



Environment Transition Policy Group

PREPARED FOR GOVERNOR-ELECT JON S. CORZINE

Final Report

January 10, 2006

THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY'S ENVIRONMENT

The Environment Policy Group wishes to thank Governor-Elect Corzine for organizing this forum to develop recommendations for a six-month policy agenda. The actions listed below would set a tone that Governor Corzine's administration will move quickly to expand environmental protection and stewardship in New Jersey. More than other issues, the environment is a bipartisan issue in New Jersey. Every governor in the last three decades, Democrat and Republican, has made environmental protection and stewardship a priority – but there is still more to be done.

This report is only a small selection of the recommendations that were considered by the Policy Group. In the attached addendum, the reports of our four subcommittees – Air, Water, Communities and Natural Resources – contain a wider plan of action for the Governor-Elect.

REDUCE AIR POLLUTANTS FROM STATIONARY AND MOBILE SOURCES

Implement The Diesel Bill Immediately. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor implement the provisions of the Diesel Bill immediately and have the program up and running by Fall 2006. In Fall 2005, the State adopted a law to reduce diesel emissions. This is an extraordinary step forward in reducing diesel emissions in this state. However, the timeline for implementation of this new law is uncertain. The bill does not include government contractors, an expansion which the Policy Group recommends you consider after implementing the law for the State's fleet, through an Executive Order that requires private companies with State contracts to retrofit their on road vehicles and construction equipment.

NJ DEP should also provide a boilerplate retrofit plan for fleet owners to use as guidance to help expedite DEP's retrofit plan approval process.

Convene A Carbon Dioxide Task Force By Summer 2006. The Policy Group recommends that you create a Carbon Dioxide Task Force to identify and recommend real and workable solutions and policy alternatives for reducing CO₂ from stationary and mobile sources. The task force should develop an inventory of CO₂ sources that affect New Jersey's environment and recommend the best alternatives for immediate action by the State, through permit conditions, energy policy and siting alternatives, lower emissions or other incentives to reduce CO₂ emissions. The task force should convene immediately and develop a draft report for comment by stakeholders by June 2006. This would include real thinking about the state's balance of electricity generation sources to reduce air pollution and to make a significant reduction in green house gases.

The State should evaluate other approaches to reducing CO₂ emissions and take a more active role, such as reducing mobile source emissions by committing to purchasing or investing in low-emission vehicles, buses and trucks for the State fleet. Additionally, a State telecommuting initiative would directly decrease daily vehicle trips – reducing air pollution and congestion. These actions will complement New Jersey's recent commitment to reduce greenhouse gases from power plants under the RGGI Memorandum of Understanding.

PROTECT NEW JERSEY'S DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Expand C1 Protections To New Waterways By April 2006. Propose by April 22, 2006, (Earth Day) and adopt by Labor Day 2006, by rule, a major portion of the DEP identified "Category One (C1) candidate waters" as published in a March 2003 NJ Register and a subset of priority publicly nominated C1 water bodies not included on DEP's list.¹ Fold the remaining DEP identified and high priority publicly nominated waterways into a work plan to update the State's water-related rules. Enact regulatory changes to insure implementation of the stormwater management 300 foot buffer on all projects adjacent to C(1) streams.

Update The 1996 Water Supply Master Plan. Expend the \$2.5 million, already allocated for the long-delayed update of the outdated 1996 Water Supply Master Plan, to do just that. Withhold action on pending and current water allocation requests until updated Master Plan, Water Allocation and other relevant rules (e.g., nitrate dilution and recharge models) are updated and implemented using modern assessment tools such as base flow watershed specific water budgets, Gibson bill Cape May / Pinelands research project, and the NJ Habitat Assessment Tool / Eco Flow model. Direct DEP to report by April 17, 2006, on statewide water allocation permit volumes and water discharge permit capacity and include a map of this capacity.

Integrate And Strengthen All Of The State's Water Rules. Propose by July 17, 2006, and commit to completely implementing by January 17, 2010, a detailed work plan to update, integrate and strengthen all of the state's water-related rules to ensure safe, affordable, plentiful water supply for the state's recreation, ecological, economic, and human needs. Most of the data needed to develop more protective rules has been gathered and is at NJDEP. In fact, drafts of many of these rules are already written and would require minimal additional work.

Widen Buffers Around Critical Streams. Adopt DEP mid-2003 draft rule proposal to expand stream buffers from 25-50 feet to at least 75-100 feet in areas that do not qualify for the 300-foot buffer around C1 streams, and update flood hazard maps to reflect current land use/hydrological conditions. In addition, amend the rule to enable comprehensive restoration projects or projects that would decrease existing pollutant loading or other impairments.

Draft Regulations On Commonly-Used Pesticides. Expand ongoing drinking water research and develop draft regulations on pharmaceuticals, commonly used pesticides, and other unregulated or under-regulated organic and inorganic contaminants, including disinfectant byproducts, perchlorate, radon and Cyanotoxins.

Increase Watershed Conservation Funding Through Water User Fee. The Policy Group recommends that you endorse a proposal similar to a bill submitted by Assemblyman McKeon and Senator Smith that would increase revenue for land and critical watershed preservation by \$11.2 million per year. The bill would enact a water user fee that would cost the average New Jerseyan approximately \$2.40 per year.

¹ Both the list of candidate waters and priority publicly-nominated water bodies are available on the DEP Website at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/cleanwater/c1special.html>. The list includes, but is not limited to, the entire reaches of the Paulinskill, Wallkill, Musconetcong, Ramapo, Wanaque, and Great Egg Rivers.

REHABILITATE NEW JERSEY'S POLLUTED WATERWAYS BY DEMANDING ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Dedicate Natural Resources Damages Collections To Restoration Of Natural Resources In Community Of Impact. The Policy Group recommends that the incoming Administration dedicates collected funds to restoration of natural resources especially water quality, and restricting distribution of NRD funds to the communities that have suffered the harm.

Make Use Of Extended Statute Of Limitations On Natural Resources Damages. Aggressively expand the implementation of the Natural Resources Damages program, including filing many more cases in light of the recent extension of the statute of limitations to June 30, 2007.

Clarify And Reduce Reliance On "In-Kind" Contributions To Settle NRD Cases. The Policy Group recommends ~~that~~ placing less weight on "in kind" contributions to settle cases, and impose the actual fines that have been levied for damages. This will stop the practice of fine compromise and/or reduction. The Policy Group further recommends that clearer criteria for "in-kind" contributions are developed to create predictability for businesses.

Implement The Lower Passaic River/Newark Bay Clean-Up Program. The Policy Group recommends that the Administration follow through on the Department of Environmental Protection's recently-announced Lower Passaic River directive.

Strengthen Raritan And Delaware Initiatives. Strengthening and expanding the Raritan and Delaware initiatives which revoke voluntary cleanup agreements known as MOA's at non-performing contaminated sites where extensive delays have occurred.

ENFORCE COMPLIANCE WITH WASTEWATER STANDARDS

Use Corporate Business Tax Portion Dedicated To Water Programs To Increase Municipal Aid For Storm Water Management. Increase funding to municipalities so that they are better able to implement municipal storm water management plans with an emphasis on urban lake and pond restoration as well as retrofitting or upgrading existing infrastructure to reduce pollution, as opposed to funding new infrastructure to control flooding or to promote new development. Funding options for this include creative use of the Corporate Business Tax that has been constitutionally dedicated to DEP water programs (e.g., \$8 million went to EcoComplex for peer review of outsourced TMDL's and funding has also gone to the Dept. of Ag.), permitting towns and counties to assess fees to fund this effort, and expansion of project types (including implementation projects) that qualify for funding under the 319 (h) grant program.

Propose Rules To Strengthen Waste Water Management And Water Quality Management By June 2006. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor propose rules to strengthen Waste Water Management and Water Quality Management Plans to require updating, assessment and management of land use-related water quality impacts. The Policy Group recommends adopting a much stronger septic rule and requiring build out and carrying capacity analyses before state taxpayer-funded infrastructure investments are made – a moratorium on approving permits on projects relevant to these latter 2 points should be in place until these 2 points are implemented. The Governor should also revise historic sewer service areas to minimize sprawl and impervious cover creation in less developed and/or environmentally sensitive watersheds; relate land use to sustainable water supply; respect

regional ecological considerations; protect drinking water supplies and watersheds through a strengthened Source Water Protection program including predicated all DEP grant and loan programs upon completion; and prevent consumptive and depletive uses.

MODERNIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Develop A Coordinated, Holistic Review Process For Permits. Creating a streamlined, uniform review process with a predictable timeframe would be helpful to the regulators, industry and the public. The goal is to have a holistic approach to view an entire facility with all stakeholders involved--the permit applicant, the community, the NJ DEP and others in the regulated community. Meaningful public participation must be allowed in the development and execution of all facets of this effort.

In light of our report's sections on smart growth, repeal of fast track and permit denials, the DEP should develop, with public input, a revised process for coordinating permitting for facilities and proposed developments that require more than one permit

To take air permitting as an example, many facilities have many different processes and emission units which require several different permits. Currently NJ DEP has no coordinated review process for air permits. This leads to the delay and backlog of permitting, which leads to frustration in the regulated community and the public, impedes economic development and growth and delays compliance, monitoring and reporting. This segmented process puts the reviewing public at a disadvantage because there is no one repository to review the draft permits and submit one set of comments.

End Policies On “Substantive Reliance” By February 2006. The Policy Group recommends that by the end of January 2006, the Governor end discretionary policies, which hold permit applicants harmless for the submission of incorrect or false critical information – whether intentional or not. The discretionary policies allow permits based on imperfect information to be approved.

Encourage Worker Participation With DEP Inspectors. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor support measures that would allow workers and their union representatives to participate with NJ DEP inspectors during investigations of facilities. The workers could point out potential risks to their health and safety, and that of the communities that are proximate to the facilities in which they work. This will not require any additional cost to taxpayers.

Implement Strong Enforcement Of Regulated Entities. This will help prevent business “bad actors” from environmentally exploiting communities. Such efforts in the recent past, as those done in Camden and Paterson, proved fruitful. Fines from violators should be promptly collected, which will help NJDEP fund itself. More vigorous enforcement of the State’s anti-idling law is needed, as called for in the recently-passed diesel emissions reduction legislation.

Grow Revenue By Reviewing Existing Leases On State-Owned Properties. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor enforce and review existing leases on state owned properties to make certain that they are set at market rate, and are being collected.

Oppose Budget Cuts At DEP. Despite broad consensus that DEP is an agency in need of an overhaul, the Policy Group urges you to resist any calls to balance the budget on the back of the Department. During the 1990s, DEP endured a disproportionate share of staffing cuts, which have never been restored – this has hampered the Department’s ability to effectively fulfill its mission. Budget cuts may also have an impact on federal matching funds, which are a sizeable contributor to the Fish &

Wildlife budget. For example, environmental and sportsmen’s groups worked with the current Administration to secure \$4.5 million for Division of Fish and Wildlife recreation programs that support the State’s \$4 billion dollar wildlife recreation industry. Support NJ’s multi billion dollar sustainable hunting and fishing.

TAKE ACTION AGAINST POLLUTERS

Adopt A State Polluter Pays Act. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor supports the adoption of a *Polluter Pays Act* that would require a ban on the use of taxpayer funds of any kind to be spent on environmental cleanups, except in emergencies, until the state has identified the responsible parties and compelled them to pay for a cleanup that is fully protective of public health and the environment.

Revive The Spill Fund By Creating A Feedstock Tax On Particular Industries. The Policy Group recommends that the incoming Administration revives and expands the Spill Fund by creating a feedstock tax on petroleum companies as a possible funding source.

Enhance The Natural Resources Damage (NRD) Initiative By Permitting Common Law Claims To Be Tried Before Juries. This could be accomplished through legislative changes that would clarify the premise that a polluter/responsible party is strictly liable—jointly and severally—for restoration costs and natural resource damage costs.

Restore NJ DEP’s Remediation Authority, Similar To Pre-1993 Levels. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor supports measures to restore DEP’s pre-1993 authority to select remedial actions at specific sites, similar to the power the Department had before 1993. This restoration of authority should also give DEP the authority to compel a Responsible Party (RP) to implement a permanent remedy, to mandate that the polluter conduct a “feasibility study” similar to the Superfund model, and to require additional cleanup without having to expend taxpayers’ money to “prove” that the remedies have failed. We further recommend that the Governor support a public-DEP collaboration on the remediation process, which include public hearings; the revision of Brownfields’ regulations so they are understandable and consistent; the prioritization of areas that need immediate cleanup, e.g., soil contamination in cities, groundwater in suburbs; the use of public health-driven cleanups; DEP more expeditiously using portions of the Corporate Business Tax allocated for cleanups; and support for extending the statute of limitations for complaints against polluters. The *Brownfield and Contaminated Site Remediation Act (BCSRA)* puts the burden on the person proposing the remedial action

PROTECT AND GROW OUR STATE’S COMMUNITIES

Oppose US EPA’s Changes To Toxic Release Inventory Report. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor oppose efforts at the EPA to weaken TRI reporting rules. The rollbacks would allow companies to report only every other year rather than annually, increase tenfold the amount of many toxics that can be released with only minimal reporting, and report reduced information on low-level releases of Persistent Bio-accumulative Toxins (PBTs), such as mercury and lead. Should the EPA successfully roll back TRI rules, we recommend that the Governor support new policies that would make the data more accessible and usable by New Jersey residents for environmental remedies.

Make Brownfields Redevelopment A Priority. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor send a strong mandate to his cabinet that Brownfields redevelopment is a priority that requires collaboration. The Policy Group also recommends that the State Implementation Plan include provisions which support urban municipalities' ability to address development concerns by allowing for assessment of impact fees, mandatory zoning and planning board member training. Support for public participation is a key element of such redevelopment. The Brownfields Redevelopment Task Force also suggests that that adequate staff support must be provided for their operation and positioning the overall Brownfields function where it can have optimal impact. We would also note that a pay-to-play ban for all levels of government is necessary to ensure that Brownfields are developed with the public's best interest at heart.

The State's overall Brownfields Redevelopment policy and integrative practices need higher status and stronger institutional support. (See the Brownfields' Task Force's memo.)

Strengthen Environmental Justice Executive Order Through Legislation. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor support strengthening and institutionalizing the Environmental Justice Executive Order through legislation. To begin this process, we suggest that the Governor make immediately available to environmental justice advocates the model Federal environmental justice legislation that he indicated his support for as U.S. Senator. New Jersey's first Environmental Justice Executive Order was signed into law on February 18, 2004, but will expire in February 2009.

Appoint A Chromium Master To Coordinate The Cleanup Of Chromium In Jersey City. Because of the ongoing problems with effective cleanup of chromium in Jersey City, we recommend that the Governor appoint a *Chromium Master or Czar* to coordinate the cleanup and that it be done with a multi-agency collaborative effort.

MAKE PUBLIC HEALTH A CENTRAL FOCUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Fully Implement The Occupational Health Registry And Environmental Public Health Advisory Group. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor directs DHSS to enforce the *Occupational Health Registry* reporting requirements to better ascertain the extent of occupational illnesses incurred by workers. The Governor's full support for the recently-established *Environmental Public Health Advisory Group*, overseen by DHSS, would help push DHSS to make this more than a "paper tiger." DHSS must be more cooperative with NJDEP to do more extensive health tracking, monitoring and reporting. Further, DHSS should make itself more transparent in carrying out these requirements and make such data easy for the public to obtain.

Create An Office Of Environmental Health. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor create an independent Office of Environmental Health. Environmental science under the NJDEP's Division of Science and Research tends to generate data to substantiate the policy positions of DEP, and not the residents of the state. The Policy Group notes that a similar independent Office of Environmental Health is operational in California.

Create Authority To Halt Or Deny Pollution Permits In Communities Known To Have Disproportionate Amounts Of Polluting Facilities. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor should support measures that give the NJDEP the authority to deny permits to projects that would add significantly to a community's pollution burden and/or is racially discriminatory, and which allow for expanded community participation in the permit process. Further, the Policy Group

recommends that the Governor issue an Executive Order placing a moratorium on the issuance of more pollution permits in communities that are already known to have disproportionate amounts of polluting facilities. Particular attention would have to be given to permit renewals, and such a moratorium would have to be implemented so as not to cause the random closing of facilities. While deliberating this proposal, the Policy Group had two communities – the Waterfront South community in Camden and the Trembly Point community in Linden – particularly in mind.

Provide Funding For Innovative Technology R&D. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor supports investment in environmental R&D from a stable funding source, such as bond revenue or the Spill Fund. New Jersey currently employs 100,000 people in the environmental industry and research. Such innovative proposals are reflected in a white paper, included here, which outlines a way to increase the state’s recycling programs and reduce air pollution by instituting the recycling of organic (food wastes). As a point of reference, the Policy Group would like to note that the State currently is able to employ significant support for research in sod, supported by revenues from sod seed technologies developed with State support.

PROTECT AND INCREASE NEW JERSEY’S RURAL AND URBAN OPEN SPACES

Repeal Fast Track Immediately. The administration should pursue the repeal of Fast Track and replace it with a carefully considered approach that adequately protects urban, suburban and rural areas, encourages appropriate development and preserves public participation in these determinations. Any initiative must be cognizant of environmental justice, and consistent with smart growth initiatives described below, and modernizing initiatives described above.

Ask Voters To Renew Garden State Preservation Trust In Fall 2006. Funding for Garden State Preservation Trust should be renewed at a level sufficient to keep pace with inflation, as soon as possible. A governor’s council should be convened early in 2006 to look at the effectiveness of the program and the priorities. Funding targets should include consideration for stewardship costs. Urban habitat and open space must also be safeguarded and given appropriate priority. We must maximize federal appropriations through Land and Water Conservation Fund, Highlands Conservation Act, Forest Legacy program and other innovative means to match state, county and local acquisition funds. Furthermore, it requests that the Governor includes significant dedicated funding for continuing the Blue Acres Program within GSPT renewal. This program restores natural floodways and removes the public from harm’s way along the State’s waterways, including coastal high hazard areas.

The Policy Group notes that it would prefer a referendum in Fall 2006, but that should depend on the number of other public questions facing the voters in November.

Direct DEP To Use The Shore Protection Fund To Acquire Vulnerable Coastal properties. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor direct the DEP to use the Shore Protection Fund to acquire vulnerable properties along the coast.

Guarantee The Preservation Of Open Space In Urban Redevelopment. The Governor should work with the NJDEP and legislature to ensure that a percentage of open space be preserved for every portion of land used for redevelopment in urban areas. The preservation and expansion of urban natural habitats is extremely important to the overall quality of life of urban residents—both human and non-human. Urban natural habitats should not be considered “expendable,” as is the case right now with the proposed building of a connector road from Turnpike Exit 12 that would dump into the

Trembly Point section of Linden and also allow for more industrial development in this already pollution-saturated area.

Close Loophole That Allows Preserved Farms To Be Paved Over. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor close the loophole that allows preserved farms to be paved over with greenhouses, aquaculture structures, and so on, by requesting the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) to adopt a regulation limiting impervious cover on preserved farmland. Second, the Governor should require the SADC to enforce the existing rule that permits landowners to restrict impervious cover when preserving their land. Finally, the Governor should appoint SADC members who support impervious cover limits.

STRENGTHEN SCIENTIFIC-BASED PLANNING PRACTICES

Move The Office Of Smart Growth Back To The Department Of The Treasury. The Policy Group recommends that OSG is returned to the Department of the Treasury. The Department's independence is important, because its perspective must be considered on a level playing field to that of the infrastructure divisions of DEP, DCA and DOT. Subjugating OSG to the DCA has infringed on the Office's neutrality, which would be solved by moving it to Treasury.

Create A Process To Streamline Redevelopment And Growth In Urban Areas. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor develop a process to encourage redevelopment and growth in urban areas. Environmental protection regulations must be based on sound science, and be equally protective of urban and non-urban areas. The Policy Group also notes that such a process should have special considerations for environmental justice. The Policy Group believes that regulations cannot be driven by designations under the State Plan and Redevelopment Plan, which is neither regulatory nor sufficiently protective of natural resources because data about those resources is not incorporated into the Plan. Instead, the Department should engage in natural resource-based planning which would begin with careful mapping of a full range of natural resources and ecological features. Once the resources are mapped, incentives should be made available for development that respects critical areas. In addition, incentives should be made available for restoration and preservation of natural resources. Protection of New Jersey's natural resources is critical for ecological and economic reasons.

Prioritize The Highlands Master Plan. When the Highlands Master Plan is adopted in June, the Policy Group recommends that the DEP adjust its regulations to support the scientifically-based Plan; if changes are necessary, DEP regulations should be subjugated to the Plan. Furthermore, the Policy Group recommends that the Governor appoints a liaison to the Highlands Council from the DEP and SADC. There needs to be a mechanism to help protect municipalities until the plan is adopted.

Reexamine Pinelands Comprehensive Plan. The Governor should continue efforts to re-examine the Pinelands Comprehensive Plan for areas in which natural resources come into conflict with zoning, as done by the Jackson Township/Toms River Task Force. This will be especially important in the "Elwood Corridor" in the southern Pines. Furthermore, the new Pinelands Forestry standards, which allow for ecologically based management, should be implemented.

Close The CAFRA Loophole. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor introduce legislation to reform the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA), including closing the "CAFRA loophole," expanding the program's jurisdiction to a watershed basis, and strengthening the law's protection of sensitive areas and ability to manage growth to protect water quality.

Expand Trap/Neuter/Return Program To Control Animal Populations With Non-Lethal Methods. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor support legislation or develops regulations that require the mandatory sterilization of animals prior to release from shelters. The Policy Group recommends a heavy emphasis on those that are designed to address the interest of both feral cats and wildlife, taking into account the protection of rare wildlife and public open spaces areas. 50,000 animals were euthanized last year in New Jersey, costing the State approximately \$2.5 million.²

PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES URBAN AND RURAL HABITATS

Adopt Critical Habitat Modification Rules To Protect Endangered Species' Habitat.

The Policy Group recommends that the Governor adopt critical habitat modification rules pursuant to the Endangered and Nongame Species Conservation Act ("ENSCA"). These rules would regulate activities that harass threatened or endangered species by modifying the habitat of those species. Species occurrence data and information system mapping would be used to delineate areas presumed to be habitat for threatened or endangered species. The habitat presumption could be rebutted by showing that the area was incorrectly mapped or is not in fact habitat for the species.

Convene A Task Force To Address Urban Habitats Of Endangered Species. We recommend that the Governor convene a NJDEP task force on preserving urban habitats be established with public representatives as partners. The protection of endangered species needs to be applied equally throughout the State, whether rural, suburban or urban. There is a need for better mapping and identification of endangered species and their habitat in urban areas. Changes will have to occur in the ways that Green Acres funds are allocated, endangered species habitats are determined, and that land use permit decisions are made.

PRIORITIZE ECO-TOURISM AND HERITAGE TOURISM

Create A "New Jersey Natural Heritage And Cultural Treasures" Designation. Create a "NJ Natural Heritage and Cultural Treasures" designation, applying to areas with unique and threatened environmental resources. These "treasures" should be based on the DEP's rich, extant spatial data sets including mapping in the Wildlife Action Plan, the Landscape Project, Important Bird and Birding Areas, Garden State Greenways, Heritage Priority Sites, critical fish and shellfish areas and nurseries, land cover (e.g. large estuarine marshes) and existing federal and international designations. These designations should be used to focus acquisition, stewardship, access, landowner incentives and natural resource based planning. Furthermore, the Governor should dedicate particular parcels of open space as "Forever Wild," for land so valuable in its natural state that it should never be diverted.

Institute A Moratorium On Horseshoe Crab Harvest To Protect The Red Knot. Protection of the Red Knot requires the immediate institution of a moratorium on the 2006 horseshoe crab harvest. The moratorium should persist until a management plan is developed and approved by a peer-review panel including shorebird ornithologists and horseshoe crab ecologists. The State should explore economic compensation for those who can document that they have been adversely impacted while continuing its leadership in the research and management of these economically important species.

² Governor's Animal Welfare Task Force, November 2004. www.state.nj.us/animalwelfare/taskforcereport.pdf

Widen Public Access To New Jersey's Public Lands. The Policy Group recommends that the Governor demands that the public is able to benefit from any projects spending taxpayer funds for passive or active recreation. The access provisions must take special note of the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas. A wider plan for public access to the state's recreational resources should include mapping and guides of potential and existing access points and acquisition priorities. Federal funding for widening access to natural resources is available under the Birding and Wildlife Watching Trails Program – NJ DOT has been successful at receiving these funds in the past. Wildlife watching generates \$2.4 billion annually in the State.

BECOME A STEWARD OF THE STATE'S LAND

Start A Statewide Stewardship Initiative To Increase Protection And Attract Federal Dollars. A statewide stewardship initiative is fiscally sound policy that will protect the investment of taxpayers and attract federal matching funds. Stewardship practices implemented on most public land in New Jersey are eligible for up to 75% cost share from USDA and USFWS through landowner incentives. New Jersey gets a smaller share of these funds than other States, and struggles to spend its portion. Programs such as the New Jersey Habitat Incentive Team (NJ HIT), that seek to improve coordination and cooperation among all public and private stakeholders, are critical.

Provide A Stable Funding Source For Land Stewardship. The Policy Group recommends that you develop a stable funding source to preserve the value of New Jersey's investment in open space and to ensure that preserved natural and cultural areas are accessible. One potential funding source would be the renewal of the Garden State Preservation Trust. The value of the State's investment in open space has decreased with overabundant wildlife populations, and the proliferation of invasive plants, insects and diseases.

Promote Non-Lethal Wildlife Control. The Policy Group recommends that you promote existing laws to reduce human conflict with wildlife. As Governor, the Group encourages you to continue feeding bans, and expand awareness and availability of tools to reduce interaction between humans and wildlife, such as bear-proof garbage cans.

Reward Farmers For Maintaining Forested Land. Support legislation to allow landowners to receive farm assessment on woodlands for natural resource conservation and habitat protection, under a forestry plan. Currently under farmland assessment forestry owners are forced to cut down trees to be eligible for the program.

Members of the Environmental Policy Group Who Have Signed on to the Above Report

Valorie Caffee (Co-Chair)	Organizing Director, NJ WEC
Tom Gilmore (Co-Chair)	President, NJ Audubon Society
Eileen Swan (Co-Chair)	Member of Highlands Commission/Former Mayor, Lebanon Twp
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Rev. Willie Anderson	Chairman, Camden Churches Organized for People
Rick Engler	Director, Work Environment Council
Andy Willner	Executive Director, NY/NJ Baykeeper
Cate Litvack	Executive Director, Crossroads of the American Revolution Association, Inc.
Jeff Tittel	Chapter Director, Sierra Club of New Jersey
Sherry Ramsey	Humane Society of the U.S.
Tom Fote	Legislative Director, Jersey Coast Anglers Association
Bill Sheehan	Hackensack Riverkeeper
Dr. Stephen J. Souza	President, Princeton Hydro, LLC
Ella Filippone	Executive Director, Passaic River Coalition
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