



Good news for Liberty State Park! See [p. 22](#).

<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

### • Global Wind Day Celebration at Liberty State Park!!



The **UUFANJ/EJTF** booth at the Global Wind Day Celebration

**UUFANJ/EJTF** was one of the sponsors of the Global Wind Day Celebration that took place at Liberty State Park on Saturday, June 15, 2024. The **UUFANJ/EJTF** booth was particularly popular due to its colorful signs, homemade organic chocolate chip cookies, and - yes - a chance to visit with some cheerful volunteers and discuss UU's connection with the the web of life and wind energy. The booth was visited by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette and U.S. Congressman Rob Menendez, Jr. See the articles on [p. 4](#) and [p. 15](#).



**EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh** engaging with a visitor to UUFANJ/EJTF's booth



**EJTF member Mike Skelly**, with the beautiful NYC backdrop of the Global Wind Day Celebration



Speakers at the Global Wind Day Celebration at Liberty State Park

*Photos by Mike Skelly*

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


### **• Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County (UUCMC)**

Congregants at UUCMC participated in the **UUFANJ/EJTF** Green Amendment postcard-writing initiative, sending postcards to their legislators advocating support for the Green Amendment. Forty members and friends took part (see photo at right).



At a recent talk given by Master Gardener and knowledgeable native plant enthusiast UUCMC member Ann Sherwood, an engaged audience learned much about the advantages and sound practice of planting at least 70% of available yard space in native plants. Other topics covered included the differing impacts of recent and less-recent invasives, and best resources.

**Gardening With Natives Brings Hope**




- Native plants evolved to form complex relationships with other species in their ecosystem of origin over millennia
- Using native plants in your garden increases biodiversity
- Take your place in your garden ecosystem to make a difference

"By starting new habitats, we'll create new ecological networks *through*. Through these *small actions by many people*, our efforts will have an outsized impact; ensuring that *our world will sustain the plant and animal populations which sustain*

**Remove Invasives!**

- Invasive species are non-native species that out-compete natives for sun and resources, weight can pull down mature trees
- Consult resources such as NJ Invasive Species Strike Team info center for best removal practices
- Before you purchase, check the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team's Do Not Plant List

<https://www.fohvos.info/invasive-species-strike-team/info-center/>



Gardener, Collin Beck, NJ  
Photo: Ann Sherwood

### **• Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF)**

During the merry month of May, some children and youth in the religious education program at the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) planted pollinator favorites columbine, spotted beebalm and swamp milkweed under the guidance of members of the Fellowship's Green Earth Ministry. Pollinators include more than just butterflies and honeybees. An assortment of wild bees, beetles, moths, bats, wasps, birds, flies, and other insects all play an important role in pollinating plants. Their needs are as basic as ours – food for themselves and their young, water, safe shelter, and a place to reproduce and raise the next generation. Snacks and tools were provided, and everyone loved getting their hands dirty!





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

### **• Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist Community (DDUUC)**

The Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist Community (DDUUC) had a table and display at the June 8, 2024 Bordentown City Green Fair. The Green Fair is sponsored by Bordentown City and organized by its Environmental Commission Green Team. The event takes over Carslake Community Center Gymnasium and the grounds of the Historic Richard Watson Gilder House. The day-long festival has music, food, demonstrations, lots of information tabling, crafts, and fun activities. The event attracts thousands of visitors of all ages from Bordentown City and nearby Northern Burlington and Mercer County communities. DDUUC met visitors from the community and nearby towns, answering questions about DDUUC and doing crafts. Volunteers were promoting the Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle ("Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part") and the new Value ("Interdependence"). DDUUC had visitors make bird feeders and used recycled materials for this environmental craft.



Photos by Mike Skelly

### **• Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC)**

Two UUs from the Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) - Roseann DePasquale (far left in photo at right) and Carol Gay (in red bandanna) - joined a rally in Bayonne, NJ and protested the planned NJ Turnpike Expansion in song. You can see and hear them singing at minutes 1:20 and 4:30 in the news video available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3zj4zhrp>.

Photo by EmpowerNJ



- UUFANJ/EJTF** members have attended multiple hearings and submitted testimony on many issues in support of offshore wind, and on the ongoing revision of the important NJ Energy Master Plan (EMP). The comments on the EMP are available here: <https://www.uufaithaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Comments-on-BPU-Energy-Master-Plan-FINAL.pdf>.

## Global Wind Day Celebration

by Mike Skelly, EJTF, Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist Community (DDUUC)

Also see [p. 1](#) and the article on [p. 15](#).

June 15, 2024 was a bright and blustery Saturday morning in Jersey City at Liberty State Park, where environmental and wind advocates from throughout the region converged as part of a Global Wind Day Celebration. The event took place between the 911 memorial sculpture path, the Hudson River promenade overlooking the New York skyline, and the historic railroad and ferry terminal. A large stage, sound system, tables, booths, tents, and decorations were set for the day. They framed information, tables, arts and crafts, kite-flying, food trucks, and live music. Speakers of note came together to address the thousands of people who were to visit the park that day, for the Wind Day and other activities like visiting the Statue of Liberty by ferry.

**UU FaithAction NJ, Environmental Justice Task Force (UUFANJ/EJTF)** had been one of the lead sponsors and organizers for this event, working in coalition for months and participating in many meetings and strategy sessions. The big day was finally here! EJTF volunteers arrived by public transport and carpooled to the event. The setting was stunning, with a mix of magnificent highrise buildings in the background of a natural State Park gem and historic presence.

The wind was so strong in the morning that EJTF volunteers had to lay down their newly-created display board on the table so that it would not be blown over. Our colorful pinwheel decoration was spinning so fast it was a blur. The morning had a festive and playful atmosphere where children were decorating kites and flying them in the nearby field. Wind advocates and environmental promoters had friendly conversations - many of whom were seeing each other in person for the first time after many conversations and far flung public hearings on Zoom in favor of widespread wind projects that would provide clean, healthy energy and high quality jobs for our near future.

As midday arrived, food trucks settled in nearby parking areas providing food specialties for hungry exhibitors or visitors. Dignitaries, government leaders and advocates filled the stage making presentations in support of a bold new vision and program for our near future. Speakers included **EJTF partner** Reverend Tuff with GreenFaith, Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, U.S. Congressman Rob Menendez Jr., Sam Pesin with Friends of Liberty State Park, **EJTF partner** Melissa Miles with NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA), **EJTF partner** Maria Lopez Nuñez with Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC), and NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette.

The afternoon sun was bright and strong, and wind settled to a calm pace. There was a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in our patch of the vast Liberty State Park. The booths, tables, and wind information was front and center while the background was filled with live music, and fun arts, crafts, and activities. Friendly questions and answers prevailed throughout the day.

As noted on [p. 1](#), the **UUFANJ/EJTF** booth was particularly popular due to its colorful signs and homemade organic chocolate chip cookies, not to mention the cheerful volunteers! NJ Department of Environmental Conservation (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette and U.S. Representative Rob Menendez, Jr. both came by our booth, and we talked about the connection between our UU Faith and wind energy.

EJTF needs volunteers to help with our work to make our lives better and live out our faith every day. Contact [environment@uufaithaction.org](mailto:environment@uufaithaction.org) if you would like to help - if you have a few minutes, you can make a difference with a postcard or phone call. We have a range of environmental issues and actions going on all the time - if you want to get more involved, we can discuss ways that fit your time and interests.

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

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

JULY 2024 (with <a href="#">hyperlinks</a> to details on the following pages)						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Comments Due: <a href="#">NJDEP "Proposed Electronic Waste Management Rules and Amendments"</a>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <a href="#">Food &amp; Water Watch Statewide Volunteer Meeting</a> - 7:00 p.m.	<b>11</b> <a href="#">NJ Community Forestry Council</a> - 10:00 a.m.	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <a href="#">EPA National EJ Community Engagement Call</a> - 2:00 p.m.	<b>17</b> <a href="#">Jersey Water Works and LeadFree NJ - Joint Meeting</a> - 9:00 a.m.  <a href="#">Pinelands Commission Climate Committee</a> - 9:30 a.m.	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <a href="#">"Mobilizing Voters"</a> - 7:00 p.m.	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <a href="#">2024 Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO</a> - 10:00 a.m.	<b>31</b>	<b>SAVE THE DATES</b> <a href="#">UU Climate Justice Revival</a> "Reimagine Together - From an Extractive Age to a New Era" Information Sessions and Facilitation Trainings - Various dates in 8/2024 & 9/2024 - Revival dates: 9/28/2024 - 9/29/2024		

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Food & Water Watch Statewide Volunteer Meeting - Virtual**  
**7/10/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

"At this meeting, we'll report back on some of the big campaigns to protect our water & climate across the state, including the statewide legislative campaign for 100% truly clean energy and against dirty energy schemes, our work to stop the proposed water privatization in Gloucester Township, and the campaign to stop the \$10.7 Billion Turnpike Expansion in Hudson County. We'll also take some time to debrief the recent NJ primary elections and share out a report-back and next steps from April's Climate Action Gathering (of which UUFANJ was a sponsor). Lastly, with

summer in full swing, we'll also be taking time to share updates from our summer outreach drive and hear from some of the incredible petitioners who have been building the movement this summer." Register here:

<https://www.mobilize.us/fww/event/632411/>

**NJ Community Forestry Council**  
**7/11/2024, 10:00 a.m. - Hybrid**  
**Jackson, NJ - In-person & Online**

"The NJ Community Forestry Council (Council) to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is comprised of members appointed by the State Forester, with expertise or interest in trees, forestry, or tree or forest management, maintenance, or care. The Council advises the State Forester, the Division of Parks and Forestry and the DEP.... in promoting, supporting and advancing healthy, safe and



sustainable urban and community forests in New Jersey." The meeting agenda will deal with implementing the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, the No Net Loss Reforestation Act, and issues concerning urban and community forestry and the forest and tree resources. Additional information, including the agenda for the meeting, will be available here: <https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/urbanandcommunity/njcommunityforestrycouncil.html>.

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### **NJDEP "Proposed Electronic Waste Management Rules and Amendments" 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." Additional information, including a link to the proposal and information about providing 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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### **EPA National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Call 7/16/2024, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Virtual**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites Environmental Justice (EJ) advocates to participate in its National EJ Community Engagement calls. "The purpose of these calls is to inform communities about EPA's environmental justice work and enhance opportunities to maintain an open dialogue with environmental justice advocates. As environmental justice continues to be integrated into EPA programs and policies, the Agency hopes that relaunching these calls will help reaffirm EPA's continued

commitment to work with community groups and the public to strengthen local environmental and human health outcomes." Additional information will be available here: <https://tinyurl.com/5a986sf6> and registration is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/p6ys5yb7>.

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### **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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### **Pinelands Commission Climate Committee Meeting 7/17/2024, 9:30 a.m. - Usually Hybrid Location is forthcoming**

Additional information on location, agenda, and other details including a link to livestream the meeting, will be available here: <https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/home/meetings/>.

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### **"Mobilizing Voters" - Webinar with Environmental Voter Project's Nathaniel Stinnett 7/23/2024, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. & "Climate Action Now" App Action Party 8:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.**

Sponsored by Elders Climate Action, in this webinar Nathaniel Stinnett from the Environmental Voter Project (EVP) will discuss how EVP identifies inactive environmentalists and transforms them into consistent voters to build the power of the environmental movement. Nathaniel Stinnett is the Founder and Executive Director of EVP, a non-partisan nonprofit using data analytics and behavioral science to identify

and mobilize non-voting environmentalists. After the webinar, there will be a 15-minute Action Party on the Climate Action Now app, which "gives individuals the ability to take planet-saving actions from their phone in seconds." Additional information about the webinar, the registration link, and a QR code to set up the Climate Action Now app in advance, are available here: [https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc\\_july24/](https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/nc_july24/).

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**2024 Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO and Policy Forum  
7/30/2024, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Hybrid  
Washington, DC - In-person and Livestreamed**

"The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) and the House and Senate Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Caucus invite you to join us for the 27th Annual Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO and Policy Forum (EXPO 2024). Top-level speakers will showcase technologies and solutions that reduce carbon emissions, save households money, improve the economy, build resilience, and protect our security interests." Panel topics will include:

- Energy Efficiency;
- Energy Modernization;
- National Security and Resilience;
- Renewable Energy;
- Rural Communities;
- Sustainable Transportation; and
- Workforce.

Additional information and the link to register are available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/expo2024>.

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**Save the dates!**

**UU Climate Justice Revival  
"Reimagine Together - From an Extractive Age to a New Era" Information Sessions and Facilitation Trainings - Various dates in 8/2024 & 9/2024 - 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!" Additional information including a map of participating congregations and the link to register a congregation are available here: <https://www.uuclimatejustice.org>. Links to register for the information sessions and facilitation trainings are available here: <https://www.uuclimatejustice.org/events>.

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**VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS**

**"The Ocean and Offshore Wind"  
- Video of Webinar**

This webinar, hosted by New Jersey Wind Works (a coalition of which **EJTF is a member**) was presented by Dr. Heidi Yeh, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance's Policy Director. Dr. Yeh gave a very clear, informative presentation of oceanography fundamentals to help understand the science of offshore wind. She explored how the ocean impacts our climate, addressed common misconceptions, and answered questions including "how big of a benefit will offshore wind development be in the climate fight?" The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrJOdRz1T1g&t=37s>.

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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  
- Videos of Four Information Sessions**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is planning (this summer) 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. The DEP held four public information sessions, for which videos are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/webinars/>.

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### **NJDEP Gloucester County EJ Community Engagement Session - Video of Meeting**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invited Gloucester County residents to attend an EJ Community Engagement Session regarding Environmental Justice. This community engagement session provided residents, community groups, and other members of the public a chance to meet the Commissioner of DEP and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 Chief of Staff and discuss environmental justice issues in Gloucester County. It was one of a series being conducted by DEP in communities across NJ. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGymBiObawY>.

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### **Eco-Logic Radio Shows: "Summer of Heat: Citibank & Fossil Fuel Financing" - Recording of Radio Show**

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI (**co-hosted by EJTF member Sally Gellert**) aired this recent show, "Summer of Heat: Citibank & Fossil Fuel Financing" related to EJTF's goals. "Summer of Heat is a sustained campaign of actions including nonviolent civil disobedience to end financing for fossil fuels." The Eco-Logic radio show airs Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. on WBAI 99.5 FM. and can also be accessed on <https://wbai.org>. The recording of this show is available here: <https://www.wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=50775>.

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### **"Inflation Reduction Act Benefits Webinar" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar was presented by the NJ, PA, MD, and NY League of Conservation Voters (LCV). The webinar included information on "how you can

save money on energy and how your organization can apply for grant opportunities in the affordable clean energy plan (Inflation Reduction Act)." In addition, WE Act for Environmental Justice and Overbrook Educational Center presented information on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EJ Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC) Program. Through this program, they are partnering with the EPA to provide technical assistance to groups interested in applying for federal grants. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp4POr0rEzg>.

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### **New Jersey Clean Air Council 2024 Public Hearing - "Reducing the Impact of Food Waste on Air Quality and Climate Change" - Presentation Slides from 8 Presenters**

As part of its charter, the NJ Clean Air Council (CAC), which provides advice to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on air quality matters, annually holds a public hearing on a current topic of interest. Formal transcripts are prepared and reports are written for each hearing. According to the CAC web page, the 2024 public hearing was to "provide further understanding of the extent and impact of emissions from food waste disposal and landfilling and develop a series of recommendations to the Commissioner of NJDEP to improve air quality using waste reduction strategies and implementing state of the art control measures to eliminate or recapture GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions." Links to the presentation slides from eight presentations are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/cleanaircouncil/previous-public-hearings/public-hearing-2024/>.

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### **"Public Transit to Reduce Emissions" - Video of Webinar**

This Elders Climate Action (ECA) webinar was presented by Seamus Murphy, who is the Executive Director of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), which operates SF Bay Ferry service throughout the region. In this webinar, he focused on how Elders can maximize their advocacy role in their own community, including how to be more effective in advocacy for transit,



especially electric transit, and transit for underserved communities. He described his experience with the current operational and funding issues facing large transit agencies – bus, rail, and ferries, and provided information to assist in advocating for more IRA funding for all forms of transit, especially for low income families. Seamus also discussed trade-offs and challenges when converting public transit modes from fossil fuels to sustainable sources of energy. The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoHZHMT8I0>.

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### **"Electrify Your Life" Series: Session 1 - Video of Webinar**

"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," discussed and compared 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 was also reviewed. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzpzDkH4epo>.

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### **Intergenerational Climate Action "Learning from Stories for Change" & "Success through Collaboration" - Videos of Webinars**

Elders Climate Action hosted 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 consisted of two 90-minute discussion sessions with conversations between

elders, parents, and youth climate activists. These sessions were "Learning from Stories for Change," which explored what calls us to act and tactics used by different generations; and "Success through Collaboration," which covered how we can combine our voices for greater political power. The videos are available here: "Learning from Stories for Change" -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bkqkqp5qkbo&t=15>

"Success through Collaboration" -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCNZTx7rLQg&t=45>

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### **"NJ's Energy Future: Offshore Wind Projects & Research Updates" - Video of Webinar**

This Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) webinar was presented by Dr. Josh Kohut, professor and co-founder of the Rutgers University Center for Ocean Observing Leadership (RU COOL). Dr. Kohut presented an overview of the ocean from an oceanographer's point of view, and described renewable offshore wind projects being developed off NJ's coast. He also described Rutgers' ongoing research regarding the environmental considerations of offshore wind development. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNq1QpyZ6Hc>.

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### **"Hooked on Environmental DNA: Reeling in Community Scientists for Fisheries Monitoring of Offshore Wind Development" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, was presented by Dr. Jason Adolf & Erin Conlon, Monmouth University. "... as offshore wind development continues off the New Jersey coast, many are concerned about potential impacts on the marine ecosystem. Environmental DNA (eDNA) provides a non-extractive method of monitoring fish community composition that can be done by community scientists and professionals alike. [The presenters] described a fisheries monitoring program run by Monmouth University and funded by the NJ Research and Monitoring Initiative (RMI) that includes a role for community scientists. Community science is important as it fosters open communication and increased understanding for

both stakeholders and researchers." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2FzS4firg4>.

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## **"Urban Humpback Whales: Coexisting with Our Charismatic Neighbors"** **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, was presented by Danielle Brown, PhD Candidate in the Rutgers University Graduate Program in Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources, and Director of Marine Mammal Research for Gotham Whale. She discussed "... 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." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NpikdwmCA4>.

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## **2024 New Jersey Energy Master Plan Public Hearings - Videos of Hearings**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) held four virtual public hearings on the 2024 New Jersey Energy Master ('EMP') Plan. According to the BPU, "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." Videos of the public hearings, at which **UUFANJ/EJTF members provided testimony** (see [p. 3](#) for a link to written comments), are available here:

### **• Hearing #1 –**

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 –**

Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 3 and 4. **The video is available here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/4xfyphw2>.

### **• Hearing #3 –**

Overview, progress, and current actions for Strategies 6 and 7. **The video is available here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/53s9mm49>.

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### **• Hearing #4 -**

Recap of Hearing #1, Hearing #2, and Hearing #3, and next steps in the development of the 2024 EMP. **The video is available here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/mry4fu9n>.

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## **Maximizing the Impact of Natural Climate Solutions - Video of Webinar**

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), U.S. Nature4Climate, and the Bipartisan Policy Center presented 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 ... explore[d] the federal role in maximizing the benefits of natural climate solutions. The.... panelists ... discuss[ed] what is working, what we are still learning, and what the next phase of natural climate solutions policy and implementation looks like..." The video is available here:

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/061124nature>.

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## **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Environmental Justice Forum Spring 2024 Meeting - Presentation Slides & Meeting Summary**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) "created the New York and New Jersey (NY & NJ) Offshore Wind Environmental Justice Forum (EJF) to advance meaningful engagement with environmental justice communities around the environmental review of offshore wind development in the NY Bight region...." The primary areas of discussion at the meeting, including in the presentations, were the economic considerations associated with offshore wind development, and the workforce development insights associated with offshore wind development. Links to the materials are available on the "Meeting Information" tab, here: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/new-york-new-jersey-offshore-wind-environmental-justice-forums>.

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## **NJBPU Public Meeting on "FY25 Clean Energy Program Proposed Program Budgets and Compliance Filings related to Electric Vehicles" - Video of Meeting**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) held 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. The video is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/54rdka4y>.

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## **NJBPU Public Meeting on "Fiscal Year 2025 Straw Proposal for NJ's Clean Energy Program," etc. - Video of Meeting**

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) held a virtual public meeting to discuss 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." The video is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2kn4f7fp>.

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## **EPA National Environmental Justice Community May 2024 Engagement Call - Video of Online Call & Presentation Materials**

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: a Community Spotlight (about Hawaii's restoration of ancient fishponds); EPA Office of Air Quality and Planning Standards (OAQPS) regulatory updates; the EPA Environmental Justice Toolkit for Lead Paint Enforcement Programs; EPA Roadshow Updates; and Stakeholder Engagement for EPA's EJ/civil rights National Program

Guidance. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgMhIFyJ8ZQ> and the presentation slides are available here: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-06/may-2024-ej-national-community-engagement-call-slides.pdf>.

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## **"Accelerating Sustainable Finance: Ceres' Insights to Managing Climate Risks in Banking and Insurance" - Video of Webinar**

"Climate change poses unprecedented risks to the banking and insurance industries, with far-reaching consequences for businesses, governments, and individuals.... These disruptions can trigger a domino effect, shaking global markets, undermining business growth, and straining government resources.... Through its Accelerator for Sustainable Capital Markets, Ceres engages with the banking and insurance industries by providing critical research and policy analysis and.... helping the financial sector navigate climate risks, accelerate sustainable finance, and safeguard the future. The video is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/57hv52jw>.

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## **"Down to Earth Soil Management" - Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, was presented by Bill Errickson, Rutgers University. The webinar looked at "... soil health and how it is defined as the continued capacity to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Maintaining soil health is an essential component of a productive and thriving garden that is more resistant to disease and abiotic stress. This presentation ... highlight[ed] the important ecological roles of soil organisms as they relate to the physical and chemical properties of soil in home-scale and community gardens. Topics ... include[ed] proper methods of soil testing, optimizing soil fertility, and practices to support soil organism biodiversity through increasing soil organic matter." The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9n7QoTCq7M>.

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## **"Offshore Wind for New Jersey: the Opportunities and Challenges"** **- Video of Webinar**

This webinar, part of the Rutgers Environmental Stewards' "Earth Day Every Day" series, was presented by Kris Ohleth of the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind organization. The webinar looked "... off New Jersey's coast to learn more about offshore wind energy. The offshore wind industry started approximately 30 years ago in Europe and is rapidly developing in the United States, including off New Jersey.... [the webinar included] the opportunities and challenges associated with developing offshore wind off New Jersey's coast." Kris Ohleth has more than 20 years' experience working in the offshore wind sector. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43DoZxa2goE>.

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## **International Day for Biological Diversity: "Creator as Anchor; Collapse as Teacher"** **- Video of Webinar**

The UU Ministry for Earth presented a webinar of poetry, song and story to honor International Day for Biological Diversity. "We celebrated International Day of Biodiversity with Dr. Lyla June Johnston (aka Lyla June) who is an Indigenous musician, author, and community organizer of Diné (Navajo), Tsétsêhéstâhese (Cheyenne) and European lineages. Her multi-genre presentation style has engaged audiences across the globe towards personal, collective, and ecological healing. She blends her study of Human Ecology at Stanford, graduate work in Indigenous Pedagogy, and the traditional worldview she grew up with to inform her music, perspectives and solutions. Her doctoral research focused on the ways in which pre-colonial Indigenous Nations shaped large regions of Turtle Island (aka the Americas) to produce abundant food systems for humans and non-humans." The video is available here: <https://vimeo.com/949894137>.

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## **"Cities Leading the Way on Nature-Based Solutions"** - Video of Webinar

The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) presented a briefing about climate solutions

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

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## **"Hack Your Veggies Haul Part 2 – Spring Edition"** - Video of Webinar

This webinar was sponsored by the Foodshed Alliance (of which **EJTF member Christine Dunbar** is the Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator) and presented by Kate Munning, who "tends a small but mighty food forest on Schooley's Mountain and orchestrates farm dinners at the Community Supported Garden at Genesis Farm. From shiso to pawpaws, she fears no fruit or vegetable, relishing the challenge of preserving 100 pounds of peppers or coaxing children into loving brussels sprouts." In this webinar, she taught how to make the most of your farmers' market haul. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2S3P-DWvFE>.

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

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. At the end of the video (minute 3:20:00) DEP Commissioner LaTourette thanked the Task Force for all their work, and outlined the next steps for DEP. This was

subsequently announced to have been the last Design Task Force meeting, which is considered a very good outcome for those who wish to see LSP revitalized in the manner envisioned by the DEP rather than by commercial interests (see articles on [p. 22](#)). Videos of this and previous LSP Design Task Force public meetings are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/design-task-force/>.

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## **NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES**

[covering 5/27/2024 – 6/25/2024]

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

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#### **Urban Warehouses Add to NJ Cities' Woes**

In this 4-minute news video, Sam Becker, the author of an Environmental Defense Fund report, "New Jersey Warehouse Boom" (available here: <https://globalcleanair.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/95/files/NJ-Warehouse-Boom-Report-EDF-6-14-2024.pdf>) is interviewed about the report's findings, which include that 1 in 3 people in NJ live within 1/2 mile of a mega-warehouse, with effects disproportionately impacting people of color who live in areas already experiencing health effects from a number of other sources. The accompanying article quotes **EJTF partner Kim Gaddy**, executive director of the Newark South Ward Environmental Alliance, who is in support of a planned bill that would require a reduction in air pollution at warehouses and ports. In the video interview, Becker states that the warehouses and their corresponding truck traffic do not fall under the NJ Environmental Justice Law, and he advocates for the planned bill's institution of an Indirect Source Review (ISR) to assess and reduce emissions from all warehouses exceeding 50,000 square feet in environmental justice communities, or 100,000 square feet in non-environmental justice communities, as well as other major truck-attracting facilities like ports. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/booming-urban-warehouse-industry-blamed-exposes-underserved-communities-more-truck-fumes/>

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

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#### **EPA sending \$12 Million in Rebates for Clean School Buses Across NJ**

Utilizing funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has selected 11 NJ school districts to receive a total of over \$12 million in rebates that will provide close to 70 clean school buses (the list of recipients is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/3ws2av68>). The EPA has also partnered with the government's Joint Office of Energy and Transportation to provide technical assistance to school districts to assist them in planning for and deploying the clean school buses. <https://enviropolitics.com/epa-sending-12-million-in-rebates-for-clean-school-buses-across-nj/>



#### **A New Emphasis on Electrifying NJ's School Bus Fleet**

This article describes the current state of electric school bus use and funding in NJ, and highlights a bill (A1677/S3263) that has been reported out of its respective committees in the NJ Assembly and the NJ Senate. The bill would assist school districts' electric school bus programs by extending terms for lease and purchase contracts for electric school buses to last the service life of the bus, and also by enabling the NJ School Boards Association to assist local districts in obtaining electric school buses by working as a government aggregator. As noted in the article, NJ currently has fewer than two dozen electric school buses on the road, with 150 more on order, out of more than 21,700 registered school buses in the

state, of which more than 99% run on fossil fuels. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/nj-electric-school-bus-push-incentives-environmental-health/>

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## **Rally at State House Against Phaseout of Gas-Powered Vehicle Sales**

This 4-minute news video shows a rally termed "Save our jobs - Don't ban our cars," with union, local government, and legislators' participation. At the end of 2023, NJ implemented the Advanced Clean Cars II rule, which requires that 43% of the annual production volume of passenger cars and light-duty trucks manufactured in 2027 must be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). The percentage increases each year, peaking at 100 percent in 2035 and thereafter. Although the rally participants called it a "ban," the mandate does not ban vehicles or dictate what consumers must buy; rather, it addresses vehicle production. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/rally-at-state-house-against-phaseout-of-gas-powered-vehicle-sales/>

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

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### **992,800 = Estimated Number of New Jersey Residents Who Are 'Food Insecure'**

Feeding America, "the largest charity working to end hunger in the United States," has released its latest "Map the Meal Gap" report, which shows almost a million NJ residents who are food insecure (based on 2022 data), which includes 263,260 children (NJ data is available here: <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2022/overall/nw-jersey>). The Feeding America website Home Page (available here: <https://www.feedingamerica.org>) includes a feature in which typing in a zip code to "Find Food" generates a list and map of nearby food resources such as soup kitchens, food pantries, senior centers, or SNAP enrollment sites. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/992800-almost-1m-nj-residents-estimated-food-insecure/>

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## **Opinion: NJ's Congressional Delegation Must Help the Rising Numbers of New Jerseyans Facing Hunger**

In this piece by a number of CEOs of NJ food banks, they outline the rising numbers of food insecure people in NJ (see the article in the [previous column](#)), and point out the major impact on food security of the federal Farm Bill, currently up for reauthorization. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/op-ed-nj-rising-numbers-residents-facing-hunger-government-support-washington-congress-trenton/>

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## **Hunger-Relief Groups Rely More Heavily on Donated Food From Supermarkets and Farms**

"The Change Project" is a NJ Spotlight News series "examining NJ's social and economic challenges - and focusing on promising actions that have led to positive change." This article focuses on one way hunger and food insecurity is being addressed - through food donated by grocery stores, meal-kit suppliers, and farms. It describes a number of successful programs, but notes that still "More than 1.7 million tons of food went to waste in New Jersey in 2022, even as close to 1 million people were food-insecure." <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/more-nj-supermarkets-and-farms-are-donating-food-gleaning-rescuing-change-project/>

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## **Jersey City Officials Move to Keep Community Gardens Growing**

Under Jersey City's "Adopt A Lot" program, nonprofits enter into leases to use vacant lots and open spaces for gardening and recreation purposes. A number of community gardens whose leases are expiring are asking the City to extend them for another year for \$1. <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/jersey-city/sections/green/articles/jersey-city-officials-move-to-keep-community-gardens-growing>

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## The Power of Green: How Nature Enhances Well-Being in Urban Environment

A study, "The Nature Gaze" (description and link available here: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/news/2024-06-05-simply-looking-at-the-natural-world-in-urban-areas-can-reap-benefits>) used eye-tracking technology with city-dwellers, and found that "simply directing visual attention towards green elements like trees, plants, lawns, and flowers during urban walks can significantly reduce anxiety and increase feelings of restoration. Trees, in particular, showed the most substantial positive effect. These findings underscore the importance of integrating nature into urban design."

<https://www.globalcompassioncoalition.org/the-power-of-green-how-nature-enhances-well-being-in-urban-environments/>

## New Jersey Department of Agriculture Distributes Summer EBT Benefits to More Than 550,000 Children

NJ is one of 37 states participating in the new, permanent Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) program. The program, provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides food dollars to low-income families with school-aged children, over the summer months when school breakfasts and lunches are not being provided. NJ is providing families with \$120 per eligible child for the summer to buy nutritious food at grocery stores, farmers markets, or other authorized retailers.

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/press/2024/approved/press240612.html>

## Murphy Administration Unveils Proposal to Spur Transit-Oriented Development and Bolster NJ TRANSIT

Gov. Murphy has "unveiled a legislative proposal that would direct the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) to purchase up to \$100 million in property from NJ TRANSIT to help expand commuter hubs across the state and meet a variety of critical needs. Under the proposal, the NJEDA would purchase a number of NJ TRANSIT properties, such as surface parking lots, and transform them into mixed-use, transit-oriented

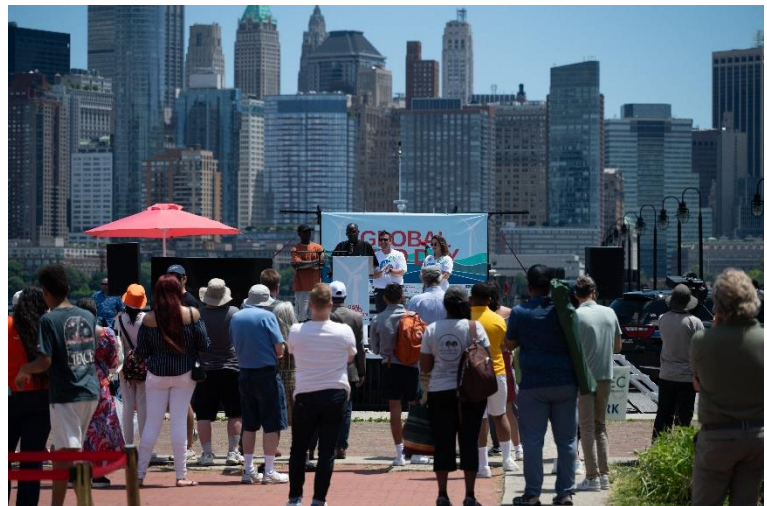
developments [TODs] that will spur economic activity and increase walkability near transit lines while also creating a direct revenue source for the mass transit agency." According to Wikipedia, "In urban planning, transit-oriented development (TOD) is a type of urban development that maximizes the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport. It... aims to increase public transport ridership by reducing the use of private cars and by promoting sustainable urban growth." Funding for the proposal would come from a portion of Gov. Murphy's proposed Corporate Transit Fee's first-year proceeds.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240614b.shtml>

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## OFFSHORE WIND

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NJ Sierra Club photo

## NJ Wind Works Coalitions Host Global Wind Day Celebration

New Jersey Wind Works (a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**) hosted 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. From the NJ Sierra Club: "Over 400 community members attended on a beautiful day at Liberty State Park. There were over 30 tables (including **UUFANJ/EJTF's**) with educational materials and children's activities such as virtual reality offshore wind simulation headsets, mini LEGO turbine building, kite flying, offshore wind coloring pages, and more all with live music and food trucks in the background. Attendees were able to interact with

offshore wind developers and partners like Rutgers University who were able to directly answer questions about the benefits of offshore wind." Also see the photos on [p. 1](#) and the article on [p. 4](#). <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2024/06/nj-wind-works-coalitions-host-global-wind-day-celebration>

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## **Murphy Administration Announces Developments in Offshore Wind Industry**

Gov. Murphy and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) jointly announced an acceleration of the next (fifth) offshore wind solicitation schedule from the third quarter of 2026 to the second quarter of 2025. The current (fourth) solicitation is open until 7/10/2024. Also announced was the settlement of NJ's claims against Ørsted arising from Ørsted's decision to cease development of its offshore wind projects. Rather than the \$300 million guarantee NJ had contended that Ørsted had agreed to pay in the event it failed to build its first wind farm, NJ will receive \$125 million to settle the legal claims, which "will be used to support investments in qualified wind energy facilities, investments in offshore wind component manufacturing facilities and other clean energy programs" according to the press release. <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240528a.shtml>

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## **Offshore Wind Project Clears Key Federal Hurdle**

This article describes the current status of the Atlantic Shores South Wind Project, composed of Project 1 and Project 2, and slated to be NJ's first offshore wind development. It focuses on the recently-released Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) final environmental impact statement (EIS - available here: <https://tinyurl.com/jvhjtt95>), including areas where "major impacts" are found, such as on the North Atlantic right whale population, commercial and recreational fishing industries, and the views from nearby beaches (8.5 miles at the nearest point). The article also touches upon opposition to the project, including lawsuits filed by shore communities (see the article in the [next column](#)). <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/atlantic-shores-south-nj-offshore-wind-project-clears-key-federal-hurdle-final-environmental-impact-statement/>

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## **See Which 8 NJ Towns Filed New Lawsuits to Stop Offshore Wind Developer**

Attorneys representing Long Beach Township, Beach Haven, Ship Bottom, Barnegat Light, Surf City, Harvey Cedars, Brigantine Beach and Ventnor City filed two appeals and one motion targeting the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) approval of part of the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind project. Among other lawsuits, they are appealing the DEP's issuance of a consistency certificate that asserts that construction activity in federally-regulated water along the Jersey Shore is consistent with state environmental regulations. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/see-which-8-nj-towns-filed-new-lawsuits-to-stop-offshore-wind-developer/ar-BB1mHQhu>

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## **Study Links Increased Vessel Traffic to Uptick in East Coast Whale Strandings**

A study, "Evaluating Drivers of Recent Large Whale Strandings on the East Coast of the United States" (available here: <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.14302>), with co-authors from Stony Brook University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), found no link during the period covered by the study between whale strandings and offshore wind activities. Rather, the study found that "Our analysis highlights the role of vessel strikes, exacerbated by recent changes in humpback whale distribution and vessel traffic. Humpback whales have expanded into new foraging grounds in recent years. Mortalities due to vessel strikes have increased significantly in these newly occupied regions, which show high vessel traffic that also increased markedly during the UME [the 2016-2024 unusual mortality event declared by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)]. Surface feeding and feeding in shallow waters may have been contributing factors. We found no evidence that offshore wind development contributed to strandings or mortalities." <https://www.wshu.org/long-island-news/2024-06-06/east-coast-whale-strandings-vessel-strikes>

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## CLIMATE CHANGE

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### Arguments Continue Over Controversial Turnpike Expansion Plan

This 5-minute news video shows the protest rally organized by EmpowerNJ that took place in Bayonne, NJ before a NJ Turnpike public information session about its planned NJ Turnpike Expansion project (see **UU Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) members Roseann DePasquale and Carol Gay** at minute 1:20 (Roseann at right, Carol in red bandanna) and minute 4:30 (Roseann at left, and Carol 3rd from left, front, in red bandanna). The video also includes remarks by local residents, local officials (both in favor of and against the expansion), and union representatives.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/arguments-continue-over-controversial-turnpike-expansion-plan/>

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### Stiff Resistance to Bill That Would Protect Workers During Heat Waves

This 5-minute news video describes the bill (S2422/A3521) that has been reported out of committee in both the NJ Senate and Assembly, and that "Establishes [an] occupational heat stress standard and 'Occupational Heat-Related Illness and Injury Prevention Program' in DOLWD [NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development]." Although workers are in favor of the bill (see the Opinion piece below), the business community, including the NJ Farm Bureau, are opposed to it, stating that it is too vague, and that it puts forth "one size fits all" requirements that would not work in all cases.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/stiff-resistance-to-bill-that-would-protect-workers-during-heat-waves/>

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### Opinion: NJ Farmworkers Need Protection From Heat

In this piece, Edgar Aquino-Huerta, a former farmworker and organizer with CATA, the Farm Workers Support Committee, describes conditions borne by outdoor and greenhouse farm workers, and voices support for the bill S2422/A3521 currently in the NJ legislature (see article above). He states that it "represents a crucial enhancement to farmworker health and safety.

This law would provide the clean, cool water we need in the fields, shade, rest and would hold farm owners - a \$1 billion dollar industry in New Jersey - accountable if they don't give us these protections."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/oped-nj-farmworkers-need-protection-from-heat-legislature-bill-pending-urge-passage/>

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### NJ Launches "Chill Out NJ" Cooling Center Interactive Map

Following the launch of Heat Hub NJ (available here: <https://heat-hub-new-jersey-njdep.hub.arcgis.com/>) in November 2023 - an online one-stop shop for understanding and mitigating the causes and health impacts of extreme heat in the state - the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience has developed the Chill Out NJ online application. A new addition to Heat Hub NJ, Chill Out NJ is an interactive map designed to help communities with limited access to air conditioning locate cooling centers. The map directs users to a variety of nearby free- or low-cost public indoor spaces, like libraries, pools and senior centers, that provide relief from heat exposure. It is available here: <https://heat-hub-new-jersey-njdep.hub.arcgis.com/pages/chill-out-nj-nearby-app>.

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### Delaware River Basin Commission to Develop Its First Climate Resilience Plan

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) has "approved a resolution directing staff to develop a Climate Resilience Plan that includes elements related to planning, consultation, outreach,



education and rulemaking concerning climate change.... The DRBC's activities will focus on water resources matters within the authority and jurisdiction of the Commission. These do not include setting or implementing greenhouse gas-reduction goals." The Plan is seen by the the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as complementing its Resilient NJ program and supporting its Climate Change Resilience Strategy by improving coordination between the Basin communities.

[https://www.nj.gov/drbc/home/newsroom/news/approved/20240613\\_climateplan.html](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/home/newsroom/news/approved/20240613_climateplan.html)

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## **Health, Climate Organizations Applaud Committee Passage of Legislation That Will Set the Standard for Healthier, More Affordable Homes and Buildings in New Jersey**

A bill (S249) that "Requires BPU [NJ Board of Public Utilities] to establish beneficial building electrification and decarbonization program and requires electric public utilities to prepare and implement beneficial building electrification and decarbonization plans" has been reported out of committee in the Senate; there is no corresponding bill in the Assembly. The bill has been lauded by a number of NJ health, environmental justice, and climate organizations. In the bill, "beneficial electrification and decarbonization" means "a change in end-use equipment from a nonelectric type to an efficient electric type for any building end use, including water heating, space heating, industrial process, or transportation, provided that the change: reduces cost from a societal perspective; reduces greenhouse gas emissions, or promotes the increased use of the electric grid in off-peak hours." Quotes from a number of organizations are included in this article.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/blog/2024/06/health-climate-organizations-applaud-committee-passage-legislation-will-set>

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## **Youth Activists Win 'Unprecedented' Climate Settlement in Hawaii**

Although not in the HI state constitution's Bill of Rights and therefore not officially considered a Green Amendment (although one is in the works), the HI constitution does contain language that

"[e]ach person has the right to a clean and healthful environment." Thirteen HI young people filed a constitutional climate lawsuit against the HI Department of Transportation (HDOT) - the world's first such case directed at stopping climate pollution from transportation systems - and a settlement has now been reached, in their favor. From *The Guardian*: "Hawaii officials have announced a 'groundbreaking' legal settlement with a group of young climate activists... 'You have a constitutional right to fight for life-sustaining climate policy and you have mobilized our people in this case,' Josh Green, the Hawaii governor, told the 13 young plaintiffs..., saying he hoped the settlement would inspire similar action across the country. Under what legal experts called a 'historic' settlement... Hawaii officials will release a roadmap 'to fully decarbonize the state's transportation systems, taking all actions necessary to achieve zero emissions no later than 2045 for ground transportation, sea and inter-island air transportation.'"

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/20/hawaii-youth-climate-activists-win>

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Launches Federal-State Initiative to Bolster America's Power Grid**

NJ is one of 21 states that has committed to participate in the "Federal-State Modern Grid Deployment." Participating states have committed to "prioritize efforts that support the adoption of modern grid solutions to expand grid capacity and build modern grid capabilities on both new and existing transmission and distribution lines." In addition, the U.S. Climate Alliance, "a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors securing America's net-zero future by advancing state-led, high-impact climate action," announced "the availability of policy, technical, and analytical assistance to help participating members advance state-level efforts to carry out these commitments."

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/05/28/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-launches-federal-state-initiative-to-bolster-americas-power-grid/>

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## Under Pressure from Big Oil, Supreme Court Requests Biden Position on Climate Suit

From the *Common Dreams* website: "The U.S. Supreme Court ... asked the Biden administration for its position on a climate lawsuit against Big Oil following a pressure campaign the industry has mounted to have the court dismiss it .... In November [2023], the Hawaii Supreme Court rejected a previous Big Oil effort to stop the case, which set the table for a potentially momentous jury trial - none of the climate lawsuits have yet reached that stage, and *City and County of Honolulu v. Sunoco et al.* could be the first. The industry had tried to argue that the lawsuit sought to regulate interstate and international carbon emissions, which states don't have the right to do, and thus the case couldn't be brought in state court. The court ruled the case wasn't about the regulation of carbon emissions." The Honolulu case is one of dozens of state and local lawsuits, including several in NJ, seeking to hold the oil companies to account for the climate impacts and for their deception and disinformation. "The industry could be found liable for many billions of dollars if such cases reach jury trials, and so a group of companies has filed a petition, supported by legal briefs and a public advertising campaign, to the Supreme Court to hear their case for dismissal."

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/supreme-court-climate-big-oil>

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## Growing Grassroots Green Initiatives in Millburn

This article, by a sophomore at Rutgers University, who is an Eco Ambassador with the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD), describes the strides Millburn, NJ has made in its green initiatives in the past 5 years, stating "Sustainable initiatives require two key parties: leaders who organize and communities who enthusiastically engage." Initiatives include the Millburn Thrift Store, Millburn for Monarchs, and the Millburn Food Waste Recycling Program, among others.

<https://srhub.org/2024/06/20/growing-grassroots-green-initiatives-in-millburn/>

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## FOREST HEALTH

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### Arbor Day Foundation's 'Canopy Report' Examines How America Sees Trees

The Arbor Day Foundation has issued "The Canopy Report" (available here:

<https://www.arborday.org/canopyreport/>) that is based on a Harris Poll survey, and examines Americans' interactions with green space, their perceptions of the health and environmental benefits of trees, and their feelings about climate change.

[https://www.arborday.org/media/pressreleases/pressreleasestxt.cfm?id=614&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.arborday.org/media/pressreleases/pressreleasestxt.cfm?id=614&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

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### 141 Acres in Maurice River Watershed Permanently Protected

Multiple conservation organizations, along with state and local government and private landowners, jointly provided funding and donated land, supporting the acquisition of 141 forested acres in Gloucester County. The preservation of this forest will not only prevent the deforestation of this ecologically important property, but will also preserve quality wildlife habitat and clean drinking water. It is part of a core forest that spans the central portion of Franklin Township into Monroe Township and serves as a significant forest connector.

[https://www.njconservation.org/press\\_release/141-acres-in-maurice-river-watershed-permanently-protected/](https://www.njconservation.org/press_release/141-acres-in-maurice-river-watershed-permanently-protected/)

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## **USDA Forest Service Seeks Public Comment on Draft Guidance for Old Growth Management on National Forests**

Although there are no National Forests in NJ, the overall climate change and biodiversity benefits of old growth forests affect everyone; mature trees sequester far more CO<sub>2</sub> than immature ones. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service has issued a draft environmental impact statement with a plan for old growth management of national forests. It calls for "proactive stewardship actions" but doesn't call for an outright ban on cutting old-growth trees and doesn't single out maturing forests for preservation so they could become the old growth of tomorrow. It provides latitude to forest managers to tune their forest policies "as conditions require," with the guidance of preserving the health of old-growth forests.

**Comments can be made until 9/20/2024.**

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/newsroom/releases/usda-forest-service-seeks-public-comment-draft-guidance-old-growth>

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## **EDUCATION and YOUTH-RELATED**

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### **These Schools Will Receive NJ Funds to Teach Climate Change**

Four Climate Change Learning Collaborative (CCLC) Centers are being established statewide by the NJ Department of Education (DOE), and it has awarded grant funding for them to the following educational institutions: Ramapo College of New Jersey (\$650,000); Rutgers University - New Brunswick (\$324,699); Monmouth University (\$311,276); and Stockton University (\$650,000). "The CCLCs will provide training, technical assistance, and experiential learning opportunities to support local educators in implementing climate change education initiatives in the classroom and their local community. The CCLCs will also increase the number of K-12 educators who are prepared to teach high quality, standards-aligned climate change education." The DOE has also awarded 34 other recipients (list available here: <https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2024/NJDOEAwardsGrantstoHelpSchoolsImproveClimateChangeInstructionintheClassroom.pdf>) a total of \$1.1 million in grants

to underwrite local climate change education projects.

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/education/2024/05/22/nj-climate-change-education-funds/73786035007/>

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### **College 'Green Teams' Tackle Pressing Environmental and Climate Challenges**

Every year since 2016, the Green Teams Program of the PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies (ISS) has provided an internship that groups students with corporations and organizations to address local and global sustainability challenges. Students are divided into teams to work together over the course of the program to create a solution to a sustainability problem. This year, 50 students are participating, coming from 40 different academic programs at colleges throughout the country, including historic Black and Hispanic-serving institutions. The Green Teams are supported by corporate foundations and federal sources, including the PSEG Foundation, Constellation, the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The program focuses on solutions, and has environmental justice concerns at its center.

<https://www.montclair.edu/newscenter/2024/05/31/college-green-teams-tackle-pressing-environmental-and-climate-challenges/>

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## **LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS**

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### **The Governor's Lead Balloon: Murphy's \$100 Million Broken Promise Leaves the Health of New Jersey Students at Risk**

From the *The Jersey Vindicator*: "With some fanfare more than four-and-a-half years ago, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy unveiled his \$100 million plan to eliminate the alarming amount of lead leaching into the drinking water of public schools in the state. An investigation by *The Jersey Vindicator* has found the plan never got off the ground, leaving countless thousands of New Jersey students still exposed to the toxic dangers of lead every day. Strangely, no one has seemed



to notice." This article in *The Jersey Vindicator* includes the results of the investigation as well as videos about the investigation, and from Gov. Murphy's 10/7/2019 press conference. <https://jerseyvindicator.org/2024/06/09/the-governors-lead-balloon-murphys-100-million-broken-promise-leaves-the-health-of-new-jersey-students-at-risk/>

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## **Municipal Leaders Claim Public Engagement is Largest Asset to Lead Replacement Efforts**

This article describes in depth the discussions at the lead service line replacement session at the 2024 NJ Planning and Redevelopment Conference. "Although funding is a major issue, engaging customers proves to be the most difficult hurdle. Session moderator Richard Calbi stated, 'The bulk of the financial burden will fall on water systems, resulting in increased water rates for consumers.' Consumers, i.e. regular households and businesses that pay for water, are the biggest stakeholders and face the burden of paying for their lead lines as water systems design replacement programs. While some programs offer free replacement, most systems will charge a cost." The article gives examples from some of the NJ communities that have found ways of dealing with this. <https://www.njfuture.org/2024/06/24/municipal-leaders-claim-public-engagement-is-largest-asset-to-lead-replacement-efforts/>

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

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### **'Forever Chemicals' Near Joint Base Raise Immediate Worries**

This 4-1/2-minute news video shows an open house held by the Air Force Civil Engineering Center in Pemberton, NJ to describe PFAS ("forever chemicals") contamination from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and to answer questions from residents who live near the base. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/forever-chemicals-near-joint-base-raise-immediate-worries/>

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## **POLLUTION**

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### **NJ Shore Town Vacuuming up Microplastic Pollution at Construction Sites**

A 6/19/2024 email from the *Enviropolitics Blog* described what appears to be "a first-in-the-nation" law just passed by the Borough of Monmouth Beach, NJ. It requires contractors "to contain and clean up daily all table sawing dust including toxic plastics from manufactured lumber such as TREX, PVC piping and vinyl siding." The ordinance, titled "Control of Plastic Dust and Contaminants," is noted in the agenda from the Borough Commission meeting where it was approved (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/59x6x3hr>). Other shore towns may be following suit:

### **Margate Residents Push to Get Eco-Friendly Construction Practices Ordinance Adopted**

The Margate, NJ Green Team has been attempting to get an ordinance comparable to Monmouth Beach's passed, but to date the Board of Commissioners has only issued a resolution asking contractors to encapsulate their cutting and clean the micro/nano particles daily. See <https://tinyurl.com/48v9fepp>. A news video from 1/2024 illustrates the issue well: see <https://tinyurl.com/ytyf2xy2>.)

### **Longport Introduces Clean and Safe Worksites Ordinance**

On 6/19/2024, the Longport, NJ Board of Commissioners introduced an ordinance, "Construction, General Requirements to Promote Clean and Safe Worksites within the Borough of Longport," (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/mbheth3w>) that requires contractors to employ specific methods to control dust, trash, and plastic contaminants at their worksites, and includes penalties for each offense including "a fine not to exceed \$1,000.00 or by imprisonment for any term not exceeding 90 days, or both. Every such violation or refusal shall be deemed a separate violation, and each day that the same shall continue shall be deemed a separate violation." A public hearing on the proposed ordinance is scheduled for 7/17/2024. <https://tinyurl.com/46dy7mve>

## Shoprite Offers New Kiosk That Recycles Flexible-Film Plastic Packaging

It is notoriously difficult to find places to recycle flexible-film plastic packaging. Shoprite has installed kiosks at five NJ stores, where customers can drop off the packaging; the kiosks include instructions for sorting the plastic film.

<https://www.supermarketnews.com/sustainability/shoprite-offers-new-kiosk-recycles-flexible-film-plastic-packaging>

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## Testimony In Favor of S217 (Prohibits Sale and Use of Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers)

This testimony given by Doug O'Malley, Director, Environment New Jersey, supports the bill (S217) which "Prohibits sale and use of certain gas-powered leaf blowers; provides CBT [corporation business tax] credit for purchase of electric leaf blower that replaces gas-powered leaf blower." The bill has been reported out of committee in the Senate; there is no corresponding bill in the Assembly. O'Malley's testimony describes health effects of the gas-powered leaf blowers, and includes examples of other places that have enacted such bans.

<https://environmentamerica.org/newjersey/media-center/testimony-in-favor-of-s217-prohibits-sale-and-use-of-gas-powered-leaf-blowers/>

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## OTHER

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## Declaring Victory: DEP's Redesign Plan For Liberty State Park Survives, Despite Billionaire's Efforts

As noted in this article, originally from *The Jersey Journal*, "In spite of months of pressure from some members of his own task force and hundreds of thousand of dollars in outside lobbying efforts, the state official refused to bend." The state official referred to here is the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner LaTourette, who listened to input from all those concerned, while sticking to the DEP's vision for the park's future. In the words of Sam Pesin, volunteer president of the Friends of Liberty State Park (whose lead **EJTF** follows), "More great news to celebrate is LSP's continuing

momentum in the Public Good direction in the DEP's 'Revitalization' planning process for a free and green, non-privatized, urban quality of life oasis wanted now and for LSP's 48 years by the overwhelming broad public consensus!" While some purportedly local groups (although in actuality funded by the billionaire owner of Liberty National Golf Course) pushed for converting LSP into a giant athletic complex with a stadium and arena seating thousands, the DEP has stood firm on their plan that does include 60 acres of active recreation and athletic fields, but that preserves the wetlands and meadows. The DEP's vision for LSP's revitalization, from their website, is: "The Liberty State Park (LSP) Revitalization Program will bring more than one hundred acres of active recreational, arts, and cultural improvements to LSP's perimeter and create a central park at its heart with world-class natural landscapes that build resilience to flooding and climate change while providing passive recreation and educational opportunities for the public." It is planned that the public will continue to be involved in the process, with the next DEP Open House tentatively scheduled for 9/2024.

<https://www.nj.com/hudson/2024/05/liberty-state-park-remains-untouched-by-pressure-from-firemans-circle-as-task-force-sunsets.html>

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## Opinion: Thumbs-up for DEP Plan for Liberty State Park

In this piece, NJ League of Conservation Voters (LCV) Executive Director Ed Potosnak lauds the revitalization plan for Liberty State Park (LSP) put forth by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), describes aspects of the plan (also see the article above), and asks people "to write the governor to express your support for the DEP's plan to keep the park open to the public and

oppose large-scale commercialization of one of the last remaining open spaces in the area."

<https://www.njlc.org/news/op-ed-thumbs-dep-plan-liberty-state-park>

## Pressure Mounts for Business Tax to Help Fund NJ Transit

This 4-1/2-minute news video shows a rally of mass transit advocates and some local officials, who support Gov. Murphy's proposed "corporate transit fee" that would provide a reliable, dedicated revenue source for NJ Transit. Proposals put forth by others include an increase in NJ's sales tax, or using the funds currently earmarked for the NJ Turnpike Expansion. The fee would need to be included in the budget that needs to be in place by 7/1/2024, but some (see minute 3:51 of video) have expressed the opinion that Gov. Murphy may have support in the legislature, related to his signing the OPRA bill that they favored (see the article in the [next column](#)). <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/pressure-mounts-for-business-tax-to-help-fund-nj-transit/>

## Murphy Administration Launches New Interactive Website to Track Billions in Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Investments

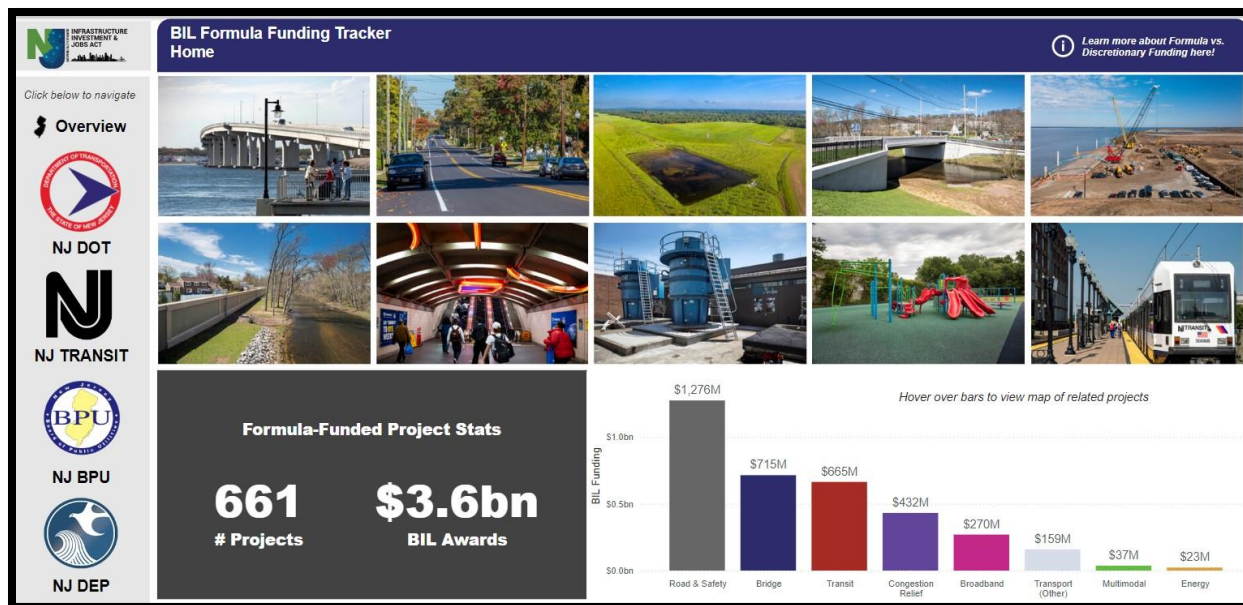
To date (6/2024), NJ has received \$3.6 billion in federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, for 661 projects. An interactive website shown below (available here: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3yjcs9>) has been launched, through which the use of these funds, and the status of projects, can be tracked. The site shows projects of the NJ Department of

Transportation (DOT), NJ Transit, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU), and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Maps of individual projects and details of each project's scope and the amounts spent to date, are available.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240620a.shtml>

## Murphy Signs OPRA Bill, Dismissing Corruption Concerns

Gov. Murphy, despite saying that his decision "will disappoint many members of the advocacy community" including labor, environmental, justice (**including UUFANJ**) and other organizations, signed the bill (S2930) to revise NJ Open Public Records Act (OPRA), on the day after the NJ primaries. He thanked advocates for making their voices heard, and issued a lengthy statement of explanation for his decision (available here: <https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240605/18/f4/d1/01/c94cfbb03c290751bd130e28/S2930.pdf>), stating among other things that "I take the concerns regarding corruption and trust in our democracy extremely seriously. However, my responsibility as Governor is to evaluate the bill on the merits, regardless of how it may be perceived." This article describes the changes to the law, including language making it harder to win legal fees for a successful records-request court battle, and another change subjecting requestors to lawsuits if the request would "substantially impair" an agency's operations. Reactions from groups including the American Civil Liberties Union of NJ (ACLU-NJ) are also provided. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/nj-gov-phil-murphy-signs-contentious-public-records-overhaul/>





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### **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.**