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## Governor Christie Fulfills Pledge to Clean Up and Restore Barnegat Bay; Announces Comprehensive Plan of Action

• Thursday, December 9, 2010 • Tags: [Energy and the Environment](#)

Trenton, NJ - Governor Chris Christie today unveiled a comprehensive plan of action to address the short and long term ecological health of Barnegat Bay and deal with the cooling system at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant which has threatened the surrounding fish population. This plan fulfills the Governor's pledge to deal with one of his top environmental priorities and puts into action a ten point plan to clean up the Bay. Furthermore, the plan resolves the need for a massive cooling system at Oyster Creek Generating Station by closing the nuclear power plant within nine years.

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"Barnegat Bay is one of my top environmental priorities," said Governor Christie. "After years of inaction and the Bay's declining ecological health, we finally have a comprehensive plan that will prevent further degradation of the Bay and begin the restoration of this incredible New Jersey resource. The changes won't happen overnight, but the long-term environmental future of Barnegat Bay is now much stronger."

Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin explained that a large and diverse community of Bay advocates, including scientists, environmentalists, elected officials, recreational fishermen and area residents, worked independently and together with the DEP for the past year to pinpoint specific causes of the deterioration of Barnegat Bay and to find ways to address those problems.

"The goal is to restore, protect and enhance Barnegat Bay, which has been suffering," said Commissioner Martin. "We are dealing with problems that have been long in the making, so we have sought solid, long-term solutions that will restore the environmental health of this tremendous resource."

"The Christie Administration's guaranteed early shut down of the nuclear plant in 9 years is a win for the long-term health of Barnegat Bay, especially given the federal government and Exelon weren't planning on closing down the plant for 19 years," said New Jersey Environmental Federation's David Pringle. "The Christie Administration's leadership here with its increased emphasis on regulatory oversight provides a model that should be replicated at all nuclear plants, whatever their age."

Closure of the Oyster Creek plant, which is the oldest operating nuclear generating facility in the nation, will occur no later than December 31, 2019, according to an ironclad agreement signed today between the state and Exelon Corp, which owns and operates the plant.

Exelon officials have pledged to work closely with state, county and local governments to ensure an environmentally safe shutdown of the facility, which currently draws significant amounts of water from the Bay for cooling and then discharges huge volumes of heated water back into the Bay. An outside safety review panel will review plant operations, issue safety reports, and hold annual public hearings.

The Comprehensive Barnegat Bay Plan unveiled today includes the following 10 key policy provisions:

- Reducing Nutrient Pollution from Fertilizer: Governor Christie will sign legislation that establishes the most restrictive standards in the nation for nitrogen content in fertilizer and puts limits on application rates and dates in order to best manage nutrients.
- Requiring Post-Construction Soil Restoration: Require post-construction restoration to mitigate soil compaction and thereby reduce runoff of nutrients into the Bay.
- Acquiring Land in the Watershed: Use DEP Green Acres money and other funds to purchase priority sensitive lands in the Barnegat Bay watershed.
- Establishing a Special Area Management Plan: Develop a Special Area Management Plan in conjunction with the Barnegat Bay Partnership to improve coordination among jurisdictions in the Barnegat Bay watershed and recommend any additional required research to the DEP.
- Adopting More Rigorous Water Quality Standards: Adopt narrative criteria for all coastal waters, and determine whether a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limit is feasible for Barnegat Bay.
- Educating the Public: Develop an education plan for residents and visitors to the Bay, to inform them about nonpoint source pollution prevention measures they can take to help the Bay, such as altering home landscaping practices and improved maintenance of septic systems.
- Producing More Comprehensive Research: Fill in the gaps on Barnegat Bay research, including evaluation of how modifying wastewater treatment plant discharges could improve the Bay's circulation and recharge groundwater; establishment of the baseline conditions of the Bay; and development of a hydrology model for the Bay.
- Reducing Water Craft Impacts: Reduce water craft impacts by restricting boats from certain shallow areas.

The Barnegat Bay watershed encompasses most of the 33 municipalities in Ocean County and four towns in Monmouth

County. Its 75-square mile environmentally sensitive estuarine system consists of aquatic vegetation, shellfish beds, finfish habitats, waterfowl nesting grounds, and spectacular vistas, as well as a population of more than 550,000 people, which more than doubles during the summer season.

Over the decades, there has been a host of studies done on the estuary, and in 1995 it was designated as an "estuary of national significance" by the National Estuary Program. Ecological problems have long been observed, but identifying and quantifying the specific causes of its decline has proven difficult. Input gained from extensive stakeholder involvement complemented the scientific data and research conducted by the Department of Environmental Protection and other researchers to provide the basis for the Administration's action plan for Barnegat Bay.

### [Plan of Action: Governor Christie Fulfills Pledge to Clean Up and Restore Barnegat Bay](#)

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Press  
Contact:  
Michael  
Drewniak  
Kevin Roberts  
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000