New Jersey Climate Change Policy

Honors Senior Thesis Presentation
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After producing virtually no climate change legislation for 8 years, New Jersey suddenly has had a barrage of climate change laws and executive orders passed in the last year.

With the speed and recent nature of these laws, it is important to understand the context and possible effectiveness of legislation being passed.

It is also essential to determine if more policy is needed on the topic, and if so, where in particular the state is still lacking appropriate policy.
NJ Climate Change Policy Review

- Global Warming Response Act (2007)
- Energy Master Plan (2011)
- Solar Act (2012)
- Joining Paris Climate Accord (2018)
- Offshore Wind Energy Development Act (2018)
- Clean Energy Act (2018)
NJ Climate Change Policy Recommendations
Policy Recommendation Summary

- **Land Conservation**
  - Increase efforts to acquire undeveloped land
  - Increase protections on preserved lands

- **Regional Protections**
  - Stop development in the Highlands, Meadowlands, and Pinelands
  - Preserve undeveloped land in the Delaware and Raritan Watersheds
  - Convert developed land along rivers into wetlands
  - Halt fertilizer usage along New Jersey bays

[Map of New Jersey Highlands and Pinelands]

https://www.saveh2onj.org/about-us/new-jersey-highlands/
Policy Recommendation Summary

Smart Growth with Green Infrastructure
- Mandate LEED certification for new construction projects
- Mandate flood resistance for all newly constructed structures
- Modernize electric grid by emphasizing efficiency

Public Transportation
- Return rail service to South Jersey
- Acquire federal funding for Gateway Tunnel
- Construct new light rail systems in Gloucester and Camden Counties
- Re-fund and re-staff NJ Transit
- Add new trains and rail cars
- Increase subsidies for electric vehicles
Policy Recommendation Summary

- **Energy**
  - Halt construction of natural gas pipelines
  - Increase solar and wind subsidies
  - Mandate that newly built houses must have solar panels
  - Implement a more expensive carbon credit system for GHG producers
  - Consider building safe, new nuclear power plants

[Source](https://rethinkenergynj.org/does-new-jersey-need-more-pipelines/)
Policy Recommendation Summary

- Environmental Justice
  - Fully fund the state's Environmental Justice Commission
  - Prioritize renewable energy projects in low income areas
  - Freeze public transportation fares for low income commuters

- Urban Planning
  - Reduce heat islands
  - Build more heat shelters
  - Fund new greenway projects
  - Build more urban parks
  - Mandate green rooftops
Policy Recommendation Summary

- **Coastal Protection**
  - Protect remaining wetlands
  - Construct artificial wetlands in bays
  - Re-map coastal flood zones by accounting for climate change
  - Ban construction and rebuilds in high-risk flood zones

[Map of NJ Coastal Municipalities](https://www.state.nj.us/dep/cmp/)
Policy Recommendation Summary

- Inland Water Policies
  - Re-map inland flooding zones by accounting for climate change
  - Mandate flood resistance for all newly constructed structures
  - Re-construct storm water infrastructure by accounting for climate change
  - Mandate increased capacities for waste water treatment facilities
  - Convert developed properties at a high-risk of flooding into undeveloped land

https://geology.com/lakes-rivers-water/new-jersey.shtml
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank professor Patrick O’Connor for being my thesis sponsor, and professor Jeremy Teigen for being a reader for this thesis, their support and insight were critical for this project.
Thank You