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## **EmpowerNJ Analysis Shows Murphy Administration Not Serious About Climate Goals**

**Trenton, NJ** -- EmpowerNJ this morning issued the following statement and released [the attached report](#) estimating that New Jersey's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have increased by up to 19% from 6 major fossil fuel expansion projects approved by the Murphy Administration over the past 4 years and have the potential to increase an additional 38% if 7 pending projects are approved and completed during his 2nd term.[1] This stands in stark contrast to Governor Murphy's Executive Order (EO) 274 which calls for reducing GHG emissions 50% by 2030.

The continued proliferation of pipelines, compressor stations, power plants, highway expansions, Liquefied Natural Gas projects and other polluting fossil fuel infrastructure in our state represents a significant threat to climate, public health and our economy.

Upon issuing EO 274 five months ago, and signing New Jersey's landmark environmental justice law, Governor Murphy stated:

- We will no longer allow Black and Brown communities in our state to be dumping grounds, where access to clean air and clean water are overlooked
- Global atmospheric warming, caused largely by the burning of fossil fuels, constitutes one of the greatest long-term threats currently facing humanity and is leading to significant changes in climate patterns here in New Jersey
- NJ's communities and economy are uniquely vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change
- Reducing the severity of adverse climate change impacts requires steep and immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions on an economy-wide basis
- Emissions reductions this decade are critical to reducing the adverse impacts of climate change

These urgent imperatives are inconsistent with the six projects approved since 2017, and the seven additional projects currently seeking approvals. **Five of the pending**

**projects would be sited in low income and/or communities of color**, and three are proposed by public entities under the authority of the Murphy Administration. In addition, five[2] of the pending projects are either unnecessary or will provide no benefits to the residents of New Jersey (their rejection will not add to residents' costs or reduce energy availability), while the remaining two can accomplish their goals with clean renewable energy.

The EmpowerNJ report updates, and uses the same models for estimating GHG volumes NJDEP agreed with in, [Empower NJ's 2019 report](#) that found pending projects just completed or pending under the Murphy Administration would increase emissions by roughly 30%. The report finds emissions are increasing faster than previously predicted and details the projects completed in New Jersey since 2017, projects currently pending approvals from this administration, and the estimated annual GHG emissions from both.

The projects completed since 2017 emit an estimated 19.3MMT (million metric tons) of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions per year, while the pending projects could emit up to an additional 37.8MMT per year. If all the pending projects are approved and completed, the total increase in GHG CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions under this Administration are estimated to be up to 57.1MMT, **an increase of 57% in total GHG emissions**. Given our State policy to reduce GHGs 50% over 2006 levels by 2030 (a reduction of 60 MMT), Governor Murphy must recognize the incongruity of the State's actions versus its policies and take immediate corrective action.

At the same time, the State's progress on implementing the vision of 100% clean energy by 2050 announced in the spring of 2017 and codified in EO 28 in the spring of 2018 has been painfully slow. There have been many missed deadlines and regulatory actions that put that vision in jeopardy and fail to get us on a path to achieve the essential interim goal of EO 274 (50% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030):

- It took two years to revise the Energy Master Plan. When it was released in January 2020, it lacked significant detail, and EO 100 and NJDEP AO 2020-01, both of which accompanied it, gave NJDEP an additional two years until Jan. 2022 to develop rules required by EOs 28 and 100;
- **DEP has missed EO 100 rulemaking deadlines for at least seven PACT rules**[3]. Most are at least 3-6 months behind schedule and at least three are 1-2 years behind schedule, having yet to be proposed (they were all supposed to be adopted by Jan. 2022);
- **DEP's featured rule on stationary sources in this package only reduces GHG emissions by 3%** and backloads that to 2035. It doesn't even acknowledge, let alone be informed by EO 274, despite being drafted concurrently in late 2021;

- **DCA and DOT have not even developed policies to reduce GHG emissions** from the building and transportation sectors as required by EOs 28 and 274 and **BPU refuses to include in cost analyses the true social, health and climate costs of GHGs** let alone frame the analyses around them; and
- **DEP has refused to implement July 2019 and January 2020 laws** to use a 20-yr timeframe for all GHG computations and establish interim benchmarks under the Global Warming Response Act.

In addition to the grave consequences for our climate, the continued proliferation of fossil fuels in New Jersey will exacerbate public health harms that kill hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. each year, and disproportionately endanger low-income communities of color. Research shows that phasing out fossil fuels will deliver immediate public health improvements to historically targeted communities.

With this rate of implementation of rules and the potential increase in GHGs, it is impossible to see a clear path to achieve our 50x30 goal. For these reasons EmpowerNJ is calling on Governor Murphy to:

1. Prevent the seven pending fossil fuel projects from being built; and
2. Direct all State agencies, especially DEP, DCA, BPU, NJTA and DOT, to provide written plans and rules to implement EO 274 to achieve our existential goal of reducing GHGs 50% by 2030 this year.

*Footnotes:*

[1] Neither of these increases account for any other increases or decreases of emissions in the past or coming yrs.

[2] Gibbstown LNG, NJTA highway expansions, Keasbey gas plant, NJ TRANSIT gas plant, PVSC gas plant

[3] EO100 and NJDEP AO 2020-01 required DEP to propose seven PACT rules by Jan. 2021: 1) Clean Truck was proposed in Spring 2021, adopted Dec. 2021; 2) GHG Monitoring and Reporting, proposed June 2021; 3) Stationary Source, proposed Dec. 2021; 4) Mobile Cargo Handling Equipment, proposed Jan. 2022; and 5-7) Coastal Zone Management; Freshwater Wetland; and Flood Hazard have yet to be proposed.

Empower NJ is a coalition of over 135 environmental, civic, faith, and progressive organizations calling on Governor Murphy to enact a prohibition on all new fossil fuel projects in New Jersey, and urgently implement policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by at least 50% from 2010 levels by 2030.

[www.empowernewjersey.com](http://www.empowernewjersey.com)

**Quotes from Empower New Jersey Leaders**

“Communities across the state are facing new polluting pipelines, power plants and

other dirty energy projects that threaten to drive New Jersey right off the climate cliff. The Governor must act now to protect clean air and water for all New Jerseyans, regardless of zip code, and reject these disastrous and unnecessary projects,” **said Matt Smith, NJ Director, Food & Water Watch.**

“This report forces New Jersey residents, elected officials and members of the Murphy Administration to acknowledge the enormous difference between the Governor’s stated policies of reducing greenhouse gasses and the reality that we are rapidly heading in the opposite direction,” **stated Ken Dolsky of the Don’t Gas the Meadowlands Coalition.**

“It’s difficult to understand how New Jersey justifies its abysmal track record on climate. Communities and the environment are suffering unmitigable damages yet Governor Murphy and the state’s agencies are increasing greenhouse gas emissions, despite their stated goals. There’s no excuse for sitting out the climate crisis, we want no more fossil fuel projects and REAL action to implement truly clean and renewable power,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

“Data and science will always unmistakably provide us with the truth, and the numbers and facts stated on this emissions report tell the crude reality of NJ’s current state of affairs. Fossil fuels projects keep being developed, greenhouse gas emissions keep increasing, our ability to tackle and mitigate climate change keeps decreasing and the health of our residents keeps being jeopardized. We ask Governor Murphy to put a stop on fossil fuel development to clear the path for true clean renewable energy,” **said Anjuli Ramos-Busot, NJ Director for the Sierra Club.**

“Transportation creates more than 40% of the GHGs in New Jersey, more than any source. Yet the NJ Department of Transportation and the NJ Turnpike Authority have no plan or strategy to reduce GHGs in violation of EO 274. Instead, they are taking us in the opposite direction, such as spending tens of billions of dollars on highway expansions, underfunding public transportation and proceeding with plans to build a gas-fired power plant in the Meadowlands. Governor Murphy has to immediately order these agencies to reverse course and follow his own purported policies,” **said John Reichman of BlueWaveNJ.**

“Our organization worked hard to put Governor Murphy in a position to tackle the climate crisis. What we have gotten are six new fossil fuel projects with seven more on the way. He can, and must, do better. This administration is our last best chance,” **said Eric Benson, Clean Water Action, NJ Campaigns Director.**

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