



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

- **EJTF member Sally Gellert** attended the "Summer of Heat" march on June 28th in New York City, part of a 12-week series of activities in which climate activists are holding "joyful, relentless, nonviolent direct action" targeting Wall Street and the big banks for their role in fueling the climate crisis. The photos are from the gathering before the march. See [p. 3](#) for information about the August 1st "No Faith in Fossil Fuels" Rally, part of the "Summer of Heat's" "Faith Week" - join us there!



- **EJTF member Christine Dunbar**, who is the Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator for Foodshed Alliance, participated in the awarding of a "River Friendly Farm" certification for the Race Farm - a 4th generation commercial farm in Blairstown, NJ (see photos at right). The River Friendly Farm Certification recognizes farmers for their commitment to stewardship of their land and surrounding water resources. The Race Farm runs completely on solar power, uses all of the latest water conservation techniques, "lets the good bugs eat the bad bugs," and makes money.



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EJTF and CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES (continued)

• Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC)



(Back row L-R: EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh, Joanie Parks, Barbara Newman; (seated) Pat Daly)

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Ocean County Congregation (UUOCC) - Joanie Parks, Pat Daly, Barbara Newman, and **EJTF Chairman Peggy Middaugh** - joined with the Ocean County National Organization for Women (NOW) for a rally in Huddy Park, Toms River, NJ on June 24th, to mark two years since Roe v. Wade was overturned by the Supreme Court, and to "stand up for ourselves, our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, and all the women in our lives and throughout the country."



Barbara Newman

Some Resources That May Be of Interest

INTERACTIVE MAPS:

- **"Urban Heat Island/Land Surface Temperature"** interactive map (data from 7/2022); zoom in or search for an address <https://arcg.is/0uLPTO>
- **"Where Will Tree Planting Improve Urban Heat Health?"** interactive map <https://heat-hub-new-jersey-njdep.hub.arcgis.com/maps/njdep::where-will-tree-planting-improve-urban-heat-health/explore>
- **"Has My Water System Found PFAS?"** interactive map <https://data.northjersey.com/epa-pfas-water-pollutants-near-me/>
- **"2023 PFAS Readings for NY/NJ Water Systems"** interactive map <https://felt.com/map/2023-PFAS-readings-for-NY-NJ-water-systems-770uUv7WRECp3uiPJfaTD>
- **"Potential Lead Exposure Mapping (PLEM) – Housing in New Jersey"** interactive map of the age of housing stock to determine the likelihood of lead paint. (click on "Lead-based Paint" tab and zoom in or search for an address) <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=6472457d42ab474b87f735de8d8ee205>
- **"NJ Water Risk and Equity Map"** interactive map (select map layers) <https://njwaterequity.rutgers.edu/map/>
- **"Jersey WaterCheck System Finder"** interactive map - links to drinking water and wastewater providers <https://www.njwatercheck.com/SystemFinder>

ARTICLE:

- **"Storytelling Strategies Make Communication About Science More Compelling"** - This article on "The Conversation" website was discovered by **EJTF member Mike Skelly**, who feels this approach may well help EJTF's work with the public. The idea is to, in a way, co-opt the methods used by those who spread disinformation, i.e., using relatable stories, rather than just presenting scientific facts. <https://theconversation.com/storytelling-strategies-make-communication-about-science-more-compelling-228858>

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

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

AUGUST 2024 (with hyperlinks 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>
				1 "No Faith in Fossil Fuels" Rally - 4:00 p.m.	2	3
4	5 "Green Day" at the NJ State Fair - 12:00 p.m. UU Climate Justice Revival Info Session - 7:00 p.m.	6	7 Tour Operating Wind-Energy Turbines - 12:00 p.m. DRBC 3Q Public Hearing - 1:30 p.m. UU Climate Justice Revival Info Session - 7:00 p.m.	8	9	10 NOFA NJ "FesTomato!" - 12:00 p.m.
11	12	13 "Has It Always Been This Hot in NJ?" - 11:00 a.m. UU Climate Justice Revival Info Session - 12:00 p.m. "Electrify Your Life - HEAT PUMPS!" - 1:00 p.m.	14 Tour Operating Wind-Energy Turbines - 12:00 p.m. UU Climate Justice Revival Facilitator Trng - 7:00 p.m.	15 UU Climate Justice Revival Info Session - 12:00 p.m.	16	17
18 UU Climate Justice Revival Facilitator Trng - 3:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.	19	20	21 Tour Operating Wind-Energy Turbines - 12:00 p.m.	22 "Understanding Environmental Justice Laws and Policies" - 5:00 p.m.	23	24 NOFA NJ "FesTomato!" - 12:00 p.m.
25	26	27 "Youth v. State of Alaska. The Right to a Safe Climate." - 7:00 p.m.	28 Tour Operating Wind-Energy Turbines - 12:00 p.m.	29 UU Climate Justice Revival Facilitator Trng - 7:00 p.m.	30	31
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 (see calendar) & 9/2024 - Revival Run-through: 9/22/2024; Revival dates: 9/28/2024 - 9/29/2024						

FUTURE EVENTS

"No Faith in Fossil Fuels" Rally ("Summer of Heat")
8/1/2024 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
New York, NY - In-person

"Summer of Heat' is the first time in history that climate activists will hold an entire season of sustained civil disobedience protests targeting Wall Street and big banks for their role in fueling the climate crisis." Week 8 is "Faith Week": according

to EJTF member Sally Gellert, "This is one of the hottest summers on record, but it is also metaphorically hot for Citigroup. The coalition of groups participating in the <https://www.summerofheat.org> 12-week campaign to get Citigroup to stop funding fossil fuel infrastructure - particularly new projects, with their potential long lifetimes - has been building week by week... 'No Faith in Fossil Fuels' is the theme of week 8, from July 28th to August 3rd. The big event is August 1st, when the faith-based community takes over Citi Plaza." Join faith leaders, both clergy and lay, for a fun and

inspiring day of food, song, art, and meaningful spiritual practice in Citi Plaza. According to the Sierra Club, the worst funder of fossil fuel expansion since the Paris Agreement is Citi, providing \$204 billion since 2016 to the companies building the most new pipelines, oil rigs, gas terminals, and more. Additional information and registration are available here:

<https://secure.everyaction.com/PEwqFlCvMEutRf12OZWTMw2>.

**Tour Operating Wind-Energy Turbines
Atlantic City, NJ - In-person
Wednesdays in August, 12:00 p.m.**

The Atlantic City Utilities Authority (ACUA) is offering hour-long free tours of its wind farm and Wastewater Treatment Facility on Wednesdays in August. ACUA's Wastewater Treatment Facility is the largest hybrid wind and solar powered water treatment facility in the world. The wind farm is the first commercial development of its kind in the state, as well as the first coastal and urban wind farm in the nation. Visitors will learn about the wastewater treatment process and how wind and solar keep this important operation running. Guests will also receive a close-up view of the Jersey-Atlantic Wind Farm. Additional information is available here: <https://www.acua.com/Community-Hub/Tours/Open-House-Tours.aspx>.

**Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)
Third Quarter 2024 Public Hearing
8/7/2024, 1:30 p.m. - Virtual**

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) will hold its third-quarter public hearing on Wednesday, 8/7/2024. The hearing is open to the public and will take place remotely via Zoom Webinar, and it will also be livestreamed on the DRBC's YouTube channel. Additional information including a link to the agenda and to register, and information about how to provide testimony, is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaxwn2sh>.

**"Green Day" at the NJ State Fair
8/5/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Sussex County Fairgrounds, Augusta, NJ
- In-person**

On Monday, 8/5/2024, from noon to 4:00 p.m., there will be a "Green Day" at the NJ State Fair at the Sussex County Fairgrounds, in the fair's Planet Networks Performing Arts Tent. It will showcase environmental exhibits and vendors, including the Foodshed Alliance's Paulins Kill Watershed, of which **EJTF member Christine Dunbar is the Coordinator**. Their focus will be on "Let's Keep Our Waters Healthy," and will include groups from across the watershed showcasing their efforts, hands-on activities like "observing aquatic critters," exploring their watershed model, and crafting a bog turtle necklace. Additional information, including links to purchase tickets online in advance, is available here:

<https://sussexcountyfairgrounds.org/html/fair-info.cfm>.

Advance ticket prices are: Child - \$4; Senior - \$8; and Adult - \$12.

**NOFA NJ "FesTomato!"
8/10/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Egg Harbor City, NJ - In-person
and 8/24/2024, 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Pennington, NJ - In-person**

Sponsored by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA NJ), this "Celebration of NJ Organic Tomatoes.... is an annual event hosted by NOFA NJ to highlight and promote NJ's favorite summer vegetable (or fruit?) and the amazing farms and farmers that grow them. Free and open to the public, FesTomato! events are fun for the whole family, with tomato tastings [30+ varieties], farm tours, culinary demonstrations, live music, local vendors, and more." Additional information is available here: <https://nofanj.org/calendar/festomato/>.

**"Has It Always Been This Hot in NJ?"
- Webinar
8/13/2024, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

The NJ Interagency Council on Climate Resilience asks: Has it Always Been This Hot in NJ? "Join us on August 13, 2024 at 11 a.m. as a panel of climate and weather experts discuss how and why NJ's temperatures have changed over time and

what we can expect moving forward. At this webinar you can expect to learn the impacts of this warming trend, the differences between weather and climate, the Urban Heat Island effect and the impact to NJ's overall warming and how to stay informed." The event flyer is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ywnm9xh8> and registration is available here:

<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/33852f14-1a96-4b6c-8bc2-cff379e6d739@5076c3d1-3802-4b9f-b36a-e0a41bd642a7>.

"Electrify Your Life Workshop – HEAT PUMPS!" - Webinar

8/14/2024, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

The Elders Climate Action Electrify Your Life series is designed for elders who want to know how to plan and implement home electrification options. "Your questions about electrification and ways to help pay for it will be answered. For this session we will focus on all things heat pump related. Please join us in a zoom meeting as renowned home electrification expert Sean Armstrong of Redwood Energy describes selection from many alternatives, in any climate, of electric heat pumps for heating and cooling your home. In addition, Sean will demonstrate how heat pumps are free of greenhouse gas emissions, and how they are also available to heat your water and even clean and dry your clothes. Presentation followed by hands-on small break out groups for personal planning." Additional information and the link to register (**suggested donation: \$10**) are available here: https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/event/electrify_august/.

"Understanding Environmental Justice Laws and Policies" - Online training

8/22/2024, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

"What are the foundational laws and policies that require the consideration of EJ in federal decisionmaking and at the state level for New York and New Jersey?" This is the first in series of trainings to be offered under the auspices of WE ACT's U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC). The six-part training series, "How to Meaningfully Engage and Influence Government Decisionmaking on Environmental Justice," is being presented by the NYU Institute

for Policy Integrity, and focuses on providing Environmental Justice (EJ) communities with the tools to effectively engage with government at all levels. Attendees do not need a background in Environmental Justice law or policy. Additional information and the link to register are available here: <https://www.weact.org/tctac/trainings/>.

"Youth v. State of Alaska. The Right to a Safe Climate." - Webinar

**8/27/2024, 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 Our Children's Trust Staff Attorney Joanna Zeigler, alongside one of the Alaska youth plaintiffs, will "share their pursuit of climate justice through the courts. Eight young people across the state of Alaska recently filed Sagoonick v. State of Alaska II, a new constitutional climate lawsuit to stop the Alaska LNG project and protect their rights to a safe climate. Joanna has been working with youth plaintiffs on a number of state lawsuits including Alaska and Hawai'i. Join us to hear more about this very important court case and get brief updates on the others." 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." Last month's Action Party resulted in more than 700 actions in 15 minutes. 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_aug24/.

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 Run-through: 9/22/2024 - Online
Revival dates: 9/28/2024 - 9/29/2024 - In-person at multiple congregations

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

Save the dates!

The 12th Annual Delaware River Watershed Forum
9/26/2024 & 9/27/2024
Bethlehem, PA - In-person

"The Delaware River Watershed Forum serves as a fun and meaningful opportunity for Coalition members, legislators, watershed advocates, environmental and community organizations, agencies, foundations and charitable trusts, constituents and residents, businesses, and students to convene and collaborate on protecting the Delaware River Watershed. Together, this working conference provides a platform to brainstorm solutions, identify gaps, improve skills, and build relationships to advance our shared goals." Additional information and the link to register (**two-day pricing: \$250 if registered by 8/16/2024; \$275 if registered by 8/31/2024; \$300 if 9/1/2024 or later; single-day pricing is \$150 for either day**) are available here:
<https://www.delriverwatershed.org/2024-forum>.

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, facilitation trainings and the Revival run-through (see below for dates) are available here: <https://www.uuclimatejustice.org/events>.

Info Sessions (1 Hour):

Monday, 8/5/2024, 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 8/7/2024, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 8/13/2024, 12:00 p.m.
Thursday, 8/15/2024, 12:00 p.m.

You can also view a recording of the 6/13/2024 Info Session here: <https://vimeo.com/961771370>.

Facilitation Trainings (2 Hours):

Wednesday, 8/15/2024, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, 8/18/2024, 3:00 p.m.
Sunday, 8/18/2024, 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, 8/29/2024, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, 9/7/2024, 3:00 p.m.
Saturday, 9/7/2024, 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 9/11/2024, 7:00 p.m.

Revival Run-through:

Sunday, 9/22/2024, 3:00 p.m.



VIDEOS+ OF PAST EVENTS

Eco-Logic Radio Shows:
"Chemical Recycling: Industry vs Reality"
- Recording of Radio Show

The Eco-Logic radio/internet program on WBAI (**co-hosted by EJTF member Sally Gellert**) aired this recent show, "Chemical Recycling: Industry vs Reality" related to EJTF's goals. "Most of us know about paper, cardboard, glass, and plastic recycling, but what on Earth is chemical

recycling? No, it is not recycling lab waste - it is the industry's new term for incinerating plastic, and the fossil-fuel companies' latest enthusiasm." 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=51677>.

USDA Forest Service Webinar on Draft Guidance for Old Growth Management of National Forests - Video of Webinar

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 CO₂ than immature ones. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service has issued a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) 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. The USDA presented a webinar to its employees with information on the plan; it is available here: <https://usda-fs.wistia.com/medias/rravo8e06w>.

Comments on the DEIS can be made until 9/20/2024, here: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=65356>.

NJDEP Essex County EJ Community Engagement Session - Video of Meeting

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invited Essex 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 Regional Administrator and discuss environmental justice issues in Essex 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=6qrOvBiUcl8>.

NJDEP Mercer County EJ Community Engagement Session - Video of Meeting

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) invited Mercer 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 an Assistant Commissioner of DEP and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 Deputy Regional Administrator and discuss environmental justice issues in Mercer 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=y71W5q_n5w.

UU General Assembly 2024 Workshop Recordings - Videos of Webinars

The Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUMFE) has provided recordings of several webinars presented at the 2024 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. The "Climate Justice Cohort" webinars "explore climate justice as an anti-racism and civil rights issue, critical for our democracy. How is climate justice different from environmentalism? What makes climate justice spiritual work?" The webinars and links to the recordings are as follows:

"Meetup on Spiritual Care for Climate Distress" - <https://vimeo.com/966379677>

"Climate Justice Cohort: Moving from Environmentalism to Climate Justice" - <https://vimeo.com/966337497>

"Climate Justice Cohort: Putting Love at the Center of Climate Justice" - <https://vimeo.com/966347855>

EJScreen Trainings **- Videos of Virtual Trainings**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held virtual public trainings on its EJScreen 2.3 "environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides EPA with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and socioeconomic indicators," following the release of the EJScreen 2024 version. These trainings included information on the updates made to EJScreen, a demonstration of the available features, and tips on how to use the tool. The video of the training is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxc06UDRQr0>;
PowerPoint slides from the training are available here:
https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-07/ejscreen-2.3-training-slides_july-10-2024pdf.pdf.

"Hydrogen Economics: Do the Dollars Make Sense" - Video of Webinar

This webinar, presented by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, provided a "dive into the economics of hydrogen and the hydrogen hub investments being supported by our tax dollars....[and] the lowdown on the future of a 'hydrogen economy' and its implications for communities and the climate.... [as well as] a look at the proposed federal government's hydrogen tax credit program '45V'.... [and] a brief update on the proposed MACH2 Hydrogen Hub planned for Delaware, Southeastern Pennsylvania, and South/Central New Jersey." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THCNaMDXq8U>.

"Offshore Wind and Local Marine Life: Conservation and Innovation" - Webinar

This NJ Wind Works (a coalition of which **UUFANJ is a member**) webinar was presented by Captain Paul Eidman, a charter boat captain with decades of experience fishing off the NJ coast. In the words of **EJTF Chair Peggy Middaugh**, "This was a fabulous, interesting webinar.... A must see by supporters and doubters alike about the impact of offshore wind on the marine environment (and a good clear explanation of how some of this stuff works!).... His presentation style of mixing his

stories with charts, maps and data make this a must see for anyone with questions about the interaction of Offshore Wind projects with the marine environment off the NJ Coast." Captain Eidman's presentation focused on "the interaction between offshore wind and the marine creatures that inhabit our local ecosystem. He dove into the benefits offshore wind can bring to our ocean and explained how it can enhance the marine ecosystem by increasing local biodiversity. Additionally, he addressed common misconceptions and answered questions from attendees. He also provided a preview of some of the heavy equipment, submarine cables, and related offshore wind components. This interactive webinar highlighted how responsibly installed offshore wind in New Jersey can guide us toward a clean energy future." The video is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10RqexGi1A0>

"Mobilizing Voters" with Environmental Voter Project's Nathaniel Stinnett **- Video of Webinar**

Sponsored by Elders Climate Action, in this webinar Nathaniel Stinnett from the Environmental Voter Project (EVP) discussed 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. The video is available here:

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

EPA National Environmental Justice Community June 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 - Community Infrastructure Center Demo; an Inflation

Reduction Act Roadshow Update; an Overview of National Program Guidance; and a Review of Community Change Grants webpage. The video is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr_oU9L9DHc and the presentation slides are available here: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-07/national-ej-community-engagement-call-slides-june-25-2024.pdf>.

NJBPU Energy Efficiency Stakeholder Meeting - Video of Webinar

The NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) monthly Clean Energy Program Energy Efficiency Stakeholder meeting for July 2024 included a presentation by a guest speaker on Building Weatherization Technology, focusing on "Renewing Building Envelopes - Maximizing the Energy Efficiency of Common Residential Exterior Upgrade Projects." The presentation begins at minute 44:06 of the video of the webinar, available here: <https://tinyurl.com/2fsp87nj>.

NEWS RELATED TO EJTF ISSUES [covering 6/26/2024 – 7/25/2024]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

NJ Paves Way for Power Plant in Area Stressed by Pollution

As part of a "natural disaster resiliency project" begun soon after Superstorm Sandy, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) has been planning a natural gas-powered standby power generation facility (SPGF) in Newark's Ironbound Section. The gas-powered plant has been strongly opposed by environmental justice advocates and local government officials for years, as the neighborhood already has four power plants and other sources of air pollution including Port Newark and Newark Liberty International Airport. As required by NJ's Environmental Justice Law, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has reviewed the plant, and based on that review DEP has granted it a limited approval (available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/ej/ej-decision-pvsc-backup-power-facility-20240718.pdf>) with a number of conditions that restrict use of the

plant. The Commissioner of DEP has stated that, if all the conditions are met, the plant would actually result in an overall reduction in air pollution from the plant, but **EJTF partner** Maria Lopez-Nuñez, the deputy director of organizing and advocacy for the Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC), has serious doubts about that, pointing to lax enforcement of permits for other entities. Others have pointed out that after Gov. Murphy leaves office, another administration could allow PVSC to run the plant all the time to sell its power, which is what it originally wanted to do before it dropped the idea amid intense opposition. DEP expects to release a draft permit in August, which will then be subject to a public comment period, but in the meantime protesters remain vocal about not wanting the plant, and Gov. Murphy remains in favor of it (see news video linked in article below). <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/07/nj-paves-way-for-power-plant-in-area-stressed-by-pollution/>



Murphy Defends Green Light for Ironbound's Fourth Power Plant

This 5-minute news video shows those protesting the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's (PVSC) gas-powered plant for which the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has just approved a limited permit (see news article above), as well as Gov. Murphy, who states that the plant is needed to prevent a recurrence of the situation in which sewage was discharged into Newark's streets when the PVSC plant lost power as a result of Superstorm Sandy. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/murphy-defends-green-light-for-ironbounds-fourth-power-plant/>

NJBIA Files Appeal Challenging DEP Rulemaking on Environmental Justice Law

The NJ Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) has filed an amicus brief (available here: <https://njbia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Appellate-Brief-Amicus-NJBIA-A-002936-22.pdf>) in the Appellate Division of Superior Court, in support of businesses and labor groups that are appealing implementation of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Environmental Justice law. NJBIA states that it is not seeking to prevent implementation of the law, but is asking for the court to "carefully review the deep flaws in this proposal and, having done so, reject the rule not for all time, but as presently written." <https://njbia.org/njbia-files-appeal-challenging-dep-rulemaking-on-environmental-justice-law/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLES & VEHICLE EMISSION REDUCTION

NJ Transit Awarded \$99 Million Grant From the FTA to Expand Electric Bus Infrastructure

According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) website, it has awarded \$99 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds to NJ Transit "to build a charging facility with a solar canopy at its Meadowlands Bus Garage. This project will allow New Jersey Transit to shelter, charge, and support the deployment of battery-electric buses with renewable energy while increasing service and advancing environmental justice throughout the state." According to Gov. Murphy's press release, "Phase one of the construction will provide charging equipment for 67 buses but will install the infrastructure to expand the site to accommodate 130 buses in later phases.... Meadowlands Garage operates 32 bus routes in Hudson County, covering more than 6.4 million miles annually, and serving diverse NJ communities." <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240710c.shtml>

Feds Fire up Electric Infrastructure for Trucks Along I-95 Corridor

In 2023, NJ received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program planning grant, awarded under the auspices of the Inflation Reduction Act. Because of having received that planning grant, NJ was eligible to apply for a CPRG program implementation grant, and was just selected to receive \$250 million, along with CT, DE and MD, with NJ as the lead applicant. The funds are for "The Clean Corridor Coalition: A Proposal for ZE-MHDV Infrastructure Along the I-95 Corridor," a project that will deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure for commercial zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty (ZE-MHDV) vehicles on the Interstate-95 freight corridor. This article includes a 4-minute news video in which **EJTF partner** Melissa Miles, the executive director of the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA), speaks about how additional charging infrastructure will hopefully result in less polluting truck traffic, although this funding only represents a down payment on what will ultimately be needed. Gov. Murphy's press release, with additional information, is available here: <https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240725b.shtml>.

On a related topic, NJ and NY are planning to apply to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant program for medium- and heavy-duty (MHD) electric vehicle charging infrastructure on or near major corridors and ports. <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/07/i-95-trucks-electric-charging-stations-big-federal-boost-250m-new-jersey-delaware-maryland-connecticut/>

Murphy Administration Launches Year Five of Charge Up New Jersey

Gov. Murphy and the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) have announced the launch of Year Five of NJ's Charge Up New Jersey electric vehicle (EV) incentive program, which promotes clean vehicle adoption by incentivizing the purchase of EVs and EV chargers. This year, the incentive has been reduced for most people, however (see news video linked on [p. 11](#)). <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2024/approved/20240710.html>

Automotive Leaders, Environmentalists Blast 'Incoherent' EV Policies

In this 5-minute news video, both car dealers and environmentalists decry NJ's upcoming decrease in incentives for buying electric vehicles (EVs), elimination of the EV sales tax exemption, and imposition of an EV registration fee. All told, this will result in around \$6,000 more out-of-pocket for EV buyers. Those interviewed question how this will impact NJ's ability to meet the goals stated in its "Advanced Clean Cars II" rule, which "requires vehicle manufacturers to make zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) an increasing percentage of their new light-duty vehicle sales, ramping up to 100% ZEVs by 2035."

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/automotive-leaders-environmentalists-blast-incoherent-ev-policies/>

LAND MANAGEMENT/ AGRICULTURE/FOOD

NJ Schools Prepare to Feed 60,000 More Students Starting in September

The Working Class Families Anti-Hunger Act (available here:

https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2022/AL23/336_.PDF) approved by Gov. Murphy in January 2024, expanded the income eligibility to qualify public and nonpublic school students for free or reduced-price meals. The eligibility had previously been capped at 200% of the federal poverty line and is now 224%. This results in 60,000 more NJ students being eligible.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/07/expanded-eligibility-school-meals-60000-more-nj-kids-but-summer-meal-restriction-limit-numbers/>

New Jersey Department of Agriculture Highlights Summer Food Service

From the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA) press release: "According to the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) report released last year, New Jersey is ranked No. 1 in the nation for providing summer lunch to children from households who participated in school year lunch. In 2023, nearly five million summer meals were served to New Jersey children who qualified for the Summer Food Service Program. This year

there are 1,272 feeding sites and 178 sponsors for the Summer Food Service Program in the state. Districts with 50 percent or more of their students that qualify for the free or reduced prices in the National School Lunch Program can participate in the Summer Food Service Program."

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/press/2024/approved/press240718.html>



Jersey City Commits to Preserving the Brunswick Community Garden in Ward E

The Brunswick Community Garden, which currently has 125 member households, has existed for over 25 years on city property in Jersey City. Recently, a developer purchased a lot next to the garden and has requested that the city destroy a portion of the garden to reopen an alleyway that traverses the garden. To protect the garden, Jersey City envisions either purchasing, or utilizing its eminent domain powers to acquire, the portion of the private alleyway easement that traverses the Brunswick Community Garden. It will then add the land to the lot currently occupied by the garden.

<https://hudsoncountyview.com/jersey-city-commits-to-preserving-the-brunswick-community-garden-in-ward-e/>

New Business Tax Will Send More Money to Preservation Programs

This article points out that, even after the new NJ 2.5% corporate business surcharge becomes dedicated to NJ Transit, 6% of it will be dedicated to environmental, conservation and preservation purposes in accordance with the "Open Space" dedication of a portion of the Corporation Business Tax (CBT) approved in a 2014 Public Question amending the NJ Constitution (Article VIII, Section II, Paragraph 6). Of the 6%, the largest portion (i.e., 78%), "will flow into the Garden State Preservation Trust to fund farmland and historical preservation alongside the Green and Blue Acres

programs.... Of the remaining constitutionally dedicated funds, 12% are set aside for the remediation of hazardous waste, and the last 10% is split equally between water pollution monitoring and the removal of underground water tanks."

<https://newjerseymonitor.com/2024/07/03/new-business-tax-will-send-more-money-to-preservation-programs/>

RENEWABLE RESOURCES (other than Offshore Wind)

Cutting-Edge Solar Program Finding Home on Rutgers' Cook Campus

Authorized by the NJ Dual-Use Solar Energy Act of 2021, Rutgers University has entered into a pilot research program on the Rutgers Cook Campus that will explore the potential of agrivoltaics - the combination of agricultural production and solar energy generation simultaneously on the same land. The pilot program is a collaboration between the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA), the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC), the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Rutgers Agrivoltaics Program and the NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU).

"Outcomes from the Rutgers Research Program will be used to inform the establishment of the Dual-Use Solar Energy Pilot Program that will be administered by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU)" according to a news release (available here:

<https://investors.solaredge.com/news-releases/news-release-details/rutgers-university-selects-solaredge-technologies-its>) from SolarEdge, Technologies, Inc., whose technology has been selected by Rutgers for this research program.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/new-brunswick/sections/rutgers-university/articles/cutting-edge-solar-program-finding-home-on-rutgers-cook-campus>

DOE Invests \$9.5 Million to Study the Social Dynamics of Large-Scale Solar Siting and Permitting

From the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) website: "The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)... invested \$9.5 million in four new projects

supporting social science research that examines the ways that siting practices can influence public attitudes toward and permitting of large-scale solar facilities. The research will generate actionable insights that improve outcomes for host communities - particularly those that are underserved - and the solar industry." Princeton University was awarded \$2 million for researchers to "assess the potential for Community Benefit Agreements [CBAs - toolkit available here:

<https://www.energy.gov/justice/community-benefit-agreement-cba-toolkit>] - legal agreements between community groups and large-scale solar developers - to deliver tangible benefits to communities, build credibility in solar projects, and strengthen trust across stakeholder groups."

<https://www.energy.gov/eere/articles/doe-invests-95-million-study-social-dynamics-large-scale-solar-siting-and-permitting>

OFFSHORE WIND

Feds Give Final Approval to NJ's First Offshore Wind Farm

According to the Bureau of Ocean Management's (BOEM) website, "On July 2, 2024, the Department of the Interior announced the approval of the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind South Project (Atlantic Shores South). The Atlantic Shores South Project consists of two wind energy facilities (Project 1 and Project 2) located approximately 8.7 statute miles offshore New Jersey at its closest point. Together, Project 1 and Project 2 are expected to generate up to 2,800 megawatts of electricity, enough to power close to one million homes with clean renewable energy. The Record of Decision (ROD) documents the decision to approve the construction of up to 195 wind turbine generators." **EJTF testified numerous times in support of the project.** This news article describes the project and includes a 5-minute news video of an interview with the CEO of Atlantic Shores, in which he provides the timeline for the project. The article also describes opposition to the project by shore towns.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/07/atlantic-shores-south-project-gets-final-federal-approval-local-opposition-persists/>

Another Round of NJ Offshore Wind Projects Proposed

In response to the fourth NJ solicitation for offshore wind projects, three bids were received. Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind resubmitted its Atlantic Shores South project in an enlarged and updated form - the project was first approved during NJ's second bid solicitation in 2021. Attentive Energy submitted a bid to expand its Attentive Energy 2 project, which was approved during NJ's third bid solicitation, issued in 2023 with approval in early 2024. The third bid was a bid resubmitted by Community Offshore Wind, a joint venture of National and Germany-based RWE, for a project 37 miles from the coast. Community Offshore Wind had submitted a bid during the third solicitation, but that project was not approved.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/07/offshore-wind-developers-submit-three-proposals-nj-latest-bidding-round/>



New Jersey Research & Monitoring Initiative Makes \$4.75 Million Available for Projects to Ensure Ecologically Responsible Development of Offshore Wind

Under the auspices of the NJ Offshore Wind Research & Monitoring Initiative (RMI) funded through projects approved in NJ's offshore wind energy solicitations, \$4.75 million is being made available "for research projects focused on furthering ecologically responsible offshore wind development. The funded projects will characterize ecological conditions prior to construction and/or address impacts to a resource during construction. Proposals submitted should clearly and concisely describe what measurements, analyses, or tool(s) are necessary during the preconstruction and

construction phases of offshore wind development to achieve this central objective of the RMI." Information about the specific ecological and technological focus areas for which proposals are being sought is available here:

https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_00717.htm.

Remaking a NJ Marsh With Sediment Dredged for New Wind Port

This article describes how some of the 600,000 cubic yards of mud, silt, sand and other sediment dredged from the Delaware Bay to prepare for construction of the NJ Wind Port is being used for marsh and beach restoration. Such dredge material used to be considered as waste, and relegated to the trapezoid-shaped mounds of "confined disposal facilities" (CDFs) that may be seen in NJ. This article focuses on the restoration of the Abbots Meadow area, and includes a 2-minute video of drone footage of the restoration area.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/special-report/nj-adopts-relatively-new-wetlands-restoration-method-pumps-dredged-sediment-onto-severely-sunken-abbotts-meadow-marshland/>

CLIMATE CHANGE

GENERAL

DEP Receives \$72 Million From NOAA to Advance Climate Resilience Projects Across Multiple New Jersey Counties

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has received a \$72 million grant in Inflation Reduction Act funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Resilience Regional Challenge competition for projects that increase the resilience of coastal communities to extreme weather and other climate change impacts, including sea-level rise. The grant will be implemented by DEP's Office of Climate Resilience, as part of its "Building a Climate Ready NJ" initiative (details are available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/climateready/>). From the DEP press release: "The grant's funds will enhance resilience in many of New Jersey's most densely developed municipalities, commit resources to help overburdened communities implement

projects that protect against the worsening impacts of climate change, and partner with multiple organizations to empower communities through education and workforce training on climate change concerns."

https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0030.htm

New Jersey Signs Multi-State Agreement on Electricity Transmission to Enhance Grid Reliability Across the Northeast

NJ and nine other Northeast states have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU - available here: <https://energyinstitute.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/MOU-Northeast-States-Collaborative-on-Interregional-Transmission.pdf>) "to establish a framework for coordinating their activities to improve interregional transmission planning and development, which will enhance grid reliability and accelerate the clean energy transition," per the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) press release. This "Northeast States Collaborative on Interregional Transmission" is the first of its kind in the nation, with the goal of enhancing transmission ties between regions that will lower the costs for consumers through increased access to lower-priced energy, bolstering reliability during periods of extreme weather and system stress, and developing a strategic action plan for promoting the development of interregional transmission projects for offshore wind resources.

<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/newsroom/2024/approved/20240709.html>

Hoboken's Resiliency Parks Fight Flooding but Come With a Big Price Tag

The first 3 minutes of this 5-minute news video focuses on the four Resiliency Parks in Hoboken that look like regular parks, but have been designed with tanks underneath to hold up to four million gallons of stormwater. The water is held until it is safe to discharge it into the sewers. They have been estimated to reduce flooding in Hoboken by 88%, but have cost more than \$230 million, most of which came from the federal government after Superstorm Sandy. The last part of the video describes issues with NJ's disappearing marshes.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/hobokens-resiliency-parks-fight-flooding-but-come-with-a-big-price-tag/>

Climate Change Protest Unites Different Religious Faiths In Montclair

A march against climate change that involved diverse religious and activist groups - including the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair - took place in Montclair, NJ. Besides the UUs, Christianity, Judaism and Islam were represented, as well as advocate groups including EmpowerNJ and GreenFaith. They decried climate change as a moral issue, and also filled out postcards to send to their local representative.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/montclair/climate-change-protest-unites-different-religious-faiths-montclair>

HEAT-RELATED

Murphy Administration Releases Groundbreaking Plan to Better Protect Health and Welfare of Residents From the Effects of Extreme Heat

After "significant public input" per the NJ Department of Environmental Protection press release, the NJ Interagency Council on Climate Resilience (Interagency Council) has released the final "NJ Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan" (available here: https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/climatechange/extreme_heat_rap_071224_final.pdf). The Interagency Council was established by Executive Order in 2019 and includes 22 member agencies. According to the DEP press release, the Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan - only the third of its kind in the country - "sets 136 specific actions to be implemented by individual agencies (or across multiple agencies) to mitigate the effects of extreme heat, one of the deadliest climate-related hazards facing New Jersey residents [see the articles on p. 15]." Several of the focus areas relate specifically to EJTF goals and interests, for example: Urban Tree Canopy and Community Forestry; Worker Safety and Health Illness Prevention; Energy Infrastructure; and Urban Heat Islands. Also see the "Resources" box on [p. 2](#) for links to interactive maps related to some of these topics.

https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0028.htm

Bill S2422/A3521

The bill S2422/A3521 "Establishes [an] occupational heat stress standard and 'Occupational Heat-Related Illness and Injury Prevention Program' in DOLWD [NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development]." It has been reported out of the Labor Committees in both the NJ Senate and Assembly and is now in the Appropriations Committee of each respective House. Although workers and their advocacy groups are in favor of the bill (see the videos linked 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. It should be noted that the Worker Safety and Health Illness Prevention section of the NJ Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan's stated action to "Develop Workplace Standards to Protect Workers in Extreme Heat Conditions" has its status shown as "TBD, pending legislation."

Advocates Urge NJ Lawmakers to Move Quickly on Heat Protections - 5-minute news video

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/advocate-s-urge-nj-lawmakers-to-move-quickly-on-heat-protections/>

Workers Push for Heat Standards Amid Sweltering Summer - 4-1/2-minute news video

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/workers-push-for-heat-standards-amid-sweltering-summer/>

High Heat Bears Down on NJ, Climate Warming Faster Than Other Regions

In this 5-minute news video, the NJ state climatologist describes findings reported in the just-released Rutgers "State of the Climate Report" (available here: <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/State-of-the-Climate-2023-06-24.pdf>). The findings include that NJ temperature is "rising at a pace almost twice that as other parts of the country for a variety of reasons that are known and still being worked on," and besides direct results of high heat on health,

invasive species that now can survive through the winter also need to be taken into consideration. Also see Future Events on [p. 4](#) for a webinar on this topic.

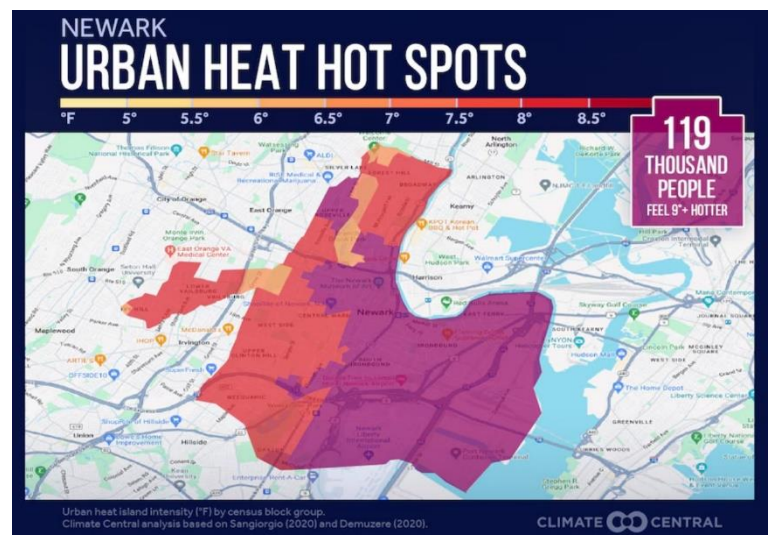
<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/climate-change-nj-heat-wave-climatologist/>

NJ: Can the Extreme Heat Impact Your Commuter Train? You Bet.

This article explains how both the steel rails and the catenary wires found on the NJ Transit rail lines can be adversely affected by extreme heat. See

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/rail/infrastructure/news/55089828/nj-can-the-extreme-heat-impact-your-commuter-train-you-bet>. A related 1-minute news video is available here:

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/nj-transit-braces-for-heat-related-problems/>.



The Strange but True Reason This City Is Always Hotter Than Everywhere Else in N.J.

According to temperature data findings recently released by the nonprofit Climate Central, Newark, NJ is among 12 cities in the U.S. where "more than eight out of every 10 people experience at least 8 degrees Fahrenheit more heat due to the 'urban heat island effect'" (see map above). In Newark, 97% of the population - 302,784 people - feel an urban heat island index of 8 degrees or higher. Climate Central noted that NJ was the third-fastest warming state in the country, and that the warming ocean along the coast and

increased development in parts of the state contribute to that rapid pace. In addition, "the urban heat burden is unequally shared, and linked to a history of racially biased housing policy. Analysis from Columbia University shows that historically redlined areas currently experience hotter summers than non-redlined areas in 150 (84%) of 179 major U.S. cities."

<https://www.nj.com/essex/2024/07/nj-is-one-of-the-fastest-warming-states-and-this-city-is-bearing-the-brunt-of-the-heat.html>

FOREST HEALTH

Utility Pledges \$500,000 to Restore NJ's Scudder Preserve

New Jersey Resources (NJR), a company "that provides natural gas and clean energy services, including transportation, distribution, asset management, and home services," announced a five-year, \$500,000 funding commitment to the Monmouth Conservation Foundation (MCF) through the company's Coastal Climate Initiative (CCI). The funding is targeted to help bring to life MCF's vision to restore and improve the Scudder Preserve, "a 90-acre, densely wooded, preserved habitat, which is home to century forest, grasslands, streams and riparian corridors, nature trails, several ponds, and a home" in Middletown.

<https://enviropolitics.com/utility-pledges-500000-to-restore-njs-scudder-preserve/>

Group Seeks to Make Jersey City Shade Tree Ordinance More Effective

This article describes a group of Jersey City residents who have come together with the goal of drafting a new Tree Ordinance that goes beyond the requirements of the existing ordinance. They were inspired by the pending removal of a mature, decades-old magnolia tree due to a new development project. Jersey City is already overdue on drafting an ordinance that complies with NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requirements; the due date was 5/1/2024.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/jersey-city/categories/news/articles/group-seeks-to-make-jersey-city-shade-tree-ordinance-more-effective>

West Orange Residents Speak Out Against Amendment Delaying Implementation of Tree Ordinance

West Orange recently (5/2024) approved a tree ordinance, but had proposed an amendment that would delay its implementation until 1/2025. Some residents feared that developers and others would take advantage of this delay and eliminate trees in the interim. The article discusses the ordinance and the value of the trees. Ultimately, the motion to vote on the amendment failed.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/west-orange/sections/government/articles/west-orange-residents-speak-out-against-amendment-delaying-implementation-of-tree-ordinance>

EDUCATION and YOUTH-RELATED

Grant Helps Stockton Educate Kids on Climate Change

Stockton University is the only educational institution in South Jersey to have received a grant from the NJ Department of Education (DOE) to establish a Climate Change Learning Collaborative (CCLC) Center; it received \$650,000. The other NJ institutions that received funding are: Ramapo College of New Jersey (\$650,000); Rutgers University - New Brunswick (\$324,699); and Monmouth University (\$311,276). Per the *BreakingAC.com* news release: "Faculty and staff from Stockton's School of Education, the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and the School of Arts and Humanities will develop high-quality lesson plans and experiential opportunities for K-12 students.... Experiential learning opportunities with community-based organizations such as The Wetlands Institute, Save Barnegat Bay, NJ Audubon, the Center for Aquatic Sciences and Sustainable NJ will connect hands-on experiences with content knowledge on climate change."

<https://breakingac.com/news/2024/jun/19/grant-helps-stockton-educate-kids-on-climate-change/>

Rowan U Awarded \$100K Grant for Camden Environmental Education Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded a \$100,000 Environmental Education grant to Rowan University for its project "Greening

of Camden: Educating, Empowering, and Enriching Communities for Climate Action and Cleaner Air." This year's EPA grant program focused on underserved communities, and Rowan University's project will use "urban greening initiatives (e.g., tree planting, nature-based solutions, and urban gardening) to help address the impacts of climate change and air pollution in Camden, New Jersey, an environmental justice and overburdened community" (description from the EPA website). <https://njbja.org/rowan-u-awarded-100k-grant-for-camden-environmental-education-project/>

Celebrating Cohort 2 of the NJEJA Offshore Wind Program!

In 2023, **EJTF partner** the NJ Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA) was awarded a grant for Offshore Wind (OSW) Workforce Training. The second cohort of their OSW program has successfully graduated. According to the NJEJA website: "This group of dedicated individuals has worked tirelessly to complete the program, gaining valuable skills and knowledge in the field of offshore wind energy. Our graduates are changing the face of renewable energy and ensuring that those from underrepresented backgrounds have a significant role in the industry." Uplifting photos of the graduates at the graduation ceremony are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/nvzp64bp>.



DEP Launches Fourth Annual Youth Inclusion Initiative Program to Empower Next Generation of Environmental Leaders From Overburdened Communities

From the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) press release: "The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection today [7/8/2024] kicked off its fourth annual Youth

Inclusion Initiative program, which partners with community-based organizations to give young people from overburdened communities the opportunity to learn about various careers in the environmental field through interactive skill-building activities. For the first time, participants will have opportunities to work on projects in their home communities, ranging from cleaning up parks to planting community gardens. Since its inception in 2021, the summer program has grown from 18 participants to nearly 80 this year, and from two host organizations to eight this year... [the program] provides exposure to nearly every program area within the DEP, as well as private and non-profit environmental organizations.... The program focuses on providing opportunities to participants, ages 16 to 20, from communities that have disproportionately less open space or historically lack natural lands access." https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0025.htm

In Mahwah, a Community Reaps the Rewards of Youth Activism

This article describes the "Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization" (MEVO), which grew from a high school student's club in 2008 to become a nonprofit organization that "has mobilized over 7,000 volunteers of all ages to carry out over 70,000 hours of environmental community service at over 450 environmental volunteer events in Northern New Jersey and lower New York State." The focus is still on youth, however, and MEVO runs spring, summer, and fall internships for college-aged students who want hands-on agricultural and environmental experience. MEVO focuses primarily on sustainable agriculture, with two farms and a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. <https://srhub.org/2024/07/10/in-mahwah-a-community-reaps-the-rewards-of-youth-activism/>

Westfield May Save Resources, Money Thanks to Project by Kean University Students

A team of graduating students at Kean University, with help from the Westfield Green Team, assembled a 220-page Environmental Resource Inventory (available here: <https://www.westfieldnj.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7776/Town-of-Westfield-Environmental-Resource->

[Inventory-July-2024?bidId=](#)), which has been added as an appendix to Westfield's Master Plan. Westfield Town Planner Donald Sammet noted that the resource can be used by the town planning officials as well as developers to protect and preserve the town's valuable resources. "Everyone can look to see where our critical habitats are," said Sammet, adding that proper information will "lessen the impact on our natural resources." <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/westfield/sections/green/articles/westfield-may-save-resources-money-thanks-to-project-by-kean-university-students>

Hawthorne Environmentally Minded Students Present: "Think Globally, Act Locally"

As part of an annual school presentation to the Hawthorne Environmental Commission, student participation in environmental education activities were showcased and local businesses and residents received recognition for environmental actions. The theme of the program was "Think Globally, Act Locally" by taking the initiative and setting the example on how to make a difference. Students presented projects ranging from "DownSpout Dynamo" to "Upcycle Fashion Dress." <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/hawthorne/sections/green/articles/hawthorne-environmentally-minded-students-present-think-globally-act-locally>

LEAD REDUCTION IN HOUSEHOLDS

NJDEP Commissioner LaTourette, EPA Administrator Garcia and I-Bank Officials Mark Billion-Dollar Water Infrastructure Milestone

Utilizing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds flowing through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the form of State Revolving Fund funding, and state matching funds, in 2024 NJ has for the first time surpassed \$1 billion in low-cost project financing for projects to improve local clean- and drinking-water infrastructure. The drinking water projects include lead service line removal and PFAS "forever chemicals" treatment system installation, among others. An interactive spending dashboard is available here: <https://dep.nj.gov/wiip/spending-dashboard/> - click on the "Drinking Water Investments" tab for a project

map and funding breakdown, including information on whether the project met "Disadvantaged" criteria. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0029.htm

EPA and New Jersey Break Ground on Project to Secure Clean Drinking Water for Irvington, NJ

From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) press release: "Today [7/22/2024], in a significant investment to improve water infrastructure in New Jersey, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia, Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and other dignitaries broke ground for a major upgrade to the drinking water system serving the Township of Irvington, NJ. The \$48 million upgrade, funded by the Biden-Harris Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will include replacing approximately 5,400 lead service lines within the Township's water service area of the Passaic Water System over the next three to five years." <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-and-new-jersey-break-ground-project-secure-clean-drinking-water-irvington-nj>

Commissioners Call for Cross-Departmental Collaboration, Information Transparency, and Systems Shift to Address Lead Poisoning in New Jersey

In a panel discussion held at the June 2024 "New Jersey Convening on Healthy Homes & Lead Poisoning Prevention" event hosted by Green and Healthy Homes Initiative and Southern New Jersey Prenatal Cooperative, the Commissioners of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the NJ Department of Health (DOH), and the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) described the collaborative efforts underway between their departments. One example is the "Potential Lead Exposure Mapping Tool (PLEM)" (see "Resources" box on [p. 2](#)). This article describes many other examples, as well as additional efforts in the works and also areas where additional efforts are needed. <https://www.leadfreenj.org/2024/07/02/commissioners-collaborate/>

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

Are There PFAS in the Water in Your NJ Town? Search Our Map

NorthJersey.com has produced a searchable database and map (available here: <https://data.northjersey.com/epa-pfas-water-pollutants-near-me/>) of water systems included in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) PFAS "forever chemicals" testing records, along with the results of the testing. This article describes PFAS, including types, health effects, national standards, and what NJ is doing to comply with the standards. <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/new-jersey/2024/07/03/pfas-in-nj-water-searchable-map/74280083007/>

DEP Presents Inaugural *Our Water's Worth It* Award to Ridgewood Water for Efforts to Conserve Water and Address PFAS

Earlier in 2024, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) launched its "Our Water's Worth It" campaign "to raise public awareness about the fundamental importance of our water supplies, the threats they face, and the steps DEP is taking to ensure all New Jerseyans have access to clean drinking water and healthy waterways." The first trophy from that campaign has been awarded to the municipal water authority Ridgewood Water "for its efforts over the years to conserve water and to protect public health by addressing PFAS contamination." It has worked with the towns it serves to pass ordinances limiting outdoor watering, implemented a social media campaign to educate the public about water conservation and also about PFAS "forever chemicals," and is spending \$150 million to rid water of PFAS chemicals. https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0026.htm

Supreme Court Halts Enforcement of EPA's Plan to Limit Downwind Pollution From Power Plants

As one of its last decisions in June 2024, the Supreme Court temporarily blocked enforcement of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "Good Neighbor" Federal Implementation Plan regulating emissions from power plants and other industrial facilities in certain upwind states. NJ was one of the states where the Good Neighbor Plan's "Group 3" ozone-season NOX control program for power plants was being implemented. Although the decision to block EPA's enforcement is temporary, pending disposition of a review in the D.C. District Court, the Supreme Court found that the states and industry groups that had appealed the EPA decision on the grounds that it was "arbitrary or capricious" would probably prevail. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/supreme-court-halts-enforcement-of-epas-plan-to-limit-downwind-pollution-from-power-plants>



Westfield Council Approves 'Skip the Stuff' Restaurant Rule Aimed at Curbing Waste

Westfield became the latest NJ community to pass a "Skip the Stuff" ordinance that makes it unlawful for restaurants in town to give out single-use food service "accessories" with delivery or take-out unless they are requested by the customer. The "accessories" affected include single-use items used with food and beverages, such as cups, lids,

beverage sleeves, containers, closures, trays, plates, forks, knives, spoons, chopsticks, stirrers, wrapping materials and condiment packages, but not straws. [Note from the Clean Water Action website <https://cleanwater.org/2024/07/12/clean-water-move-july-2024>: "Red Bank and Garwood joined those towns who wove a 'Skip the Stuff' ordinance into their 2019/20 bag bans. Now Monmouth Beach, Westfield, Aberdeen and Hoboken have ordinances and Atlantic Highlands has a resolution. Jersey City and Cranford are now working on ordinances. There's another dozen towns getting close. State legislation has been introduced by Senator Bob Smith (S3195). By passing local ordinances now, like we did with the 2020 bag ban, we demonstrate widespread public support for state policy. It will also help us get the bill to contain the best possible language."]
<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/westfield/sections/green/articles/westfield-council-approves-skip-the-stuff-restaurant-rule-aimed-at-curbing-waste>

NJ Lawmakers Consider Banning Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers

This article describes the bill (S217/A4666) 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; but not yet in the Assembly. The article states the views of those in favor of the bill and also those who point out challenges to its implementation, stating "The battle over leaf blowers exemplifies the complex interplay between environmental policy, economic interests, and practical considerations. While the move towards greener alternatives is driven by environmental imperatives, its implementation remains fraught with challenges and resistance from industry stakeholders. The outcome in New Jersey and elsewhere will likely shape future environmental regulations and the landscape maintenance industry for years to come."
<https://thedigestonline.com/news/nj-lawmakers-consider-banning-gas-powered-leaf-blowers/>

Princeton U Tech Spinoff to Test Microplastic Removal at ACUA Site

From Enviropolitics: "PolyGone Systems has announced plans for a Microplastic Removal Pilot Project and Educational Pavilion at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA). The installation will open to the public on September 12, 2024, at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority Wastewater Treatment Facility in Atlantic City." PolyGone System's website (<https://polygonesystems.com>) states that it "began as a research component of Nathaniel Banks & Yidian Liu's joint Architectural thesis at Princeton University. As part of their research, the pair analyzed the dysfunctional plastic recycling industry and were shocked to learn about the millions of tons of plastic that leaches into the world's oceans each year. Their thesis research ultimately proposed the development of novel infrastructure for the collection and recycling of aquatic plastic waste." The pilot project at ACUA will deploy its novel microplastic filtration technology, and the Education Pavilion will feature an exhibition about microplastic pollution and PolyGone's environmental mission.
<https://enviropolitics.com/princeton-u-tech-spinoff-to-test-microplastic-removal-at-acua-site/>

The Emergence of Zero-Waste Stores: How They Operate

This article describes the emergence of "zero-waste stores," which now exist in all 50 states - there are around 1,300 stores that are focused on zero waste or have large zero-waste sections across America. "Offering natural products that have an end-of-life plan, they are free of single-use plastics, compostable, refillable, and reusable. Stores achieve this through a 'closed-loop' system, where they reuse components in the production, sale, and distribution process, thus generating minimal to no waste." The article focuses on one such store, in Summit, NJ, "Sustainable Haus Mercantile" (website available here: <https://www.sustainablehaus.com>) which sells a variety of sustainably-produced products and notably has large containers of shampoo, conditioner, liquid soap, etc., for which customers bring their own containers and refill them at the store.
<https://srhub.org/2024/07/17/the-emergence-of-zero-waste-stores-how-they-operate/>

OTHER

Fulop Joins Protest Against Turnpike Expansion

In this 5-minute news video, Jersey City Mayor Fulop joins others in a protest in Jersey City outside of the NJ Turnpike Authority's public information session about its proposed NJ Turnpike expansion project. They point out that air pollution, increased traffic and the impact it would have on the communities were NJ's rationale for opposing NY's congestion pricing plan, and ask why the same standard is not being applied to the turnpike expansion.

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/video/fulop-joins-protest-against-turnpike-expansion/>



DEP Advances Liberty State Park Revitalization Program by Launching Pilot Free Shuttle Service

In response to public feedback, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is launching a free Liberty State Park shuttle service (see map above). The shuttle will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and select holidays, with additional service for some special events (additional information and the schedule are available here:

<https://dep.nj.gov/revitalizelsp/shuttle/>). The shuttle began operation on 7/19/2024 and will operate through 9/29/2024.
https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0027.htm

New NJ Budget: Supporters, Critics Weigh up Pluses and Minuses

This article describes major areas in NJ's new budget that was signed by Gov. Murphy on 6/28/2024 (Gov. Murphy's press release is available here:

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240628b.shtml>), including the approval of the "corporate transit fee" earmarked as a dedicated future revenue source for NJ Transit, which **EJTF applauds**, but would have liked to see the 15% fare increase eliminated (also see the article on [p. 11](#) regarding a portion of the funds to go to preservation programs).

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/07/supporters-critics-weigh-up-record-high-56-6-billion-nj-budget-details/>

Toxic Algae Blooms Pop up at Spruce Run Reservoir and 10 Other N.J. Lakes

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) have been identified in eleven NJ lakes so far this summer: Spruce Run Reservoir, Amico Island Pond, Rosedale Lake, Greenwood Lake, Mountain Lake, Dramasei Park Lake, Sunset Lake, Branch Brook Park Lake, Kirkwood Lake, Hopkins Pond and Pemberton Lake. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has a HABs dashboard (available here:

<https://njdep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/49190166531d4e5a811c9a91e4a41677>) that shows where they are being found. The blooms are caused by cyanobacteria and are being made more prevalent by climate change as it heats the water. The cyanobacteria rapidly increase when hit by sunlight when there are nutrients in the water. They can kill dogs, and in humans they can cause rashes, abdominal pain, flu-like symptoms, respiratory irritation, and eye irritation. If ingested, the cyanotoxins they produce can result in liver toxicity and neurological effects. A video of HABs in Powder Mill Pond in Colonia Park in Franklin Township is available here:

<https://newjersey.news12.com/harmful-algal-bloom-detected-in-pond-at-franklin-township-park>. Last year saw a record-setting amount of HABs in NJ, with several beaches being shut down.

<https://www.nj.com/news/2020/07/toxic-algae-blooms-close-spruce-run-reservoir-and-7-other-nj-lakes.html>

**Statement From New Jersey
Commissioner of Environmental
Protection Shawn M. LaTourette on U.S.
Supreme Court Decision in *Loper Bright v.
Raimondo***

From the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) press release giving DEP Commissioner LaTourette's statement: "Today's U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning *Chevron v. NRDC* irresponsibly threatens national efforts to improve and protect public health and the environment. Turning its back on decades of precedent, the majority decision in *Loper Bright v. Raimondo* disrespects and undermines the scientists, technical experts, and other public servants responsible for reducing pollution and

improving the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we live upon.... Despite this federal decision, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection remains steadfast in its commitment to improve and protect public health and the environment we all share. New Jersey is home to nation-leading environmental laws and leaders who respect the scientific judgment and technical expertise that have proved crucial to protecting public health, improving our standard of living, and conserving our natural resources. And our important work continues."

https://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2024/24_0024.htm

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.**

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

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.