DEP in communities across NJ. Registration for in-person participation is voluntary, but is recommended to assist communication. Registration is required for virtual attendance, to send the link for the Zoom livestream. Additional information and registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/47x7jt58>.

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**Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)  
Second Quarter 2024 Business Meeting  
6/5/2024, 10:30 a.m. - Hybrid  
Narrowsburg, NY - In-person & viewable  
on YouTube**

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) second-quarter business meeting will be held in person in Narrowsburg, NY and can be viewed live on YouTube. After all scheduled business has been completed and as time allows, the Business Meeting may be followed by up to one hour of Open Public Comment (in-person only). This is an opportunity to address the Commission on any topic concerning management of the Basin's water resources outside the context of a duly noticed, on-the-record public hearing. Following the Open Public Comment session, DRBC will be presenting an afternoon screening of the short film "Our Shared Waters: A Flight Along the Delaware" and panel discussion highlighting success stories and management challenges for the Upper Delaware River, moderated by Meg McGuire, Delaware Currents. The film screening and panel discussion will be in-person only. Links to the agenda, to the YouTube livestream, and to register to provide in-person comments are available here: <https://www.nj.gov/drbc/meetings/upcoming/>.

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**"Affordable Home Energy Shot Summit"  
6/5/2024, 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
- Virtual**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is holding a Summit on its "Affordable Home Energy Shot™", part of the DOE's Energy Earthshots™ Initiative, which "is designed to accelerate breakthroughs of more abundant, affordable, and reliable clean energy solutions." There are eight DOE Energy Earthshots™, and the intent of this Affordable Home Energy Shot™ is "to address the persistent burdens faced by low-income households and communities of color.... The Affordable Home Energy Shot™ will reduce the cost of energy-efficient retrofits in affordable homes by at least 50% and decrease residents' energy costs by at least 20% within a decade. [It] focuses DOE's research and development (R&D) strategy and resources to ensure that households in the greatest need will benefit from decarbonization solutions - specifically, the 50 million single-family, multifamily, and manufactured homes

rented or owned by households earning less than 80% of the area median income." Additional information about the Summit and the link to register are available here: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/affordable-home-energy-shot-summit>.

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

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

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**"New Rules for Municipal Stormwater Permits" - Webinar**  
**6/6/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

Although geared toward municipalities, this webinar may be of interest, in that it will describe the new NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permit rules for stormwater discharge into streams, which require municipalities to use green infrastructure in new public and private developments. "Stormwater causes major problems for our local communities and is expected to worsen with climate change. Flooding after rainstorms creates public safety issues and causes extensive property damage. Pollution carried by stormwater threatens drinking water, the local economy, and aquatic life. We will discuss the local impacts of flooding and pollution caused by stormwater in your communities, and the new NJDEP MS4 permit

rules for stormwater discharge into streams... In addition, we will introduce Watershed Restoration and Protection Plans being developed for municipalities in the region." Registration is available here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc96RvO5LuovkPzzDTSKyL5mzuQZrvalz4vEWJF00UQx5-q2w/viewform>.

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**UU Climate Justice Revival**  
**"Reimagine Together - From an Extractive Age to a New Era" Information Sessions:**  
**6/6/2024, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. - Online**  
**6/13/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Online**  
**Revival dates: 9/28/2024 - 9/29/2024**

The UU Climate Justice Revival is a project of the UU Climate Justice Coalition and Friends with financial support from Revival Sponsors. "On September 28-29, congregations will host UU Climate Justice Revivals to collectively reimagine a spirit-filled and liberatory future. Through conversations, worship, and advocacy, congregations will work together to realize climate justice and collective liberation in our communities. Congregations will receive everything they need to host a revival in their communities, including discussion guides and materials for all ages, training, worship resources, and advocacy actions designed to transform our communities through climate justice. Sign up to host a UU Climate Justice Revival in your congregation today!" The map of congregations that have signed up so far shows NO NJ congregations as of 5/26/2024. Additional information including the map and the link to register a congregation are available here: <https://www.uuclimatejustice.org>. Links to register for the information sessions are available here:

- 6/6/2024 session: <https://secure.everyaction.com/31EzV3c0ckqBKlWOqkdUxQ2>
  - 6/13/2024 session: <https://secure.everyaction.com/FuKrQUzDbkq68hv5LwY5-w2>
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**Intergenerational Climate Action  
"Learning from Stories for Change"  
6/11/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
& "Success through Collaboration"  
6/25/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
- Webinars**

Elders Climate Action is hosting its third annual intergenerational month in partnership with its youth advisory council, which includes representatives from Change the Chamber\*Lobby for Climate (Change the Chamber is "a nonpartisan coalition of young adults, 100+ student groups, and other allied organizations that conducts campaigns to educate for science-based climate action within the Chambers of Congress, trade associations, e.g. the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, corporations, government agencies, and local communities, pursuing meaningful change towards an equitable, sustainable future, and empowering others to do the same") and other youth allies. This round-table discussion series consists of two 90-minute discussion sessions with conversations between elders, parents, and youth climate activists. These sessions are "Learning from Stories for Change," which will explore what calls us to act and tactics used by different generations; and "Success through Collaboration," which will cover how we can combine our voices for greater political power. Additional information and the links to register (a \$10 donation for each session is suggested) are available here:

- 6/11/2024 session:  
<https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/intergenerational1/>
- 6/25/2024 session:  
<https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/intergenerational2/>

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**Maximizing the Impact of Natural Climate Solutions - Webinar  
6/11/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), U.S. Nature4Climate, and the Bipartisan Policy Center invite you to a briefing on natural climate solutions, which leverage natural processes - like those in forests, grasslands, soils, and wetlands - to reduce carbon emissions, sequester carbon, and bring new income and employment opportunities to rural America.... This briefing will explore the federal role in maximizing the benefits of natural climate solutions. The....

panelists will discuss what is working, what we are still learning, and what the next phase of natural climate solutions policy and implementation looks like..." Additional information and the link to RSVP are available here:  
<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/061124nature>.

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**NJDEP Public Hearing on "Proposed Electronic Waste Management Rules and Amendments"  
6/12/2024, 1:00 p.m. - Virtual  
Comments Due 7/5/2024**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has published a proposed rulemaking that amends the electronic waste recycling program requirements "to implement amendments to the Electronic Waste Management Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.95 et seq., which requires each manufacturer of covered electronic devices to provide for the collection, transportation, and recycling of its market-share-in-weight of all covered electronic devices collected in a program year. The Department proposes this rulemaking to ensure that the electronic waste management rules are consistent with the Electronic Waste Management Act, as amended, and to respond to a rulemaking petition filed by the Consumer Technology Association." (Also see the article on [p. 23](#)). Additional information, including links to the public hearing and to the proposal, and information about providing oral and/or written comments, is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/rules/notice-of-rule-proposals/20240506a/>. **Written comments are due 7/5/2024.**

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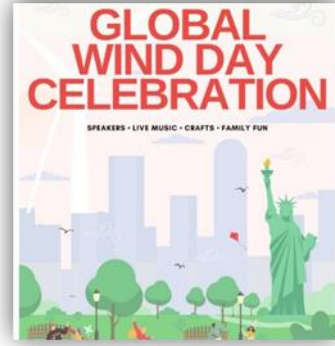
**NJBPU "Fiscal Year 2025 Straw Proposal for NJ's Clean Energy Program," etc.  
Comments Due 6/12/2024**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) is releasing the Fiscal Year 2025 ("FY25") Straw Proposal for New Jersey's Clean Energy Program ("NJCEP") Comprehensive Resource Analysis ("CRA") and the proposed FY25 program budgets and compliance filings. "Through the CRA process, the NJCEP funding levels for energy efficiency and Class I renewable energy programs are established. The proposed funding level will fund the core NJCEP programs and provide opportunities for new and enhanced programs that help residents,



businesses, and State and local governments reduce energy usage, save money, and improve the environment." **Comments are due 6/12/2024.** When the FY25 CRA Straw Proposal and FY25 program budgets and compliance filings are released, they will be available here: <https://www.njcleanenergy.com/main/njcep-policy-updates-request-comments/policy-updates-and-request-comments>. Additional information and the link to provide written comments are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/558d46xb>.

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

New Jersey Wind Works (a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**) is hosting a Global Wind Day Celebration at Liberty State Park along with the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club and other environmental and environmental justice partners. The event "will show support for responsible offshore wind development and clean energy more broadly at Liberty State Park. This family-friendly event will have music, a speaking program, offshore wind coloring books, pinwheels and kites, and more, all with the iconic New York City skyline and Lady Liberty in the background! We encourage folks to bring family and friends and make the day at one of New Jersey's most treasured urban state parks and enjoy the June sunshine and outdoors with us." Additional information and a link to RSVP are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5hfcjdj>.

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**Rutgers Climate and Energy Institute**  
**Listing of Climate Events**

Multiple events are listed on this site (an event for June 2024 is listed below) - check the site periodically for an updated list, here: <https://rcei.rutgers.edu/events/> and here: <https://rcei.rutgers.edu/news-events/external-events/>.

**"Urban Humpback Whales: Coexisting with Our Charismatic Neighbors" - Webinar**  
**6/3/2024, 6:30 p.m.**

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, will be presented by Danielle Brown, PhD Candidate in the Rutgers University Graduate Program in Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources, and

**"Election Waves: Safeguarding Our Water in the 2024 Election"**  
**Clean Water Action Annual Member Meeting - Virtual**  
**6/13/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

"With the 2024 Election on the horizon, it's imperative that we come together to ensure our voices are heard in safeguarding our most precious resource, clean water.... This virtual event aims to empower members like you to advocate effectively for policies that prioritize clean water - free from pollution and toxic chemicals like PFAS." Topics of discussion with Clean Water Action election panelists will include:

- The current state of our water resources and the challenges we face.
- Environmental platforms of key candidates in battleground states.
- Strategies for grassroots advocacy and engagement to promote water protection.
- Resources and tools for members to take action in their communities, and more.

Additional information and registration, including an opportunity to submit questions in advance, are available here: <https://cleanwater.salsalabs.org/national-2024-member-annual-meeting-registration/index.html>.

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Director of Marine Mammal Research for Gotham Whale. "... We will discuss how the Humpback whales have become an exciting part of the coastal ecosystem in NJ and NY.... [and] what we have learned about humpback whale ecology over the last decade, and how we can best coexist with whales in our region." Registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/27746xy8>.

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**Save the date!**

**Jersey Water Works and LeadFree NJ -Joint Meeting**  
**7/17/2024, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**  
**Montclair, NJ - In-person**

This joint meeting, "Healthy Communities - Two Collaboratives, One Vision," will be divided into two parts: the morning with Jersey Water Works and the afternoon with Lead-Free NJ. "Don't miss this chance to engage with other water leaders, advocates, decision-makers, and community champions and to connect with a network of people and organizations striving to protect the health of all New Jerseyans. We hope to see you there!" Additional information including the agenda and the link to register are available here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-membership-meeting-tickets-880961037177>.

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**VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS**

**Governor Murphy, DEP Commissioner LaTourette Announce First-in-Nation Suite of Reforms to Build Resilience to Coastal Flooding and Better Protect Communities from Climate Change Impacts**  
**- Videos of Four Information Sessions**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is planning to issue its long-awaited proposed rules implementing the "Resilient Environments and Landscapes" (REAL) reforms under the "NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats" (NJ PACT) initiative begun in 2020 (see article on [p. 17](#)). The DEP held four public information sessions, for which videos are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/webinars/>.

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**"Implementing NJ's Priority Climate Action Plan: Climate Mitigation Funding Opportunities for NJ Local Governments"**  
**- Video of Webinar**

NJ published its "Priority Climate Action Plan" (PCAP - available here: [https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/climatechange/nj\\_pcap\\_final-1.pdf](https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/climatechange/nj_pcap_final-1.pdf)) for submission to the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a requirement of its Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program. The PCAP "outlines 12 priority measures and dozens of enabling actions to reduce greenhouse gases and mitigate climate change.... Recognizing the pivotal role local governments play in helping the State meet its climate change goals, this webinar will highlight priority actions in New Jersey's PCAP along with resources and funding opportunities to support local implementation. While the webinar will be focused on opportunities for local governments, all are welcome to attend as several opportunities are available to community-based organizations, School Districts, and other entities." The video is available here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\\_NkK84Pjxw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_NkK84Pjxw).

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**NJ 2024 Sustainability Summit**  
**- Links to Slides/PowerPoint Presentations**

"The New Jersey Sustainability Summit is a momentous event in our state, drawing change-makers from across the political, private, and public sectors. This exceptional one-day forum spotlights the successes and lessons learned from the people and projects that are helping New Jersey realize a more sustainable future." Slides of the presentations are available here:

<https://www.sustainablejersey.com/resources/presentations/sustainability-summit/>.

Some of the topics that may be of interest include:

- Land Management Triage (focusing on forests and invasive plants)
  - Community Energy Planning & Implementations
  - Single-Use Plastics Law
  - Riding the EV Wave
  - Gas Leaf Blower Regulation: Municipalities Transforming Landscaping Practices
  - Tree Stewardship for Community Resilience & Well Being.
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## **"A Tale of Twin Energy Developments: Shale Gas and Large-Scale Solar"** **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, was presented by Dr. K. Max Zhang, Professor of Engineering at Cornell University and a Fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. "This talk goes through two major developments in energy transitions and the associated social, economic, and environmental impacts. The phenomenal growth in shale gas production over the last decade has fundamentally reshaped the energy systems in the U.S. and geopolitics in the world. However, the environmental and climate impacts of shale gas development have led to distinctly different energy policies even in neighboring states. Large-scale solar is an emerging energy development in the U.S. While it plays a critical role in achieving the ambitious grid decarbonization goals, the public acceptance of large-scale solar has been mixed. The speaker argues that a new kind of developmental process is necessary to accelerate renewable energy deployment while creating vibrant communities that host those projects." The video is available here: <https://atkinson.cornell.edu/media/a-tale-of-twin-energy-developments-shale-gas-and-large-scale-solar/>.

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## **"Climate Change: Past, Present, and Future"** - Video of Webinar

This webinar, part of the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability "Perspectives on the Climate Change Challenge" Seminars, was presented by Dr. Kate Marvel, a Research Physical Scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies who served as Chapter Lead for Climate Trends on the Fifth National Climate Assessment. "It's now unequivocal that human activities are changing the climate. The world is 1.2°C hotter than it was before the Industrial Revolution, and this is already having profound consequences for everyone who lives on the planet. But the climate has changed before – how do we know the most recent trends are attributable to humans? And what can past climate change teach us about what lies in store?" In this seminar, Dr. Marvel discussed how scientists use multiple tools – climate models and tree rings, historical records,

and satellite observations – to answer these questions. The video is available here: <https://atkinson.cornell.edu/media/climate-change-past-present-and-future/>.

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## **EPA National Environmental Justice Community April 2024 Engagement Call** **- Video of Online Call**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been inviting Environmental Justice (EJ) advocates to participate in its National EJ Community Engagement calls. "The purpose of these calls is to inform communities about EPA's environmental justice work and enhance opportunities to maintain an open dialogue with environmental justice advocates." This call included "Community Spotlight - CA Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative," a report from EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS), and information on how to use EPA's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CKsNyeWF4g>.

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## **"Making Climate Policy Models More Decision-relevant"** - Video of Webinar

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

## **Draft New Jersey Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan - Videos of Webinars**

Two public webinars on the recently-issued draft NJ Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan were held by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to provide an overview of the draft Plan and allow the public to provide verbal feedback. The webinars appear to be identical except for the public feedback at the end of each; links to videos of the webinars, as well as a link to the Action Plan, are available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/climatechange/resilience/resilience-action-plans/>.

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### **Liberty State Park – Design Task Force Public Meeting - Video of Meeting**

On 4/9/2024 the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) hosted a public meeting of the Liberty State Park (LSP) Design Task Force to discuss alternatives for potential active recreation, arts, and cultural amenities in LSP-North (Phase 1B), as well as elements for inclusion in the Master Plan for LSP-South (Phase 2). Following the Task Force meeting, an open comment period was held for members of the public to offer comments to the Design Task Force. A link to the 3-hour video of the 4/9/2024 meeting, as well as links to videos of previous meetings, are available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/design-task-force/>.

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### **NJBPU Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Meeting - Video of Webinar**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) monthly Clean Energy Program Energy Efficiency Stakeholder meeting for May 2024 included a presentation by a guest speaker on Heat Pump Water Heaters that begins at minute 52:28 of the video of the webinar, and an update on the NJ "Whole House Pilot Program" that begins at minute 7:55. [Note: as described in NJ's "Priority Climate Action Plan" (PCAP), "Whole House" refers to a holistic approach to healthy housing, incorporating and coordinating energy efficiency improvements while remediating health and safety hazards that pose a threat to human health and too often cause efficiency upgrade work to be deferred or delayed. These hazards include water intrusion, mold, asthma triggers, asbestos, radon,

slip-and-fall risks, pests, electrical deficiencies, lead-based paint, lead service lines, and other existing toxins and contaminants. To date the State is piloting the Whole House program in Trenton, New Jersey, with partners including PSE&G, CMC (PSE&G's Comfort Partners implementer), Isles Inc., and Habitat for Humanity. NJBPU is pursuing enrollment of 100 homes in the pilot program and looking for 20-30 candidates for electrification." The video is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2ks3zxh4>.

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### **"Breathe Easy: Efficient Buildings and Healthy Air Workshop" - Video of Webinar**

Elders Climate Action (ECA) and its partners in the Breathe Again Collaborative hosted a special workshop, "Breathe Easy: Efficient Buildings and Healthy Air," with Jerry Lawson, the national manager of the ENERGY STAR for Small Business & Congregations program at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Stephen Geusman, the technical director at WERiSE (Weatherize Every Residence in the South East). The speakers discussed practical strategies for lowering utility bills, saving money, and reducing indoor and outdoor pollution, providing actionable solutions. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVJEZU3FY3g>.

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### **"2023 Billion-Ton Report: Assessment of Biomass Resources to Support Decarbonizing the Transportation and Industrial Sectors" - Video of Webinar**

This U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) webinar provides findings of the 2023 Billion-Ton Report released by the DOE Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The report includes findings on the potential biomass resources available in the U.S., including "how the nation can produce 1 billion tons of biomass per year, potentially advancing the United States to a cleaner future." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5h1rMAPumBg&t=32s>.

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## **WE ACT's "Clean Air and Climate"** **- Video of Webinar**

"This webinar offered an overview of environmental justice, environmental health, climate change, and health disparities to prepare more leaders for advocacy work." It is part of the training provided by the Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTAC) Program funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The program provides grant funding to establish centers across the U.S. providing technical assistance, training, and related support to communities with environmental justice concerns and their partners. "WE ACT for Environmental Justice" has been designated as the TCTAC grant recipient for EPA Region 2 (NY, NJ, PR and VI), and will receive at least \$10 million over the next five years "to help environmental justice communities across EPA Region 2 by providing training and other assistance to build capacity for navigating federal grant application systems, writing strong grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf3GqE5yuQo>.

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## **Option Green: Food Choices for a Small Planet - Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by East Brunswick Hadassah, the East Brunswick Public Library and the Friends of the East Brunswick Environmental Commission. A panel of Rutgers faculty discussed "individual and community practices which decrease greenhouse gases, decrease waste of energy, land and water resources, and which slow the filling of our landfills. Consider this a teachable moment to educate your family about things they can do to prevent food waste at home, school and work." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ra4y7TJP4Y>.

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## **MACH2 Hydrogen Hub Listening Sessions** **- Summary of Sessions**

In response to feedback from attendees at its H2Hub ("Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub") community briefings, the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations

(OCED) has been providing virtual listening sessions for impacted communities to voice their questions and concerns. To date, two sessions have been held related to the Mid-Atlantic H2Hub ("MACH2"). After the sessions, summaries of each session, including names and affiliations of stakeholders and their comments, are available here: <https://www.energy.gov/oced/h2hubs-local-engagement-opportunities>.

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## **NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES** **[covering 4/27/2024 – 5/26/2024]**

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

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#### **New NEPA Rule Eases Permitting Process while Advancing Environmental Justice**

According to this Goldberg Segalla law firm's article, "On the final day of April 2024, a week and a half after Earth Day, the Biden-Harris Administration announced that the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) finalized a rule intended to simplify and modernize the federal environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).... The focus this time around was on the acceleration of federal permitting for clean-energy projects while still protecting communities that receive a disproportionate share of environmental pollution or hazardous climate-change impacts." The White House press release (available here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/news-updates/2024/04/30/biden-harris-administration-finalizes-reforms-to-modernize-environmental-reviews-accelerate-americas-clean-energy-future-simplify-the-process-to-rebuild-our-nations-infrastructure/>) provides a description of the focus areas and a link to the Final Rule.

<https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/new-nepa-rule-eases-permitting-process-9711085/>

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$25 Million to Help Provide Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities with Clean and Safe Drinking Water**

As part of its "Justice40 Initiative" that directs that 40% of the benefits of certain Federal investments go to disadvantaged communities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is awarding \$25 million in grant funding which "will specifically benefit underserved, small and disadvantaged communities by upgrading infrastructure to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, reducing exposure to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), removing sources of lead, and addressing additional local drinking water challenges." NJ's share is \$406,000.

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-25-million-help-provide-small-underserved-and>

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## **ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION**

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## **Coalition Protests against Proposed E-bike Regulations**

This 4-1/2-minute news video describes a rally held in Jersey City and a letter signed by 40 organizations (letter available here: [https://www.scribd.com/document/735475116/S2292-A3359-Opposition-Sign-On-Letter#from\\_embed](https://www.scribd.com/document/735475116/S2292-A3359-Opposition-Sign-On-Letter#from_embed)) protesting proposed legislation (S2292/A3359) that would require low-speed electric bicycles and low-speed scooters to be registered with the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) and to have liability insurance. The rally was attended by concerned citizens, delivery workers, cyclists,

families, and community leaders, and described the negative impacts the legislation would have on low-income residents and delivery workers, among others, and that it would provide a disincentive for using these "affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly modes of transportation." The group highlighted that these requirements would have no impact on safety, and expressed support for a "Target Zero" approach instead, as delineated in another bill (S361/A1476).

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/coalition-protests-against-proposed-e-bike-regulations/>

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## **Princeton University's Electric Shuttle Fleet Serves the Entire Community**

This comprehensive article describes Princeton University's all-electric shuttle bus fleet, which began operation last fall. Princeton University has a goal of net-zero emissions by 2046. The fleet includes 17 buses, and is supported by an off-campus vehicle charging base as well as on-campus chargers. Winter bus operation requires charging twice as often (i.e., after each eight-hour shift) as summer operation does.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/04/princeton-university-electric-shuttle-fleet-serves-entire-community/>

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## **LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD**

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## **Tiny N.J. Town Wins Fight to Keep 286 Acres of Farmland From Becoming Housing Development**

This article describes a conflict between affordable housing and open space in Burlington County. A developer seeking to build on 286 acres of farmland in the County's "carefully planned farm belt" has lost a lawsuit it filed against Springfield Township. Although the Township is in violation of the Mount Laurel Doctrine - a landmark civil rights case that prevents the state and municipalities from using land-use policies to discriminate based on income, and requires all towns in NJ to provide their fair share of the region's affordable housing - a state Superior Court judge found that the site proposed by the developer was "unsuitable for affordable housing development." He did,

however, state that the Township still must comply with the affordable housing requirements. <https://www.nj.com/news/2024/04/tiny-nj-town-wins-fight-to-keep-286-acres-of-farmland-from-becoming-housing-development.html>

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### **The Business Case for Safer Alternatives to Fertilizers and Pesticides**

The American Sustainable Business Network has issued a report, "The Business Case for Safer Alternatives to Fertilizers and Pesticides" (the report can be accessed at the website linked at the end of this article), which highlights the detrimental effects of chemical inputs on farms, waterways, and public health, while also presenting viable business solutions. It connects agricultural chemical inputs, like pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, with harm to soil health, and delineates solutions that exist to avoid dangerous chemicals like those currently impacting waterways. It describes safer alternatives to chemical-intensive farming, lawn, and turf care methods, stating that these have proven to be more affordable and significantly better for the environment, businesses, and local communities. "Building soil health through a combination of context and place-based practices has been shown to eliminate the need for chemical inputs, lower costs, and boost yields in some farms." <https://www.delriverwatershed.org/news/2024/4/29/the-business-case-for-safer-alternatives-to-fertilizers-and-pesticides>

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### **Jersey Strong: Local Organizations Fight Food Insecurity in New Brunswick**

According to this article, more than 30 percent of the population of New Brunswick, NJ lives in poverty, with food security being a major issue. This article focuses on "Elijah's Promise," which operates a Community Soup Kitchen, Mobile Meal Program truck, Promise Culinary School, and has a presence at the New Brunswick Community Farmers Market. <https://srhub.org/2024/05/16/jersey-strong-local-organizations-fight-food-insecurity-in-new-brunswick/>

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## **FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE**

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### **One Natural Gas Transport Plan Killed in New Jersey as Another Forges Ahead**

The good news last month was that Williams Transco notified the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that it will not seek an extension for the permit to build the "Northeast Supply Enhancement" (NESE) fossil gas pipeline project. However, two other companies, Delaware River Partners and Bradford County Real Estate Partners, confirmed to FERC that they do not intend to cancel their Wyalusing, PA liquefaction facility and Gibbstown, NJ export facility, despite a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) decision last September to suspend authorization to transport liquefied natural gas (LNG) by rail car. The companies stated that they intend to export the LNG by tanker truck instead of by rail as originally proposed. <https://why.org/articles/natural-gas-transport-new-jersey-pennsylvania/>

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## **RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)**

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### **NJBPU Announces Expansion of Nation-Leading Community Solar Energy Program**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) "announced the opening of an additional capacity block of 275 MW in the Community Solar Energy Program (CSEP) for Energy Year 2024. This new capacity will more than double the size of the existing program and enable it to accommodate an additional 40,000 subscribers across the state.... All new projects must provide a bill credit discount of at least 20%... and must reserve at least 51% of capacity for LMI [low- to moderate-income] subscribers. LMI subscribers may now also use the approved self-attestation form to qualify." <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2024/approved/202404301.html>

## Solar-Capped Landfill New Trend In NJ

While there has been a nationwide movement to install solar panels on capped landfills, for the first time ever a solar installation has taken place on a previously-uncapped landfill in Berkeley Township, with the solar developer capping the landfill as part of the project in exchange for leasing the land. In addition to being an optimal place for a solar field because it is on otherwise-unusable land, it results in a savings for the Township in not having to pay to cap the landfill, and residents will save on their electricity bills.

<https://www.jerseyshoreonline.com/berkeley/solar-capped-landfill-new-trend-in-nj/>

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## OFFSHORE WIND

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### BOEM Releases Final Environmental Impact Statement for Two Wind Projects Offshore New Jersey

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has announced the availability of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for two wind energy projects offshore NJ. The BOEM press release states that, "If approved, the two projects could generate about 2,800 megawatts of electricity, enough to power almost 1 million homes. Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind submitted a combined Construction and Operations Plan for two wind energy facilities and associated export cables on the Outer Continental Shelf offshore New Jersey: Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project 1 and 2, collectively referred to as the Atlantic Shores South Wind Project. The combined proposal includes up to 200 total wind turbines and up to ten offshore substations with subsea transmission cables potentially making landfall in Atlantic City and Sea Girt. The lease area covers approximately 102,124 acres and is approximately 8.7 miles offshore New Jersey at its closest point."

<https://www.boem.gov/newsroom/press-releases/boem-releases-final-environmental-impact-statement-two-wind-projects>

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### Will Latest Bids Boost Offshore Wind for NJ?

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has approved its fourth solicitation for bids for offshore

wind projects, in the amount of 1.2 gigawatts to approximately 4 gigawatts of offshore wind generation capacity. Unlike previous solicitations, this solicitation includes a \$50,000 per megawatt security fee and a \$100 million performance guarantee, along with an additional \$100 letter of credit for any potential rebids. Also see the news video linked below.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/will-latest-bids-boosnj-bpu-seeks-more-offshore-bids-nj-ploughs-on-with-offshore-despite-challenges-t-offshore-wind-for-nj/>

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### NJ Out to Bid for Next Offshore Wind Farms

This 4-minute news video describes the latest offshore wind bid solicitation approved by the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and includes reactions from an industry analyst, the BPU president, and the mayor of Long Beach Township. Also see the article above.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-out-to-bid-for-next-offshore-wind-farms/>



### Rowan Researcher: Twitter Helped Shape Discourse, Outcome of Proposed Offshore Wind Projects

Dr. Alison Novak, an associate professor in the Rowan University's Department of Public Relations and Advertising, analyzed users' tweets on X (formerly Twitter) related to offshore wind energy (OWE), and believes the change in public support over time was directly affected by this social media and the ability for its users to interact with others around the world. (The study, "Global Discourses of Protest and Support of Offshore



Wind Energy," is available here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17459435.2024.2342941>.) "Based on an analysis of nearly 5,000 tweets, Novak found that many New Jersey X users became disheartened by various narratives, including that OWE companies overpromise and underdeliver in the construction of offshore windfarms, and that conservative positions often pushed by beachfront homeowners swayed public opinion against the projects." <https://today.rowan.edu/news/2024/05/rowan-researcher-twitter-helped-shape-discourse-outcome-of-proposed-offshore-wind-projects.html>

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## **Offshore Wind Roundtable in Atlantic City Sparks Critical Conversations on Maritime Opportunities and Workforce Development**

The NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA) held a Maritime Roundtable forum in Atlantic City, including participants from the maritime service industry and maritime-related businesses. The forum addressed opportunities and challenges in offshore wind, and focused on the development of training programs for qualified mariners, maritime career pathways including the importance of considering veterans for positions, and the necessity of building networks and dialogue. <https://www.njeda.gov/offshore-wind-roundtable-in-atlantic-city-sparks-critical-conversations-on-maritime-opportunities-and-workforce-development/>

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## **Opinion: The Momentum of N.J.'s Wind Industry Is the Envy of the Nation. Let's Keep It Going**

This piece by Tim Sullivan, CEO of the NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA), describes the positive progress that offshore wind has made in NJ, its future potential, and the role the EDA is playing in providing support and job training opportunities. <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2024/05/the-momentum-of-njs-wind-industry-is-the-envy-of-the-nation-lets-keep-it-going-opinion.html>

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## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

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### **Governor Murphy, DEP Commissioner LaTourette Announce First-in-Nation Suite of Reforms to Build Resilience to Coastal Flooding and Better Protect Communities from Climate Change Impacts**

In 2020, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) began a regulatory reform effort called NJ PACT (NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats) "to help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) and other climate pollutant emissions while making New Jersey's natural and built environments more resilient to the impacts of climate change..." Part of that initiative was the suite of reforms termed "Resilient Environments and Landscapes" (REAL). Now, DEP has announced a forthcoming rule proposal that would implement these reforms and, according to DEP, "make NJ the first state to initiate a comprehensive update of land resource protection regulations to address the current and future impacts of a changing climate." The proposed rules include limits on coastal development, creating a new designation called the "Inundation Risk Zone," and expand the scope of existing tidal flood hazard areas. Additional information and a link to the 1057-page proposed rule are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/>. The DEP held four public information sessions in late May, for which videos are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/webinars/>. The rules are scheduled to officially be published in July, and will then be subject to a public comment period. <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240510a.shtml>

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### **Lawmakers' Push to Protect Workers from Excessive Heat Criticized by Business Groups**

A bill (S2422/A3521), which has been reported out of committee in the NJ legislature, "Establishes [an] occupational heat stress standard and 'Occupational Heat-Related Illness and Injury Prevention Program' in DOLWD [NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development]." There are

currently no federal or NJ laws specifically related to excessive heat conditions for workers; there is Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance, and OSHA is working on a regulations addressing workplace heat, but it has been working on them for the past four years. Farmworkers in NJ are particularly affected by extreme heat conditions. The NJ bill "requires the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development to establish by rule a heat stress standard that contains the following: 1. a standard that establishes heat stress levels for employers that, if exceeded, trigger actions by employers to protect employees from heat-related illness and injury[; and] 2. a requirement that each employer develop, implement, and maintain an effective heat-related illness and injury prevention plan for employees." The business community is pushing back on these requirements as too broad, and also that NJ should wait for the OSHA regulations. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2024/05/07/lawmakers-push-to-protect-workers-from-excessive-heat-criticized-by-business-groups/>

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### **NJBPU Announces Approval of Proposed Grid Modernization Rules to Build a Stronger, More Reliable Electric Distribution System**

In 2022, after a public comment period, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) accepted and released a Grid Modernization Report (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/28zjtr24>) that included short- and long-term recommendations to modernize the state's electric grid and improve its interconnection rules. BPU has now approved rules (to be published on 6/6/2024 in the NJ Register) that implement the short-term recommendations. A planned Grid Modernization Forum will convene expert workgroups to address the longer-term changes. <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2024/approved/20240430.html>

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### **Municipalities' and Counties' Recent Climate Change-responsive Activities**

#### **Hoboken Unveils Community Energy Plan to Drive Sustainability Efforts**

<https://www.hobokennj.gov/news/hoboken-unveils-community-energy-plan-to-drive-sustainability-efforts>  
Plan available here: <https://tinyurl.com/4s8cwx9e>

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#### **Montclair Council Passes Climate Action Plan**

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/montclair/sections/government/articles/montclair-council-passes-climate-action-plan-authorizes-manager-to-sign-lease-for-senior-center>  
Plan available here: <https://tinyurl.com/4jp56u4a>

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#### **Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan Focuses on Open Space, Farmland Preservation, Flood Control**

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/flemington-slash-raritan/sections/government/articles/county-growth-management-plan-focuses-on-open-space-farmland-preservation-flood-control>  
Plan available here: <https://tinyurl.com/3w93zayv>

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#### **Westfield Town Council Resolves to Fight Climate Change**

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/westfield/sections/green/articles/westfield-town-council-resolves-to-fight-climate-change>

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#### **Fair Lawn Encouraging Green Business Recognition Program**

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/fair-lawn-slash-glen-rock/sections/green/articles/fair-lawn-encouraging-green-business-recognition-program>

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#### **A Closer Look at Hoboken's Department of Climate Action + Innovation**

<https://www.hobokengirl.com/department-of-climate-action-innovation-hoboken-nj/>

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#### **Protecting Our Environment - Randolph Environmental Guidebook**

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/randolph/sections/mayors-corner/articles/protecting-our-environment>  
Guidebook link here: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3x7vcj>

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#### **Trenton Green Team Takes Sustainability City-Wide**

<https://srhub.org/2024/05/23/trenton-green-team-takes-sustainability-city-wide/>

## Green Hydrogen: A Climate Change Solution or Fossil Fuel Bait and Switch?

This article, from the NPR station WHYY's News Climate Desk, describes the research behind "green hydrogen," its place in the federally-funded hydrogen hubs, and issues with its production and cost. The long-term underlying concept behind competitive "green hydrogen" is based on an assumption that there will be a surplus of renewable energy in the future that can be used to generate hydrogen.

<https://whyy.org/articles/green-hydrogen-hub-climate-change-fossil-fuel-industry-philadelphia-region/>

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## 'Tragic and Unjust': Trump Judges Grant Biden DOJ Request to Toss Youth Climate Case

Following up on the status of the youth climate lawsuit "Juliana v. United States," it has now been dismissed as requested by the U.S. Department of Justice, in an Order (available here: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/655a2d016eb74e41dc292ed5/t/66328ae8809131310fec400b/1714588392724/DktEntry+24.1+Opinion.pdf>) that states that the plaintiffs lack standing to bring their claims because "neither the request for declaratory relief nor the request for injunctive relief was justiciable," because standing, as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court, requires that the claims are redressable by a favorable judicial decision. The case was originally filed in 2015 by 21 young Americans who argued the federal government has violated their "fundamental constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property" by continuing to allow the extraction of fossil fuels despite knowing their central role in destructive planetary heating.

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/biden-doj-youth-climate-case>

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## New Federal Rule Will Overhaul Transmission Planning as Electric Grid Strains

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has issued a new Order (available here: <https://www.ferc.gov/media/e1-rm21-17-000>) that was years in the making and, according to FERC, "marks the first time in more than a decade that FERC has addressed regional transmission policy – and the first time the Commission has ever squarely addressed the need for long-term transmission planning." The rule requires transmission operators to conduct transmission planning at least every five years, planning ahead for at least 20 years, using "best available data to develop well-informed projections" of needs, According to FERC, "The absence of this type of regional transmission planning is resulting in piecemeal transmission expansion that addresses relatively near-term transmission needs... [which] results in transmission providers investing in relatively inefficient or less cost-effective transmission infrastructure, with the costs ultimately recovered through commission-jurisdictional rates". Among other requirements, transmission providers will be required "to measure and use at least seven enumerated economic and reliability benefits for the evaluation and selection of long-term regional transmission facilities. These seven benefits are: (1) avoided or deferred reliability transmission facilities and aging infrastructure replacement; (2) either reduced loss of load probability or reduced planning reserve margin; (3) production cost savings; (4) reduced transmission energy losses; (5) reduced congestion due to transmission outages; (6) mitigation of extreme weather events and

unexpected system conditions; and (7) capacity cost benefits from reduced peak energy losses." Opportunities to upgrade existing lines, called "right-sizing," also will need to be considered. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2024/05/14/new-federal-rule-will-overhaul-transmission-planning-as-electric-grid-strains/>

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## **Opinion: Clean Energy Is Crucial to New Jerseyans' Health and Well-Being**

In this piece Dr. Elizabeth Cerceo (an internal medicine physician, an associate professor of medicine and director of climate health at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, and a member of Clinicians for Climate Action NJ) describes how fossil fuel emissions and other toxic pollutants impact everyone in NJ, with children, pregnant women, disadvantaged communities, the elderly and those with other illnesses being disproportionately affected. Dr. Cerceo describes a number of the effects, and calls for the rapid adoption of a Clean Energy Standard such as that included in NJ bill S237/A1480.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/op-ed-clean-energy-standard-is-crucial-to-new-jerseyans-health-well-being/>

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## **FOREST HEALTH**

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### **West Orange Town Council Approves Amended Tree Ordinance**

In response to an identified need to strengthen its Tree Ordinance, based on decreasing tree canopy and residents cutting down trees without paying permit fees, the West Orange Town Council approved an amended Ordinance. This amendment took into account input from the West Orange Environmental Commission and the public. Among other things, it requires: a "green permit" to be posted by residents before cutting down trees; new stores are required to have 50% tree canopy in their parking lots; and replacement trees must be 4 inches in diameter rather than the 2-1/2 inches that was previously required.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/west-orange/sections/green/articles/west-orange-town-council-approves-amended-tree-ordinance>

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## **Opinion: DEP's Wharton Vehicle Plan Is an Example of Good Government at Work**

This piece by Thomas H. Kean, former governor of NJ, touts the Pinelands and Wharton State Forest in particular, and lauds the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) vehicle access plan, stating that it was prepared after extensive study and input, and that it "will ensure safe motor vehicle access to the entirety of Wharton State Forest while also protecting the Pinelands from further destruction."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/off-road-vehicles-off-road-pinelands-wharton-state-forest-wharton-state-forest-visiting-vehicle-use-map-gov-brendan-byrne-gov-jim-florio-gov-christine-todd-whitman-pinelands-pine-barrens-department/>

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## **EDUCATION and YOUTH-RELATED**

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### **New Jersey Department of Education Awards Grants to Help Schools Improve Climate Change Instruction in the Classroom**

The NJ Department of Education (DOE) "announced awards for two grant opportunities to help schools implement, improve, and expand climate-change instruction in the classroom. The grants will approach climate-change instruction through two avenues:

- An interdisciplinary learning and community projects grant will provide funds directly to school districts to help them partner with local organizations or their municipality to establish Interdisciplinary Learning Units and Community Resilience Projects. These projects will help schools impact their community through projects such as planting rain gardens with plants that will ease flooding; growing food using aquaponics to combat food insecurity; restoring native plant species; and planting dune grass to restore and protect native habitats.
  - The Climate Change Learning Collaboratives grant will fund programs in which colleges and universities will create Climate Change Learning Collaboratives to provide training to teachers on how to infuse climate change into the curriculum."
- <https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2024/NJDOEAwardGrantstoHelpSchoolsImproveClimateChangeInstructionintheClassroom.pdf>
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## Princeton and Big Oil: How BP Used the University's Climate-Change Research

A report recently issued by Congressional Democrats, titled "Denial, Disinformation, and Doublespeak: Big Oil's Evolving Efforts to Avoid Accountability for Climate Change" (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/74e6za64>), describes the results of a nearly 3-year investigation by the Democratic staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Accountability, working with Democratic staff of the U.S. Senate Budget Committee. It delineates "the extensive efforts undertaken by fossil fuel companies to deceive the public and investors about their knowledge of the effects of their products on climate change and to undermine efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions." One of the findings of the report states that "The fossil fuel industry strategically partners with universities to lend an aura of credibility to its deception campaigns while also silencing opposition voices." One such partnership, with Princeton University, is described in this article: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/princeton-university-research-program-ties-bp-energy-giant-funding-climate-change-issues/>.

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## Middle Schoolers Become Marine Scientists for a Day

This 4-minute news video shows the first of two annual summits hosted by Clean Ocean Action "to provide middle school students (Grades 5-8) from throughout New Jersey with an opportunity to experience hands-on, marine environmental education at the Jersey shore." Close to 1,000 students from 32 schools participated in the two-day summit at Gateway National Recreational Area in Sandy Hook, which focused on the importance of environmental preservation. Another summit will occur in October at Island Beach State Park. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/middle-schoolers-become-marine-scientists-for-a-day/>

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## LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

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### More NJ Children Being Tested for Lead

This 4-minute news video provides details about the lead-testing program in NJ and the causes and

effects of lead related to childhood development. It describes the findings in a NJ Department of Health (DOH) report (available here: <https://www.nj.gov/health/childhood-lead/documents/childhood-lead-2022-annual-report.pdf>), which shows that a higher percentage of 3-year-old children were tested in state fiscal year (SFY) 2022 than in the previous SFY. Gov. Murphy's budget proposal includes an additional \$5.2 million to expand the lead screening program for children. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/more-nj-children-being-tested-for-lead/>

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## New Jersey to Get Over \$123 Million for Lead Pipe Replacement to Advance Safe Drinking Water

NJ has among the most lead service lines of U.S. states (i.e., ~350,000) and therefore is receiving one of the highest funding amounts from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for lead service line identification and replacement. The funds are part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the law mandates that 49% of such funding must be provided as grants and forgivable loans to disadvantaged communities. See <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240502c.shtml>. A 1-minute news video describing the funding is available here: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/feds-send-nj-123m-to-replace-lead-service-lines/>.

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## **NJDEP Lowers Residential Lead Soil Remediation Standard**

According to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), "On May 6, 2024, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department) published a Notice in the New Jersey Register updating the residential soil remediation standard for the ingestion-dermal exposure pathway for lead to 200 mg/kg. The previous residential soil remediation standard for the ingestion-dermal exposure pathway for lead was 400 mg/kg. This updated standard reflects revisions the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) made to its... residential soil lead guidance." The Notice is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/rules/adminchg/adminchg-20240506c.pdf>.

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### **DRINKING WATER-RELATED ISSUES (other than lead)**

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#### **AG Platkin, DEP Commissioner LaTourette Resolve Montvale Groundwater Natural Resource Damage Case**

The NJ Attorney General and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner have announced "a \$14 million resolution of a natural resource damages (NRD) lawsuit against two companies for the contamination of groundwater with trichloroethylene (TCE) in Montvale, Bergen County. DEP will use the funds to restore natural resources and recover its own cleanup costs.... While the companies did not admit fault or liability in the settlement agreement, the companies agreed to resolve their alleged liability for natural resource damages and to reimburse the State for past cleanup and removal costs." Site remediation is currently occurring, which aims to reduce the groundwater plume, decrease potential impacts to drinking water wells and mitigate the impacts of vapors in nearby buildings. <https://www.njoag.gov/ag-platkin-dep-commissioner-latourette-resolve-montvale-groundwater-natural-resource-damage-case/>

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## **Opinion: Paying for Protections Against 'Forever Chemicals'**

In this piece, Mark McDonough, president of New Jersey American Water, acknowledges the positive health impacts of the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations on PFAS "forever chemicals," but also points out the costs that will have to be incurred by water providers in order to meet the new standards. He advocates that all water providers, regardless of ownership or size, should be able to receive state or federal funding to assist in meeting these requirements, and also that there should be a federally funded program to provide low-income assistance for water and wastewater costs, similar to the assistance program that exists for energy bills. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/head-of-nj-water-utility-says-corporations-responsible-pfas-forever-chemical-pollution-must-pay-cost-new-regulations/>

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### **ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

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#### **NJBPU Approves Expanded New Construction Program to Benefit Residents, Businesses and the Environment**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) has approved the New Construction Program (NCP), a part of New Jersey's Clean Energy Program. The BPU describes it as "designed to increase energy efficiency and environmental performance. The NCP, which will replace the existing new construction energy efficiency programs, will also simplify the customer experience and application process... with a long-term goal of transforming the new construction market in NJ to one in which most new buildings will have 'net zero' energy usage.... New construction or buildings undergoing substantial renovation (also known as "gut rehab") of all types (e.g., single family, townhome, multifamily, commercial, and industrial) are eligible to participate in the NCP, so long as their utility bills include or will include contributions to the Societal Benefits Charge ('SBC')." The NCP was proposed in 2023 and underwent review and a public comment period. A detailed description of the NCP may be found beginning on p. 25 of the document available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2zwecut4> and a webinar

describing it is available here: <https://njcelc.com/new-construction-program/> . "Three Program Pathways (Bundled, Streamlined, and High Performance) will offer incentives.... [and the NCP] will further include a greenhouse gas reduction bonus and a workforce development component." <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2024/approved/202404303.html>

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## **In TCNJ’s Forcina Hall Renovations, Sustainability is Key**

In line with The College of New Jersey’s (TCNJ) "Greener Going Forward" Sustainability Plan (available here: <https://polisci.tcnj.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/152/2020/07/Greener-Going-Forward-v3.pdf>), the school’s Forcina Hall is set to undergo renovations that will reduce its energy consumption. "Funded by a \$33 million grant from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education of New Jersey, the renovations will align some aspects of the building with the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED certification program, which sets sustainability and energy-saving standards for buildings. Planned initiatives include switching to LED lighting, reducing water usage, upgrading indoor climate control tools, and improving indoor air quality. Improving the building’s energy efficiency is paramount to the project - part of the College’s goal to become carbon-neutral by 2040. Key to that goal is an on-campus power plant and solar power system, which save costs and produce energy more sustainably." <https://srhub.org/2024/05/02/in-tcnjs-forcina-hall-renovations-sustainability-is-key/>

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## **POLLUTION**

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### **NJDEP Proposing to Amend E-Waste Regulations**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is proposing to move the rules related to recycling of electronic waste from their current position as a subchapter under the general Recycling Rules to their own chapter. The rules implement the Electronic Waste Management Act as amended in 2016. In addition to making them a separate chapter, the proposed amended rules

include some additional changes. A public hearing is to be held (see "Future Events" on [p. 8](#)). <https://enviropolitics.com/njdep-proposing-to-amend-e-waste-regulations/>



### **New Jersey Snags Mixed Results in Annual Snapshot of Air Pollution**

The American Lung Association (ALA) has released its 2024 "State of the Air" report (available here: <https://www.lung.org/getmedia/dabac59e-963b-4e9b-bf0f-73615b07bfd8/State-of-the-Air-2024.pdf>), which includes data from 2020 through 2022. Findings for NJ show improvement in some areas but declines in others. As shown on the NJ Report Card (available here: <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/new-jersey>), Bergen and Mercer counties received "high ozone days" grades of "F." <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2024/04/24/new-jersey-snags-mixed-results-in-annual-snapshot-of-air-pollution/>

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### **Union County Expands Initiative to Reshape Reusable Bag Recycling Landscape**

NJ's "Get Past Plastic" Law, which just had its two-year anniversary of full implementation, has resulted in an imbalance of reusable bags. Some households have accumulated a surplus of reusable bags, resulting from forgetting to bring them shopping and purchasing more than, and also from acquiring bags from grocery delivery services. At the same time, Food Banks are having trouble keeping up with their need for bags. Union County is collaborating with a number of other NJ towns, and with GOATote, Inc., to collect, sanitize, and redistribute reusable bags. <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/rahway/articles/union-county-expands-initiative-to-reshape-reusable-bag-recycling-landscape>

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## Camden County Air Quality Committee Launches in Response to 2024 State of the Air Report

The American Lung Association (ASL) annual "State of the Air" report (see article on [p. 23](#)) showed Camden County as having improved from a D in the last report to a C for ground level ozone, but the grade for fine particulate pollution dropped from an A to a B. Camden County has formed the Camden County Air Quality Committee to work with "municipalities, schools, hospitals, businesses, state agencies, and regional partners across the following pillars:

- Fleet electrification and charging infrastructure
- Solid waste operations
- Regional engagement
- Green space
- Indoor air quality
- Finance and funding mechanisms."

<https://www.insidernj.com/press-release/camden-county-air-quality-committee-launches-in-response-to-2024-state-of-the-air-report/>

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## Red Bank: Plastic Utensil Law Kicks In, Gently

At its March 2024 meeting, the Borough of Red Bank Municipal Council approved the expansion of its previously-enacted "Plastics and Polystyrene Foam; Single Use" ordinance as follows: "Effective April 22, 2024, the provision of plastic utensils, condiment packets, napkins, and extra containers to take-out or delivery customers is prohibited, unless requested by the customer. Online ordering and delivery apps shall be set to a default to not provide plastic utensils, condiment packets, napkins, and/or extra containers unless the customer selects an option to request said items. Delivery and courier services shall not provide said items unless requested by the customer. These restrictions shall not apply to self-service stations within any food provider's premises or within any food or grocery establishment." A grace period until 7/1/2024 was given for the ordinance to take effect, but it appears that many establishments are already following it.

<https://www.redbankgreen.com/2024/04/red-bank-plastic-utensil-law-kicks-in-gently-050124/>

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## Becoming A BYOB Society

This article, by a sophomore at Rutgers University, who is an Eco Ambassador with the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) at the Earth Institute at Columbia University, describes how his family is committed to BYOB ("Bring Your Own Bags, Bottles, and Boxes"). The article points to the lack of NJ-wide regulations banning single-use plastics for takeout containers and utensils, citing several NJ towns that have passed their own ordinances (see the article about Red Bank in the previous column ).

<https://srhub.org/2024/04/25/becoming-a-byob-society/>

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## Westfield Conservation Center Expands Recycling to Include More Textiles

The Westfield Conservation Center, which is classified by NJ as a transfer facility for organic waste and recyclable materials, has partnered with Helpsy, a company that collects and reuses or recycles unwanted clothes, shoes, and accessories. The Center had previously accepted clothing and shoes, but partnership with Helpsy allows the Center also to accept additional items such as accessories, linens, luggage and stuffed animals.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/westfield/sections/green/articles/westfield-conservation-center-expands-recycling-to-include-more-textiles>

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## Addressing Clothing Waste in New Jersey: Sustainable Spotlight on Greene Street Consignment

This article describes in depth the waste created by the "fast fashion" industry (see the article above about Westfield's textile recycling), and alternatives such as consignment stores that are becoming popular and helping to address this issue. "Studies show that if every consumer opted for one second hand item this year instead of new, it would decrease CO2 emissions by more than 2 billion pounds. And as young people become more environmentally conscious, secondhand shopping is seeing a massive increase in popularity." One group of consignment stores in NJ and PA, "Greene Street" is showcased (their website is here: <https://greenestreetstores.com>). In NJ, they have stores in Lambertville, Princeton, and Red



Bank, and they also promote sustainability and biodiversity initiatives.  
<https://srhub.org/2024/05/09/addressing-clothing-waste-in-new-jersey-sustainable-spotlight-on-greene-street-consignment/>

## Trolls To Populate Burlington Co., With Big Rusty-Inspired Sculptures In The Works

In 2023, Danish "recycling artist" Thomas Dambo, who has created artworks from recycled materials in 20 countries (website available here: <https://www.thomasdambo.com>) installed "Big Rusty," a 20-foot troll made of recycled trash, in Burlington County, as commissioned by the City of Hainesport. A Burlington County initiative will fund artists to develop at least 13 additional troll sculptures for other public spaces in the County. The County has used Big Rusty to promote recycling, sustainability and community, and plans a "Burlington County Troll Trek" throughout the County to spread these values to parks and downtowns throughout the County.  
<https://patch.com/new-jersey/cinnaminson/troll-sculptures-big-rusty-populate-burlington-county>

## OTHER

### "34" = Number of NJ Organizations Calling for Halt to NJ Transit Fare Hike

Thirty-four labor, social justice, transportation, environmental and community organizations (including UUFANJ) signed a letter (available here: <https://environmentamerica.org/newjersey/media-center/nj-transportation-legislative-organization-letter-spring-2024/>) to the NJ Senate President, Assembly Speaker, and members of the Legislature urging them to: "1) halt the 15% NJ Transit (NJT) fare hike; 2) repurpose funds designated for the unneeded and unwanted expansion of the NJ Turnpike to replace the revenue that would be generated by the fare increase; 3) support and expand Gov. Murphy's FY25 budget proposal for a corporate transit fee (CTF) to provide \$800 million in dedicated funding for mass transit to avoid NJT's upcoming fiscal cliff, which should include a full restoration of the Corporate Business Tax surcharge; and 4) end the raids on NJT's capital

budget and dedicate the Clean Energy Fund transfer to bus electrification to ensure that NJT can make desperately needed operational and infrastructure improvements."  
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/34-group-coalition-says-dont-raise-new-jersey-transit-fares-nj-transit/>

## NJDEP Hosts Public Open House on Revitalization of Liberty State Park South

This NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) press release describes the latest open house DEP hosted regarding the Liberty State Park (LSP) revitalization, and describes the planned next phase of the revitalization. This open house focused on Phase 2 - LSP South, which concentrates on the southern and waterfront areas and envisions recreational activities such as athletic fields, court-based sports, and water-based recreation.  
[https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24\\_0016.htm](https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0016.htm)



## Utility Pushes New Water Fee

One of the "Lame Duck" legislative session bills approved by Gov. Murphy was A4791/S3184, which establishes "the 'Resiliency and Environmental System Investment Charge Program' (RESIC), which creates a regulatory mechanism that enables water and wastewater utilities to recover the costs of investment in certain nonrevenue producing utility system components that enhance water and wastewater system resiliency, environmental compliance, safety, and public health...." As authorized by the new law, the New Jersey American Water utility has filed a petition with the NJ Board of Public

Utilities (BPU) to phase in the allowed surcharge on customers' bills by an estimated \$2.50 per month "for the recovery of the costs of investments for the period of 2024 through 2027 related to: compliance with requirements addressing both existing and emerging chemical elements or compounds... " and for other improvements.

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-new-york-new-jersey-energy/2024/05/06/utility-pushes-new-water-fee-00156174>

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## Environmental Department Is Facing Federal Funding Cuts

This 4-1/2-minute news video shows portions of the testimony of the NJ Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner at a NJ Assembly Budget Committee hearing. He emphasized that NJ is taking full advantage of all federal funding available, but the news report states that federal stimulus funds that were provided in the past will not be available next year. In addition, state funding has been decreasing as Congress is taking funds that in the past funded state clean water and drinking water infrastructure and using it for earmarks (see the letter available here: <https://www.ecos.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECOS-Sign-On-Letter-to-Congress-on-Water-Infrastructure-Funding.pdf>). The primary issue statewide is flooding, which is expected to be exacerbated by climate change. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/environmental-department-is-facing-federal-funding-cuts/>

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## Gotta Know Jersey: How the State Budget Gets Made

Last year, NJ Spotlight News launched its "Gotta Know Jersey" series of short videos describing the workings of NJ's legislature, elections, and budget. This 5-minute video describes the NJ budget process. Note the links to six additional "Gotta Know Jersey" videos on this YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FSumPIT1a8&list=PLiZ284L7DnPGnd-EiVXAF7IoT9TffeOFz&index=8>

## NJ OPRA Law Proposed Revision

A bill (S2930) to revise NJ Open Public Records Act (OPRA) passed both houses of the NU legislature on 5/13/2024 and as of 5/26/2024 it is awaiting Gov. Murphy's signature. There is much opposition to the revision (including by **UUFANJ**), as evidenced by the news articles and video below:

### Radically Revised OPRA Bill Would Make It Much Tougher to Access Public Records

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/radical-revision-nj-opra-public-records-law-would-make-much-harder-access-public-records/>

### Concerns Remain over OPRA Bill's Effect on Police Accountability

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/nj-opra-revision-raises-concerns-police-records-police-accountability/>

### Revised OPRA Bill Sparks Greater Outcry Than Original

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/revised-nj-opra-bill-angers-new-jersey-opponents-fear-gutting-public-access/>

### Advocates Hopeful but Not Confident Murphy Will Veto OPRA Bill

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/advocates-hopeful-but-not-confident-murphy-will-veto-opra-bill/>

### Opinion: Don't Gut Our Open Public Records Act

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/op-ed-dena-mottola-jaborska-nj-citizens-action-urges-nj-lawmakers-dont-gut-opra-open-public-records-law/>



## **Opinion: Lawmakers Must Step up and Save the New Jersey School of Conservation**

Bob Locantore, a 35-year health and physical education teacher at Wenonah Middle School, lauds the many positive impacts the NJ School of Conservation (NJSOC) has had on his students through the years, decries the fact that the proposed budget cuts NJSOC funding by 60%, and asks that full funding for it be restored in the budget.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/urging-gov-phil-murphy-nj-lawmakers-save-nj-school-of-conservation-proposed-state-budget-funding-cuts/>

### **EJTF's GOALS for 2023/2024**

- 1. Advocating for the adoption of the Green Amendment in New Jersey through work in our congregations and as a Task Force;**
- 2. Working toward resolving the many challenges in New Jersey related to food-insecurity, including but not limited to promoting regenerative agriculture, increasing accessibility of healthy food, reducing food waste, and encouraging community and family gardens;**
- 3. Supporting 100% renewable energy and energy conservation through measures such as the Clean Energy Equity Act, and those affecting transportation and Electric Vehicles (EVs).**
- 4. Advocating for better health and reducing climate change for all by protecting and expanding New Jersey's public and urban forests.**

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

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### **MORATORIUM MONDAYS CONTINUE**

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