Environment New Jersey expresses strong support

On the heels of Environment New Jersey’s summer campaign to clean and protect the Shore, the state Senate moved to kickstart an aggressive plan to reduce the pollution that plagues New Jersey’s beaches.

The legislation comes just after a new National Resources Defense Council report released by Environment New Jersey and our Shore allies, showed that pollution caused 132 beach closings and advisories last year—up 20 percent from last summer.

“That with beach closings on the rise, this bill would put Shore cleanup on an expedited track,” said Doug O’Malley, interim director of Environment New Jersey. “We’ll be pushing our leaders to pass and build on this legislation to protect this critical natural resource.”

Environment New Jersey reaches out to thousands

The Senate’s action coincided with Environment New Jersey’s summer push to educate and activate tens of thousands of state residents around efforts to clean up the Shore. Our staff traveled through 100 New Jersey towns, knocking on more than 100,000 doors and communicating directly with local decision-makers.

By the end of the summer, Environment New Jersey delivered over 7,000 petition signatures to local legislators supporting increased protections for the Shore and the smaller waters that feed it.

In the weeks and months ahead, Environ-

ment New Jersey will be redoubling efforts to get this critical legislation passed and signed into law.

A natural treasure at risk

Any New Jerseyan who has spent time at the Shore knows what a special place it is, whether they’re fishing, boating or just relaxing on the sand.

But it’s easy to see how reckless development has changed the Shore for the worse, washing more pollution and dangerous bacteria into the water where we swim and play.

“As encroaching development washes more pollution into our waters, we need the state Legislature to protect our Jersey Shore,” said O’Malley. “It’s time to pass—and then build upon—the state Senate’s clean-up plan.”

Visit our website and urge your leaders to crack down on the Jersey Shore’s worst polluters.

www.EnvironmentNewJersey.org
To our members

Every summer, New Jerseyans finally get to appreciate the outdoors, whether we go down to the Shore, paddle on the Delaware River or visit our northern ridgelines and forests in the Highlands.

Whenever I spend time in these places, I’m reminded why we fight so hard to protect them—and we’d rarely (if ever) succeed without your support.

But this summer, thanks to the membership of citizens like you, we fought to ban waste from gas drilling in our waterways and mounted ongoing support for New Jersey’s clean energy programs, including a critical interstate program to reduce pollution and kickstart clean energy production.

Finally, we were able to help spur new legislation to clean our Shore waters.

I’m proud of all we’ve done together, and I hope you are, too.

Doug O’Malley
Interim Director

Recent action

Environment New Jersey endorses Barack Obama

Looking back on the accomplishments of President Obama’s first term, we’ve seen real progress for our environment. And in an election already overrun with the financial influence of Big Oil and their allies, we need to make sure that Congress and the White House are champions that will stand up for us and fight for the same environmental values we share. That’s why Environment New Jersey is endorsing Barack Obama for President.

We have seen cleaner cars on the road—cars that are saving oil and reducing carbon pollution. We have seen strong new standards in place that will significantly reduce mercury, soot and smog pollution from power plants—standards that could save 46,000 lives a year. Finally, we have seen historic levels of investment in clean energy. Now is the moment to keep this progress going and keep America moving forward to cleaner air and water, protection for our natural environment and a new clean energy economy.

Governor jeopardizes Garden State’s open spaces

New Jersey is defined by its incredible places, from the Shore to the Pinelands to our northern ridgelines and forests. Yet incredibly, the Christie administration is pushing policies, like the “waiver rule,” that could make it easier for shortsighted developers to bypass environmental laws and raze these beautiful places.

Environment New Jersey joined 27 other organizations to challenge these proposals in court, alleging Gov. Chris Christie bypassed state law when he crafted policies without involving the Legislature or New Jersey’s citizens. At the same time, we’re also pushing our state lawmakers to override this decision and tell the governor to protect our precious open spaces.

With our strong support, the state Assembly passed a resolution forbidding the so-called “waiver rule.” With member support, we’re turning our efforts to the Senate, urging them to pass identical legislation.
This summer, Environment New Jersey joined with our allies to announce litigation against Gov. Chris Christie for unilaterally—and illegally—withdrawal of New Jersey from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Together with the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Columbia University Law Clinic, Environment New Jersey is demanding Gov. Christie play by the rules, comply with state law, and give the people of New Jersey their chance to weigh in on this critical decision.

“Gov. Christie withdrew from New Jersey’s cornerstone clean air program without taking any input from our elected officials or the public,” said Environment New Jersey’s Matt Elliott, as he announced the legal action. “Not only is this an undemocratic practice, it’s also illegal.”

A regional program that works

In May 2011, Gov. Christie announced plans to end New Jersey’s participation in the 10-state program that caps harmful emissions from power plants, makes polluters pay for their pollution, and invests those payments in clean energy programs such as solar and more energy-efficient buildings.

After just three years of participation in the program, New Jersey realized significant benefits. RGGI is reducing power plant pollution and is helping to grow the state’s economy. At the same time, it has brought over $180 million in revenue to New Jersey—supporting roughly 1,800 local clean energy jobs.

A continued push in the Legislature

Given the benefits of RGGI to New Jersey’s environment and economy, Environment New Jersey sprang into action following the governor’s decision to pull New Jersey out of the program. All told, our members, supporters and coalition partners sent over 60,000 emails, letters and phone calls to the governor and the Legislature in support of RGGI.

As a result, on two occasions, the state Legislature passed proposals requiring New Jersey to stay in this clean energy program. On both occasions, the governor vetoed the proposals.

Moving forward, Environment New Jersey will continue to educate the public about the benefits of RGGI while building grassroots support for the program. We will work with a diverse coalition of environmental groups, faith-based organizations, civic groups and New Jersey businesses to continue to tout the benefits of this important program and ensure that New Jersey gets back in the program.

“RGGI works: It slows global warming, makes polluters pay and funds clean energy,” said Elliott. “It’s exactly what the government should be doing, and we’ll continue working in the Legislature and the state court system to protect it.”

Green Future Fund

A new way to honor supporters

Environment New Jersey is proud to announce the establishment of our Green Future Fund.

The Green Future Fund will honor a special group of our donors: those who are ensuring a greener future by remembering Environment New Jersey or our sister group, Environment New Jersey Research & Policy Center, in their wills, life insurance policies or retirement accounts.

These legacy donors are helping to ensure that Environment New Jersey will continue to flourish—protecting the places we love and the values we share—for years to come. “We appreciate all of our supporters,” said Environment New Jersey’s Doug O’Malley. “I feel a special gratitude toward those members who have the vision and generosity to plan a gift that will protect our state’s environment beyond their own lifetimes.”

Establishing a legacy gift also offers donors a few advantages. Some supporters wish they could give more, but can’t right now. Including Environment New Jersey in your estate plan costs nothing today, while ensuring support for our mission in the future. Legacy gifts may also offer tax benefits. Your professional advisor can help you determine any tax advantage.

As a Green Future Fund donor, with your permission, we’ll recognize your gift in our annual report and other publications, helping to inspire other members to make their own legacy gifts. Of course, you may also choose to give anonymously. Either way, any specific details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential.

If you’d like to become a member of the Green Future Fund, or if you just have questions, call our planned giving coordinator, Marilyn Tesauro, at 1-800-841-7299 or email us at plannedgiving@EnvironmentNewJersey.org.

Research

A Record of Leadership

How Northeastern States are Cutting Global Warming Pollution and Building a Clean Economy.

Read the full report online at: EnvironmentNewJerseyCenter.org
This June, with Environment New Jersey’s strong support, the state Legislature passed a bill banning the transport, treatment and discharge of fracking waste in New Jersey.

With bipartisan support, both houses of the Legislature voted overwhelmingly to ban this toxic waste from being dumped in our waterways. Three days later, an Environment New Jersey canvasser called on Gov. Chris Christie personally during a town hall meeting, urging him to sign the ban into law.

Prior to the bill’s passage, Environment New Jersey and other coalition partners organized a statewide Lobby Day in Trenton, where 150 people came together at the State House, calling for a ban on carcinogenic drilling waste in New Jersey. At the time of printing, Gov. Christie hadn’t announced a decision on the bill. We’ll keep you updated in the next newsletter.