

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

ICYMI: GOVERNOR MURPHY NOTIFIES RGGI GOVERNORS OF NEW JERSEY'S COMMITMENT TO REJOINING CLIMATE-CHANGE COMPACT

Trenton - Following up on his pledge to advance New Jersey as a national leader in addressing global warming, Governor Phil Murphy has formally notified governors of states that belong to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative of his administration's commitment to rejoining the regional climate-change compact.

"As a founding member of RGGI, New Jersey is eager to rejoin your state as a partner in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the health of residents, and growing the economy in our region," Governor Murphy wrote in a letter sent last week to the governors of nine RGGI states in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions.

The 2005 memorandum of understanding that established RGGI requires member states to agree to the admission of another state as a member. The Governor notes that he has instructed the Department of Environmental Protection and Board of Public Utilities to open discussions with the member states as soon as practical.

"As a recognized national leader on environmental protection and as a coastal state, it is imperative that New Jersey resume its rightful place as a leader in combating climate change and sea-level rise," said DEP Acting Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe. "At the DEP, we are moving forward aggressively with the necessary steps to rejoin RGGI as soon as possible. This process will fully engage all stakeholders and the public, and will be conducted with ample outreach and public education."

"BPU is happy to be a part of the process of rejoining RGGI and ensuring cleaner air in New Jersey and throughout the region," added BPU President Joseph L. Fiordaliso.

The letter follows the Governor's Jan. 29 executive order that directs the DEP and BPU to take all necessary regulatory and administrative steps to expeditiously rejoin RGGI, reversing New Jersey's withdrawal in 2012.

The Murphy Administration has set a goal of 100 percent clean energy for New Jersey by 2050, shifting from reliance on fossil fuels and other production methods that contribute to climate change toward renewable energy that will strengthen New Jersey's economy.

RGGI is the nation's first multi-state, market-based cap-and-trade program designed to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants. Participants allocate, award and transfer carbon allowances through an auction process as an annual carbon-dioxide cap declines. This encourages more market efficiencies, development of renewable energy, and technological improvements for power plants.

Proceeds from the auctions are disbursed to states for a variety of programs including energy efficiency assistance for consumers, renewable energy, greenhouse gas abatement and electricity bill assistance. As directed in the Governor's executive order, allocation of auction proceeds will include an emphasis on projects that serve communities that are disproportionately impacted by the effects of environmental degradation and climate change.

In addition to beginning the negotiations for New Jersey's re-entry into RGGI, the DEP has assembled a team to develop the regulations needed to move the state back into RGGI. The DEP will also schedule a public information meeting in the near future to gather input on state funding priorities for proceeds generated by RGGI auctions.

RGGI is currently comprised of Delaware, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

For a copy of the Governor's letter, visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/docs/letter-to-rggi-governors20180222.pdf>
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