



EMPOWER NJ

NO FOSSIL FUEL PROJECTS

Press Release

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13 Frack Gas Projects Undermine Murphy Clean Energy Plan New report finds 32% spike in greenhouse gas emissions, law requires 80% cut Coalition for emergency moratorium in response to climate crisis

Trenton, NJ – A report released today documents the devastating climate impacts if 12 new frack gas projects in New Jersey move forward with one completed in 2018, in stark contrast to Governor Murphy's stated commitment and legal requirements to combat global warming and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The report, *FIGHTING Climate Change in NJ: The Urgent Case for a Moratorium on all Fossil Fuel Projects* (<http://empowernewjersey.com/MoratoriumReportFeb2019.pdf>) authored by the **Empower NJ: No Fossil Fuel Projects** campaign, calculates the previously overlooked cumulative greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from these 13 projects (see Appendices I and II for details of each project) would increase New Jersey's total GHG emissions by approximately 30% and the 5 power plants would spike GHG emissions from electricity generation by roughly 76%.

The report makes a powerful case for 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 and comply with existing law and stated Murphy Administration policy. It describes the major actions needed during the moratorium and provides an analysis of the key economic factors involved in effectively transitioning to a green economy.

State legislators fighting against climate change and local mayors on the front lines of these projections joined **Empower NJ: No Fossil Fuel Projects**, a growing coalition of over 58 progressive, faith, environmental and citizen groups (see Appendix III of the report for a full list of members) calling on Governor Murphy to initiate the moratorium, in releasing the report.

"This report comes out at a critical time. The choices we make today—to continue to guzzle fossil fuels, or to build a sustainable society powered by renewable energy—will affect not just our lives, but our children's and grandchildren's lives. There is no excuse for inaction, and no reason to build new fossil fuel plants," said **Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg (D-37)**, a leading opponent of the Meadowlands gas plant.

Assemblyman John McKeon (D-27) added: "We can't afford the increased greenhouse gas emissions from these fossil fuel projects. A moratorium until protections are in place would ensure

we meet our obligations under the Global Warming Response Act, Paris Climate Accords and the US Climate Alliance, and are on track to achieve Governor Murphy's commitment to be 100% clean energy by 2050. At minimum, we need to regulate greenhouse gasses under the Clean Air Act, strengthen water rules weakened by the Christie Administration, and close loopholes that let polluters in New Jersey buy their way out of cleaning up deadly ozone."

Major findings of the report include:

- A **32% increase** (32 million metric tons [MMt]/year) in total NJ CO₂e GHG (CO₂ and methane) emissions over current levels from the 13 projects. With methane being 86 times more efficient at trapping heat than CO₂ over a 20-year time frame, GHG emissions from fracked natural gas are greater than those from coal.
- A **76% increase** (14.2 MMt/year) in CO₂e GHG emissions from in-state power plants over 2017 levels by the 5 power plants (Sewaren 7 now operating under 2018 approvals).
- Spiking GHG emissions make it **impossible to meet the clean renewable energy objectives** of the Murphy Administration and the state's obligations under existing law despite advances on offshore wind, battery storage, etc.
- **Demonstrated lack of need for 12 of the projects** to residents and businesses in New Jersey as any true increase in energy demand can be met with improvements in energy efficiency, conservation and clean renewable energy developments. Two of the projects would not even deliver any energy to State residents.
- **Significant increases in already unhealthy levels of ground level ozone** and other toxic air pollutants leading to more premature deaths and increased health care costs.
- Investing in renewable energy and **clean renewables will create more jobs** than investing in new fossil fuel projects.

"It's kind of scary that no one until now has done the basic math around these cumulative impacts or shared it," **stated Ken Dolsky of the Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition and a primary author of the report.** "Our research shows building these gas projects would make it impossible to achieve Governor Murphy's objectives in EO 28 and what the Global Warming Response Act requires. We also document that the need in NJ for these new projects is either non-existent or very soft. That is why we are calling for a moratorium to give the state the time it needs to get its act together."

"New Jersey is the most densely populated state so we have to be a leader when it comes to protecting clean air and water," **Senator Bateman (R-16) said.** "Climate change is real and unless we take action now, our kids and our grandkids won't have access to these resources in the future. Dangerous projects like the **PennEast Pipeline** must be stopped and we must permanently ban fracking in the **Delaware River Basin.** I am proud to be a part of this fight. We have made a lot of progress, but there is so much more to do and we need a moratorium to get there."

Specific steps the report calls for during the moratorium include but are not limited to:

- Establishing rules under existing air pollution laws to limit GHG emissions and enable DEP to reject permits for projects that would cause New Jersey to exceed GHG limits;
- Reversing Governor Christie's rollbacks of water and land use regulations that make it

easier to build pipelines in environmentally sensitive areas;

- Eliminating the ability to increase ozone levels by allowing the purchase of ozone credits in any area out of compliance with EPA standards;
- Championing a full ban on fracking and all of its associated activities throughout the Delaware River Basin and in New Jersey; and
- Creating a strong green jobs program including training and placement in the new green economy, built on and driving living wage union jobs in emerging sectors (solar, offshore wind, electric car infrastructure, efficiency, etc.).

"Climate change is creating real, devastating effects and New Jersey is experiencing it first-hand. Areas are flooding at higher rates than ever before, causing distress amongst homeowners who face rising insurance rates and high costs to elevate their structures. The time to act is now, by eliminating new fossil fuel projects we can take the first of many steps to protect our environment and ensure that our beautiful Garden State is protected for future generations," **continued Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-37)**.

"The Roseland Compressor station is a cause of tremendous concern to my constituents, and plans to build a second station have compounded the worry, especially given its proximity to a power transfer station and protected wetlands. The Roseland project is one of the 13 pipelines, power plants and compressor station projects in the report. While individually quite concerning, their cumulative impact (a 32% increase in greenhouse gas emissions) is even more so. I stand squarely with the EMPOWER NJ coalition in calling for a moratorium on all of these projects until such time as proper protections are in place to ensure compliance with the 80% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions mandate of the 2007 Global Warming Response Act and Governor Murphy's goal of an of 100% clean energy," **concluded Assemblywoman Mila Jasey (D-27)**.

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**Quotes from additional authors of "Fighting Climate Change:
The Urgent Case for a Moratorium on all Fossil Fuel Projects in NJ"**

"Climate change is an immediate and real threat to the state. The combination of sea level rise, increased storm events, and other climate impacts put our environment and communities at risk. The overwhelming scientific consensus says we may have as little as 12 years to reduce greenhouse gas levels before the Earth reaches a dangerous temperature. This is a dire situation and the state needs to do more immediately to avert it," **said John Reichman of BlueWaveNJ.**

"We are in a climate crisis and things are getting worse. This report is an alarm bell going off. While we wait for the Governor Murphy to act, carbon emissions are projected to go up 30% and 13 fossil fuel projects are going forward. He needs to take immediate action and put a moratorium in place. This is happening around the country. Seattle has a moratorium on new gas power plants, Los Angeles and Arizona just stopped major fossil fuel plants too. Three other NJ governors have put moratoriums during an environmental crisis. We need this so DEP can put programs in place to regulate and set standards for CO2 and GHG emissions. This will help regulate Christie's rollbacks that make it easier to build pipelines and put in place laws that will let us get to 100% renewable. Our future and climate depend on it," **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.**

"If Governor Murphy stops these massive dirty energy projects, some of which are already proceeding at their own risk, he would show that protecting our air, water, and climate is a higher priority than fossil fuel industry profits. The truth is the governor cannot have it both ways; if he is serious about battling the climate crisis, that means we can't build the pipelines and power plants that will spew tons of planet-warming emissions. This is a make-or-break moment for Governor Murphy's environmental legacy," **added Matthew Smith, a Senior Organizer with Food & Water Watch.**

"We're under the climate gun from the impact of these baker's dozen of fossil fuel infrastructure projects. The Empower NJ analysis of the cumulative carbon impact of these pipelines and power plants shows clearly we can't hit our climate change goals if these projects get a green light. This report should serve as a road map for the Murphy Administration to move forward with a fossil fuel infrastructure moratorium to ensure we reach Gov. Murphy's clean energy goals and protect public health and private property," **said Doug O'Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.**

"Empower NJ's report explains that it is essential that New Jersey stop building fracked gas projects because they release methane, a greenhouse gas 86 times more efficient at trapping heat than carbon on a 20 year time frame, worse than coal. The myth that gas is better than other fossil fuels has led us down a deadly path that spurs fracking pollution and will doom our efforts to fight climate change here

in New Jersey and beyond. Empower NJ has organized to change that,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

“A 2017 US Energy Department report found clean electricity jobs outnumber paychecks provided by the fossil fuel industry by at least five to one. New Jersey’s long term economic stability is dependent on creating more family supporting union jobs across the green energy spectrum and in environmental justice communities. In our call for no more fossil fuel projects, *Empower NJ* seeks a just transition (wages, skill transfer and employment) for displaced fossil fuel and union workers. Whether an electrician, carpenter, laborer..., there is a great role and union job for you in the green economy,” **stated Amy Goldsmith, NJ State Director of Clean Water Action.**