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DURING EARTH WEEK, MURPHY ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES EXTREME PRECIPITATION PROJECTION TOOL TO HELP STATE BETTER PREPARE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

(22/P018) TRENTON – As part of its commitment to making the state more resilient to the impacts of climate change, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection today launched an online tool that will help planners, local governments, developers and residents better understand that extreme precipitation events are increasing, as confirmed by recent studies by the Northeast Regional Climate Center. Improved understanding will help decision-makers and the public take informed actions necessary to adapt to a changing climate.



The [New Jersey Extreme Precipitation Projection Tool](#) allows users to view a range of rainfall depths, with options for frequencies, emission scenarios and time periods. Due to increasing greenhouse gas emissions and a changing climate, extreme precipitation events are expected to increase in frequency and intensity throughout the century.

The tool allows users to zoom in to local areas and view a depiction of the likely precipitation depth that would occur with various storm scenarios. It also allows users to compare this projection with the values currently published in the NOAA Atlas 14 reference report. The tool is being launched during Earth Week. The global theme for this Earth Week is [Invest in Our Planet](#).

“While Earth Week is certainly a time to celebrate our planet and our environment, it is also a time to commit to making hard choices to adapt to a changing planet and become more resilient,” said Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette. “This Extreme Precipitation Projection Tool is an investment in our planet by helping to open our eyes to the realities of climate change-induced flooding and helping us make better decisions on how and where we build. This tool will help all of us make informed choices to ensure that development is able to withstand the test of a changing planet.”

The tool incorporates the important findings detailed in two [New Jersey-specific studies](#) by the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University and in partnership with DEP. The studies, released in November, found that extreme precipitation events have been increasing for the past 20 years and are going to continue to increase throughout the end of the century.

The studies found that precipitation expectations that long guided state policy, planning and development criteria, and which rely upon data obtained through 2000, do not accurately reflect current precipitation intensity conditions. By including additional data through 2019, extreme precipitation amounts are 2.5% higher, and some parts of the state have seen a 10% increase above the outdated data. The studies also found that precipitation is likely to increase by more than 20% from the historical baseline (1950-1999) through 2100, and projected changes will be greater in the northern part of the state than in the southern and coastal areas, with upper likelihood projections for some northwestern counties seeing the greatest increases, by as much as 50%.

DEP will be using the Extreme Precipitation Projection Tool in planning and decision-making processes and encourages local government agencies, planners and developers to use the tool when assessing needs for flood hazard and stormwater management permits.

Through Governor Murphy, New Jersey has become a national leader in efforts to reduce carbon emissions and become more resilient to climate change. Under Governor Murphy, New Jersey has returned to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, is moving forward with the development of offshore wind energy and is implementing policies to spur the sale of clean electric vehicles. In addition, the DEP has prepared the state’s first Scientific Report on Climate Change, worked collaboratively with other agencies to adopt a Climate Change Resilience Strategy, and launched the NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT) regulatory reform process. For information, visit <https://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/>

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