A renewed call to our leaders in Trenton

This winter, against strong objections from Environment New Jersey and concerned citizens across the state, the Legislature and Gov. Chris Christie enacted new legislation that could more than double pollution entering the Jersey Shore and Barnegat Bay.

The new law repeals rules protecting environmentally critical areas—including lands that surround New Jersey's rivers, reservoirs and streams. These buffer zones are essential to keep pollution out of the rivers and streams that feed the Jersey Shore. Now those open spaces will be vulnerable to encroaching development.

Prior to the rollback's passage, Environment New Jersey fanned out across the state, informing concerned citizens and garnering media coverage in outlets including the Star Ledger.

In the months ahead, we'll be redoubling our efforts to restore protections to the waterways that feed the Jersey Shore—and working to pass new rules that crack down on the pollution that's led to more than 130 beach closings in 2011.

Protocols sought for the Shore

Unfortunately, development at the Shore is skyrocketing.

Monmouth and Ocean Counties alone lost over 16,000 acres to development between 2002 and 2007. This development is increasing pollution into our waters, ending up in the waters of our beaches and in the Barnegat Bay. Instead of weakening protections for the Shore and our other waterways, we need our politicians in Trenton to restore these waterways.

Developers are fighting efforts to control construction near our critical waters—construction that will mean more pollution in our rivers and streams, which will end up at the Shore. If they get their way, New Jersey risks losing tens of thousands of acres of natural lands and open spaces that keep pollution from entering our waterways.

Without these buffers, overdevelopment could increase pollution at the beaches where we fish, swim and play.

Our staff has been educating New Jerseyans about what's at stake, while lobbying key lawmakers and urging our politicians in Trenton to get serious about the pollution that flows into the Jersey Shore.

take action

Urge state legislators to crack down on Shore pollution.
Visit our website to take action.
www.EnvironmentNewJersey.org
You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment New Jersey or the Environment New Jersey Research & Policy Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNewJersey.org.

To our members

Last year, when Gov. Chris Christie announced intentions to remove New Jersey from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, I couldn’t believe it. We fought tirelessly to create this historic program, which cuts global warming pollution and funds clean energy projects.

And it’s been a huge success. Here in New Jersey, it’s already funded the largest solar and energy efficiency projects in the state.

When Gov. Chris Christie took aim at this successful program, we started a statewide campaign to defend RGGI, organizing media coverage, doing the research, reaching out to the Legislature, and informing the public.

So far, we’ve brought hundreds of citizens to the State House to lobby legislators directly and held rallies across the state. We’re starting to see progress. With your support, we’ll keep it going.

Doug O’Malley
Interim Director

Recent action

Offshore wind could clear our air

The environmental costs of our fossil fuel dependence are out of control: from the accidents and oil spills, to smog, to climate change. It’s time to set New Jersey on a path to kicking our fossil fuel addiction and keeping our energy dollars here at home to promote cleaner, safer alternatives.

To help get us there, Environment New Jersey has set a goal of powering 400,000 homes with clean, renewable offshore wind energy by 2020. Earlier this year, our staff met with federal officials to discuss New Jersey’s progress on offshore wind.

“Given our addiction to fossil fuels, New Jersey suffers from some of the most polluted air in the nation,” said Environment New Jersey’s Clean Energy Advocate Matt Elliott. “We want to see turbines spinning in the ocean, helping us reduce pollution and easing our fossil fuel addiction.”

The Delaware: Groups uphold fracking reprieve

Home to bald eagles and three national recreation areas, the Delaware River area also provides drinking water for 15 million Americans. Yet this is where some oil and gas companies want to start Marcellus Shale gas drilling, a process that includes injecting toxic chemicals under drinking water wells, millions of gallons of contaminated wastewater, and ruined landscapes.

Last year, a regional agency known as the Delaware River Basin Commission proposed opening the area around the river to Marcellus gas drilling. In response, Environment New Jersey and our allies mobilized more than 35,000 residents to oppose the short-sighted plan. Under increasing public scrutiny and concern, the DRBC recently tabled its drilling proposal, lacking the votes to ensure its passage. To date, the agency has yet to bring this anti-environmental proposal back up for consideration.

How do you want to be remembered?

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Fighting to save our historic anti-pollution program

When Gov. Chris Christie announced intentions to withdraw from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative last spring, Environment New Jersey began its push to stop the governor’s shortsighted move and defend the state’s critical clean air program.

One year later, as local leaders begin to line up in defense of this important anti-pollution program, we’re seeing encouraging progress in the effort to preserve RGGI.

A grassroots push for our cornerstone pollution law

This spring, more than 20,000 Environment New Jersey supporters called, wrote letters and emailed their state legislators, urging them to preserve this vital clean air program, which is on track to cut 84,000 tons of global warming pollution annually in New Jersey.

This spring, our organizing efforts culminated in a Citizen Action Day in Trenton, as Environment New Jersey joined forces with a broad coalition of faith-based groups, business leaders, labor unions and public health officials to bring hundreds of citizens to the capitol to voice their support of RGGI and meet with lawmakers one-on-one.

Participants drove home an important point: That New Jersey residents support clean air and clean energy for New Jersey.

“Poll after poll has shown that New Jerseyans strongly support clean air and clean energy,” said Matt Elliott, Environment New Jersey’s clean energy advocate. “Governor Christie’s decision to kill this program flies in the face of public opinion, hurts our economy and puts our environment at risk.”

A program that works

As the first program in the nation to limit global warming emissions from power plants, RGGI has helped show the nation that a program to invest in clean energy and reduce our reliance on dirty out-of-state energy sources can work.

Here in New Jersey, RGGI facilitated major solar projects, including an installation at William Paterson University—the largest project of its kind in the nation. Altogether, RGGI-funded clean energy projects have created enough power to supply almost 20,000 New Jersey homes.

Unfortunately, groups funded by out-of-state fossil fuel companies have launched a well-funded campaign to fight the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and convince Gov. Christie to kill it.

“We need every tool available to end our unhealthy addiction to fossil fuels, and we can’t let oil and coal companies dictate our energy future,” said Elliott.

“We’ll continue our campaign until the Legislature stands up to Gov. Christie and salvages this historic and effective clean energy program.”

Clean energy program benefits NJ economy

As a bill moves through the Legislature to keep New Jersey in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Environment New Jersey released a new study that quantifies the program’s benefits for the state’s economy, as well as to business and residential ratepayers, and for our environment.

RGGI is a 10-state program designed to reduce global warming pollution and ensure that polluters pay for their dirty emissions. Those payments are then invested in clean energy programs that further reduce pollution, implement homegrown clean energy projects, and grow the economy.

Among other achievements, the program has:

- Delivered $118 million in new revenue to New Jersey;
- Supported nearly 2,000 local jobs across the state;
- Reduced energy costs by $150 million for New Jersey consumers state-wide; and
- Avoided 13,000 tons of global warming pollution each year.

The report documents the benefits already realized by New Jersey after just three years of RGGI participation, and it models future benefits that New Jersey will reap by staying in the program—both under the existing program and under a strengthened and improved program.
Industrial facilities reported dumping 8.5 million pounds of toxic chemicals into New Jersey’s waterways in 2010, ranking our waterways 12th worst, according to a new report released this spring by the Environment New Jersey Research & Policy Center.

The report, “Wasting Our Waterways 2012,” documents and analyzes the dangerous levels of pollution discharged to New Jersey’s waters and ranked the Delaware River fifth in the U.S. for highest amount of total toxic discharges, receiving 6.7 million pounds of pollution in 2010. Among the toxic chemicals were arsenic, mercury and benzene. Exposure to these chemicals is linked to cancer, developmental and reproductive disorders.

“Unfortunately, New Jersey’s waterways are still open season for the state’s biggest polluters,” said Megan Fitzpatrick, clean water associate with Environment New Jersey. “We must reduce this pollution with tighter standards and restore Clean Water Act protections for all of our waterways.”

Clean Water Associate Megan Fitzpatrick speaks to NJTV about pollution in the Delaware River and all our waterways.

The Delaware River is ranked 5th in the nation for highest amount of total toxic discharges, with 6.7 million pounds discharged in 2010 alone. Visit our website to read the whole report: www.EnvironmentNewJersey.org.