

COMMUNITY VOICES



PRIORITY CLIMATE MITIGATION INSIGHTS FROM NEW JERSEY'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVOCATES

Over the last seven years the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prioritized engagement with environmental justice (EJ) advocates and communities to inform its greenhouse gas reduction efforts. We reviewed over 45 sources of comments regarding climate mitigation and developed a high level summary below. The summary is not meant to be all inclusive or representative of all viewpoints. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of what we've heard and a starting point for further discussion.



EQUITY & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- **Tailor emission reduction solutions to the unique needs of each community.** Give communities ownership of climate action, fostering local involvement in creating sustainable, equitable solutions that 'cross sectors.'
- **Focus on reducing risks for the most vulnerable populations** to create a "trickle-up" effect that benefits everyone.
- **Center EJ communities in decision-making**, ensuring those most burdened by pollution are prioritized in decarbonization efforts.
- **Pursue a process of informed, pre-consent for technological investments**, ensuring communities are aware of costs, health impacts, and infrastructure implications.



TRANSPORTATION

- **Focus on electrifying fleets, incentivizing micromobility** (like e-bikes and scooters), **halting highway expansions**, and **addressing NJ Transit's low number of electric buses**.
- **Expand public transit service, reliability, and safe walking and biking infrastructure**.
- **Focus on electrification of port equipment and truck fleets, creating 'zero-emissions zones'**.



ELECTRIC GENERATION

- **Ensure an affordable, fair transition to clean energy** for all New Jersey residents, especially low-income communities and renters.
- **Expand electrification incentive programs** for low-income households, including a "whole home" approach that both retrofits older homes and ensures low-income renter households are not displaced by cost increases.
- **Eliminate power sector impacts on low-income and minority communities and transition to renewable energy** while rejecting harmful, so called "clean" technologies like carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS/CCS) and hydrogen co-firing as they perpetuate fossil fuel use and increase co-pollutants.
- Incinerators (which burn garbage) are also seen as harmful energy sources that disproportionately affect EJ communities, with higher emissions of toxic pollutants like mercury and lead. **NJ should disqualify waste incinerators from Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)** and better address their negative health impacts.
- **Prioritize zero-emission technologies and rapidly phase out fossil fuels**.
- **Mandate reductions of co-pollutants from power plants in EJ communities**.



WASTE

- **Support zero-waste strategies to reduce waste incineration and pollution**. High-priority actions include banning new incinerator construction, strengthening enforcement of permit violations, and incentivizing and lowering regulatory hurdles for community composting.
- **Incentivize waste reduction and 'circular economy' programs** to improve health, create jobs, and reduce energy usage.