

***For Immediate Release***

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**Contact:**

Jeff Tittel, **NJ Sierra Club**, 609-558-9100; Matt Smith, **Food & Water Watch**, 201-321-1967

Doug O'Malley, **Environment NJ**, 917-449-6812; Amy Goldsmith, **Clean Water Action**, 732-895-2502

Tracy Carluccio, **Delaware Riverkeeper Network**, 215.369.1188 x104

Elizabeth Meyer, **Women's March on NJ**, 551-804-4596; John Reichman, **Blue Wave NJ**, 917-626-8025

Dena Mottola Jaborska, **New Jersey Citizen Action**, 609-540-6609

**Empower NJ - Stop Fossil Fuel Campaign Launch**

Over 50 environmental, citizen, faith, and progressive groups in New Jersey are calling on Governor Murphy to enact a moratorium on all new fossil fuel projects in New Jersey until there are rules in place to achieve our 100% clean energy goals. There are currently 5 new proposed gas-fired power plants like the Meadowlands power plant and 7 new major natural gas pipelines in New Jersey. We are entering a climate crisis and feeling it first hand in New Jersey. That is why we need to call on Governor Murphy to act quickly on climate change by stopping fossil fuel projects and their greenhouse emissions.

"Reports show that we are in a climate crisis in this country and internationally. New Jersey is seeing these impacts first hand from major flooding to a rise in health impacts like lymes disease and asthma attacks. Our campaign urges Governor Murphy to put a moratorium on fossil fuel infrastructure until our state has the rules and standards in place to achieve our 100% clean energy goals. Other governors like Governor Byrnes, Kean, and Florio have all implemented a moratorium to protect public health. We are in a climate emergency and Governor Murphy has to take drastic action now," **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.**

We're already seeing the impacts of climate change in NJ and it's getting worse. Fish are already living in storm drains in Long Beach Island. Some roads go underwater every time there's a full moon and we're losing coastal wetlands at an alarming rate. Many homeowners face rising insurance rates and high costs to elevate their structures. Our low reservoir levels have led to an increased threat of salt water intrusion, further threatening our water supply. Many inland cities such as Hoboken also see frequent flooding.

"Limiting carbon emissions is an economic and moral imperative. So is Governor Murphy's goal of 100% clean energy by 2050. The Governor should immediately use every tool in his toolbox to stop new fossil fuel plants and pipelines. Otherwise his lofty clean energy promises will amount to nothing but diversionary talk," **said John Reichman, Blue Wave NJ**

Since 2005, the NJDEP has had the authority to regulate greenhouse gases and carbon under the New Jersey Air Pollution Control Act and through Title V permits. The Department's determination is based on compelling scientific evidence of existing and projected adverse impacts due to climate change on the environment, ecosystems, wildlife, human health, and enjoyment of property in the State.

"Like most people I never gave much, if any, thought to fossil fuel infrastructure and its impact. When you get a letter describing a compressor station being built within ½ mile of your home, you start thinking about it a lot and none of those thoughts are comforting. I started this fight in 2016, with the singular thought of stopping a compressor station from being built near my community. After 2 1/2

years of involvement, I have come to the conclusion that the people of New Jersey will suffer permanent and irreparable harm from any pipeline project in our state,” **said Barry Kutch, President of Central Jersey Safe Energy Coalition, Inc.**

There are 7 natural gas projects underway in New Jersey. Southern Reliability Link Pipeline, PennEast Pipeline, and the South Jersey Gas Pipeline are pipeline projects that will destroy sensitive ecosystems harming wildlife and public safety. Williams Transco is already threatening New Jersey with other gas pipelines and infrastructure.

“Setting strong clean energy goals while also approving fossil fuel expansion projects would leave New Jersey standing still in the race against climate destruction. Governor Murphy has the authority to stop dirty energy projects, and for the sake of our state and the planet he must show the leadership that the climate crisis demands,” **said Matt Smith, Senior Organizer, Food & Water Watch**

Governor Murphy promised to rejoin the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and has signed an Executive Order to do this however there are concerns that it will take 2 years to implement. Meanwhile the new proposed natural gas powerplants may blow through the RGGI cap.

"New Jerseyans clamor for a thriving economy and affordable healthcare and cry out against rising taxes. Our legislature is tackling issues ranging from the legalization of marijuana to common sense gun laws and sexual harassment policies. But, all of this is inconsequential, if we don't have a safe, clean place to inhabit. We need to act yesterday to preserve our environment. I have two young daughters and I'll be damned if I sit back and watch our New Jersey government neglect the land that keeps and feeds its families," **said Elizabeth Meyer, founder of Women's March on NJ**

We are more than 11 months into the Murphy Administration and they have not proposed one rule, regulation, or standard at the Department of Environmental Protection.

"Over the last three years we have written hundreds of letters and gathered thousands of petitions opposing a massive new fracked-gas pipeline through our Pinelands communities. We've attended hearings and spoken in front of commissions, we've marched and we've protested. And we did all this with the hope that a new Governor could begin to undo the damage caused by Christie and his fossil fuel cronies. Governor Murphy, you ran for office with a commitment to fight climate change and protect our health and environment. We need the you to live up to your promises by enacting an immediate moratorium on all fossil fuel projects in New Jersey," **said Agnes Marsala, founder of People Over Pipelines**

The new U.S climate report by 13 federal agencies and hundreds of scientists show that climate change is getting worse and happening faster. The study projects a hefty cost of \$291 billion from heat-related deaths, sea level rise and infrastructure damage all due to climate change.

"The climate science couldn't be clearer than we have limited time to dramatically reduce carbon emissions. The first step to reduce emissions is to stop expanding endless fossil fuel infrastructure projects. We strongly support Gov. Murphy's call to reach 100% clean energy by 2050 but that won't be

possible if we continue to permit and build fossil fuel infrastructure. The road to climate action needs to both embrace clean, renewable energy technologies like off-shore wind, energy efficiency and solar and end expansion of unnecessary fossil fuel projects foisted upon us by fossil fuel companies,” **said Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.** “This coalition is a grassroots effort stretching across the state demanding we act on climate science to protect our most vulnerable communities now and into the future. The time to start ending our fossil fuel addiction is now.”

In New Jersey there have been 5 new natural gas power plant proposals such as the Meadowlands, Musconetcong, BL England, and Keasbey Plant in New Jersey that would emit a combined 5 million metric tons of CO2 per year.

“A clean energy economy with an end to fossil fuel expansion is the only path out of the climate crisis. This can be the path out of poverty for New Jersey’s most economically disadvantaged families and communities. By breaking our addiction to fossil fuels, New Jersey’s most vulnerable communities can look forward to rapidly expanding, new economic opportunities rather than more pollution and devastation from climate change,” **said Dena Mottola Jaborska, Associate Director at New Jersey Citizen Action.**

The PennEast Pipeline threatens the open space, farmland, and drinking water for too many people. Any day, federal court will issue a ruling on the granting of eminent domain for PennEast Pipeline. The ruling will allow PennEast to do surveys on homeowner’s property in order to get information they need to reapply for permits with the DEP. With this court ruling, the battle is now with Governor Murphy and his Administration who will need to deny these new permit applications to stop this unnecessary project from being built

“We are waiting any day for the court to rule on eminent domain giving PennEast power to come on to our land. Because so many people have said no to PennEast, Dep have denied their permits twice. Now they want to get on our land to do surveys to apply for DEP permit. We believe this is not only abusive power but their pipeline is unneeded and dangerous. Governor Murphy should keep his word on stopping PennEast and put a moratorium on stopping fossil fuel infrastructure,” **said Dante DiPirro, Sourlands Conservancy, PennEast Activist.**

Empower NJ- Stop Fossil Fuel Projects will be launching a grassroots campaign to call on Governor Murphy for a moratorium on fossil fuel projects in New Jersey until there is a plan and rules in place to achieve Murphy’s 100% clean energy goals. Other Governors in New Jersey like Governors Byrne, Kean, and Florio have all successfully enacted moratoriums in the past to protect public health and the environment.

“The climate crisis is impacting New Jersey directly through natural disasters and sea level rise, harming the environment, the economy, and public health. New Jersey can address the climate crisis by the choices it makes regarding the sources of energy it uses to provide electricity and the projects it supports. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is critical and the Governor and his administration must do all in their power to replace dirty fossil fuel projects with clean renewable energy,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

New Jersey has been impacted by climate change more than many other states. We're seeing disruptions in seasons, worse air pollution including ground level ozone, and more severe storms like Hurricane Sandy. With the Trump Administration's hostility to climate action and embrace of fossil fuels, it's more important than ever that New Jersey becomes a leader on clean energy and builds a green economy.

"New Jersey needs to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, not be undermined by more gas infrastructure approvals. Low income and of color communities need relief from fossil fuel costs, pollution and siting impacts, not be disproportionately exposed to more of the perils of climate change," **said Amy Goldsmith, NJ State Director, Clean Water Action.** "If as the governor stated, we are going to grow a "stronger, fairer" green economy and its corresponding jobs, then we need to take our foot off the gas and ensure high speed investment in wind, solar, energy efficiency, conservation, community solar, electric vehicles/fleets and public transit."

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