

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Delivers Climate Change Address "Clean Energy & Jobs to Power the Next New Jersey"

02/15/2023

Rutgers University

February 15, 2023

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good afternoon.

Thank you, Jeanne Herb, for that introduction. And thank you to President Jonathan Holloway and Rutgers University for allowing us to gather on the banks of the Old Raritan.

And I must acknowledge that my dear friend, Congressman Frank Pallone, spoke here at Rutgers on our climate and energy future Monday when he delivered this year's Gov. James J. Florio Memorial Lecture – which sadly we must now refer to as the inaugural *memorial* lecture, given Governor Florio's passing last September.

I was honored to give the Florio Lecture in 2020 – and I'm equally honored that Congressman and I are now both Florio Laureates.

It's also a pleasure to see Assemblymen Joe Danielson and Rob Karabinchak.

When this administration took office five years ago, we brought with us an entirely new mindset on a whole host of issues and challenges.

Whether it relates to our economy, education and higher education, health care, social justice, or our environment, we have worked tirelessly – and nonstop – to bring about the real reform that our state long-needed.

There were many examples across many issues where the old way of doing things had left New Jersey, and our families, behind. For far too long, past administrations were content to just paper over our issues, putting in place short-term fixes that would ultimately fall to someone else to deal with.

And through our efforts, New Jersey's communities are becoming more affordable, our economy is more diverse and growing, our schools are better funded, our state's fiscal standing is stronger, and more residents can see their place in our bright future.

And today New Jersey is also more resilient, more just, and smarter than ever.

Yet, we still have our challenges, and perhaps none is as existential than the challenge we face from climate change.

We are being hit by more and more severe rain events and oftentimes devastating flooding in non-coastal communities. Along the Jersey Shore – one of our greatest natural resources – higher tides are leading to flooded roads and communities even on clear days.

This is an administration that has taken the view that it is more important to do things that will better protect our communities from worsening climate impacts while building opportunity for all in our burgeoning clean energy economy, leaving the next generation of New Jerseyans better than the past one left us.

And our efforts to combat climate change are based on this core belief. We can't undo the impact to our families and communities.

We can't undo the years of air pollution that have impacted generations of kids with asthma and left our planet warming.

We can't undo the years of water pollution that have degraded rivers and increased health risks, particularly in impacted communities. We can't undo the rising seas and more extreme rainfall.

But we must and do govern with a deep and abiding belief that we cannot leave our kids and grandkids to fate. We must take this on. We must take it on now.

And we are.

Among the highlights ...

We reentered the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and rejoined a comprehensive and collaborative multi-state partnership to curb the carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

We set a goal of achieving a 100-percent clean energy economy by 2050. And to achieve this goal, we are leaning into offshore wind with one of the nation's most-ambitious programs.

We are investing heavily in electric vehicle infrastructure and helping get more EVs on the road through highly

successful incentive programs.

We put in place innovative new policies to expand solar, making the leap to solar power more accessible for middle-class families and, through our community solar program, opening doors to solar for the low- and moderate-income neighborhoods which had been overlooked and bypassed for too long.

We wrote strong incentives for adaptive building reuse and energy efficiency into our new business attraction and retention programs.

We authored a new statewide Energy Master Plan in 2019 and now, because so much has changed during the past four years, we are preparing to write an entirely new one for 2024 that takes technological, economic, and policy progress into account.

We enacted a landmark, nation-leading environmental justice law and are on track to have its final rules adopted by April.

We are charting a more responsible path for future development to ensure that, one, we build more resilient, and two, we build with long-range environmental impacts front-of-mind.

We became the first state to put climate education into our K-12 teaching curriculum to prepare our kids for the green jobs of the future.

And because of the partnerships being both forged and renewed with President Biden, his administration, and our federal partners through the Inflation Reduction Act, we can take steps, together, to not just position New Jersey for a stronger climate future, but ensure that the opportunities we create by confronting this challenge reach every community, including the environmental justice communities previously left out and left behind.

We have taken steps large and small. We have done big, forward-facing things and we have done lesser-seen, nose-to-the-grindstone work that doesn't make headlines. We have held press conferences and we have had personal discussions with stakeholders, on all sides, up and down the state.

These efforts have led to responsible decisions based on balancing laudable goals with achievable realities for a growing state with a growing economy. And I am proud of this record.

And I am equally proud of those who have played a role throughout and will continue to do so, and I must give particular shout-outs to Lieutenant Governor and Commissioner of Community Affairs Sheila Oliver ...

Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette ...

Board of Public Utilities President Joe Fiordaliso ...

Economic Development Authority CEO Tim Sullivan ...

And Governor's Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy Director Jane Cohen and Deputy Chief Counsel Lisa Almeida ...

And through them to their teams for their efforts.

At no point have we taken our eyes off the need for strong and forward-looking solutions. At no point have we sat back on our laurels and at no point have we ever contemplated that the job was done.

Because we know it is not.

And that is what sets up what we are announcing today. After many months of stakeholder conversations and policy planning, we are ready to take the next six big steps in our fight against climate change.

Now, let me make one thing perfectly clear at the outset before the right-wing meme-makers go off ...

No one is coming for anyone's gas stove. No one is walking into anyone's kitchen. No one is going to be forced to do anything, in any way.

I know there will be those opposed to our efforts who will spread lies and misinformation. And it does follow a pattern that those against reproductive rights, the right to read what you want, the right to live safe from gun violence, the right to marry who you choose, and the right of workers to organize would be against the rights of consumers to make decisions for themselves.

And that's what today is about – giving consumers more choices and more chances to join us in creating a cleaner, more sustainable, and more affordable energy future.

The first three steps we are taking today are ...

... Moving our target for a 100 percent clean-energy state ahead by 15 years – from 2050 to 2035 – and putting in place the means for our power supply companies to get us to this target efficiently and affordably.

... Setting a target of installing zero-carbon-emission heating and cooling systems in hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses by 2030 and putting money right back into the pockets of consumers who choose to make the switch.

... And working side-by-side with our natural gas utilities to tackle the tough questions and put forward a comprehensive plan for a future less reliant on the burning of fossil fuels.

And because the single-greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state are cars and trucks, the next two steps maintain our focus on getting more of the new and cleaner generation of vehicles in New Jersey's garages and on our roads by...

... Motivating and supporting the fast-growing electric vehicle market with reforms that will help ensure that, by 2035, the new cars sold in New Jersey will all be zero-emission vehicles.

... And using \$70 million of our state's proceeds through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to fund local-

government purchases, right now, of all-electric medium- and heavy-duty trucks and associated charging infrastructure.

And, finally, we must recognize that no matter what we do, past practices have already led to unequivocal and irreversible changes to our climate – changes that leave us more likely to see more powerful and damaging storms and, as a coastal state, more susceptible to sea-level rise.

So, to ensure that we are better prepared for what our reality is now, and that we ensure that New Jersey's future is literally built with a clear focus on resilience, our final step is to have the Department of Environmental Protection put forward the next round of flood resilience rules this summer.

Those are the broad strokes, so allow me to dig a little deeper into each of these.

We've already put our state on a clear path for clean-energy by requiring our power companies to buy more electricity from renewable-energy sources through the current Renewable Portfolio Standard we enacted in 2018.

But upgrading this to a Clean Energy Standard would allow our power companies to tap into an even broader set of clean energy technologies and credits which can drive down their costs – and, therefore, the costs they charge consumers.

Further, it would use our statewide purchasing power to further reduce regional demand for electricity derived from burning fossil fuels and further support clean energy development.

Doing this would have no day-to-day impact on consumers. And alongside both our current moves to build a New Jersey-based clean-energy industry and consumers' own desire for more energy-efficient homes and appliances, we can get to 2035 more affordably and with household energy costs well under control.

Now, this will require new state law. But, thankfully, no one in Trenton is more attuned to this reality than Senate Environment Committee Chairman Bob Smith, and I thank him for his partnership and look forward to continuing to work with him on this.

And that's important, because homes and businesses are the second-largest producers of greenhouse gas emissions in our state. And it is little wonder why, when nearly 90 percent of homes and more than 80-percent of businesses are heated by fossil fuels.

So, next, I will sign an executive order setting a target that, by 2030, some 400,000 homes and 20,000 commercial buildings – accounting for ten percent of New Jersey's complete building stock – be constructed or retrofitted with zero carbon-emission heating and cooling systems.

Electric heat pumps, for example, are an already proven and efficient home heating technology, and it is time we make them more than just a novelty.

Within this order will be a goal of making 10 percent of lower- and moderate-income and working families' and seniors' homes ready for electrification, bringing electrification into reach for many who historically haven't been able to afford making the switch.

We want to partner with our construction industry in getting ourselves to these targets.

And through the future proceeds we expect to receive through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and the federal funds currently available through the Inflation Reduction Act – which specifically offers consumers wanting to lessen their carbon footprint and lower their heating and cooling costs long-term incentives of up to \$14,000 – we can help more families affordably do this.

Now, of course, this all begs the question, "What happens to our natural gas utilities as we reduce our reliance on fossil fuels?"

That's more than just a consumer question. That's a question asked by the men and women who work in and around the natural gas industry – and many of those jobs are good, union jobs.

To be sure, we are not going to leave this future to chance. We started this conversation through the Green Jobs Council, which First Lady Tammy Murphy serves on as honorary chair. Now is our time to engage even more deeply with the industry and its stakeholders – especially its labor stakeholders – so our energy transition isn't just orderly but creates places in the new energy future for workers.

So, I will be signing an additional executive order directing the Board of Public Utilities to engage with all stakeholders from across the energy industry, organized labor, the environmental spaces, and the Governor's Clean Buildings Working Group, to take on the big question of the future of the natural gas utility.

There are going to be far-reaching challenges to be sure – from transitioning current natural-gas infrastructure to creating good, new jobs for those working in the field.

Look, we're not going to be the first state taking on these questions. Other states, including New York, Massachusetts, California, Colorado, and Vermont, are already engaged in these discussions. So, we also have a chance to learn from them to help us craft New Jersey solutions.

As I mentioned, buildings are the second-leading emitter of greenhouse gasses in our state. And we're not taking our eye off the number one source of these emissions – our cars and trucks.

To ensure our state continues to move toward making all-electric and alternative clean-fuel vehicles a greater part of state's landscape, I am today directing the Department of Environmental Protection to begin the stakeholdering process so we can propose the next generation of clean-car rules by the end of this year.

Pursuing this Advanced Clean Cars II rule would add New Jersey to the list of states already working to require that all new cars and light-duty trucks sold in our state by 2035 be zero-emission vehicles.

The Advanced Clean Car II rule would work alongside our current suite of cash-on-the-hood incentives for all-electric cars and direct assistance to homeowners, condominium and apartment associations, mixed-use development owners, and local government installing electric-vehicle charging stations to make a zero-emission vehicle more attractive, affordable, and accessible.

And allow me to be clear about something else ...

Yes, there are many consumer-focused reasons for us to put more EVs on our roads. But, I also think of the residents – largely African American and Latino – who live in the shadows of the overpasses and alongside the highways which were shoehorned into their communities, and where asthma rates from those years of breathing dirty air are many times higher than the rest of the state.

And to further supercharge our shift away from the medium- and heavy-duty trucks with some of the worst tailpipe emissions, I am also announcing that we will use \$70 million of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auction proceeds to do just this.

This is just one way that our reentry into RGGI is literally paying for itself.

Leaving RGGI was a failure of leadership. It was a fiscal failure. We lost years in the effort to build a more resilient state to leave our kids and grandkids.

Let me put it another way. In the years between when Governor Christie unilaterally pulled New Jersey out of RGGI and when our administration got us back in, we lost out on an estimated \$279 million. We've only been back in RGGI for three full years. In this time, alone, we have pulled in more than \$365 million.

This is real money. This is money we are investing in building a clean energy future. This is money being invested in making buildings more energy efficient. This is money doing exactly what it is designed to do.

Now, finally, for all we are doing to make New Jersey a leader in the fight against further climate change, we must recognize that years of doing nothing are already having a direct impact on our state and our families.

Just think back to the summer of 2021, when tropical storms Henri and Ida dumped, in order, unprecedented amounts of rain on our inland communities, flooding thousands of families out of their homes.

The predictions and impacts of climate change aren't theoretical to us.

And unless we take steps now to make resilience a top priority, we're never going to get families off the merry-go-round of flood, rebuild, repeat without untold upheaval to their lives and finances.

Prior to the pandemic, in January 2020, I signed an executive order directing the Department of Environmental Protection to undertake a broad review of our development and land-use rules and propose revision to modernize them because of the impending impacts of climate change.

These changes, collectively, are called PACT – Protecting Against Climate Change.

Since then, DEP has moved forward with new rules setting limits for carbon dioxide emissions as well as for reducing inland flood hazard risks and improving stormwater management.

And to be clear, requiring smarter building design, so buildings can literally stand the tests of time and water, is good for developers looking to get the most out of their investments, too.

We're now ready to move forward with the process of proposing the next round of rules to further foster climate resilience, including accounting for rising sea levels in our coastal flood zone requirements ... addressing concerns raised by FEMA about our current rules' consistency with those of the National Flood Insurance Program ... embracing nature-based solutions to support our resilience goals ... facilitating responsible development of our renewable energy infrastructure...and improving our environmental permitting processes.

These are what are included in the NJ PACT Resilient Environment and Landscapes – or REAL – package.

Together, they will make homes and businesses up and down our state, and particularly along coastline more resilient, so they have a better chance of surviving the next big storm when – and not if – it comes.

It's time to change our mindset from simply being "Stronger Than the Storm" to being "Smarter than the Storm."

And that is what our entire administration's efforts have been about. We're not giving lip service to climate change – we're actively engaged in this fight.

It's a fight that is helping to transform our energy infrastructure, the way we live and move about, the way we build, and the way we look at being New Jerseyans. And to be sure, it is transforming it for the better.

The ultimate goal of every New Jerseyan is to leave to their kids and to future generations a state that is better than the one in which we currently live.

That's my goal, too.

And it's a goal we can achieve by tapping into our offshore wind, our sun, and into clean forms of energy still being researched to produce our own, home-grown electricity more affordably and more independently.

It's a goal we can achieve by supporting the new jobs the clean-energy industry can create.

And it's a goal we can achieve by leaning into partnerships with the federal government and the private sector.

But to get to this future, we must begin building these opportunities today.

As I noted when I opened, we've never slowed or stopped for one moment in our efforts. And we're not going to do either now.

These are the next big steps forward.

I ran for governor because I saw a proud state punching well below its weight and doing the bare minimum for the sake of politics over people.

Over the past five years, I believe we've restored the balance. I've governed as I said I would. Work over show.

Results over words.

And together we have New Jersey moving in the right direction again ...

... The direction of a brighter, stronger, fairer, more resilient future ...

... The future our kids will inherit and continue to fine tune.

For their sake, and to give them the head start they will need against climate change, let's do this now.

Thank you.

Governor Phil Murphy

Statewide

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](/governor/admin/about/)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](/governor/admin/about/)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](/governor/admin/lt/)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency \(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/bca/)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(/http://drumthwacket.org/\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

[Affordability and Transparency \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

[News & Events \(/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230215a.shtml\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/news/562023/approved/20230215a.shtml)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](/governor/news/press)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](/governor/news/addresses)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Advice and Consent \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Appointments \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

[Social](/governor/news/press)

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

Social

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/scheduling\)](/governor/contact/scheduling)

NJ Home

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

Services A to Z

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

Departments/Agencies

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

FAQs

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

Contact Us

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

Privacy Notice

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

Legal Statement & Disclaimers

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

Accessibility Statement

[\(/www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

(//nj.gov/opra/)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023
Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000

(<https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login>)

(<https://tech.nj.gov/>)