

For Immediate Release

June 19, 2015

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Renewable Energy Coalition Forms to Support Clean Energy, Calls for Action Against Polluting, Dangerous Fossil Fuels

Trenton, NJ- Today, 36 environmental, labor, religious, community, and citizen groups launched a campaign to work to reduce climate impacts and greenhouse gases. This is a fight for clean energy over dirty fossil fuels and infrastructure like pipelines. Groups from around the state who are fighting for clean energy and opposing dirty energy projects have joined and will be holding a **Lobby Day and Rally at the State House June 25th**. Coalition members include people who work at the local, state, regional, and national level.

"We are in a battle for the future of our state, our nation, and our planet. This battle has come together in New Jersey in a fight for clean energy over dirty fossil fuels. People from all over the state are fighting one project after another. The enemy is not just dangerous trains or pipelines destroying open space, but frackers and drillers, dirty fuels. That is why we need to push to make New Jersey a leader again in clean, renewable energy. That is why we must end this addiction to carbon and transition to a clean economy," **said Jeff Tittel, director, NJ Sierra Club.**

The Coalition was formed as New Jersey is seeing a proliferation in pipelines, oil trains, and proposals for LNG terminals. The state continues to be vulnerable to frack waste and potential future fracking. The groups calls for action by the Governor and Legislature against this onslaught of dirty, dangerous, unneeded fossil fuel projects as they threaten our drinking water, open space, ocean, property values, communities, and neighborhoods; exacerbate the climate crisis; and block our transition to a green economy that creates more jobs at less cost.

The Coalition will hold its first event, a Lobby Day and Rally, on Thursday, June 25, 2015, and encourages concerned citizens to attend. Members will be in Trenton urging policymakers to pass a suite of bills that will be up in the Senate session that dangerous Bakken oil transportation in our state. **SR106 (Codey/Kean)** opposes the Pilgrim Pipeline, a proposal to install two brand new pipelines across New Jersey to carry crude oil and refined petroleum products. The Senate will also consider two bills and a resolution (**S2858, S2979, SCR165**) improving safety standards for railcars carrying explosive Bakken crude oil, produced by fracking.

"We have a choice. Dirty, dangerous fuels that make people sick and put them in harm's way or clean renewables that not only don't do that but also create more jobs at less cost. We choose the latter, are calling on decision makers to do the same, and will be mobilizing our ground forces to make it happen," **said David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action**

The coalition unifies organizations across the state working to oppose various fossil fuel threats and to promote renewable energy alternatives that will reduce carbon pollution and will create more green jobs and promote our state's clean energy economy. The coalition is focused on six important goals, for which they will advocate at the State House Thursday:

- Accelerate New Jersey's transition to a safe, clean energy future, increase economic security and resiliency, and reduce carbon pollution.

The Coalition is calling for a 30% increase in energy efficiency and 100% carbon free electricity production by 2030. By 2050, New Jersey can achieve a goal of 100% clean, safe, and renewable energy sources (e.g., wind, solar, water, geothermal) for transport, heating/cooling, and industry. Additionally the coalition is calling for the elimination of subsidies for fossil and nuclear fuels. The policies the coalition supports would make New Jersey a hotbed for manufacturing and R&D for green technologies that coupled with the increases in renewable and efficiency construction, installation and maintenance jobs will assist the workforce as labor demands shift in an evolving economy

“The fight against fossil fuel infrastructure has become an endless game of Whack-a-Mole in New Jersey,” **said Doug O'Malley, Environment New Jersey's director.** “The way out of this morass is to double down on clean energy solutions that can make a 100% renewable energy future possible. We need to channel grassroots opposition to fossil fuel projects into fighting for a clean energy future.”

- Stop new pipeline projects from cutting through New Jersey communities and environments to service more fracked gas and oil

As oil and gas production through fracking mushrooms around the country, New Jersey has become the target for new pipeline expansion projects to get those fossil fuels to market. Since 2009, over a dozen projects have been proposed or constructed, all to service fuels produced by fracking. All of these projects cross environmentally sensitive areas, critical waterways for drinking water supply, densely populated communities, or contaminated sites, resulting in a myriad of serious impacts.

Ongoing fights include the South Jersey Gas and NJ Natural Gas Pipelines in the Pinelands, the Penn East gas pipeline near the Delaware River, and the Pilgrim Oil pipelines across the Highlands.

“Pipelines are a known and growing source of water pollution, air pollution, forest and wetland devastation. They threaten our lives and when they fail inflict hundreds of millions of dollars of damage a year. They are responsible for the increased taking of private and public lands through the exercise and/or threat of their eminent domain authority. Pipelines are the big bully partners of the gas drillers. New Jersey does not want or need the pipeline cuts through our Rivers, state and region — clean energy options are here today and can provide us the energy we need, while creating a greater number of jobs, and protecting our communities and environments at the same time. The drillers, pipeline companies, and even FERC want us to think we are powerless in the face of a pipeline proposal, we are here to stand our ground in

opposition and to take hold of the peoples' power to defend ourselves," **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

- Ban fracking (A2151) and the dumping of frack waste (S1041) in New Jersey

The Governor has thwarted action to protect New Jersey from fracking and fracking waste over the past five years. Most recently, he vetoed for a second time legislation to ban the treatment and disposal of fracking waste in our state, despite strong bi-partisan support. On Thursday, coalition members called for an override vote on the Frack Waste Ban Bill to protect our communities and drinking water from this toxic, radioactive waste.

"From the Jersey shore to the Highlands and Pinelands, every corner of the State is being threatened by infrastructure projects like pipelines, oil trains and LNG. These projects coupled with the potential for fracking in Central and Northern NJ and the dumping of radioactive fracking waste must be stopped. But stopping these projects is not enough, we need to make a conscious decision to invest in renewable energy. We are launching this coalition to unite forces around New Jersey who are fighting these dangerous and unnecessary projects around a bold new agenda to move us away from fracking and fracking related infrastructure and toward a clean energy future," **said Jim Walsh, NJ Director, Food & Water Watch.**

- Prohibit Bakken Shale crude oil and Alberta Tar Sand products from barreling through New Jersey on explosive oil trains

Current regulations allow rail companies to send dangerous, explosive oil shipments through our state without having to disclose the schedule or contents to local emergency personnel, governing bodies, or citizens. Right now up to 30 oil trains a week cut through our state on the CSX line on their way towards Philadelphia. The Norfolk Southern line is also believed to carry Bakken oil shipments. These trains pass densely populated communities and critical water supplies, including the Oradell Reservoir in Bergen County and the Delaware River. An accident, spill, or derailment would have serious safety and public health impacts. The coalition is calling for a ban on Bakken oil rail shipments.

"The more we learn about the transport by rail of highly volatile Bakken crude oil through our communities, the more we become alarmed. Most people--even those living in the "blast zone" within one half mile from the tracks know little if anything about the dangers, from fiery derailments happening across the country, the puncture prone trains, or the lack of accountability of railway companies to state and local authorities. Outraged citizens are starting to change that, by shining a light on the risks and pressuring our elected officials at all levels to protect the public--not in five years or ten years--but now. That requires an immediate ban on unsafe oil trains and a rapid shift toward investing in conservation and clean, renewable energy here in the Garden State, **said Rosemary Dreger Carey, coordinator, 350NJ.**

- Prevent the construction and expansion of oil and gas industries and facilities in New Jersey communities, off our shoreline, and on our waterways

Gas drillers are pushing to export their products to foreign markets, where the prices are higher. There are proposals to industrialize the Delaware River as a gas hub. The New York-New Jersey harbor is being targeted for LNG facilities. Liberty is proposing the Port Ambrose import terminal off the coast of Sandy Hook. A previous proposal by the company was vetoed

by Gov. Christie in 2010, and the coalition is calling for similar action by the administration on the current proposal.

"We can rebuild New Jersey's economy by embracing clean energy technology. Expanding dirty energy sources in our state is both environmentally and economically unsustainable," **said Dena Mottola Jaborska, Associate Director of New Jersey New Jersey Citizen Action.**

- Prohibit offshore drilling and exploration of fossil fuel in and around New Jersey's precious waters

The Bureau of Ocean Energy and Management (BOEM)'s 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program could open up areas from Georgia to Virginia to offshore drilling, putting the New Jersey coast at risk. New Jersey has a multi-billion dollar fishing industry up and down its coast, which could be jeopardized by drilling. Commercial and recreational fishing in New Jersey support 50,000 jobs and generate \$7.0 billion annually. Sierra Club's *Don't Rig Our Coastal Economy* report found that New Jersey's coastal tourism industry supports nearly 500,000 jobs, and one out of every six of the state's jobs are linked in some form to its shoreline. Visits to the area generate \$16.6 billion in wages and add \$5.5 billion to the state's tax coffers. Banning offshore oil drilling is critical to protecting the environment and economy of our coastal areas.

"Surfrider Foundation members live, work, or play in the communities most affected by climate change," **said John Weber, Mid Atlantic Regional Manager for the Surfrider Foundation.** "Our oceans, waves and beaches are increasingly being walled off, armored, or filled as the short-sighted human responses to sea level rise. We are proud to join the effort to move away from the root cause of these problems and move us to a clean energy future."

What Coalition members are saying:

"The Already Devalued and Devastated Homeowners of Parsippany have seen property value declines due to power line upgrades and will suffer both further property devaluation as well as risks to our physical health and water should the Pilgrim Pipeline be built. Renewable energy is the single best solution to all these problems caused by a hydrocarbon-based economy," **said Ken Dolsky, Head of The Already Devalued and Devastated Homeowners of Parsippany.**

"Air pollution from burning fossil fuel is a major source of nitrogen in Barnegat Bay. Years of research has concluded that nutrient loading, specifically nitrogen, is the primary cause of the bay's decline. If New Jersey's elected officials are serious about saving Barnegat Bay, they need to be quantitative about the impacts of all sources of nitrogen to our waterways," **said Britta Wenzel, Executive Director, Save Barnegat Bay.**

"The benefits of protecting New Jersey from shale gas infrastructure extend beyond its border to Pennsylvania where we are not only fighting many of the same projects, but are also fighting to end extraction itself. More pipelines in New Jersey means more fracking in Pennsylvania," **said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth, a coalition member based in Pennsylvania.**

"The moral and practical imperative for this platform couldn't be clearer. The Pope's recent encyclical stated clearly what we all know: the time for decisive action to protect the earth is now, and we need our political leaders to act with courage and vision," **said Rev. Fletcher**

Harper, Executive Director, GreenFaith.

“Transporting highly volatile Bakken crude oil by rail through our communities is unacceptable. A Department of Transportation report estimates that there will be at least 15 derailments of trains carrying Bakken crude each year. Yet the new rules issued by the D.O.T. won't be fully implemented for up to ten years. In the meantime, the people of New Jersey are left to simply hope nothing happens. ACCIDENTS DON'T WAIT TO HAPPEN,” **said Paula Rogovin, Coalition to Ban Unsafe Oil Trains.**

“We are all interconnected in the global climate change crisis. As Pope Francis calls attention to the unprecedented destruction of ecosystems from the harnessing of energy from fossil fuels, we are both morally and ethically called to recognize our interconnectedness and our responsibility for the care of the ecosystems that support all life on Earth. The time is now to create and support the public policy and economic systems that will speed the transition to cleaner, safer energy sources. We are uniting in New Jersey with the NJ Clean Energy Coalition to call on our communities and legislators to accelerate this process of transition. The time for inaction and debating is over, we need to create and act now,” **said Sr. Suzanne Golas, csjp WATERSPIRIT.**

"The goals are achievable, the technology available, and the majority of the population in support of battling climate change," **said Janet Tauro, a founding member of GRAMMES (Grandmothers, Mothers, and More for Energy Safety).** "We are at the tipping point. We have to change how we use, consume, and generate energy. If we don't, our children's children will look back at us, shake their heads, and sadly wonder why we were so very selfish, greedy and short sighted."

"In California, Colorado, Hawaii, Germany, Italy, China, and many other places all over the world, a new vision of a clean and sustainable energy future is taking hold - and taking shape in the form of legislation. New Jersey used to be a leader in this accelerating trend, and can be again. This coalition's plan would create tens of thousands of jobs, prevent environmental destruction and community disempowerment, and generate a huge net economic benefit for the state," **said Lyle Rawlings, President, Mid-Atlantic Solar Energy Industries Association.**

"Climate change presents an unprecedented challenge that calls for strong and immediate action. As Pope Francis calls for strong leadership on this important issue, we are answering this call by standing with other community leaders to chart a just course for our future that is free of fossil fuels," **said Jackie Schramm, Coordinator of Franciscan Response, St. Mary's Church.**

"We need to stop the proliferation of this infrastructure. The possibilities of ruptures and devastation through New Jersey is great. Once our forests and aquifers are destroyed, we all lose," **said Diane Wexler, Co-founder of Northjersey Pipeline Walkers.**

This diverse coalition continues to keep growing and working to make our state cleaner and greener.

Clean Energy Rally & Lobby Day

When: Thursday, June 25 at 10:00am - 3:00pm

Where: New Jersey Statehouse

10 AM: Morning Briefings in Committee Room 9, 3rd Floor, State House Annex

12 PM: Rally for Clean Energy, Statehouse Annex Front Steps