2024 EMP Update Talking Points

General

- We urge the strategic, equitable and cost-effective decarbonization of our top three most carbon emitting sectors, transportation, buildings and energy generation while simultaneously modernizing and updating their connective tissue, the grid.
- The updated EMP must build on the successes of the current 2019 EMP including the cost effective electrification of the building and transportation sectors powered by 100% clean renewable electricity
- The impacts of indoor and outdoor air pollution are disproportionately borne by low-income households and communities of color
- Reducing indoor and outdoor air pollution is particularly important to New Jersey because asthma is an ongoing public health challenge for the state.
    - Over a third of New Jersey's counties received a "D" grade or below for ground-level ozone by The American Lung Association.
    - More than 17,600 deaths annually are directly linked to air pollution in New Jersey based on recent research from the Harvard School of Public Health.
    - Environment New Jersey Research and Policy Center's 2021 "Trouble in the Air" report found that the New York-Newark-Jersey City metro area, home to more than 19 million people, experienced 47 bad-air days in 2020.
- If the state does not prioritize overburdened communities, it will further exacerbate poverty and health disparities, and New Jersey will not reach its clean energy goals.

Buildings

- In New Jersey, buildings powered by fossil fuels contribute more than four times more outdoor nitrogen oxides (a precursor to smog) than electricity generation.
- New Jersey has among the highest health burdens of any state from outdoor air pollution directly related to combustion of fossil fuels in buildings — with over 250 premature deaths and $2.8 billion in monetized health impacts annually, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found.
- The proposed EMP must prioritize the full decarbonization of our buildings and to simultaneously prepare our homes and buildings to be safe, healthy and efficient so that the energy savings do not leak out through the drafty windows.
- Replacing fossil fuel-burning equipment like gas furnaces, propane boilers, and more with highly efficient electric heat pumps will cut climate pollution from buildings.
- Electrifying our homes and business is more energy efficient - heat pumps are 3 to 5 times more energy efficient than a similar fossil fuel heating system
- As fossil fuel costs continue to climb, New Jerseyans who make the switch from gas to highly efficient electric cold climate heat pumps can save anywhere from 4% to 41% on their annual energy bills, depending on utility territory
- In order to address the high cost of living here in NJ, the updated EMP must support lowering emissions and energy burdens by deeply subsidizing residential multi-family units' transition to electric

- Federal and state incentives, particularly federal incentives for low- and moderate-income New Jerseyans through the Inflation Reduction Act, help significantly offset costs for electrical upgrades and heat pumps.
- New Jersey has a lot of older housing stock, which tends to be more likely to suffer from “leakage”. Low- and moderate-income residents are more likely to live in older housing stock because rent prices tend to be lower, which increases their energy burdens due to excessive heating or cooling.
- The updated EMP must ensure effective Energy Efficiency and electrification programs, so that building decarbonization can be more easily addressed holistically. This is the promise of the whole home pilot program, which expands upon some existing programs, where their shortfalls are that they can’t address other problems in the home, like asbestos or a damaged roof.
- The whole home pilot program is the gold standard as a home’s concerns can be addressed all at once and retrofitted to the desire of the resident. However, there has been limited utilization of the program to date in Trenton. The EMP must ensure that residents can opt-in and make this program extremely affordable to the low- and moderate-income residents who opt in.
- Most importantly, this work must continue to prioritize LMI households, which are the most likely to reside in unhealthy and inefficient homes. We strongly urge the Board to administer the Comfort Partners Program so that the folks that need to be prioritized are, and no one is left behind regardless of their utility.

100% clean electricity by 2035

- Phasing out gas is critical to meeting decarbonization and public health objectives, and thus long-term planning must be deployed to align utilities’ goals with those decarbonization goals.
- Investments geared towards extending the longevity of gas pipeline networks must not be favored, instead the state should be focused on encouraging the deployment of clean energy, including wind, solar, and storage technologies, to achieve decarbonization.
- 100% clean electricity means cleaner air and improved public health, creation of good local union jobs, energy independence, and bold action on climate change.
- The Governor’s goals of 100% clean electricity by 2035 is ambitious and attainable, and the EMP must create the framework for our state to meet the goal while providing certainty for utilities, energy suppliers, and businesses.
- 100% clean electricity by 2035 must genuinely mean clean energy – which does not include trash incinerators or false energy solutions like blended hydrogen and renewable natural gas.
- The previous EMP noted that most of our clean energy would be met with offshore wind and solar. Offshore wind is a burgeoning industry, and with the Governor’s latest stated goal of 11,000 MW by 2040, and the latest offshore wind solicitation that just opened, we feel encouraged that we can meet the 100% goal while creating good-paying in-state jobs, solidifying New Jersey as the east coast leader in offshore wind, and producing local, clean energy to reduce air pollution and address climate change.

- Solar is a well-accepted and continually growing clean energy industry. A combination between grid-connected, residential and community solar will provide New Jerseyans with energy independence, clean energy opportunities, and cost savings to their wallet. Community solar allows renters and low-income residents to access clean energy while reducing their energy burdens. With energy year 2025 promising at least 500 MW of community solar energy, nearly 4 times the capacity as previous years, residents will have more access than ever to this vital program.
- With the current goals of 2,000 MW by 2030, we encourage the Board to accelerate developing strong incentive structures for energy storage in the state, and consider marrying that with small-scale, residential incentives so that households that may lose power can also take advantage of energy storage. Given that offshore wind and solar are not demand-response energy types, energy storage for clean, renewable energy will allow New Jerseyans to continue drawing clean energy even when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing.

Transportation

- Transportation is the largest source of carbon emissions in the state – representing 38% of emissions in 2021.
- Decarbonizing this sector is essential to meeting our climate goals, reducing air pollution, and protecting the health of all New Jerseyans, especially members of environmental justice communities that are adjacent to and most impacted by highways and vehicular pollution.
- The 2019 EMP overarchingly supports: decarbonize through rapid electrification, reduce vehicle miles traveled, reduce reliance on single passenger vehicles, and exploration of alternatives for hard-to-electrify transportation like aviation. We agree that these are the right tactics, however funding and educational campaigns need to ramp up in order to make these transitions such as adopting electric vehicles, and cultural shifts such as using public transit a reality.
- We urge the Board to move forward the Medium- and Heavy Duty Straw Proposal, which is significantly delayed so that utilities can employ strategic plans on charging infrastructure across the state with the purpose of transitioning and powering one of our most polluting sources of emissions in our most polluting sector, our trucks.
- Finalizing the Straw proposal will better enable entities like New Jersey Transit and school districts–many of whom have received federal grant money towards clean school buses–to speed the efficient, cost-effective integration of electric vehicles into their fleets.
- The state needs significant and consistent funding to electrify fleets and medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, establishment of sufficient charging infrastructure, and enhance public transit in a timely manner.
- The recent passing of the punitive $250 per year registration fee, which is scheduled to increase to $290 per year over the next few years, moves us in the wrong direction and discourages the transition to electric vehicles in the near term.