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Empower NJ coalition has some serious questions about NJ's draft Energy Master Plan

Trenton, NJ: Empower NJ coalition members will preview their critiques of Governor Murphy's draft Energy Master Plan (EMP) in advance of Wednesday's Board of Public Utilities hearing. The draft EMP is potentially the most holistic energy master plan to transition us to a green economy but without more details and stopping new frack gas projects it will utterly fail to achieve the governors 100% clean energy goals and global warming response act mandates. Their testimony at the BPU hearing will raise many specific issues that need to be addressed before the coalition members, and the tens of thousands of concerned New Jersey residents they represent, can feel satisfied that our state is truly on a path to a clean, renewable energy future.

"Governor Murphy has long promised a plan to fight climate change in NJ through a rapid and fair transition to 100% renewable energy. But his highly anticipated draft energy master plan is full of dirty energy loopholes, and lacks the aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals necessary to avoid runaway climate catastrophe," **said Matthew Smith, Senior Organizer, Food and Water Watch.**

"The public must have abundant opportunities to participate in the development of the New Jersey Energy Master Plan. With only 3 days of hearings in 3 locations, people will have very limited opportunity for verbal comment. Furthermore, details about the annual milestones the state will accomplish, the fate of dirty energy projects that work counter to the Plan's stated goals, modeling results from the Integrated Energy Plan, and other crucial issues are missing from the draft. When will the public be able to weigh in on these other key aspects if these are not available now for public input? This plan will directly impact more than 8.9 million New Jerseyans, we require a robust public participation process," **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

"If the Administration is serious about meeting its clean energy goals and addressing our climate crisis, there must be an immediate moratorium on new fossil fuel projects, none of which New Jersey actually needs. We have to stop increasing GHG emissions and begin immediately transitioning to a clean energy economy. Increasing our use of natural gas is a bargain with the devil. It would lead to long term economic, financial and societal costs that are greater than any short term savings, suppress the development of clean, renewable energy and lead to stranded assets," **said John Reichman, Environmental Chair, BlueWaveNJ.**

“Gov. Murphy broke his commitment to the people of New Jersey when it comes to Clean Energy. He called for 100% Clean Energy and now he is redefining it to include natural gas fossil fuel plants with carbon sequestration, nuclear power plants, incinerators, biomass, carbon credits and offsets. He’s now defining dirty energy as clean energy in almost a Trumpian-like way. Calling fossil fuels Clean Energy is like Ben & Jerry’s calling their ice cream Vegan,” **said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** “The EMP is EMP-T-Y when it comes to more renewable energy. Our current goal is 50% by 2030 and the EMP does not increase renewable energy beyond that. This means that to reach 100% Clean Energy by 2050, half our energy can be from dirty fuels and nuclear. The definition of Clean Energy also doesn’t include impacts from natural gas pipelines and compressor stations, and they kept the nuclear subsidy that could go on indefinitely. When it comes to reaching our climate and renewable energy goals, our governor is full of hot air.”

"The Energy Master Plan and companion policies mention equity, but offer few specific remedies to this injustice. The State of NJ must establish immediate mandatory reductions of climate changing substances and their co-pollutants within EJ communities, as well as designate a significant portion of future climate mitigation benefits, funds, and programs to these same communities who have long suffered the harms of polluting facilities," **said Amy Goldsmith, Clean Water Action, State Director, Clean Water Action.**

“Methane emissions are the Achilles heel of the bridge fuel philosophy peddling natural gas. The Energy Master Plan fails to fully take into account the full impact of methane pollution from fossil fuels and this glaring oversight needs to be corrected,” said **Doug O’Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.** “Methane is the loaded gun of carbon pollution, and we need to fully reckon with its impacts – and significantly reduce methane pollution via a fossil fuel moratorium – if we are to truly reach a clean, renewable energy future.”

Governor Murphy has repeatedly promised that guidance and rules for constructing new gas power plants and pipelines/compressor stations would be addressed in the EMP and has used this to deflect criticism and defer action. The EMP completely ignores this subject and is effectively allowing these projects to proceed. With each passing day it becomes increasingly difficult to achieve the Administration’s stated goals. The time to fulfill these promises is now.

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A coalition of over 80 environmental, citizen, faith, and progressive groups are part of the Empower NJ- No Fossil Fuel Projects Campaign. The campaign is calling on Governor Murphy to put a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure until New Jersey has rules and standards in place to achieve our state’s 100% clean energy goals. Coordinating committee groups include: BlueWaveNJ, Clean Water Action, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Environment NJ, Food & Water Watch, NJ Sierra Club, and No Meadowlands Powerplant Coalition. www.empowernewjersey.com