



N J H E P S

New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability

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All 56 NJ College Presidents Sign Environmental Plan

New Brunswick, NJ, Feb. 12 -- In an historic signing, the presidents of all 56 New Jersey colleges and universities have joined together to endorse a Sustainability Greenhouse Gas Action Plan for New Jersey that calls for a 3.5 percent reduction in the state's greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2005.

Developed by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the plan is the nation's first to establish reduction goals for greenhouse gas emissions.

The action commits its signers to the implementation of "voluntary programs and initiatives to accomplish the core goal of the Plan, a 3.5% reduction in New Jersey greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by the year 2005." The 56 educational institutions join 13 other New Jersey organizations and businesses that have similarly pledged to help implement the plan (see: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/gcc/gcc.htm>).

"This historic signing on greenhouse gas emissions means that 56 college presidents are all looking to New Jersey's future," said James Loughran, S.J., President of Saint Peter's College, and Chair of the New Jersey Presidents' Council. "We shall be teaching an important lesson both to our students and to the citizens of New Jersey and beyond."

Dr. Donald Wheeler, president of NJHEPS (New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability) and Professor of Sociology and Global Studies at Kean University, outlined the following concerns:

- Millions of New Jersey citizens breathe unhealthy air and the state is the second worst in the nation for levels of ground ozone and among the worst in toxic air contaminants.
- Some 900,000 New Jersey residents have asthma or other respiratory illnesses. On bad smog days there is a large percent increase in the number of asthma patients taken to emergency rooms.
- Man-made emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, gas and oil, have contributed substantially to the observed warming of the earth's atmosphere over the last fifty years.
- The worst-case estimate for a temperature rise by the year 2100 has now been revised from 6.3 degrees to 11 degrees Fahrenheit.
- There will be more extreme events such as droughts, storms and floods.
- Trends of increasing temperature, sea-level rise, and increased precipitation will intensify.
- The global sea level rise is anticipated to be between 14 cm and 80 cm, with a mid-range estimate of about half a meter.
- Glaciers and polar ice will continue to melt.
- A National Assessment was recently completed by the United States Global Change Research Program (see: <http://www.nacc.usgcrp.gov/>). A separate assessment for the Mid-Atlantic examines the impacts of climate change on the New York City metropolitan region, including Northern New Jersey (see: <http://www.nacc.usgcrp.gov/regions/midatlantic/>).

"Because of its foresight, the endorsement of the DEP plan by 56 college presidents is a milestone in the history of New Jersey higher education," said Wheeler. "This action will serve as a model for the nation."

NJHEPS presented the Council with a resolution calling for support of the DEP plan that the Presidents then voted to endorse. Subsequent to this, 56 presidents individually signed a "Covenant of Sustainability" committing their respective institutions to the plan. NJHEPS is a coalition of 15 New Jersey campuses promoting sustainability. It has established ties to faculty, students, administrators and campus facilities operators around the state. NJHEPS is funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation of Morristown, NJ.

56 Presidents* of New Jersey Higher Education Institutions Having Signed the New Jersey Sustainability Greenhouse Gas Initiative

Dr. J. Michael Adams — Fairleigh Dickinson University
 Mr. William F. Anderson — Gloucester County College
 Dr. Ronald L. Applbaum — Kean University
 Dr. W. Sherrill Babb — Philadelphia Biblical University, NJ Campus
 Dr. John J. Bakum — Middlesex County College
 Dr. Peter F. Burnham — Brookdale Community College
 Mr. Robert M. Bocchino — DeVry Institute
 Dr. Stephanie M. Bennett-Smith — Centenary College
 Dr. Thomas H. Brown — Union County College
 Dr. Alice Chandler — Ramapo College of New Jersey
 Dr. Susan A. Cole — Montclair State University
 Dr. Peter B. Contini — Salem Community College
 Dr. Stuart D. Cook — University of Medicine and Dentistry of N.J.
 Dr. Phyllis DellaVecchia — Camden County College
 Dr. Vincent DeSanctis — Warren County Community College
 Dr. Kenneth L. Ender — Cumberland County College
 Dr. Vera King Farris — The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
 Dr. Donald J. Farrish — Rowan University
 Dr. Saul K. Fenster — New Jersey Institute of Technology
 Dr. Glen E. Gabert — Hudson County Community College
 Dr. Thomas W. Gillespie — Princeton Theological Seminary
 Dr. R. Barbara Gitenstein — The College of New Jersey
 Dr. Bradley M. Gottfried — Sussex County Community College
 Mrs. Mary Jo Greco — Gibbs College
 Rabbi Moshe Herson — Rabbinical College of America
 Sr. Julitta Heinen — Assumption College for Sisters
 Dr. Carlos Hernandez — New Jersey City University
 Rev. Dr. Norman J. Kansfield — New Brunswick Theological Seminary
 Rabbi Aaron Kotler* — Beth Medrash Govoha
 Hon. Thomas H. Kean — Drew University
 Dr. Jon H. Larson — Ocean County College
 Dr. Francis L. Lawrence — Rutgers University
 Fr. James N. Loughran, S.J. — St. Peter's College
 Dr. J. Barton Luedeke — Rider University
 Mr. Kevin Luing — Berkeley College
 Sr. Theresa Mary Martin — Felician College
 Dr. John T. May — Atlantic Cape Community College
 Dr. Robert C. Messina, Jr. — Burlington County College
 Dr. John F. Noonan — Bloomfield College
 Mr. Eric M. Perkins — Mercer County Community College

Dr. George A. Pruitt — Thomas Edison State College
Sr. Francis Raftery, S.C. — College of St. Elizabeth
Dr. Harold J. Raveche — Stevens Institute of Technology
Dr. Steven M. Rose — Passaic County Community College
Dr. G. Jeremiah Ryan — Raritan Valley Community College
Rabbi Yeruchim Shain — Talmudical Academy
Dr. Harold T. Shapiro — Princeton University
Msgr. Robert T. Sheeran — Seton Hall University
Dr. Arnold Speert — William Paterson University
Dr. Rebecca Stafford — Monmouth University
Dr. Louis C. Vaccaro — Georgian Court College
Rabbi Yitzchok Weintraub — Rabbi Jacob Joseph School
Sr. Patrice Werner, OP — Caldwell College
Dr. Judith K. Winn — Bergen Community College
Dr. A. Zachery Yamba — Essex County College
Dr. Edward J. Yaw — County College of Morris

** Rabbi Herson's title is "Dean"; Rabbi Kotler's title is "Chief Executive Officer"; Rabbi Shain's title is "Dean"; and Rabbi Weintraub's title is "Executive Director"*

"New Jersey's campuses have made significant advances in energy efficiency," stated Dr. Saul Fenster, President of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Vice Chair of the Council. "Those efficiency gains translate into emissions reductions which are not only good for the environment, but make sense economically."

"The state's greenhouse gas reduction goal can only be achieved through implementation of cost-effective strategies and technologies through a public and private sector partnership," said DEP Commissioner Bob Shinn. "I commend all of the institutions represented here today, especially those which have already taken steps to address this global problem and are helping to prove that this is indeed a realistic plan with achievable goals. The commitment of New Jersey colleges and universities to this goal is even more significant due to their role in the education of future generations. I am delighted to see this initiative will be used to train the next generation of architects and engineers in sustainable building design."

"It's good to see this initiative take root," stated former Governor and now Drew University President Tom Kean. "I whole heartedly support the current administration's efforts in this area and believe they can have a lasting impact."

"Per unit energy consumption has decreased on the campuses, in some cases dramatically," said Dr. Jim Quigley, NJHEPS Executive Director. He pointed to examples of cogeneration plants that have been constructed at Rutgers and Princeton Universities, and at The College of New Jersey. Other examples of energy conservation are a set of fuel cells at Ramapo College and a substantial geothermal installation at Richard Stockton College. Most New Jersey campuses have made improvements in lighting efficiency and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment.

"These are major developments that can be credited with having avoided tens of thousands of tons of carbon dioxide emissions," said Quigley. "But, we know there's a long way to go."

New Jersey's action plan calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by about 20 million tons (from the projected 151 million tons in 2005 to the goal of 131 million tons by that date) through initiatives in five areas: energy conservation, pollution prevention, innovative technologies, recycling and solid waste management and natural resource protection. If nothing is done, emissions are projected to rise 6 percent annually.

Specifically, the plan would achieve a 6.2 million ton reduction through energy conservation initiatives in residential, commercial and industrial buildings, another 6.3 million ton reduction through innovative technologies in residential, commercial and industrial buildings, a 2.2 million ton reduction through energy conservation and innovative technologies in the transportation sector, a 4.5 million ton reduction through waste management improvements, and a half million ton reduction through natural resource conservation.

Examples include: proper car maintenance to improve fuel efficiency, greater use of mass transit and alternate fueled vehicles, use of more energy efficient appliances in the home, use of more efficient commercial and residential heating and cooling systems, lighting system upgrades in commercial establishments, use of fuel cells in industrial and commercial settings, greater recycling to reduce waste generation, tree planting to reduce carbon dioxide levels, and reducing or using energy lost through inefficient industrial processes. One study showed that in New Jersey, 21 percent of energy designated for use in industrial activities is wasted due to inefficient processes.

New Jersey produces about 2 percent of the nation's greenhouse gases, approximately 130 million tons a year. It is the first to sign an agreement with a foreign nation – the Netherlands – to work jointly on climate change issues to reduce sea-level rise.