

# Overview of Draft Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan Transcript

April 29, 2024, 5:30-6:30 PM

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 0:03**

Okay, we'll get started.

Hi, everyone. My name is Shamay, and I'm one of the many colleagues here at the Department of Environmental Protection. I'm really happy to have you all here on this call with us today.

So, I'm going to start with a few basic housekeeping items. For one, this meeting is being recorded. To minimize any disruptions, we've muted all participants during the presentation portion of this meeting.

At the end of the meeting, we'll allow you to unmute yourself, or we'll unmute you, to provide verbal comments.

We have some people who signed up to provide comment during the registration of this event, so we'll read through those list of names first, and if we have the opportunity at the end, if time permits, we will allow others to provide comment and we'll— you can use the raised hand function if there's time and we'll call on those folks.

Shortly after the meeting concludes, we'll post the recording, transcriptions, and meeting slides on our web page.

We encourage you to complete the online comments and suggestion survey if you haven't already. It's about the Extreme Heat RAP to give us more detailed feedback, and I encourage you to take this when the webinar concludes.

And I'll now turn this presentation over to the Chief Resilience Officer, Nick.

**AN Angarone, Nick [DEP] 1:13**

Good evening, everybody. I'm Nick Angarone, New Jersey's Chief Resilience Officer.

I'm going to quickly provide some background on how this plan came to be before we move into the details of the plan itself.

This all started with Executive Order 89, which was signed by Governor Murphy in October of 2019. This EO did a number of important things, not the least of which was establishing the position of Chief Resilience Officer. It also established an office at DEP to support the work of the Chief Resilience Officer, now known as the Office of Climate Resilience.

Perhaps most importantly, for the first time, the governor made clear that it was the policy of the State of New Jersey that executive branch departments and agencies should take proactive and coordinated efforts to protect public health and safety and to promote and protect the physical, economic, and social vitality and resilience of New Jersey's communities from the current and anticipated impacts of climate change.

Go ahead, slide. There we go.

Executive Order 89 also established the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, known by us as the Interagency Council or IAC for short, to coordinate the efforts of executive branch departments and agencies.

Go ahead.

**AN** **AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP]** 2:34

Oops.

**AN** **Angarone, Nick [DEP]** 2:37

Thank you.

When it was first established, the Interagency Council consisted of 17 executive branch agencies and departments. Now we're up to 22.

Go ahead. To ensure that the Council was in a position to develop a resilience strategy that adequately addressed all of the impacts we face, EO 89 mandated that DEP develop a Scientific Report on Climate Change. Go ahead.

That report was issued in June of 2020, and it brought the global issue of climate change to our backyards with New Jersey-specific information. We often think about that the destruction caused by storms such as Sandy and Ida when thinking about climate change, but we need to think about the impacts much more broadly. The Scientific Report does that.

EO 89 recognized that climate science is constantly evolving, and so DEP is required to update this report at least every two years. Since the report's original release we've released updated precipitation studies as well as an addendum on climate impacts to human health and communities. We're also expecting to update New Jersey's sea-level rise projections in the coming year.

If you're interested in gaining a better understanding of all the impacts of climate change in New Jersey, I highly recommend going to [climatechange.nj.gov](https://climatechange.nj.gov). There, you can find our most recent release, a StoryMap version of the Scientific Report, that's easier to navigate and more approachable than the larger report.

With the Scientific Report in hand, the Interagency Council took to work developing New Jersey's Statewide Climate Change Resilience Strategy.

Released in 2021, the Strategy is a policy framework that includes forward looking state policies that address some of our vulnerabilities to climate impacts and help us strengthen resilience in New Jersey. This document has been the guiding force of New Jersey's resilience work.

One of the most important things this strategy did was define resilience for New Jersey. That definition, displayed here, is really a melding of resilience and adaptation terms, indicating that we're not just bouncing back but bouncing forward. Go ahead.

There are six priority areas that make up the Strategy, displayed here. Across all priority areas, there are 127 recommendations for the state as a whole. I hope you can see that these priority areas recognize a broad definition of resilience and types of actions necessary.

Importantly, the Resilience Strategy provides a high-level foundational policy framework and to guide us in advancing our vision for what a resilient New Jersey would look like. With this framework in hand, state agencies now have a guiding force to take concrete action to make that vision a reality. Which brings us to today.

The Draft Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan, or Extreme Heat RAP, is a follow-up to the Resilience Strategy. The RAP lays out implementable actions that agencies are taking, will take, and should take to advance New Jersey's climate resilience. We are primarily concerned with addressing the effects heat will have on the state's policies, programs, and decision-making consistent with the resilience policy.

I'm going to turn over the presentation now to our Deputy Chief Resilience Officer, Nathaly Agosto Filión, to share more about the Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan.

**AN** AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 6:09

Awesome. Thank you, Nick.

Good evening, everyone. My name is Nathaly Agosto Filión, and I have about 20 minutes of remarks that basically provides a little bit of context on extreme heat as an issue in New Jersey and then runs through the plan at a high level before we'll open up for comments.

So let's start with a brief understanding of why we decided to focus on extreme heat. There are two primary reasons. The first is that the Resilience Strategy was rather limited in the discussion of extreme heat when it was first developed, and second is extreme heat is one of the deadliest climate impacts that we are already facing. If you stepped outside around the lunch hour today, then you, like me, were sweating at the last few days of April as if it was early June or even July.

Extreme heat is defined as a high heat— a period of high heat with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two or three days. And with climate change, we are expecting more extreme heat events, more frequently, impacting more areas, and potentially lasting longer.

Temperature increases are felt more strongly in New Jersey, in part because of a large number of urbanized areas in our state, which contribute to the urban heat island effect.

Here we see the history of average annual temperatures in New Jersey. Each bar represents the average temperature for that year, with blue-toned bars indicating a cooler-than-average year and red-toned bars indicating a warmer-than average-year. You can clearly see a pattern of significantly hotter average temperatures as we move into the 21st century. In fact, 15 of the 20 hottest years on record have occurred since 2000, and the summer of 2022 was ranked as the third hottest on record since our record keeping began 130 plus years ago in 1895.

And as I said previously, the trends expected to continue. So in terms of heat, it's less about, "how do we prevent this," and much more about "how do we prepare ourselves for these conditions?"

Now, as Nick mentioned, the Human Health and Communities Addendum to the Scientific Report has given us a really great understanding of how extreme heat directly and indirectly affects the health of New Jerseyans.

Extreme heat is dangerous to human health, because, under prolonged excessive heat, the bodies built-in innate systems regulating temperature can become ineffective. And extreme heat acts as a threat multiplier, so that folks that are already vulnerable from cardiovascular issues, or have preexisting conditions, or maybe are taking certain medications that impact the body's ability to regulate its temperature. In those situations, we may lead to increased heat-related illness and even mortality.

So who is at risk? When it comes to extreme heat: the children, the elderly, individuals with chronic health conditions, people who work outside. These are among the most vulnerable folks to the impacts of extreme heat.

In the case of children under four, their bodies are still developing and still developing the abilities to regulate temperature. They also tend to spend more time outdoors than adults.

Older adults are more likely to have preexisting conditions. They may be taking medication that makes them more susceptible to extreme heat conditions, and, in many cases, they may be more socially isolated and potentially unable to get around if they have limited mobility challenges.

Folks in lower income areas may not have access to the mitigating factors to help deal with extreme heat events, such as air conditioning.

Outdoor workers and athletes spend a good amount of time outdoors for their livelihoods.

And even people who are pregnant and breastfeeding, even though those conditions are temporary in nature, they are much more susceptible to the issues of extreme heat, again, because the body's ability to temperature regulate are impacted by being pregnant or by breastfeeding and more prone to dehydration.

Now, I don't want to gloss over the fact that heat waves can have a significant effect on mental health. Prolonged exposure, especially when you have limited access to cooling options, can lead to many different kinds of impacts on mental health and physical health. High nighttime temperatures can disrupt sleep patterns, contributing to anxiety and mood swings and fatigue, difficulty concentrating in our schools. Individuals may need to limit their activities and social interactions outdoors, which can, in turn, lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness and sadness and other things like that.

So, let's be clear. Extreme heat impacts everything, not just the health—the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and the roads we drive on, which underscores why we're taking this effort through the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience. We need action across every sector and every agency in order to become more resilient to extreme heat and its impacts.

So, ultimately, our resilience action plans are meant to be implementing actions, and this screen shows a variety of the kinds of outcomes that we're striving for. We want to build New Jersey's

resilience and ensure that resources are flowing to the folks most at need and doing so in a variety of ways.

Now, I want to draw people's attention to the fact that we are very eager for your feedback on the plan itself—how we can make improvements, how we can make it clearer, how we can make it more implementable. And this plan is accompanied by a comments and suggestions form. So the same exact page that you all navigated to to register for this webinar is where you can find that comments and suggestions form. We'll be, as Shamay indicated earlier, linking to the slides for this presentation and the recording of this webinar shortly.

Early in the year, we distributed a feedback survey form, asking New Jerseyans to help us understand how they're impacted by extreme heat. I won't go through these in detail, but I wanted to give a little bit of context of what we already know from the general public, are their needs and wants related to this issue.

This slide in particular sort of shows how individuals are dealing with— both at home in the workplace in terms of their commutes and how they get to and from places as well as the, you know, most commonly cited strategies: drinking water, taking more breaks, seeking shade, et cetera.

In this slide, we know that heat impacts the costs that we face on a day to day basis, degree of discomfort that people are facing as going through their day-to-day lives, and then just issues of environmental conservation came up among the population of survey respondents, which was nearly 4,000 people.

There are questions in the survey that asked people about the top concerns and how those might trigger other threats and challenges, which are summarized in this slide. So, people were concerned about the cost of air conditioning, about the health of their loved ones as well as themselves, being able to find shade, having to work in excessive heat conditions, and then, related to the cost of air conditioning, just having limited access to air conditioning. And other threats that were mentioned include ecosystems, wildlife, air quality, crop production, risk of wildfire, drinking water quality and drought.

While extreme heat is an issue, we do recognize that there are a number of amenities in our communities that help us combat extreme heat, and so we asked people to identify what are the most common things that are helping in this instance as well as what they wish existed in their communities to sort of make us even more prepared. For example, people wanted to be able to access free Wi-Fi and electricity and recreational and community-building events and free water stations and children activities in the kinds of centers, cooling centers, that might be activated during extreme heat events.

One crucial strategy, as I mentioned, is the activation of cooling centers. Some communities have them established, others do not. There's room for enhancing these spaces to maximize the benefits to the community and to make them more numerous.

So, looking forward, our hope is that this plan can help address the ways in which the jurisdictional authority of the state agencies that make up the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience are able to meet the needs of New Jerseyans relative to this challenge.

So, before moving on, and I think I may have missed a slide there, so I apologize. This is out of order. My bad.

One thing that we did want to make sure everyone that joined these webinars is aware of is that, as we were developing this plan, the need for outreach, for education, for building the awareness around extreme heat as a challenge in the state kept coming up as a theme. And so we developed Heat Hub NJ as a user friendly online resource to help the public better understand, and become more resilient to, the impacts of extreme heat.

And so, to help folks get a sense for the plan, as you're preparing your comments and suggestions and improvements for how, you know, state agencies can be doing this better, we prepared the plan, which is available on the website that you used, again, to register for this webinar.

It tracks the Climate Change Resilience Strategy, or foundational policy framework, and uses that same overarching framework. So, as you'll see, when we refer to Priority One, Build Resilient and Healthy Communities, those are the main priorities of our Strategy. And so this plan is directly linked back to those efforts.

Now, I'm going to go through and talk about the various components of this plan. Let's see how I'm doing on time. Still okay.

This is— Priority One is the bulk of the plan. The concepts and activities associated with Building Resilient and Healthy Communities are really the majority of the actions within the Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan, which sometimes I'll call RAP for short.

So, when it comes to focus area related to emergency preparedness and response, we recognize that state, county governments— state and county and municipal governments are proactively addressing natural hazards through their comprehensive hazard mitigation plans and that these plans not only assess vulnerabilities and emergency response capabilities, but also implement strategies like planning and coordinating communications and building power redundancy at critical facilities.

Some of these sections are longer than others, so what you'll see is that I might be relatively quickly going over these, but each one of these summaries has the title of the sort of thematic focus area within the plan, the title of—oops—an action or activity—title is in bold here—the lead agency that's implementing, as well as the status, and then, in the plan, these numbers are referenced, as well.

As I mentioned before, cooling centers are an important strategy for mitigating the impacts of extreme heat. This series of actions demonstrates a mix of approaches for advancing consistency and quality in the network of places to stay cool through building awareness of cooling centers and their availability, the times that they're open, how you get there, et cetera, as well as developing and expanding network of places that people can go to stay cool.

New Jersey's agencies responsible for housing and energy identified a number of actions that can help residents not only have better access to efficient energy and cooling technologies, but other related resources. So, these actions facilitate, you know, safe indoor temperatures in order for people to remain safe and comfortable in their own homes during periods of extreme heat. I believe there are 11 actions in this focus area.

And I'm going through these rather quickly, but you do have the plan at your fingertips if anybody would like to navigate to that page.

When it comes to worker safety and heat illness prevention in the workplace, there are, again, a number of commitments for state agencies to not only protect their own employees through the network of public sector employees, but to consider the really specific interventions that are needed for certain populations, like our agricultural sector and our military.

Our public health actions recognize how heat may worsen air quality, impacts to water bodies based on pathogens and the increase in pathogen exposure, as well as ways to think about this through our community planning work.

The actions listed under energy infrastructure section of the plan represent efforts by the Board of Public Utilities to adapt our current infrastructure to sort of better understand the impacts of worsening and extreme weather trends and to ensure that the programs are backed by research that can effectively ensure resilient and reliable distribution of power.

New Jersey is also committed to ensuring that we understand how climate change impacts our water supply. Some folks may know that the Water Supply Plan was recently updated and includes a number of activities around the impacts of climate change, and that's captured in this section of the plan.

And our transportation focus area is actually our longest. I believe there are 14 actions in this that capture the activities being done by the four state transportation agencies: the Department of Transportation, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and New Jersey Transit. There's a number of activities to make sure that everything's operational and the infrastructure is able to sort of withstand the impacts of extreme heat and that the impacts to customers and transit riders is as limited as possible.

Another important category of activities has to do with how state agencies are helping to offer guidance and technical assistance, providing support as municipalities are seeking funding, and, in general, helping municipalities to be more proactive and forward-thinking when it comes to local planning. There's an adage among climate adaptation and resilience professionals that local adaptation is local, so this focus is beyond state-level activities to ensure that we're aiding our local governments so that they receive effective support from the State as we are preparing for a warmer future.

The regional planning activity outlines the priorities and strategies that our various regional planning organization— agencies, excuse me—New Jersey Meadowlands, the Pinelands and Highlands areas—are doing through their master planning and local land use planning efforts to

protect natural and cultural resources. As extreme heat threatens water and green spaces, these organizations have identified a number of strategies to assist municipalities in minimizing the heat impacts.

Now, urban heat islands are a phenomenon that takes place when more urbanized areas are considerably hotter than more green, vegetated areas in the state. And so, the Interagency Council has a number of activities focused on this particular phenomena to support municipal officials, community based organizations, households that exhibit indicators of vulnerability when it comes to issues of excessive heat in urban heat islands across the state.

One of the most effective and arguably the most ancient technology to combat against extreme heat is our green space and our forests and urban canopies. So, this category of actions describes a series of activities that state agencies are doing to support county and municipal governments in managing the urban canopy and forestry assets through technical and financial assistance, as well as supporting local governments and establishing retaining, expanding, and improving the data available about urban tree canopy and community forestry programs.

Now, as New Jersey faces rising extent and frequency of heat waves, we want to make sure that we're increasing and improving our access to recreation spaces that are safe and cool enough for people to recreate in. So, this category of actions focuses on improving outdoor recreational areas and ensuring their safety by prioritizing the kinds of— developing and increasing cooling features and protecting people's health and safety during outdoor events.

As I mentioned, that section of the plan is the bulkiest. There are something like 83 actions in that plan— in the Priority One.

Priority Two focuses on strengthening the resilience of New Jersey's ecosystems and captures activities related to agriculture, ecosystems and habitats, and— as well as the issue of harmful algal blooms.

When it comes to agriculture, this focus area is completely oriented around the needs of growers, including funding and technical assistance, targeted outreach, collaborations on research, and very context-specific programs and initiatives for the agricultural sector.

With respect to ecosystem and habitat, this focus area describes strategies to ensure that we're strengthening our natural systems to be able to withstand temperature shifts by protecting and conserving forests, removing issues with our waterways and riparian buffers, and advancing best practices as they relate to our natural ecosystems and habitats.

And lastly in Priority Two, the harmful algal bloom focus area represents a range of agency actions to ensure that we're protecting public health as this cyanobacteria, this particular water based toxin, can increase during extreme heat events and just periods of warming in general.

Our third priority around promoting coordinated governance has a focus area related to legal and regulatory affairs, legislation that's advancing, and advocacy work that we do with other states. So, there's activities here that have to do with leveraging existing authorities that agencies have

in order to be able to continue to push on policy and advocacy fronts as well as describing for the public the activities that the legislature has undergoing.

With respect to Priority Four, which is about increasing and investing information in public understanding, we've got activities that both seek to better our knowledge of the impacts of extreme heat from a scientific perspective as well as really intentional efforts around communications and outreach.

So, when it comes to advancing our scientific understanding of extreme heat in New Jersey, there's a number of actions that help to advance our knowledge of the effects and how extreme heat projections are considered for our state: summarizing data, continuing our monitoring, developing assessments, developing further assessments, et cetera. Not exhaustive, but a number of activities under this focus area.

And then, with respect to communications and outreach, I had already sort of named that Heat Hub New Jersey is one example of how we are really intentionally making sure to gather resources and make it available to the public as well as, you know, numerous sort of subpopulations of folks that are of interest for specific communications and strategies.

Our last priority area, Priority Five, focuses on promoting climate-informed investments and innovative financing, and so here, we've called out a variety of activities that relate to a financing programs, funding programs, that can help advance our work around addressing extreme heat, combating extreme heat.

And now we're going to transition into the verbal feedback portion of the webinar.

I do recognize that that was very fast. It was meant to just be a taster, because we really do want you all to dig into the plan, and so it was not intended to be, you know, detailed about everything. But we do want to create an opportunity for anyone who wanted— who indicated in their registration form that they were hoping to provide verbal comments.

In just a minute, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Shamay, who will call out the folks that have preregistered, and we will go one at a time. I will say that, because of the number of folks that expressed interest in speaking, we're going to be pulling up a slide with a timer on it, and we're asking folks to stick to a minute, pretty please, so we make sure that we can hear from everyone that expressed interest in speaking tonight and also so that we can potentially create opportunities for folks who did not pre-register to speak, but would like to use the raised hand function.

And so, with that, I will turn it over to my colleague, Shamay, who will call out the first person who signed up to comment verbally.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 28:39**

Okay. So, I want to apologize advance if I mispronounce anyone's name, but hopefully, folks know who I am addressing.

So, first, we have Adeeko, last name Adeeko.

We'll wait a few seconds, because some people are registered guests. I'm not sure if this person is actually online with us right now.

Okay, I'll move on, and we can always come back. Next, we have Megan Bushlow.

**BM Bushlow, Megan 29:16**

Hi everyone. Hi Nathaly. Thank you for the presentation. This is really great.

Yeah, this—I haven't had the chance to really dive into the plan yet, so it may be in there, but one thing that I've been thinking about is—sorry, there was someone at my door—is heat deaths and mortality. I know that having data on excessive heat deaths can really contribute to being able to do a benefit-cost analysis and that that data can be really hard to collect and requires some detailed research. So, I was just wondering if they're— what discussions NJDEP has been having around that. Thank you.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 30:01**

Thanks, Megan.

So, I heard a question there regarding the data and the research that the Department is using.

I will flag that I was not intending to respond to comments. We want to collect comments so that we can then gather everything, and I probably should have said that earlier.

**BM Bushlow, Megan 30:14**

Got it. Understood.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 30:19**

But if you go to the Advancing Scientific Understanding section of the plan, that's where sort of the majority of our data collection efforts are described. It's not the only place. I do believe that in Ecosystems and Habitat, we have some stuff about sort of baseline species habitat shifts. So, that kind of topic may be sprinkled throughout the plan, but definitely encourage you to check out the Advancing Scientific Understanding.

I will say, and I'll apologize, because my little magic trick of slides does not appear to be working.

**BM Bushlow, Megan 30:42**

Thank you.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 30:48**

Ashley, if you have any advice for me, would you drop it in the chat?

But thank you so much for sticking to the time, Megan, because you absolutely did it while I was struggling with the slides here.

Shamay, back to you.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 31:00**

Okay, and next on our list, we have last name Canor. C-A-N-O-R.

Okay. I'll move forward and then we come back. Next on the list we have Patricia Croisier. Sorry for mispronouncing that. Patricia?

Okay, six second rule passed. Next, we have Emmanuel.

Okay, moving forward. Next, we have Barbara.

Next is Robert. There's a Robert and a Mary. Same last name. Robert or Mary?

Next, we have James.

**JF James Fritsch 32:30**

Yup. Thank you for the opportunity.

So, 17 groups, 22 groups now, and there's all these great ideas. Has there been— the resiliency office, is your goal to be like the ringmaster in this circus, and is there a timeline to get any of these things done? Because having great ideas on paper is one thing, implementation is an entirely separate animal. So, what is resiliency office doing, and what is the timeline on this?

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 33:03**

Thank you, James.

Each of the actions in this plan, and I should say, the framework of the plan itself, is meant to address the question of implementability and accountability to the public for actions that are taking place.

So, when you get a chance to review the plan, also take a look at the appendix that accompanies it, where you see action-by-action status, progress, lead agency, key stakeholders, and next steps for implementation that are detailed in the appendix section.

My slide is working, so I'm very proud of myself. I don't know if it'll keep up, but Shamay, I'll send it back to you.

And actually, let me just pause and say, James, if there are specific actions where you find that it's not clear or you need better information or you're not thinking that it's sort of substantive enough, we, you know, we're very cognizant of not making it a multiple hundreds of pages of a document, so not all of the detail is in the plan, but it would be helpful to know where things are not clear.

All right, Shamay.

**JF James Fritsch 34:06**

Thank you.

Thank you.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 34:08**

Of course, and apologies to Ashley and Shamay both. Now that I'm sharing my screen this way, I cannot admit people into the room, so if you wouldn't mind kindly admitting that. I just heard a noise a second ago.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 34:19**

He's been admitted.

Thanks for that.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 34:22**

Sure.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 34:22**

Next, we have Qian. Qian He.

Belinda Manning.

Stephanie.

**S Steph 34:50**

Hello? Can you hear me?

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 34:52**

Hi. We can hear you.

**S Steph 34:56**

Sorry, it's because I have my headphones.

But, I had a question regarding the— any plans pertaining improvement in transportation options?

Currently, there is a plan that the NJ Turnpike expansion is still being pushed forward, so I was wondering what plans there are to increase transportation—

**DN Daniel Nachman 35:26**

It used to be like this?

Good thing I didn't buy a paintball gun?

**S Steph 35:32**

Sorry, I don't know what that— but yeah, any options to improve transportation?

Because, expanding highways, it kind of connects with, road pavements that can increase the heat, like an urban heat island effect. So, I'm not sure— also, the NJ Turnpike does go into environmental justice communities, like in Jersey City, for example, by where I live in Hudson County. And yeah, pavements can reach up to like 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and it's kind of scary

thinking about that there's a plan for expanding the highway instead of looking into alternative modes of transportation like public transportation. So, I was wondering if there's any plans for that.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 36:28**

Thank you so much, Stephanie.

I'm going to just navigate back, because I don't have these memorized. Obviously, I wouldn't, it's too many.

But the transportation section does have a number of activities that speak to, you know, the concrete work, pavement managing, you know, the exposure of infrastructure itself, as well as planning, you know, the designs and procedures, sensors that would be deployed, risk assessment activities, as well as design guidelines and bus shelter design.

I think I'm hearing you speak not just about, you know, those really specific in-place interventions in the transportation sector, but, you know, a specific project. This plan is meant to address state agency actions sort of across the board and not location-by-location, if that makes sense. And so, I just kind of wanted to flag that, that there's not— there's nothing in this plan that's site-specific. It tends to do with the ways in which state agencies are sort of intervening through their policies, their procedures, their design guidelines, their criteria.

I don't want you to lose the comment, but I wanted to sort of name that for you when you are submitting your written comments.

Back to you, Shamay.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 37:54**

Okay. By the way, Nathaly, I just wanted to let you know that you're not screensharing, if you were intending on doing it.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 37:59**

Oh, interesting. It must have been when I stopped— that's good to know. Sorry, give me a second. Why am I in this view now? Hold on one second.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 38:05**

No problem. So it's okay to go on to the next person or do you need a second?

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 38:16**

Yeah. Just give me one second. Sorry about that.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 38:18**

No problem.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 38:24**

I think someone activated together mode, and I don't know how to turn it off.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 38:31**

Yeah, something—

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 38:31**

I find it kind of distracting.

I went to speaker view. I think that did it. So, I'll go back to sharing screen the way I attempted to do it earlier, where the timer— I don't think we need it as much as we did. I thought there was all these listed people, but we've had to skip, so I recommend us going back to the top, in case there are people who we missed or maybe weren't able to mute themselves quickly enough, or unmute themselves, rather.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 38:41**

Yeah.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 38:51**

I'll go back to sharing screen as I did before.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 38:52**

Okay.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 38:59**

Is it displaying, Shamay?

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 39:01**

No, it's not.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 39:03**

Interesting.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 39:12**

Now it is. It's sharing your screen now. Okay, perfect.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 39:18**

Thank you.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 39:19**

Okay, pull back up the list.

Garrett O'Connor.

Debbie Oliver.

Indhira Quezada.

**IQ Indhira Quezada-Sanchez 39:49**

Yes, hi.

This is my first time hearing anything like this. I did a survey, and that's why I signed in.

I really need to read a little bit more to conscious myself about this, what's going on, because I don't really know, but I would say that this is very informative, because there's some people like me that they don't have a clue what's going on. So, this offers an opportunity for us to kind of get some info of what the government and the local agencies are doing. Thank you.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 40:30**

Thanks so much, Indhira.

If you haven't had a chance, please do check out Heat Hub NJ. It's linked off of our website, and if you just do a quick search for Heat Hub NJ, it'll come up.

There's a component of Heat Hub, and I meant to say this earlier, that— it's sort of a map application called Cool It. It's sort of our cutsie name for helping people find places where they can get cool, and that particular component of the site allows anyone to sort of contribute other places in their community where they can keep cool. So, it's one piece, one way, in which we're sort of soliciting information from the general public.

But, broadly speaking, Heat Hub NJ is how you sort of understand the basics of the issues, and there's specific information about mental health impacts, about impacts on vulnerable populations, et cetera. So, peruse that, and definitely hit us up if you think there are certain resources that would be helpful for us to add.

Thank you, Indhira.

Shamay, back to you.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 41:37**

I see that, Debbie, you have your hand raised, and I just called your name right before last person.

**OD Oliver, Debbie 41:41**

Yes, thank you.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 41:41**

So, Debbie, you can go ahead.

**OD Oliver, Debbie 41:43**

I couldn't get my mic opened.

I come from the recreation field, and I saw, you know, one page came up about where grant opportunities—there were comments earlier about having more benches and spray parks. We're the ones that are doing all that. We're the ones running the state parks in this, you know, throughout the state, the municipal parks, and I'd like to see more connection with the people in the parks and recreation field, because that's where everybody goes when they want to get out of the house. They go in our park. We're the ones that are installing pools and spray pads and lakes for people to cool off.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 42:25**

Absolutely.

**OD Oliver, Debbie 42:30**

Most often, they're using our recreation centers for cooling centers. So, I'd like to see a connection or brought to the table. Because, the little thing you had, putting more benches in a park—we're the ones that are doing that. I would like to see us have a place at the table to where we can connect more. Maybe even a session at the League of Municipalities, where something like this could be done.

I think I went over my time, sorry.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 43:07**

That sounds great, Debbie. Thank you so much. I really appreciate you sharing.

I actually feel like I want to—let me navigate to Heat Hub NJ just to kind of give folks a taster for what's in here, because that Cool It platform that I had mentioned previously is actually—includes where you can find all the pools, where you can find all the splash parks. We reached out to the New Jersey Recreation Association to make sure that we were sort of leveraging the available data about places that people are already using to keep cool.

So, this is Heat Hub NJ. On the primary page, there's a video with three of the state agency commissioners sharing a little bit about the issues and more sort of just information. There's a kind of cute quiz, test your knowledge of extreme heat.

And if you go to this tab called Chill Out New Jersey, here's that map application that I had mentioned previously. And so, what we did was, within a three-mile radius of whatever address you put in—so, I'll put in my work address—it'll show, with different iconography, parks, libraries, senior centers, public pools. And then the parks locations that are listed, we didn't just go with the middle of a state park. We were intentional about the parking area, right, to help people navigate to places. And I had mentioned before, we kind of created this web—this shared email address so that if you think we missed something, send us that information.

This is one of the one hundred and thirty, I think it's three, actions, 133 actions in the plan. This is one of them. It just gives you an example of the effort that we're putting into making sure that the information is accessible.

Definitely check out the Recreation area of the focus— of the focus area of the plan. And there was something else you said about— in the Urban Heat Island section of the plan, there's also some stuff about community greening and accessible resources for folks to access.

And then, I guess just another thing to mention is that in our— the section of the plan that had to do with— there's one about aging populations and creating specific plans for seniors.

So, anyway, there's a few different places in the plan that your content expertise would be really valuable, and so just sort of naming that so that you're aware, because using the comments and suggestions forms to tell us like, “hey, here's another stakeholder that—” In our capacity, as the Office of Climate Resilience, we are the staff, facilitation support, to the 22 agencies that make up the Interagency Council, so often, we're playing that connector feature, and it would be really great to, you know, have your ideas and your recommendations for, “I'd love to be involved in X, Y, Z.” People would appreciate that.

Thank you, Debbie.

Back to you, Shamay. I do see some hands. I don't know if you want to re-cover the people who you called out earlier or how you want to proceed. I'll let you decide.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 46:17**

Okay. I actually will go back to Garrett. I see that you've rejoined. You could ask your comment when you're ready.

**G Garrett O'Connor- Make the Road NJ (Guest) 46:26**

Yes, I'm not a regular Teams user, so a little slow to react to the buttons.

But I'm particularly interested in the worker pieces of the draft, where I think it does— the focus on agricultural workers makes a lot of sense. Construction is also a highly impacted industry. But there are other industries, like delivery drivers, who are increasingly subject— there's been a number of deaths of UPS workers, USPS workers, across the country, and also warehouse workers.

So, at Make the Road New Jersey, we have a lot of workers who are assigned to the logistics industry via temporary staffing agencies. We've had people who, you know— mothers who, you know, they're working, doing heavy lifting all through the day, and not even be, literally, not being able to hold their kids, lift their kids up at the end of the day. They're entirely collapsed and are making a decision between protecting their safety and their paycheck.

So, Amazon had three workers die within three weeks of each other in 2022, and the reporting in the media. Of course, Amazon would deny that, but it is directly related to heat and workload.

So, I appreciate the worker pieces that are shared in the draft, but particularly when we're talking resiliency plans and looking to the future, yes, it's impacting agricultural workers now, but when it's agricultural, construction, warehousing, delivery, or any other industry, this problem's only going to get worse. So, really having as many different professions, occupations, covered and considered as possible would make a lot of sense.

We don't want to be reacting to more and more deaths. We want to be preventing them before they before they happen, and so broadening the industry focus would be a strong suggestion.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 48:28**

Thank you so much for that, and I apologize, because I didn't catch your name.

**G Garrett O'Connor- Make the Road NJ (Guest) 48:33**

Garrett O'Connor, and I'm from Make the Road New Jersey.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 48:36**

Garrett. Garrett, thank you so much for that comment.

This is actually a really good opportunity for me to share that one of the challenges with developing a plan like this is that the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience is a body of state agencies, right? And so, the actions included here are what state agencies can do. And we, you know, had to keep going back through this back and forth.

There's nothing— I'll name a few things that I can acknowledge are gaps. The Department of Education is not a direct participant in the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, and therefore, there's very little here about schools or youth, you know, in the school setting.

So, some of the industries that you're describing are not directly sort of represented among the constituency and the, you know, primary sectors, areas of concern, of the 22 member agencies. Department of Labor is another example. Department of Corrections is another example.

So, you know, we have— the Executive Order sort of dictated which agencies should be part of the Interagency Council and, since then, has grown, primarily because of interest amongst some of those agencies. So, I think it's a conversation that the Interagency has, is, how do we expand this network to include even more members of the state agency family of actors?

And, it's not to say, "don't submit that comment." I think it's really important, but I also would, if you're able to, offer suggestions for state agency partners that have jurisdiction. It would be really, really helpful for us to be able to then reach out to those folks and say, "okay, this is a plan for state agencies across New Jersey. How can we involve you?"

**G Garrett O'Connor- Make the Road NJ (Guest) 50:11**

Gotcha. Yeah.

And we're hoping that more state agencies will soon be included. There's been a workplace heat standard introduced, and that's what we're hoping, is that all the state agencies who have a say do some strong advocacy for the strongest bill possible, but hopefully that will give— you know, expand some of the permissions to participate to other state agencies.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 50:22**

Yeah.

**G Garrett O'Connor- Make the Road NJ (Guest) 50:29**

But appreciate that. Thanks.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 50:31**

Yeah. Thank you, Garrett, and thank you for the work that you do.

Shamay, I'll hand it back to you.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 50:37**

Okay. I will call next on Sophie. I see you have your hand raised, and you're on the list.

**S Sophie 50:42**

Hi, can you hear me okay? I'm not sure. I have a headset on.

Most of my questions have been answered.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 50:47**

Yes.

**S Sophie 50:50**

I'm a Commissioner on our town's Environmental Commission and one of our— so some of the things we do is to educate and do outreach for the citizens of our town.

You brought up a lot of questions, especially about workers and the effects of the heat on the workers.

I'm from a town that is an environmental justice site. Many heat islands, some parts of the town are worse than other others. Extreme heat, lack of tree cover.

Also, our health department— I'm looking on the—this site is great—the Heat Hub of New Jersey. I was looking at, does do the occupational health surveillance? Our health department is adjunct, so we share a health department with many other towns, and I was wondering— we also have two rivers in our town, rivers and streams. I think they do monitoring, like you were saying, for the bacteria and such. We had a high COVID death rate. You know, you know, sickness, the heat, sickness, you know, viral sicknesses.

You know, like you were saying, the occupational health industries like the kitchen workers and the schools, not all the schools are air conditioned or have air flow. You know, that's a concern, and I know what the OSHA— you're right, there isn't a standard for heat index for the workers, so, you know, I'm glad to be part of this experience.

This is new to me, and I want to thank you for having this seminar, and I'm going to be sharing what I'm learning, and I appreciate it. Thank you.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 52:39**

Thank you for that, Sophie. Thank you very much for sort of sharing the word on this.

The fact of the matter is that, in New Jersey, when we talk about resilience, we're usually talking about flooding, whether it's sea-level rise or, you know, these extreme storm events, but all of this comes together and is primarily driven by a warming planet and the way that shows up here.

So, appreciate your work on the Environmental Commission in your town and other issues.

And, you know, if there are, I guess, specific educational needs that you have, definitely recommend that you check out that resource that Nick mentioned at the top. We took a 296-page Scientific Report and turned it into a more accessible tool for educators to use in the curriculum, but also just for, you know, concerned citizens to understand the climate challenge in New Jersey. We can always do better, and we're eager for that feedback, so please feel free to, you know, keep that kind of thoughts coming.

Shamay, back to you.

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 53:34**

Rhonda Robinson.

Michele.

**MS Michele Stricker 53:50**

Hi everyone. Can you hear me? Can you hear me okay?

**PS Phillips, Shamay [DEP] 53:54**

Yes.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 53:55**

Yes, you sound good.

**MS Michele Stricker 53:55**

Okay.

Yes, great presentation. Thanks for letting me speak.

Michelle Stricker, and I'm the Deputy State Librarian for the New Jersey State Library. And I have a lot to say, so I beg your pardon if it all comes tumbling out in a big mess.

I was so happy to hear libraries finally mentioned in one of the slides, and I want to say that, you know, there's 450 libraries in the state of New Jersey alone, and they have been acting as heating and cooling centers for God knows how long at this point, but for the last decade, I've been working at the State Library ever since Sandy on libraries intentionally becoming resilience centers.

And so, I have a lot of presentations, a lot of work we have done with libraries in order to train the librarians, and, you know, this is community-level stuff on how to go out there and integrate into their communities with education programs on how to adapt to climate now. And libraries are also in the forefront of becoming resilience centers, like whole resilience complexes.

We have libraries that have pergolas and community food gardens, reading gardens. We have spray grounds, too. We have performance areas outdoors. Libraries that have pop up shade umbrellas and tents when they're needed. We have libraries that are doing roof gardens and

community food gardens and that are also doing intentional planting for shade. We have— you want, people want, free Wi-Fi and electricity? Libraries have free Wi-Fi and electricity for everybody in their community. We do telehealth, so, you know, we offer that to people.

And we're most concerned with training people who are in these urban, rural, and these underserved areas especially. And libraries have been doing this work for a decade now. And so, what I just wanted to say to you is that I would love to be involved as the State Library with any of your state agencies in the work that I've been doing for a decade now in all of these trainings.

You know, you've got a built-in 450, you know, network. And in some of the other states, when the governors activate resilience hubs, libraries are included in that, and we would love to work towards that with you.

That being said, that even though I'm a statewide level, 450 libraries are all right down there at the community level. You know, they know their community, they live in their communities, and they work in their communities. You know, they can do a number of things. And there's a trust that the people have in the libraries is so high.

So, I just— like I said, it's all tumbling out. I've done a decade of work in resiliency, community resiliency, and we would love to be part of the work that you're doing. You could just contact me, and then I can get it all out to the local level in how to train libraries to augment all the things that you're doing.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 56:50**

Love that. Thank you so much for that offer.

**MS Michele Stricker 56:51**

Thank you.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 56:52**

Please do send us an email or submit in the comments and suggestions form.

I'll call your attention to one action that's in the Municipal Capacity Building section, which is very exciting. We partnered with Rutgers University— the Department of Environment Protection, our team here at the Office of Climate Resilience, partnered with Rutgers to go after a Department of Energy grant to build more resilience hubs across the state and to help, you know, create a network and a process for, you know, activating those in partnership with community organizations that would themselves have to identify, you know, whatever facilities are within the community that would be good candidates, and I think, you know, trying to connect the network of 450 with the communities that are participating in that would be a really good opportunity to leverage your enthusiasm.

**MS Michele Stricker 57:33**

Right. Yeah.

**AN** **AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP]** 57:37

Thank you so much.

**MS** **Michele Stricker** 57:38

And let me just say that that everything is scalable according to what a library can do, too. I mean, if you can only do so much, then you can only do so much. So, there's small libraries, there's big libraries, but everybody could do something, and they all are trying to do something.

**AN** **AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP]** 57:54

Thank you.

Shamay, can I get a sense for how many more people have not had a chance to speak that maybe have their hands up? We are at time. We wanted to sort of respect the one hour, but, you know, members of our team are okay with staying on for a little bit extra.

**PS** **Phillips, Shamay [DEP]** 58:09

Yeah, out of the folks have their hand raised, I just— I think everyone already spoke. There's only one person that signed up to receive comment that I haven't called their name, so maybe I could just call their name. That'll be it.

**AN** **AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP]** 58:25

Go for it.

**PS** **Phillips, Shamay [DEP]** 58:25

You just want to open it up after that? Okay.

**AN** **AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP]** 58:27

No, this could work.

**PS** **Phillips, Shamay [DEP]** 58:27

Last one is Aminah Toler.

**AN** **AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP]** 58:37

Alright. Well, let me go back to the version of screen sharing where I can see my talking points. Maybe this will work. Fingers crossed.

And I'll offer some closing remarks, including the fact that we'll do this again on next Tuesday. So, not tomorrow, but Tuesday the 7th, we'll have another meeting that is covering the same content, again creating an opportunity for folks to offer verbal comments. And so, if there's a colleague of yours, or you know a friend or family member you think would be interested in this content, please do, you know, direct them to register.

I wanted to call people's attention to the comments and suggestions form. I've mentioned it a number of times. We'll have it open until May 20th. We did set a four week window for comments, not because we're in a rush, but because summer season is here, and we want to make sure that we have this plan out and, you know, public and finalized well before the start of summer. The sort of unofficial start of summer's around the holidays that happen in the summer months.

And, with that, I think I'll turn it over to Nick to close us out and say goodnight. Thank you everyone so much for being with us.

**AN Angarone, Nick [DEP] 59:53**

Thank you, everybody, for attending. Thank you to those who were able to provide comments.

As Nathaly noted, we have about four weeks for you to provide comments in writing. We'd greatly appreciate any thoughts and comments you have, and with that, have a good evening.

**AN AgostoFilion, Nathaly [DEP] 1:00:10**

Thank you so much.