



Historical Timelines of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Policy in New Jersey: 2026 Update

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Introduction

This document provides historical timelines with respect to New Jersey's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., climate change mitigation) as well as reduce its vulnerability to climate change impacts (i.e., climate change adaptation). They provide a window into the evolution of innovations in New Jersey climate change policy. For context, the report juxtaposes these timelines with seminal United States climate change policy mitigation and adaptation actions.

This document updates Andrews, C., G. Bulger, M. Kaplan, and G. Rivera. (2025). Historical Timelines of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Policy in New Jersey. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. <https://doi.org/10.7282/00000514>

The timelines were originally developed and shared with participants at the March 21, 2025, conference *Sustaining Innovation in New Jersey Climate Policy: Past, Present and Future* hosted by the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center (NJCCRC) at Rutgers University. The NJCCRC welcomes additional feedback and expects to periodically update these “living” timelines to capture this slice of New Jersey's environmental history. This is the first of these updates.

Two additional timelines on key New Jersey demographic and infrastructure milestones, as well as technology innovations, were also developed as part of the contextualization of New Jersey's climate change policy history and can be found within the documented Conference Proceedings.¹

¹ Herb, J., Kaplan, M. B., & Marxen, L. J. (2025). Sustaining Innovation in New Jersey Climate Policy: Past, Present and Future Proceedings of the March 21, 2025, New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center Conference. <https://doi.org/10.7282/00000515>



Climate Change Mitigation Timeline

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

NJ Air Pollution Control Act

The NJ Air Pollution Control Act (P.L. 1954, c.212) was passed to monitor and control air pollution, setting emission limits for industrial sources and introducing the requirement for pollution control technologies.

Motor Vehicle Air Contaminant Control

New Jersey adopted legislation (P.L. 1966, c. 16) that allowed the Air Pollution Control Commission, after consultation with the Division of Motor Vehicles, to set standards and requirements for the control of air contaminants from motor vehicles.

Air Pollution Control Equipment Tax Exemption

New Jersey adopted legislation (P.L. 1966, c.126) that granted a local property tax exemption to industry for the installation of State-approved air pollution control equipment.

1949
1954

1955

1963

1965

1966

1966

1967

1970

1970

Combined-Cycle Gas Turbine Plant

First combined-cycle gas turbine plant began operation, improving efficiency in electricity generation.¹

Air Pollution Control Act

The Air Pollution Control Act (Pub. L. No. 84-159, 69 Stat. 322) provided research and technical assistance in relation to air pollution control.

Clean Air Act

The Clean Air Act (P.L. 88-206) granted enforcement authority to the government to regulate air pollution.

Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act

The Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act (P.L. 89-272) gave the government the power to set federal emission standards for new motor vehicles.

Air Quality Act

The Air Quality Act (P.L. 90-148) established a regional framework for pollution control by requiring the federal government to designate atmospheric areas and publish scientific air quality criteria. It mandated that states use this data to set their own ambient air standards and implementation plans within a strict legal timetable.²

Clean Air Act Amendments

In December, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970 (CAA) (Pub. L. No. 91-604, 84 Stat. 1676) were passed, establishing one of the most sweeping environmental laws in U.S. history.

- The law gave the federal government authority to limit emissions from both stationary and mobile sources.
- It established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), requiring states to implement measures (State Implementation Plans) to meet federal air quality goals.
- Authorized establishment of New Source Performance standards for new and modified stationary sources
- Authorized establishment of national emissions standards for hazardous air pollutants
- Increased enforcement authority
- Authorized requirements for control of motor vehicle emissions.

Environmental Protection Agency Established

In December, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is established (35 Fed. Reg. 15623, 84 Stat. 2086), consolidating responsibilities previously spread across multiple federal agencies.

This gave the U.S. a unified regulatory body to combat pollution, enforce compliance, and conduct scientific research on environmental health. The EPA's early efforts focused on setting air pollution limits, regulating industrial emissions, and establishing enforcement mechanisms, shaping modern environmental policy in the U.S.

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

NJ Energy Master Plan Statute Passed

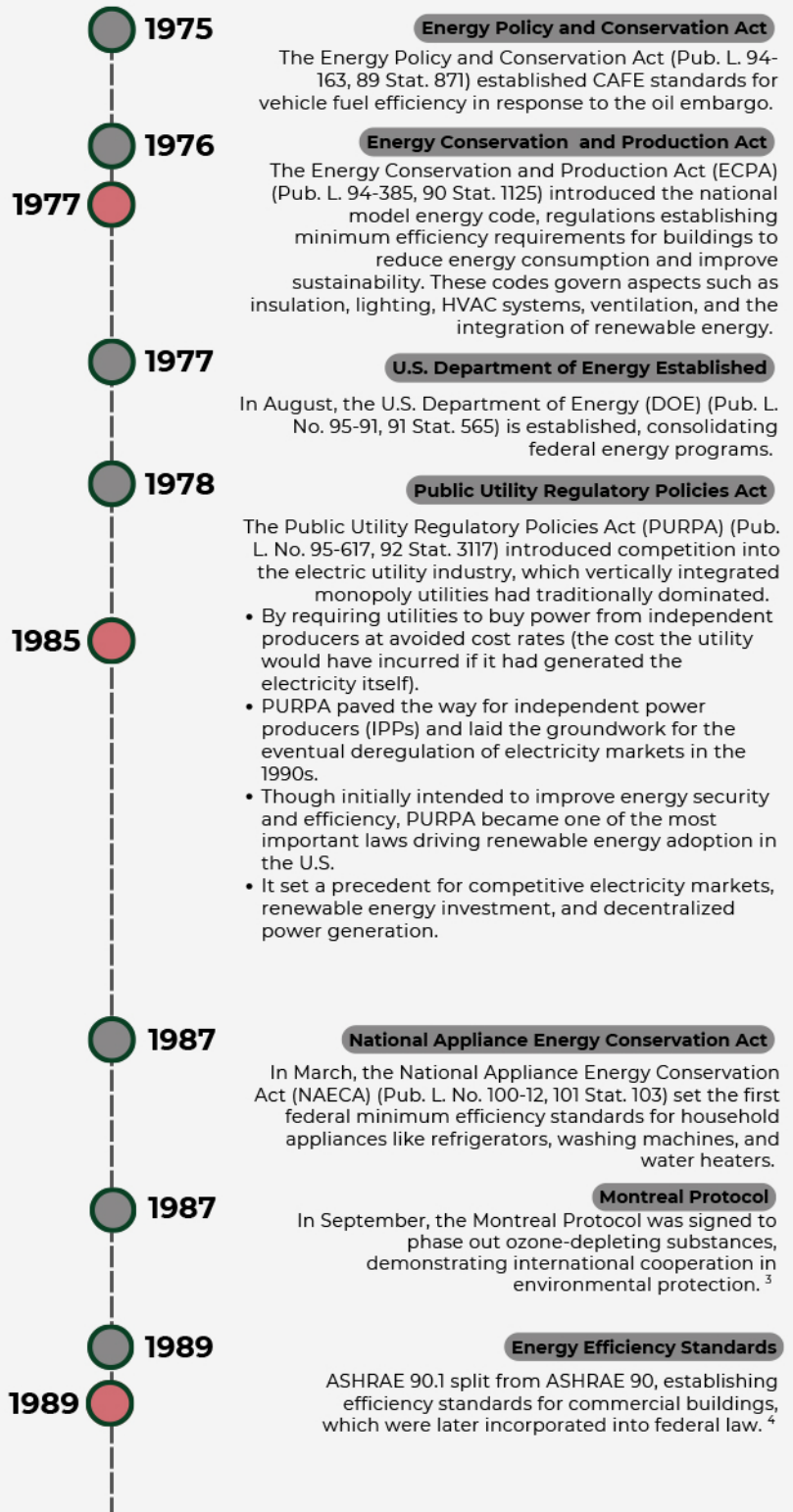
In July, the NJ Energy Master Plan Statute (N.J.S.A. 52:27 F-14) was passed, requiring the creation of a new Energy Master Plan (EMP) every 10 years, with updates every three years. The EMP should cover the planned production, distribution, consumption, and conservation of energy across the state.

State Planning Commission and State Development & Redevelopment Plan

New Jersey established (P.L. 1985, c. 398) a State Planning Commission within the Department of the Treasury to provide a triennial "coordinated, integrated and comprehensive plan for the growth, development, renewal and conservation" of the state, and an Infrastructure Needs Assessment to provide information on "present and prospective conditions, needs and costs" on public infrastructure.

Executive Order No. 219

Executive Order No. 219 (Governor Kean) aimed to center the issue of global climate change and ozone depletion in New Jersey. It acknowledged the scientific understanding of how greenhouse gas emissions impact the atmosphere, leading to problems like warming, droughts, storms, and increased UV radiation. The EO directed New Jersey state entities to prioritize energy conservation, use energy-efficient equipment, and review policies that encourage energy saving and the use of cleaner energy. It also called for exploring alternatives to ozone-depleting substances, promoting tree planting, considering sea-level rise in planning, encouraging "greenways" for natural system adaptation, and revising public awareness programs about climate change.



MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Ozone Transport Commission

NJ joins with 11 states and Washington D.C. in creating the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC), a multi-state organization created under the Clean Air Act to advise the EPA on the development and implementation of regional solutions to the problem of ground-level ozone pollution in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the US.⁵

First State Plan Adopted

In June, the first New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan was adopted with the goals of "revitalizing the state's urban centers and areas" and "conserving the state's natural resources." These goals would be achieved through the identification and revitalization of five types of "centers": urban centers, towns, regional centers, villages, and hamlets, and through the allocation of "growth" between existing centers and planned centers. Among its Statewide Policies, one under Infrastructure Investments included Infrastructure Investments and Flood Control and Storm Water Management."⁶

Low- Emissions Vehicle Law

New Jersey enacts a Low-Emissions Vehicle (LEV) law (N.J.S.A. 26:2C-8.6) authorizing NJDEP to adopt rules and regulations establishing and implementing a LEV program in New Jersey allowing New Jersey to adopt California's more stringent vehicle emission standards under Section 177 of the Clean Air Act, a common pathway for states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic seeking greater emission reductions. Implementation was conditional on 40% of new car registrations within the Ozone Transport Region being in states (other than New Jersey) and the District of Columbia that have enacted legislation or rules and regulations implementing an LEV program.

The Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act

The Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act (EDECA) (P.L. 1999, c.23) restructured New Jersey's energy sector to promote competition and consumer choice. This legislation aimed to lower energy costs, enhance service quality, and provide diverse options for residential, business, and institutional consumers. It worked across several avenues.

- Societal Benefits Charge (SBC): A funding mechanism for renewables that requires all utility customers to pay a small surcharge on their electricity bills.
- Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS): Beginning on January 1, 2001, 0.5% of the kWh sold by each electric power supplier and each basic generation service provider will be from Class I renewable energy sources. BPU will increase the required percentage for Class I renewable energy sources so that by January 1, 2006, 1% of the kWh sold by each electric power supplier and each basic generation service provider will be from Class I renewable energy sources and will additionally increase the required percentage for Class I renewable energy sources by 0.5% each year until January 1, 2012, when 4% of the kWh sold by each electric power supplier and each basic generation service provider will be from Class I renewable energy sources.

1990
1991

1992
1992

1993
1997

1999
1999

Clean Air Act Amendments

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (P.L. 101-549) established new regulatory controls for acid deposition; codified EPA's list of Hazardous Air Pollutants; established permit program requirements; established a program to phase out the use of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer.

Energy Policy Act

In October, the Energy Policy Act (EPACT) (Pub. L. No. 102-486, 106 Stat. 2776) expanded renewable energy incentives, encouraging alternative fuels, and establishing competitive electricity markets. It also expanded appliance efficiency standards and established the Energy Star brand.

Kyoto Protocol

The U.S. signed the Kyoto Protocol, committing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, though the Senate never ratified it.⁷

Executive Order No. 13123

In June, Executive Order 13123 (President Clinton) on the greening of the government directed federal agencies to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting sustainable building design, energy-efficient products, and renewable energy use in federal facilities.

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Second State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In March, the State Planning Commission adopted the first update of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. This update maintained "Centers" as the core organizing principle to mitigate the fiscal and environmental costs of sprawl while emphasizing the revitalization of Urban Centers. It integrated coastal considerations to ensure consistency between the State Plan and CAFRA regulations, specifically seeking to coordinate infrastructure investment and land-use patterns to protect environmentally sensitive coastal resources. It mentioned climate change considerations, stating that "Municipalities should start to assess their vulnerability to the potential impacts of climate change and develop action plans to respond to the possibility of more frequent and intense storm events." The plan also mentioned exploring New Jersey's role in contributing to global climate change through greenhouse gas emissions, its dependence on fossil fuels, and the need to promote energy conservation through energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy, and passive solar energy.⁸

Low Emission Vehicle Program- Updated

In March, California updated its Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) program to further reduce vehicle emissions. This update, encompassing the implementation of LEV II standards, underscored California's leadership in setting stringent air quality goals. Again, under Section 177 of the Clean Air Act, states like New Jersey (which authorized adopting California's standards in 1993) could choose to implement these more aggressive emission requirements to meet federal air quality mandates and achieve greater reductions in ozone precursors within the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) region.¹⁰

NJ BPU's Solar Renewable Energy Certificate

In April, NJBPU introduced the Solar Renewable Energy Certificate (SREC) program. SREC provided a financial incentive for solar developers and homeowners by allowing them to earn and sell credits for the clean energy they produced. It was replaced by the Successor Solar Incentive (SuSI) program in 2021.¹¹

CO₂ Classified as an Air Contaminant

In November, NJDEP classified carbon dioxide (CO₂) as an air contaminant through formal rule adoption (N.J.A.C. 7:27). This significant regulatory step enabled New Jersey to directly address and manage CO₂ emissions, highlighting the harmful impacts of polluting sources such as coal-fired power plants on air quality and public health, and establishing a regulatory framework for addressing climate change at the state level.

NJ Co-Founds Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

In December, New Jersey co-founded the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) with 9 other Northeastern states, introducing a cap-and-trade system to reduce power sector emissions.¹²

2001

2001

First U.S. Offshore Wind Project

In November, the first U.S. offshore wind project, Cape Wind, is proposed off the coast of Massachusetts, marking the beginning of offshore wind energy discussions in the country.⁹

2004

2004

2005

Energy Policy Act

In August, the Energy Policy Act (Pub. L. No. 109-58, 119 Stat. 594) introduced federal incentives for renewable energy, including tax credits for wind and solar and funding for smart grid initiatives.

2005

2005

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Global Warming Response Act

In July, New Jersey enacted the Global Warming Response Act (P.L. 2007, c. 112), setting legally binding greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Auction

NJ participated in the first auction for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which generated proceeds successfully using market forces to set a price on carbon.¹³

Solar Energy Advancement and Fair Competition Act

In January, the Solar Energy Advancement and Fair Competition Act (P.L. 2009, c. 289) is signed, amending EDECA and compelling the BPU to adopt an RPS that requires no less than 306 GWh of solar power be generated in 2011, with the annual minimum increasing each year until 2026, when at least 5,316 GWh of solar power must be generated.

Offshore Wind Economic Development Act (OWEDA)

In August, the Offshore Wind Economic Development Act (OWEDA) (P.L. 2010, c. 57) was signed into law. It advised the BPU to establish a program for Offshore Wind Renewable Energy Certificates (ORECs) to incentivize the development of offshore wind facilities.

RGGI Withdrawal

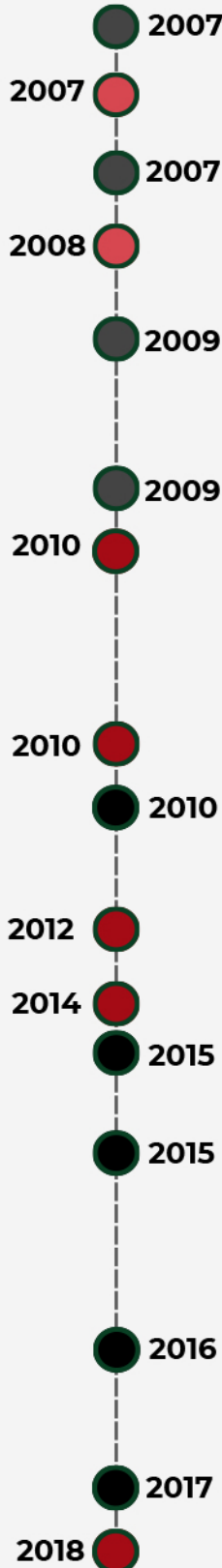
New Jersey withdraws from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.¹⁶

Sulfur Limit

Established maximum allowable sulfur content in various fuel oils (NJ Admin Code 7:27-9.2).

Executive Order No. 8

Executive Order No. 8 (Governor Murphy) directed all New Jersey State Agencies with responsibilities under the OWEDA to fully implement the act to meet a goal of obtaining 3,500 MW from offshore wind by the year 2030.



Massachusetts v. EPA

In April, the Supreme Court ruled in Massachusetts v. EPA (549 U.S. 497 (2007)) that CO₂ is a pollutant under the Clean Air Act, compelling the EPA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy Independence and Security Act

In December, the Energy Independence and Security Act (Pub. L. No. 110-140, 121 Stat. 1492) mandates higher lighting efficiency (phasing out incandescent bulbs) and strengthens fuel economy standards for vehicles.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) (Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115) included a historic \$90 billion investment in clean energy, jumpstarting large-scale renewable energy projects, battery storage, and electric vehicle infrastructure.

EPA Endangerment Finding

In December, the US EPA issued the Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases Under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act, otherwise known as the "Endangerment Finding." The finding singled out six greenhouse gases for the danger they pose to public health and welfare: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.¹⁴

First Offshore Wind Energy Development Commercial Lease

In October, the U.S. Department of the Interior issued the first commercial lease for offshore wind energy development to Cape Wind Associates, signaling federal support for offshore wind initiatives.¹⁵

Paris Agreement Signed

Paris Agreement signed, committing the U.S. to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025.¹⁷

EPA Clean Power Plan

In August, the EPA announced the Clean Power Plan under the Clean Air Act. The plan created a partnership between the EPA, states, tribes, and U.S. territories, with the EPA setting the goal and states and tribes choosing how they will meet it. The goal was to reduce carbon pollution from power plants to 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.¹⁸

Clean Power Plan Halted by U.S. Supreme Court

In February, in West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency, the Supreme Court, by a 5-4 vote, granted a stay, blocking the Clean Power Plan from taking effect while the case was litigated.¹⁹

Paris Agreement- Withdrawal

The U.S. withdrew from the Paris Agreement. In response, states and cities agreed to the principles of the agreement. The U.S. joined again in 2021 and withdrew once more in 2025.^{20/21}

MITIGATION

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Clean Energy Act

In May, the Clean Energy Act (CEA) (P.L. 2018, c.17) was passed, a landmark law aimed at accelerating the state's transition to renewable energy. It significantly increased New Jersey's Renewable Portfolio Standard, mandating 50% of NJ's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030 and 5.1% from solar by 2021. The law also expanded energy efficiency programs, introduced a cost cap on ratepayer increases, and set the foundation for offshore wind development, targeting 3,500 MW by 2030.

Executive Order No. 92

In November, Executive Order No. 92 (Governor Murphy) effectively raised New Jersey's offshore wind goal from 3.5 GW by 2030 to 7.5 GW by 2035, more than double the initial goal.

2019 Energy Master Plan (EMP)

On January 27, 2020, NJ released the 2019 Energy Master Plan (EMP). The 2019 plan was a blueprint for achieving a 100% clean energy economy by 2050. The 2019 EMP emphasized:^{23/24}

- Offshore wind: A goal of 11 GW by 2040.
- Solar energy: Community solar programs targeting equitable access.
- Energy efficiency: Programs to decarbonize residential and commercial buildings.
- Transportation electrification: Incentives for EVs and charging infrastructure.

Rejoin RGGI

In June, New Jersey rejoins the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.²⁵

HFC/GHG Prohibition

New Jersey prohibited (P.L. 2019, c.507) certain products and equipment, such as propellants, vending machines, and consumer refrigeration units, from containing hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) or other greenhouse gases.

Executive Order No. 100

In January, Executive Order No. 100 (Governor Murphy) established the Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT) program, aiming to reduce emissions & adapt to climate change.

Solar Transition Incentive Program

In May, the interim solar Transition Incentive Program was launched until the Solar Successor Incentive Program was implemented by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities in August 2021. It created a fixed-price Transition Renewable Energy Certificate to compensate for residential solar production.^{26/27}

Offshore Wind Research and Monitoring Initiative

In March, New Jersey established the Offshore Wind Research and Monitoring Initiative (RMI), which aims to ensure environmentally responsible offshore wind energy development along the state's coastline.²⁹

2018
2019

Clean Power Plan Repealed

In July, the U.S. EPA issued a final rule repealing the 2015 Clean Power Plan.²²

2019

2020

2020

2020

2020

2020

2021

U.S. Rejoins Paris Agreement

In February, the U.S. formally rejoined the Paris Agreement, the international treaty on climate change initially signed in 2016.²⁸

2021

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Successor Solar Incentive (SuSI) Program

In August, the NJBPU closed the solar Transition Incentive Program and established the Successor Solar Incentive (SuSI) Program with an annual goal of installing 750 MW of new solar capacity, including targets for 300 MW of net metered solar, 150 MW of community solar, and 300 MW of grid supply. The SuSI Program contains two sub-programs: the Administratively Determined Incentive (ADI) and the Competitive Solar Incentive (CSI).³⁰

- The ADI Program provided incentives to net-metered residential projects, net-metered commercial and industrial projects <5 MW, and community solar projects, with incentives from \$70 to \$100.
- The CSI Program provided incentives for grid-supply projects and commercial and industrial net-metered projects larger than 5 MW. The incentives are determined by a competitive bid process.

Executive Order No. 274]

In November, Executive Order No. 274 (Governor Murphy) established an interim greenhouse gas reduction target of 50 percent below 2006 levels (approximately 60.6 MMTCO₂e) by 2030.

Competitive Solar Incentive (CSI) Program

In December, the NJBPU established the Competitive Solar Incentive (CSI) Program, a major component of the Successor Solar Incentive (SuSI) Program. The CSI program was designed to incentivize larger grid-supply solar installations and to preserve and protect open space and farmland.³⁷

Executive Order No. 315

In February, Executive Order No. 315 (Governor Murphy) sets an accelerated target of 100% clean energy in New Jersey by 2035.

2021

2021

2021

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Law Passed

In November, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. No. 117-58, 135 Stat. 429), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), provided over \$65 billion specifically for climate mitigation efforts, including \$7.5 billion for electric vehicle charging networks, \$65 billion for clean energy and grid modernization projects, and \$8 billion for regional clean hydrogen hubs. This funding was to support large-scale demonstration projects and accelerate clean-energy technology adoption, substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transforming U.S. energy infrastructure.

West Virginia v. EPA

In June, the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision, restricted the authority of the EPA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act, establishing the "Major Questions Doctrine." The Major Questions Doctrine stated that if an agency seeks to decide an issue of "vast economic and political significance," it must have a legislative mandate from Congress, and that Congress had not explicitly granted the EPA the power to transform the nation's energy generation sector, despite the EPA's mission to protect the environment.^{31/32}

Inflation Reduction Act

In August, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) (Pub. L. No. 117-169, 136 Stat. 1818) committed \$369 billion toward climate action, the largest federal investment in climate and clean energy in U.S. history. It funded tax credits and rebates for solar, wind, geothermal, and battery storage; accelerated the adoption of electric vehicles through consumer incentives and charging infrastructure; supported domestic clean energy manufacturing; and invested in grid modernization. The law also allocated billions for environmental justice, methane reduction, and agricultural conservation, aiming to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 40% below 2005 levels by 2030.^{33/34/35/36}

2022

2022

2023

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Executive Order No. 316

In February, Executive Order No. 316 (Governor Murphy) set a target to install zero-carbon-emission space heating and cooling systems in 400,000 homes and 20,000 commercial properties, making 10% of all low-to-moderate income properties electrification-ready by 2030.

Executive Order No. 317

In February, Executive Order No. 317 (Governor Murphy) directed BPU to plan for the future of the natural gas utility in the state.

Community Solar Energy Program

In August, the Community Solar Energy Program was made permanent, permitting community solar projects of no greater than 5 MW on rooftops, carports, and other small residential areas.³⁸

20M Heat Pumps Pledge

In September, in partnership with other states, New Jersey pledged to collectively reach 20 million heat pump installations across the coalition by 2030 while ensuring at least 40 percent of benefits flow to disadvantaged communities.³⁹

NJ Rankings

By January, New Jersey was the nation's 12th-largest producer of electricity from solar energy and ranked 7th in small-scale solar power generation.⁴⁰

ACC II Regulations Adopted

In November, the ACC II regulations (NJ Admin Code 7:27-29A.3) were adopted, where 100% of new light-duty vehicle sales will be zero-emission by 2035, with interim targets starting from the 2026 model year.⁴¹

Residential Heat Pumps

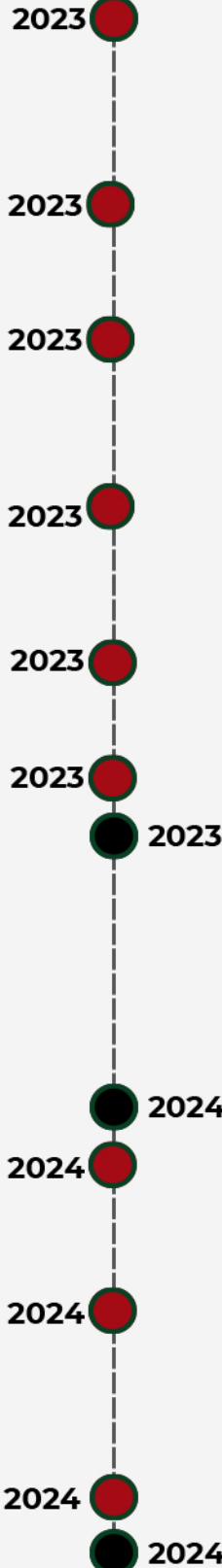
In February, New Jersey and eight other states signed a pledge to have heat pumps make up 90% of residential heating, air conditioning, and water heating sales by 2040.⁴⁴

Priority Climate Action Plan

In March, New Jersey submitted its Priority Climate Action Plan in accordance with the EPA's Climate Protection Reduction Grants program. It outlines 12 priority measures designed to achieve significant greenhouse gas reductions by 2030, specifically targeting a 50% reduction below 2006 levels.⁴⁵

Public EV Charging Stations

By May, New Jersey had approximately 1,200 public EV charging stations.⁴⁶



Renewable Energy Sources

By the end of the year, renewable energy sources accounted for approximately 21.4% of the United States' total utility-scale electricity generation.⁴²

Broken down by source:

- Wind Power: 10.2%
- Hydropower: 5.7%
- Solar Power: 3.9%
- Geothermal: 0.4%

Total U.S. Electricity Consumption

By the end of the year, total U.S. electricity consumption rose to close to 4 trillion kWh, 14 times higher than in 1950.⁴³

Small-Scale Solar Capacity

By September, the US had accumulated an estimated 55 GW of small-scale solar capacity, including residential, commercial, and industrial installations.⁴⁷

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Over 5GW of Solar Capacity

By December, New Jersey had installed nearly 400 MW of new solar capacity, bringing the state's total installed solar capacity to over 5 GW.⁴⁸

2024

2024

2025

Mandatory RPS Policies

By July, 29 states and the District of Columbia had implemented mandatory RPS policies.⁴⁹

Executive Order No. 14154

In January, Executive Order No. 14154 (President Trump) halted the distribution of Inflation Reduction Act funds intended for climate mitigation and adaptation projects, causing significant disruption to state and local planning efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerabilities to climate impacts.⁵⁰

- In April 2025, Federal Judge Mary McElroy ruled the freeze illegal and ordered EPA, DOE, and other agencies to restore access to climate funds.⁵¹
- In January 2026, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the freeze (i.e., the injunctions that had forced the government to reinstate funding).⁵²
- Later in January 2026, a D.C. District Court judge ruled DOE violated the Fifth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause by explicitly canceling \$7.5 billion in grants based on whether the project was located in a state that voted for the president's opponent in 2024. This ruling vacated the specific termination notices for projects such as EV charging and building performance hubs.⁵³
- In February 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit began hearing oral arguments in *The Climate United Fund v. Citibank, N.A.* case regarding \$20 billion in EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds.⁵⁴
- In March 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit began hearing oral arguments for *Appalachian Voices et al v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, which concerns the fate of \$3 billion in cancelled Environmental Justice Block Grants.⁵⁵

2025

Offshore Wind Energy Development – Halted

In January, through Presidential Memorandum, President Trump halted all new offshore wind energy development on the Outer Continental Shelf. It suspended permitting and federal support for offshore wind projects, citing national interest in preserving coastal views and supporting domestic fossil fuel jobs.⁵⁶

- On December 8, 2025, In *State of New York v. Trump*, Judge Patti B. Saris of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts ruled that the part of the memorandum that directed federal agencies to stop issuing permits and approvals for *all* wind projects (onshore and offshore) violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and was declared unlawful.⁵⁷
- In December 2025, the administration canceled work for five significant offshore wind projects already under construction, citing "national security risks" related to radar interference.⁵⁸
- On February 2, 2026, federal judges granted preliminary injunctions for all five projects, allowing development to resume. The five projects are the following:⁵⁹
 - **Sunrise Wind:** Located off the coast of New York and developed by Ørsted.
 - **Empire Wind:** Located off the coast of New York and developed by Equinor.
 - **Revolution Wind:** Located off the coasts of Rhode Island and Connecticut and developed by Ørsted and Eversource.
 - **Vineyard Wind 1:** Located off the coast of Massachusetts and developed by Avangrid and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners.
 - **Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind:** Located off the coast of Virginia and developed by Dominion Energy.

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

2025

Executive Order No. 14162

In January, Executive Order No. 14162 (President Trump) mandated the immediate withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement and the cessation of all financial commitments under the UNFCCC.⁶⁰

- *Lighthiser v. Trump* was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana. It includes 22 young Americans and argues that EO 14162 and related energy orders violate their Fifth Amendment rights to life and liberty by knowingly increasing greenhouse gas pollution.⁶¹
- As of April 2026, the case is before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and oral arguments occurred on April 13, 2026, in Portland, Oregon.⁶²

2025

Executive Order No. 14199

In February, Executive Order No. 14199 began the process of withdrawing the U.S. from certain United Nations organizations and reviewing United States support to all international organizations.⁶³

2025

U.S. Withdraws from Just Energy Transition Partnerships

In February, the U.S. withdrew from Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETP) with Indonesia, Vietnam, and South Africa. JETPs are plurilateral agreements that provide financial resources and technical assistance from countries in the "Global North" to help recipient countries expedite their transition from fossil fuel generation.^{64/65}

2025

US EIA Staff Reduction

In February, almost one-third of staff at the Energy Information Administration (EIA) left under Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) incentives, crippling the agency responsible for the data used to understand and transition the U.S. energy system.⁶⁶

2025

Cancellation of IPCC Technical Support Unit

In February, NASA canceled the contract supporting the technical support unit for the IPCC's mitigation working group.⁶⁷

2025

Executive Order No. 14260

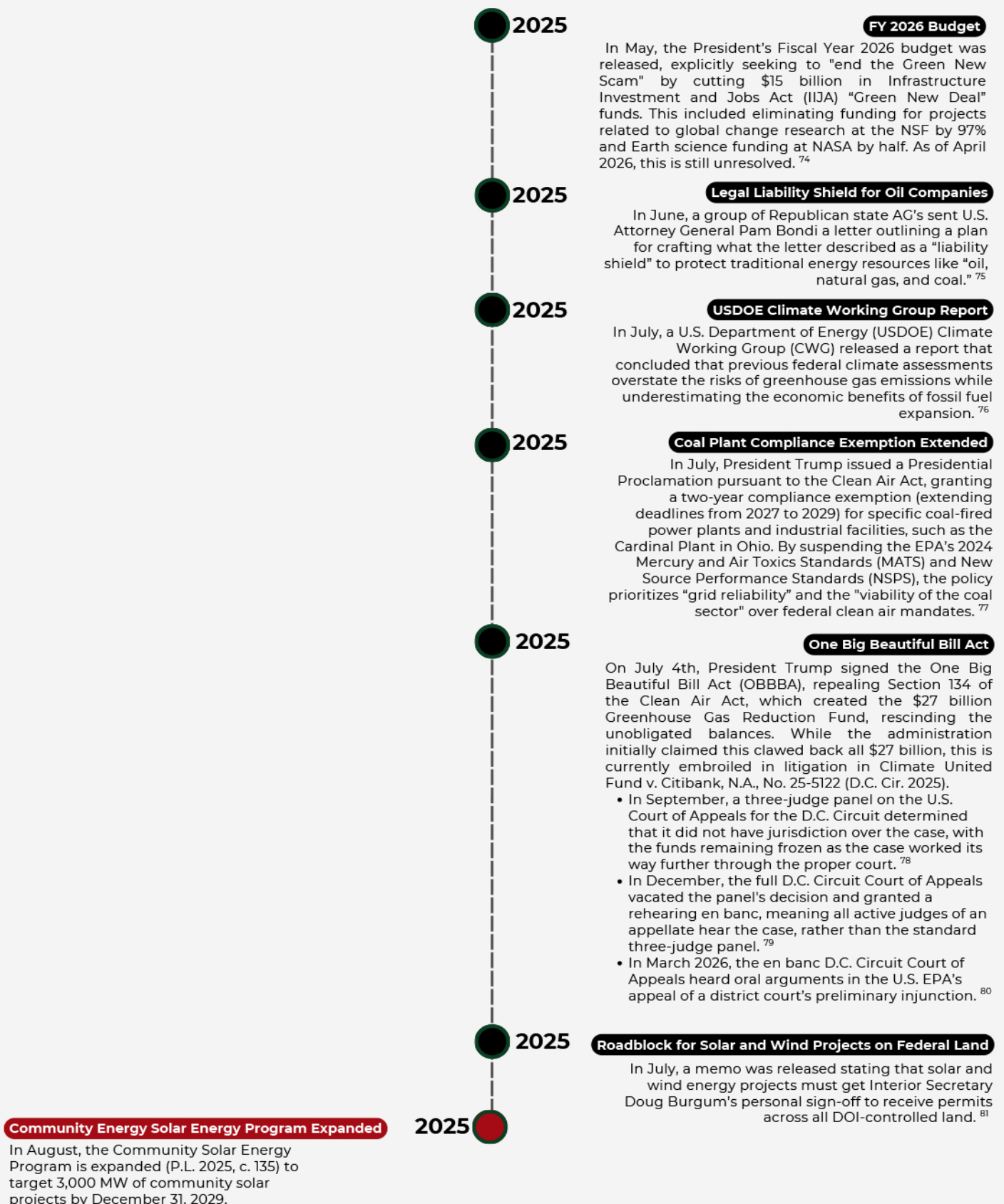
In April, Executive Order No. 14260 (President Trump) instructed the Department of Justice to challenge all "State and local laws, regulations, causes of action, policies, and practices" that are "burdening the identification, development, siting, production, or use" of domestic energy resources.

- The DOJ filed separate suits in district court against four states, New York, Vermont, Hawaii, and Michigan, using EO 14260 to challenge state or local laws.⁶⁸
- New York's Climate Change Superfund Act (2024), which seeks to collect \$75 billion from fossil fuel companies to fund state climate adaptation projects.
- Michigan's antitrust lawsuit against BP, Chevron, Exxon Mobil, Shell, and the American Petroleum Institute. In February 2026, a Michigan federal court rejected the Department of Justice lawsuit.^{69/70}
- Vermont's Climate Superfund Act, which looks to recover costs from certain businesses that contributed to greenhouse gas emissions when they extracted and refined fossil fuels from 1995-2024.⁷¹
- Hawaii's lawsuit against oil companies, including BP, Shell, and Exxon, for creating, contributing to, and/or assisting in the creation of climate change-related harms in Hawaii. In April 2026, the DOJ lawsuit was dismissed by the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii for lack of legal standing.^{72/73}

MITIGATION

NEW JERSEY

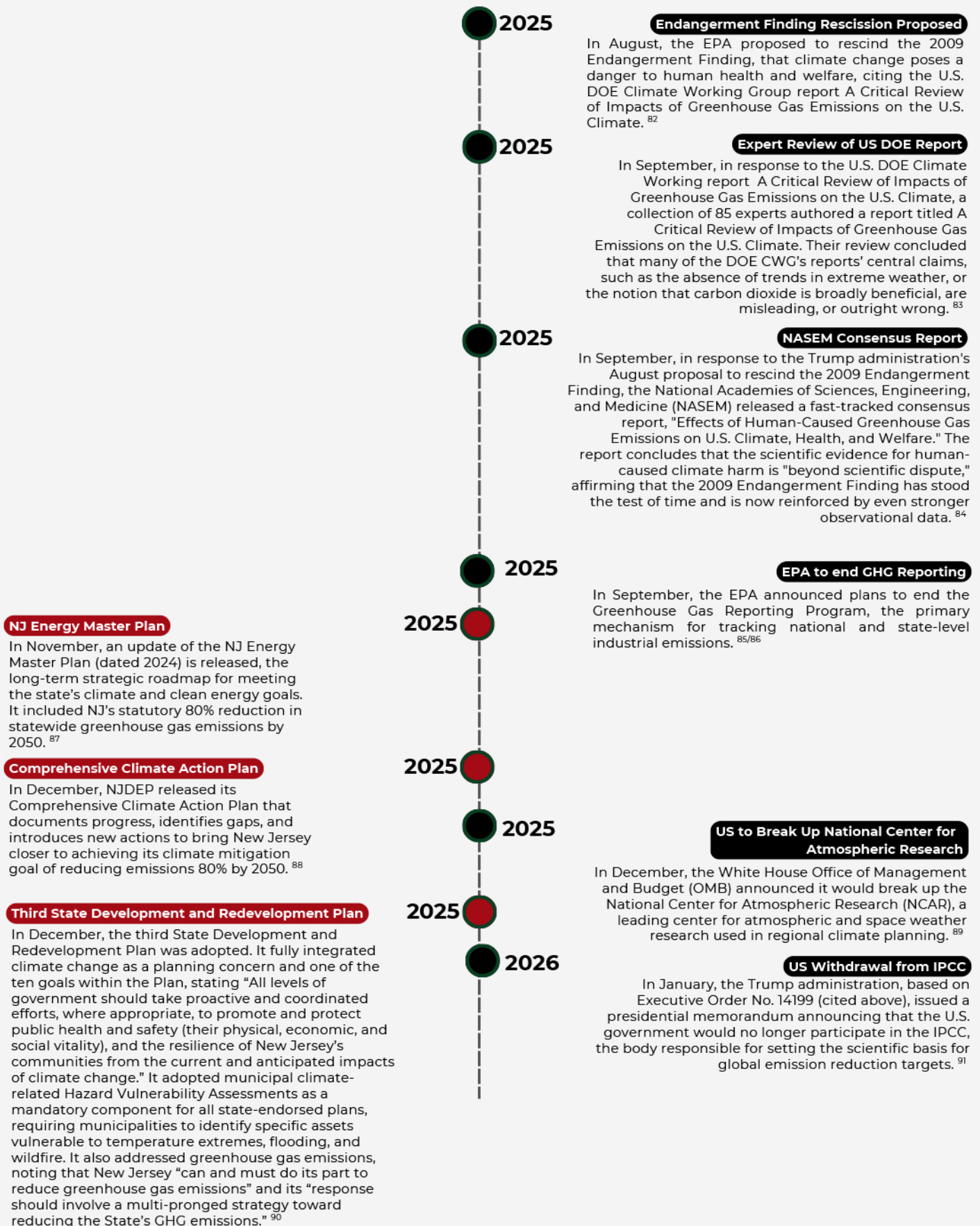
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Executive Order No. 1

In January, Executive Order No. 1 (Governor Sherrill) declared that the ongoing electricity affordability crisis in New Jersey constitutes a state of emergency and identified several actions to reduce electricity costs for consumers, including Residential Universal Bill Credits ("RUBCs").⁹²

Executive Order No. 2

In January, Executive Order No. 2 (Governor Sherrill) declared a State of Emergency to increase and accelerate the development of new power generation to address supply and reliability problems. This will be accomplished by:⁹³

- BPU accelerated the development of utility-scale solar electricity generation.
- Open to registration 3,000 MW of community solar energy program capacity.
- Accelerate the development of transmission-scale battery storage.
- Develop a "virtual power plant" program.
- Modernize the gas-fired power plants already operating.
- Establish an interagency Nuclear Power Task Force to implement a strategy for the development of new nuclear generation facilities in the State.

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NOX Standards Weakened

In January, the EPA published a final rule to weaken standards for NOX pollution as it seeks to accelerate the buildout of AI infrastructure and gas-fired plants to power them.^{94/95}

GHG Reporting Extended

In February, the EPA extended the reporting deadline under the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Rule for reporting year 2025 from March 31, 2026 to October 30, 2026.⁹⁶

Endangerment Finding Rescinded

In February, the Trump administration issued the final rule that officially rescinded the Endangerment Finding, the landmark scientific determination that greenhouse gases pose a threat to human health and welfare. This removes the legal requirement for the government to mitigate carbon emissions under the Clean Air Act.⁹⁷

Executive Order No. 14386

In February, Executive Order No. 14386 (President Trump) aimed to prioritize the use of coal-based energy within the Department of Defense, because of the United States' "vast coal resources," to ensure that "military installations, command centers, and defense-industrial bases remain fully powered under all conditions."⁹⁸

Coal-Fired Power Plant Funding

In February, the DOE announced \$175 million in funding for six coal-fired power plants serving rural and remote communities to modernize, retrofit, and extend operational life. This investment is part of a broader \$525 million initiative aimed at reinvigorating the U.S. coal fleet to ensure "around-the-clock" baseload power and grid reliability. Selected projects include major upgrades at the Mountaineer and John E. Amos plants (West Virginia), the Cardinal Plant (Ohio), and the Belews Creek Steam Station (North Carolina).⁹⁹

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Abandoning Offshore Wind Leases – NJ Implication

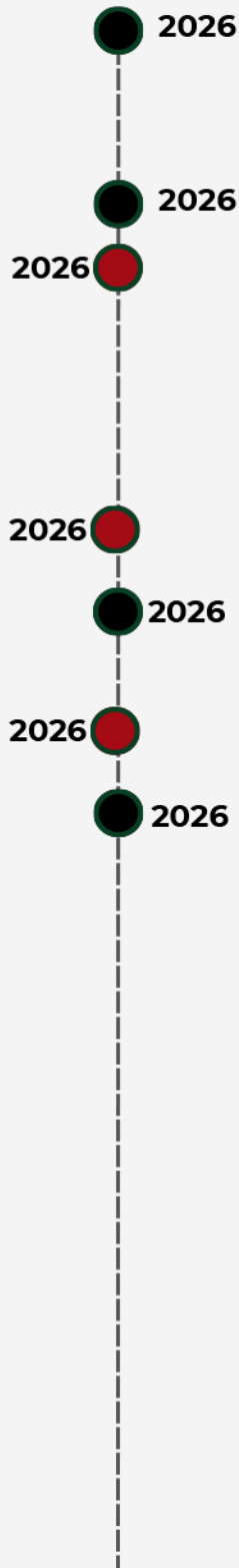
Beginning in March, as part of TotalEnergies and Bluepoint Wind's settlements with the Trump Administration, two offshore wind projects were abandoned which were to bring 3.7 GW of clean energy to New York and New Jersey, capable of powering up to 1 million residential homes.^{104/105}

Energy Storage Procurement

In March, Governor Sherrill signed new legislation (A4529/S3819) to expand the state's energy storage infrastructure, accomplished by expanding the number of projects eligible to receive financial incentives under the Garden State Energy Storage Program.¹⁰⁶

Nuclear Facility Permitting

In April, Governor Sherrill signed new legislation (S3870/A4528) modifying the permit review process under the Coastal Area Facility Review Act enabling the NJDEP Commissioner to approve a permit for the construction and operation of a nuclear electricity generating facility if the proposed methods of storage or disposal of radioactive waste conforms to NRC standards and will remove danger to life and the environment; this amendment recognizes storage that meets NRC standards as an acceptable approach to managing radioactive waste material in addition to disposal that meets NRC standards.¹⁰⁹



CA Clean Car Rules Suit

In March, the DOJ filed suit against the state of California to overturn its clean car rules, arguing that California's clean car rules violate the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, which directed the federal government to set national clean car standards.¹⁰⁰

Abandoning Offshore Wind Leases

Beginning in March, the Trump Administration agreed to pay three energy companies almost \$2 billion to walk away from their offshore wind leases, TotalEnergies for \$928M, Bluepoint Wind for \$765M, and Golden State Wind for \$120M. The companies agreed not to develop any new offshore wind projects in the United States and to invest that money in new oil and gas infrastructure.^{101/102/103}

Legal Liability Shield for Oil Companies

In March, Utah passed (Utah Code § 78B-4-515) a first-in-the-nation legal liability shield for greenhouse gas emitters.¹⁰⁷ Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Iowa are working on similar bills.¹⁰⁸

Renew Northeast v. United States Department of the Interior

In April, in *Renew Northeast v. United States Department of the Interior*, Judge Denise Jefferson Casper of the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts granted a preliminary injunction against federal policies restricting wind and solar permitting, finding the policies likely violated the Administrative Procedure Act by creating unlawful bottlenecks.¹¹⁰

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Climate Change
Adaptation Timeline

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Waterfront Development Act

The Waterfront Development Act (N.J.S.A. 12:5-1 et seq) was passed to regulate and control development along the state's valuable waterfront areas by creating a permitting process requiring developers to obtain the state's approval before undertaking any construction or dredging activities in waterfront areas.¹

Board of Commerce and Navigation

The Board of Commerce and Navigation was created (P.L. 1915, c. 242) to consolidate the duties of the Board of Riparian Commissioners, the Department of Inland Waterways, and the New Jersey Harbor Commission.

NJ Stream Encroachment Law

The New Jersey Stream Encroachment Law (N.J.S.A. 58:1-26) was passed to regulate structures within the natural and ordinary high-water mark as approved by the Water Policy Commission (later the Water Policy and Supply Council).

1914

1915

1923

1926

1929

1930

1935

1936

1936

1940'S

First Use of Beach Replenishment

The first use of beach replenishment happened in Coney Island, reflecting early coastal adaptation efforts.²

American Shore and Beach Preservation Association

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association was founded by individuals who recognized the need for an organized effort to combat erosion, a serious problem in many coastal areas.³

River and Harbor Act

In July, the River and Harbor Act of 1930 (Pub. L. No. 71-520) authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct shore erosion studies with state collaboration. It also formed the National Beach Erosion Board, to review reports of investigations made concerning erosion of the shores of coastal and lake waters and the protection of those shores.⁴

River and Harbor Act of 1935

In August, the River and Harbor Act of 1935 (Pub. L. No. 74-409, 49 Stat. 1028) authorized the construction, repair, and preservation of public works to protect the shores of the United States under the jurisdiction of the War Department.

Flood Control Act

In June, the Flood Control Act of 1936 (Pub. L. No. 74-738, 49 Stat. 1570) established flood control as a federal responsibility and a matter of national welfare, authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to design and construct massive civil works projects across the country.

Beach Improvement and Protection Act

In June, the Beach Improvement and Protection Act (Pub. L. No. 74-834, 49 Stat. 1757) established the policy of Federal assistance where federal interests are involved; assigned the research of the projects to the Beach Erosion Board, and directed said Board to recommend what share of expense should be borne by the Federal Government.

California Beach Nourishment

Large nourishment projects were initiated in California as part of wartime harbor dredging (e.g., the deepening of San Diego Harbor).⁵

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

An Act Regarding Shore Protection

Legislation (P.L. 1940, c. 52, p. 161, s. 1) was passed granting authority to the Board of Commerce and Navigation (which was responsible for the development and maintenance of New Jersey Intracoastal Waterways until it was eventually folded into the Department of Conservation) to "repair, reconstruct, or construct bulkheads, groins or jetties, on any and every beachfront along the Atlantic Ocean," to repair damage caused by erosion and storms, and to prevent erosion of the beaches. It also made the Board responsible for "beach protection and dredging" in Ocean, Atlantic, Cape May, and Cumberland counties, and for dredging and removing underwater obstructions in every waterway or stream in state waterways.⁶

Protecting Inland Waters

This legislation (P.L. 1946, c. 138) amended the 1940 legislation regarding shore protection, permitting the Division of Navigation (in the Department of Conservation) to "repair, reconstruct, and construct new structures" on "beachfronts along the Delaware Bay and Delaware River, or at any inlet or any inland waters adjacent to any inlet" in New Jersey waters.

NJ Beach Erosion Commission

The New Jersey Beach Erosion Commission is established, formalizing beach replenishment as a long-term strategy.⁸

Protecting Barnegat Bay

This legislation (P.L. 1956, c. 10) amended the 1940 legislation regarding shore protection, adding Barnegat Bay to the list of authorized areas where the Board of Commerce and Navigation could construct or repair shore protection structures like bulkheads, seawalls, groins, and jetties to prevent erosion.

Beach Nourishment Projects

Large-scale beach nourishment projects became a consistent part of the state's adaptation strategy.¹⁰

1940

1944

1946

1946

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1960S

Flood Control Act

The Flood Control Act (33 U.S.C. § 701a) significantly expanded the federal government's role in water resource management, moving beyond simple flood protection to a holistic approach that includes irrigation, hydroelectric power, and recreation. Included in the Flood Control Act is the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, which included funds for the construction of five large dams and reservoirs in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska.⁷

Federal Cost-Share for Coastal Defense

In August, Congress established (Pub. L. No. 79-727) that the federal government could pay up to one-third of the cost for the construction, but not maintenance, of shore protection projects for publicly owned shores.

Flood Control Act of 1948

New legislation (Pub. L. 80-858) streamlined federal water management by granting the Chief of Engineers the authority to approve minor flood control projects without requiring individual congressional authorization. It also established a maximum annual expenditure for the repair and maintenance of these works.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act

New legislation (Pub. L. 83-566) authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to provide technical and financial assistance to local organizations for watershed protection and flood prevention. It established strict project limits, such as a maximum watershed size of 250,000 acres, and mandated cost-sharing between federal and local sponsors for the construction of floodwater-retention structures.

Federal Flood Insurance Act

In August, the Federal Flood Insurance Act (Pub. L. No. 84-1016) created the first federal flood insurance program. However, the program was never implemented due to the House of Representatives' refusal to fund it over disagreements regarding state and federal cost-share mechanisms.⁹

Shore Protection Act

In July, the Shore Protection Act (Pub. L. No. 84-826) amended the 1936 Beach Improvement and Protection Act to allow federal assistance for the protection of privately owned shores, provided that the protection results in "public benefits."

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Hurricane Donna

In September, Hurricane Donna brought wind gusts of up to 105 mph and rainfall, peaking at 8.99 inches in Hammonton. Across the state, Donna resulted in three fatalities and approximately \$6.9 million in damages (or almost \$70 million in 2026 inflation-adjusted dollars.)^{11/12}

NJ Passes Delaware River Basin Compact

In May, New Jersey passed the Delaware River Basin Compact (P.L. 1961, c. 13), enabling the state to join the four-state and federal government compact.

Flood Hazard Area Control Act

In March, the Flood Hazard Area Control Act (N.J.S.A. 58:16A (50-54)) was passed, establishing statewide standards for managing flood risks and protecting stream corridors. This act empowered the Water Policy and Supply Council to delineate flood hazard areas, develop land use regulations, and coordinate flood control efforts.

Christmas Trees for Dune Nourishment

Approximately 15,000 discarded Christmas trees are trucked to the shore to use in dune nourishment efforts.¹⁶

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River and Harbor Act of 1960

In July, the River and Harbor Act (Pub. L. No. 86-645) authorized the Secretary of the Army to develop and construct small shore protection projects that do not exceed a certain cost without specific project-by-project authorization from Congress, also known as the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP). It also authorized the Army Corps to compile and disseminate information on flood hazards, such as mapping and technical assistance, to states and local communities.

Delaware River Basin Compact

In September, the Delaware River Basin Compact (Pub. L. No. 87-328) brought New Jersey together with Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and a federal representative from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the "planning, conservation, utilization, development, management and control" of the water resources of the Delaware River Basin. It is also charged to "plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain projects and facilities" for flood damage reduction."¹³

River and Harbor Act of 1962

In October, the River and Harbor Act of 1962 (Pub. L. No. 87-874) increased the maximum federal contribution for shore protection projects from 33.3% to 50% for most public shores, and up to 70% for certain parks and conservation areas. It also raised the funding ceiling for the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP), allowing the Army Corps to tackle more substantial projects without direct Congressional approval. It abolished the local cost-share requirement for beach erosion studies and instead implemented a 100% federal cost share, meaning all studies of coastal areas were to be financed completely by the Federal Government.

Coastal Engineering Research Center

In November, Congress (Pub. L. No. 88-172) abolished the Beach Erosion Board, the primary federal body for shore protection since 1930, and replaced it with the Coastal Engineering Research Center (CERC). In 1999, the CERC would become a part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineer Research and Development Center.¹⁴

First Federally Funded Beach Erosion Project

The first federally funded Beach Erosion Control project at Carolina Beach, North Carolina.¹⁵

Water Resources Planning Act

In July, the Water Resources Planning Act (Pub. L. 89-80) was passed to facilitate coordination of federal water resources policy, to coordinate governmental activities regarding water resources management of individual river basins, and bolster state-level planning activities. It also established the Water Resources Council, which was to conduct ongoing assessments on the adequacy of the national water supply, and authorized the creation of River Basin Commissions to prepare a "comprehensive coordinated joint plan" for the development and use of water and related land resources in the area that the commission had jurisdiction. It authorized \$5M annually for ten years for grants to states to assist the commission in "developing and participating in the development of comprehensive water and related land resources plans."¹⁷

National Flood Insurance Act

In August, the National Flood Insurance Act (Pub. L. No. 90-448, Title XIII, 82 Stat. 572) launched the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) with two primary goals: reducing future flood damage and protecting property owners.

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Hackensack Meadowlands Reclamation and Development Act

Hackensack Meadowlands Reclamation and Development Act (N.J.S.A. 13:17-1 et seq) was passed, regulating wetland development to balance urban growth and ecological preservation.

The Wetlands Act

The Wetlands Act (N.J. Stat. Ann. §§ 13:9A-1 to 13:9A-10) required mapping and delineating all coastal wetlands, ensuring oversight of water-adjacent developments.

Flood Hazard Area Control Act Amendments

In December, major amendments (P.L. 1972, c.185) were made to the 1962 Flood Hazard Area Control Act, which empowered the newly created NJDEP to mark flood hazard areas and to adopt land use regulations within them. Specifically, the NJDEP was authorized to create rules for floodways to maintain their water carrying capacity and for flood fringe areas to minimize public risk. The state's approach to effectively providing this information was to develop flood hazard area maps that indicated the 100-year flood, the 0.2 ft rise floodway, and to delineate the NJ Flood Hazard Area Design Flood (based on the 100-year flood plus 25%).

100-Year Flood Regulations

The NJDEP Commissioner directed that the 100-year flood be used for the purpose of regulation, bringing NJDEP in line with the Federal Flood Insurance program, which was using the 100-year flood as its design flood.¹⁸

Coastal Area Facility Review Act

In June, the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA) (N.J.S.A. 13:19-1 et seq.) is enacted to regulate industrial and residential development along NJ's coastline, ensuring environmental protection and controlling land use. Initially focused on large-scale industrial sites, its scope expanded over time to include major residential projects. CAFRA has played a critical role in shaping coastal development, requiring permits and comprehensive environmental reviews for new projects.

Stream Encroachment Regulation

In June, the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA) (N.J.S.A. 13:19-1 et seq.) is enacted to regulate industrial and residential development along NJ's coastline, ensuring environmental protection and controlling land use. Initially focused on large-scale industrial sites, its scope expanded over time to include major residential projects. CAFRA has played a critical role in shaping coastal development, requiring permits and comprehensive environmental reviews for new projects.²⁰

90-Day Act

In October, the "90-day Act" (P.L. 1975, c.232 (C.13:1D-29 et seq.) transferred the approval authority of stream encroachment applications from the Water Policy and Supply Council to the NJDEP, while requiring a decision within 90 days of accepting a complete application.²¹

Coastal Management Strategy

In September, the NJDEP submitted the state's first Coastal Management Strategy in response to the 1972 passage of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act.²²

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Coastal Zone Management Act

In October, the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) (Pub. L. No. 92-583, 86 Stat. 1280) was enacted, providing federal support for coastal management, including beach nourishment.

Flood Disaster Protection Act

In December, the Flood Disaster Protection Act (Pub. L. No. 93-234, 87 Stat. 975) was passed, amending the 1968 National Flood Insurance Act to require the purchase of flood insurance for some homeowners in high-risk flood zones.

First Water Resources Development Act

The first Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) (Pub. L. No. 93-251) authorized the Secretary of the Army to work with any state to prepare comprehensive plans for the "development, utilization, and conservation" of any drainage basins located within that state. It also mandated that consideration shall be given to "nonstructural alternatives" to prevent or reduce flood damages, including floodproofing, floodplain regulation, and the acquisition of lands in the floodplain for recreational public use.¹⁹

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

Beaches and Harbors Bond Act

In September, the Beaches and Harbors Bond Act (P.L. 1977, c.208) was passed, making \$20 million available for shore protection.²³

NJ Coastal Management Program

In September, New Jersey's Coastal Management Program (CMP) was approved by NOAA, making it one of the first states to establish a CMP.^{24/25}

Comprehensive Beach Protection Plan Legislation

In November, legislation was passed (P.L.1978, c.157) requiring the creation of a "comprehensive beach protection plan," or what became the first "Shore Protection Master Plan." This served as the guiding document for shore protection projects, including dune creation, beach nourishment, and structural components.^{26/27}

NJ Flood Hazard Area Control Act Amendments

In January, amendments (P.L. 1979, c. 359) to the 1962 NJ Flood Hazard Area Control Act were signed into law to strengthen the state's ability to manage development in flood-prone areas and align with federal standards. These amendments gave NJDEP authority over any structure or alteration within the 100-year floodplain of non-delineated streams or the Flood Hazard Area of delineated streams.

Update to NJ Coastal Management Program

In September, New Jersey updated its Coastal Management Plan to incorporate the northern waterfront area, Delaware River area, and the New Jersey Meadowlands.²⁸

NJ Stormwater Management Act

In November, the NJ Stormwater Management Act (P.L. 1981, c. 32) amended and supplemented the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.) to regulate stormwater management and require municipal stormwater management plans and ordinances to reduce flood damage, minimize runoff from new development that would increase flood damage; reduce soil erosion from development or construction, assure adequacy of culverts and bridges, induce ground water recharge, prevent nonpoint pollution, maintain stream channel integrity, provided that a grant for the preparation of such a plan has been made for 90% of costs incurred.

Shore Protection Master Plan

In October, the New Jersey Shore Protection Master Plan was released, promoting a regional approach to shore protection.²⁹

- The Plan addresses sea level rise and notes "...beach erosion as a problem exists only where development has taken place, and where man has adversely affected the natural sand supply and attempted to impose a static shoreline. In the long run, the rising sea and wave forces will not cooperate."³⁰

NJ Flood Hazard Area Regulations

The NJ Flood Hazard Area regulations (N.J.A.C. 7:13-1.1) expressed similar intent as the 1975 stream encroachment regulations but applied them to the entire 100-year floodplain for non-delineated streams and the Flood Hazard Area for delineated streams. It included provisions for environmental review and a limited amount of fill in the flood fringe area or the area outside of encroachment lines.³¹

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Executive Order No. 11988

In October, Executive Order No. 11988 (President Carter) required federal agencies to minimize floodplain development.

Executive Order No. 12127

In April, Executive Order No. 12127 (President Carter) established FEMA, consolidating federal emergency functions into a single agency, and created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Superfund Act

In December, the Superfund Act (CERCLA) (Pub. L. No. 96-510, 94 Stat. 2767) addressed hazardous waste sites, imposing cleanup responsibilities on polluters.

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY

USA

State Planning Commission and State Development & Redevelopment Plan

New Jersey established (P.L. 1985, c. 398) a State Planning Commission within the Department of the Treasury to provide a triennial "coordinated, integrated and comprehensive plan for the growth, development, renewal and conservation" of the state, and an Infrastructure Needs Assessment to provide information on "present and prospective conditions, needs and costs" on public infrastructure.

Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act

New Jersey enacted the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9B-1 et seq.), consolidating and integrating state wetlands protections into the CMP.

Certificate of Imminent Peril

In October, Governor Kean signed a "certificate of imminent peril" to temporarily halt development along New Jersey's oceans, rivers, and bays. This emergency action was designed to protect the coastal environment by closing a loophole in the 1973 CAFRA. Governor Kean stated, "I'll do whatever is necessary to protect the coastal environment." While CAFRA required Department of Environmental Protection permits for commercial construction, industrial projects, and residential developments of 25 or more units, the state was seeing a surge in 24-unit developments specifically designed to avoid regulation. The order halted an estimated 1,600 housing units and delayed another 800 to ensure that ongoing construction did not continue to destroy critical marshlands and dunes.^{33/34}

- The order was immediately challenged in court, and in December of the same year, the Appellate Division of the New Jersey Superior Court struck it down.³⁵

Executive Order No. 219

In October, Executive Order No. 219 (Governor Kean) aimed to center the issue of global climate change and ozone depletion in New Jersey. It acknowledged the scientific understanding of how greenhouse gas emissions impact the atmosphere, leading to problems like warming, droughts, storms, and increased UV radiation. The EO directed New Jersey state entities to prioritize energy conservation, use energy-efficient equipment, and review policies that encourage energy saving and the use of cleaner energy. It also called for exploring alternatives to ozone-depleting substances, promoting tree planting, considering sea-level rise in planning, encouraging "greenways" for natural system adaptation, and revising public awareness programs about climate change.

New Stormwater Management Requirements

Under the authority of the 1981 NJ Stormwater Management Act (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-95), NJDEP issued new administrative rules requiring municipalities to adopt stormwater management plans and ordinances aimed at minimizing public safety hazards associated with stormwater detention facilities built as part of subdivisions or site plans.³⁷

First State Plan Adopted

In June, the first New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan was adopted with the goals of "revitalizing the state's urban centers and areas" and "conserving the state's natural resources." These goals would be achieved through the identification and revitalization of five types of "centers": urban centers, towns, regional centers, villages, and hamlets, and through the allocation of "growth" between existing centers and planned centers. Among its Statewide Policies, one under Infrastructure Investments included Infrastructure Investments and Flood Control and Storm Water Management."³⁸

1985

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Water Resources Development Act

The Water Resources Development Act is amended (Pub. L. No. 99-662), adding a cost-share mechanism to WRDA projects, with state and local governments paying up to 50% of the total cost.³²

Community Rating System

FEMA established the Community Rating System (CRS) program, rewarding communities that go beyond minimum NFIP requirements in floodplain management with discounts on flood insurance premiums.³⁶

Clean Air Act Amendments

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (P.L. 101-549) established new regulatory controls for acid deposition; codified EPA's list of Hazardous Air Pollutants; established permit program requirements; established a program to phase out the use of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer.

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY USA

December Nor'easter

The December Nor'easter struck New Jersey with winds reaching 80 mph and waves up to 25 feet, causing severe coastal flooding and beach erosion. Approximately 3,200 homes were damaged, and the storm inflicted an estimated \$750 million in damage.³⁹

Shore Protection Stable Funding Act

In December, the Shore Protection Stable Funding Act (P.L.1992, c.148) created the first dedicated shore protection fund in the country, initially providing \$15 million dollars annually for the specific task of "protection, stabilization, restoration or maintenance" of the shoreline.⁴⁰

CAFRA Amendments

Amendments are made to CAFRA (P.L. 1993, c. 190) to close the "24-Unit Loophole," requiring permits for developing single-family homes in sensitive areas. Previously, residential developments with fewer than 25 units were exempt from CAFRA review.

Green Acres, Farmland, and Historic Preservation and Blue Acres Bond Act

In August, the Green Acres, Farmland, and Historic Preservation and Blue Acres Bond Act (P.L. 1995, c.204) authorized \$340 million in general obligation bonds for land preservation across the state. This act laid the groundwork for managed retreat in New Jersey and positioned the state as an early national leader in climate adaptation through property acquisition and risk reduction.

- Coastal Blue Acres: \$15 million was designated to establish the Coastal Blue Acres program, which enabled the voluntary buyout of flood-prone properties in the coastal area that have been damaged by or may be prone to incurring damage caused by storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage with monies made available pursuant to section 11 of this act. This act laid the groundwork for managed retreat in New Jersey and positioned the state as an early national leader in climate adaptation through property acquisition and risk reduction.
- Inland Blue Acres: Any project of the State to acquire, for recreation and conservation purposes, lands in the floodway of the Passaic River and its tributaries that have been damaged by, or may be prone to incurring damage caused by storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage, and which is funded with moneys made available pursuant to section 13 of this act.

Garden State Preservation Trust Act

In June, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act (P.L. 1999, c.152) established the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT) to finance the acquisition and preservation of open space, farmland, and historic sites. It authorized the issuance of up to \$1 billion in bonds to be repaid from dedicated revenues, supporting a comprehensive 10-year land preservation program. The GSPT serves as a successor to previous bond acts, including the 1995 Green Acres, Farmland, and Historic Preservation, and Blue Acres Bond Act, but continued to widen the criteria through the inclusion of properties in the floodplain (i.e., expanding beyond the floodway).

1992

1992

1993

1994

1995

1995

Executive Order No. 12898

In February, Executive Order No. 12898 (President Clinton) on Environmental Justice aimed to achieve environmental protection for all communities and address disproportionate adverse effects.

50-Year Beach Nourishment Project Life Cycles

In October, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began mandating 50-year project life cycles for federally funded beach nourishment projects.⁴¹

1999

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY USA

Hurricane Floyd

In September, Hurricane Floyd struck New Jersey, delivering record rainfall and widespread flooding. Rainfall peaked at 14.13 inches in Little Falls, the highest from a tropical cyclone in state history. The storm caused six deaths—five from drowning and one from a traffic accident—and inflicted approximately \$250 million in damages. Severe flooding occurred in the Raritan River basin, with towns like Bound Brook and Manville experiencing water depths up to 13 feet, leading to extensive property damage and evacuations.⁴²

Second State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In March, the State Planning Commission adopted the first update of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. This update maintained "Centers" as the core organizing principle to mitigate the fiscal and environmental costs of sprawl while emphasizing the revitalization of Urban Centers. It integrated coastal considerations to ensure consistency between the State Plan and CAFRA regulations, specifically seeking to coordinate infrastructure investment and land-use patterns to protect environmentally sensitive coastal resources. It mentioned climate change considerations, stating that "Municipalities should start to assess their vulnerability to the potential impacts of climate change and develop action plans to respond to the possibility of more frequent and intense storm events." The plan also mentioned exploring New Jersey's role in contributing to global climate change through greenhouse gas emissions, its dependence on fossil fuels, and the need to promote energy conservation through energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy, and passive solar energy.⁴³

Open Space Preservation Act

The Open Space Preservation Act (P.L. 2002, c. 76) amended the Garden State Preservation Trust Act to establish the Blue Acres Program by statute. This initiative prioritizes the protection of water resources, watersheds, aquifers, wetlands, floodplains, and flood-prone areas, explicitly recognizing the acquisition of flood-prone properties as essential for preventing loss of life and property. Under the Act's priority ranking system, the protection of flood-prone areas is given greater weight compared to several other preservation criteria. The allocated Blue Acres funds support voluntary buyouts, ensuring acquired lands remain preserved as open space, thereby safeguarding water resources and reducing future flood risks, enhancing public safety, and promoting environmental conservation.

Stormwater Management Rules

New Jersey passed a comprehensive Stormwater Management Rules framework to address water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges:

- 1) Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8) established performance standards for new development, focusing on groundwater recharge and controlling quantity and quality of stormwater runoff while requiring municipal stormwater management plans, and
- 2) Phase II NJPDES Stormwater Regulation Program Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:14A) mandated permits for small municipal storm sewer systems to reduce pollutants in existing stormwater discharges and created the New Jersey Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Program.

1999

2000

Disaster Mitigation Act

The Disaster Mitigation Act (Pub. L. No. 106-390, 114 Stat. 1552) required local governments to develop Hazard Mitigation Plans to qualify for federal disaster funding.

2001

2002

2003

FEMA Moved Into Department of Homeland Security

Following the September 11 attacks, FEMA was incorporated into the newly formed Department of Homeland Security to enhance coordination among agencies responsible for disaster preparedness and response.⁴⁴

2004

Flood Insurance Reform Act

In June, the Flood Insurance Reform Act (Pub. L. No. 108-264, 118 Stat. 712) eliminated incentives to rebuild properties that repeatedly flood, increasing transparency of the claims process, and establishing a flood insurance training requirement for insurance professionals.

2004

ADAPTATION

NEW JERSEY USA

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act

In August, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq.) is enacted to preserve open space and protect New Jersey's water resources within the greater Highlands region and to protect the region's ecological integrity and natural resources. These regional waters provide drinking water to over half of New Jersey's population.

Hurricane Irene

In August, Hurricane Irene struck New Jersey, killing 11 people and causing over \$1B in damage across the state.⁴⁷

Hurricane Sandy

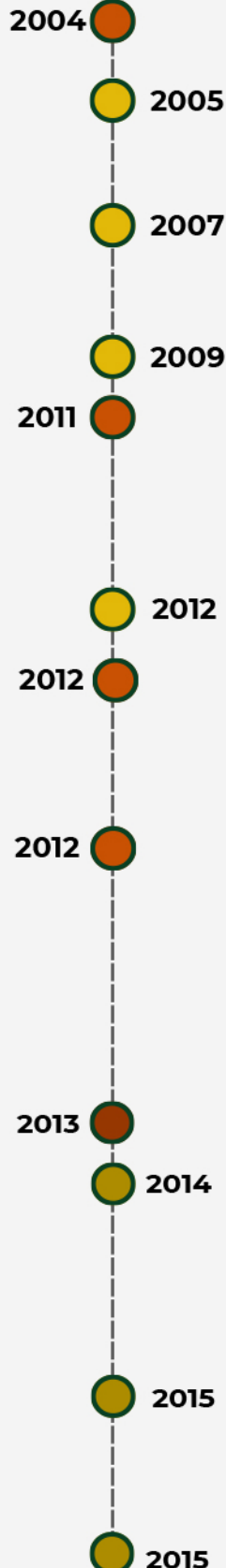
In October, Hurricane Sandy struck New Jersey, killing 40 people and causing \$36.8B in damage through severe storm surge and high winds. To this day, it is the 3rd most destructive storm to ever strike the U.S., only behind Hurricanes Harvey and Katrina.⁴⁸

Increased Beach Nourishment Projects

According to the beach nourishment database from Western Carolina University, in the decade preceding Hurricane Sandy (2003–2012), New Jersey averaged approximately \$62.5 million annually on beach nourishment, which increased roughly 251% to \$157 million annually in the decade after (both adjusted to 2025 USD). Similarly, New Jersey placed roughly 710 thousand cubic yards of sand per year in the decade preceding Hurricane Sandy. In the decade following that figure rose to 1.87 million cubic yards per year, a roughly 263% increase.⁴⁹

Resilient Coastal Communities Initiative

The NJ Coastal Management Program established the Resilient Coastal Communities Initiative to enhance adaptation efforts.⁵⁰



Hurricane Katrina

FEMA faced significant challenges during Hurricane Katrina, leading to critical evaluations and subsequent reforms aimed at improving federal disaster response capabilities.⁴⁵

Massachusetts v. EPA

In April, the Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts v. EPA* (549 U.S. 497 (2007)) that CO₂ is a pollutant under the Clean Air Act, compelling the EPA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

EPA Endangerment Finding

In December, the US EPA issued the Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases Under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act, otherwise known as the "Endangerment Finding." The finding singled out six greenhouse gases for the danger they pose to public health and welfare: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.⁴⁶

Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act

In July, the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act (Pub. L. No. 112-141, §§ 100201–100249, 126 Stat. 916) was signed, authorizing the national flood mapping program and aiming to increase the NFIP's fiscal soundness by implementing significant rate changes intended to reflect the true risk of flooding. However, the Act led to widespread concern and backlash due to the potential for substantial and unaffordable flood insurance rate increases for many property owners, resulting in subsequent legislative efforts to modify its implementation.

Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act

The Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act (Pub. L. No. 113-89, 128 Stat. 1020) was enacted in response to significant public outcry over the potential for drastic rate increases under the Biggert-Waters Act of 2012. It aimed to alleviate those concerns by restoring 'grandfathering' (allowing some property owners to maintain lower rates based on previous flood maps) and placing limits on the amount by which flood insurance rates could increase annually.

Executive Order No. 13690

Executive Order No. 13690 (President Obama) adopted the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard rule, aimed at improving the resilience of communities and federal assets against the impacts of flooding now and in the future. It was subsequently revoked in 2016, reinstated in 2020, and revoked again in 2025.

Paris Agreement Signed

The Paris Agreement was signed, committing the U.S. to enhancing global adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change.⁵¹

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Preserve New Jersey Act

The Preserve New Jersey Act (P.L. 2016, c.12) implemented a constitutional dedication of a portion of the Corporation Business Tax (CBT) revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation. It established several funds, including the Preserve New Jersey Blue Acres Fund, to provide a stable, long-term funding source for land acquisition and stewardship activities.

Clean Stormwater and Flood Reduction Act

In March, the Clean Stormwater and Flood Reduction Act (P.L. 2019, c. 42) was passed, providing local government entities (counties, municipalities, or groups of municipalities) with the ability to create dedicated and stable funding sources through the establishment of stormwater utilities. This was intended as an effective management strategy to address stormwater issues. The statute also encourages the use of green infrastructure (GI) as an effective approach to reduce and treat stormwater, while delivering other environmental, social, and economic benefits. This act supplements existing stormwater management regulations by offering a new mechanism for funding and implementing stormwater projects, including the potential for regional stormwater utilities.

Preserve New Jersey Act Amendments

In June, amendments to the Preserve New Jersey Act (P.L. 2019, c.136) refined how Corporation Business Tax revenues were allocated, ensuring continued funding for Blue Acres and other preservation programs. It reinforced the state's long-term commitment to climate adaptation through land acquisition.

Executive Order No. 89

In October, Executive Order No. 89 (Governor Murphy) was issued, creating a Climate and Flood Resilience Program within the NJDEP. The order also created an Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, which included 16 agency representatives who will assist the Chief Resilience Officer in developing a statewide Climate Change Resilience strategy.

DRBC Advisory Committee on Climate Change

In December, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) formed an Advisory Committee on Climate Change to provide the Commission with scientifically based information and recommendation for identifying and prioritizing: i. threats and vulnerabilities affecting the Basin's water resources due to climate change and accompanying sea level rise; ii. science-based future climate scenarios for Basin water resource planning; iii. water resources planning, monitoring, research and regulations that will support mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency to climate change in the Delaware River Basin.⁵⁵

Executive Order No. 100

In January, Executive Order No. 100 (Governor Murphy) established the Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT) program, aimed at reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

New Green Infrastructure Rule

In March, NJDEP published a new green infrastructure (GI) Rule within Stormwater Management, requiring the use of GI to reduce runoff and achieve water quality goals, defining GI as a stormwater management measure close to its source, working to treat runoff through infiltration into subsoil, filtration by vegetation or soil, or storage of stormwater runoff for reuse.⁵⁶

2016

2017

2018

2019

2019

2019

2019

2020

2020

Paris Agreement Withdrawal

The U.S. withdrew from the Paris Agreement. In response, states and cities agreed to the principles of the agreement. The U.S. would rejoin in 2021 and withdraw once again in 2025.^{52/53}

Beach Nourishment Record

2018 is a record year for beach nourishment in the U.S., with over 60 million cubic yards of sand placed, particularly in Mississippi, Louisiana, and New Jersey.⁵⁴

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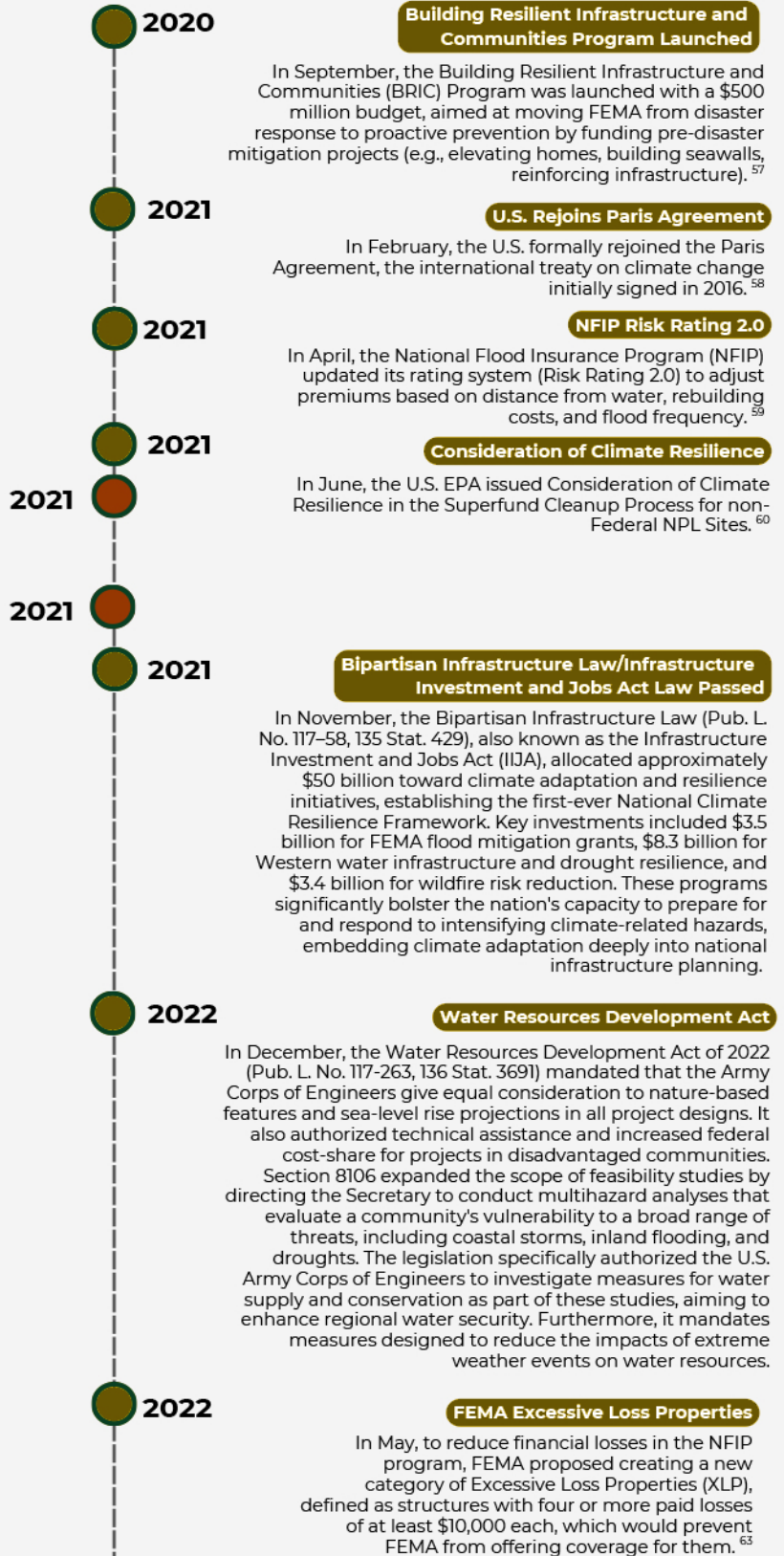
USA

Sea-Level Rise Guidance Issued

In June, the NJDEP issued guidance to aid decision-makers in planning for, mitigating, and adapting to sea-level rise.⁶¹

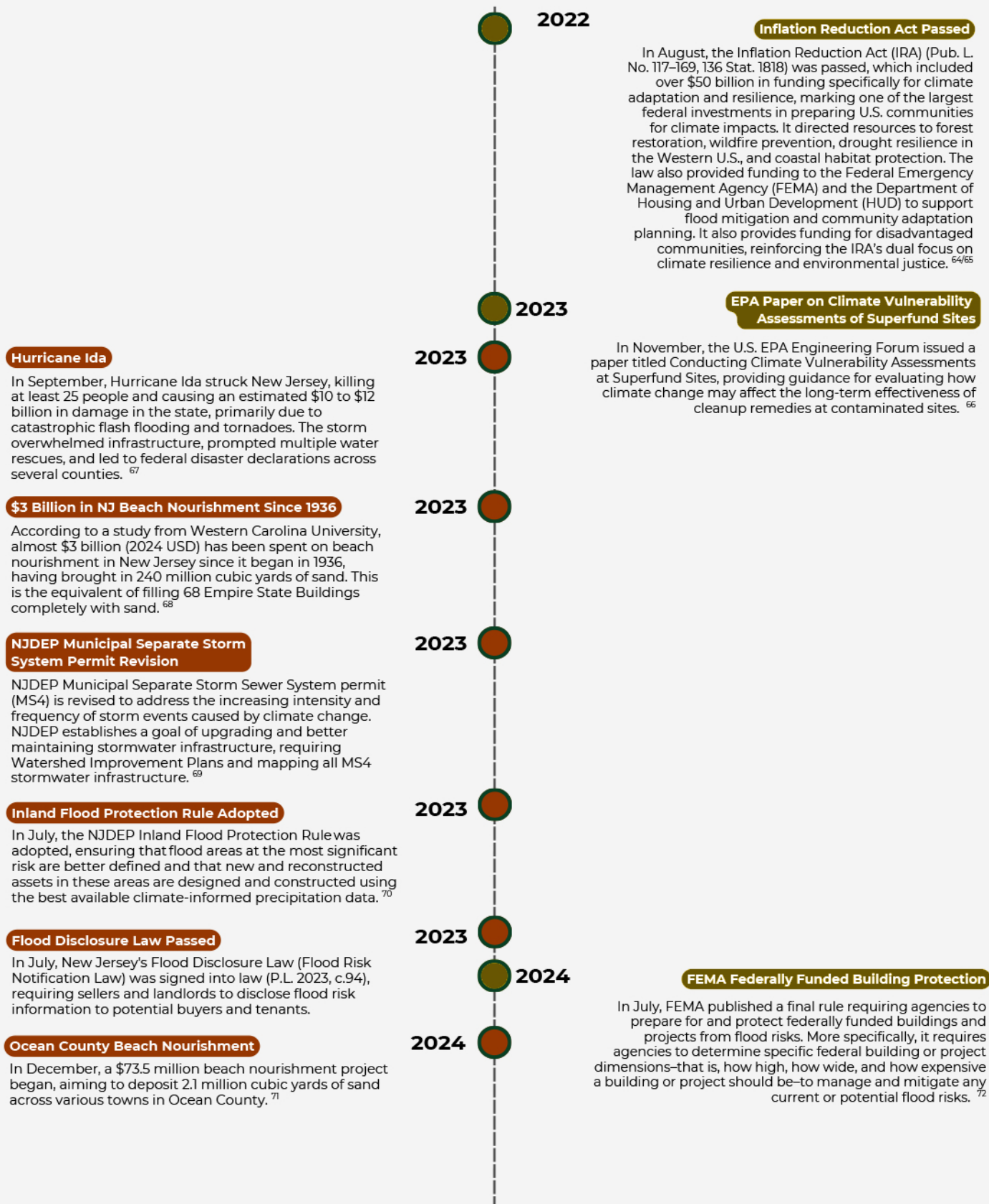
NJ Climate Change Resilience Strategy

In October, NJ released its statewide climate change resilience strategy, intended to build resilience programs and suggested a set of key public policy concerns to prioritize.⁶²



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Protecting Against Climate Threats and Resilient Environments and Landscape Rule Proposed

In August, The Protecting Against Climate Threats & Resilient Environments and Landscape Rule was proposed, and once adopted, would:⁷³

- Adjust coastal Flood Hazard Areas to reflect rising sea levels and related storm surges, extending areas that must comply with the rules further inland and requiring buildings to have higher first-floor elevations, flood-proofing and higher roads.
- Create an Inundation Risk Zone to address risk for residential buildings and critical structures proposed in permanent or daily inundation areas due to rising sea levels.
- Improve water quality and reduce flooding by adding sound stormwater management practices in areas where stormwater is not adequately managed.
- Support renewable energy by balancing habitat conservation with infrastructure demands.
- Improve State alignment with FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Improve DEP permitting processes to track authorizations and permits from the start of construction to the completion of the project.

Blue Acres Expanded Funding

In February, through an allocation from the New Jersey Corporate Business Tax (P.L. 2025, c.16), \$24.7 million in direct funding was allocated to the Blue Acres program, to date the single largest increase in funding for this program for voluntary buyouts of flood-prone properties in New Jersey.⁸³

2024

2025

2025

2025

2025

2025

2025

2025

Water Resources Development Act

In January, the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (Pub. L. No. 118-272) authorized over \$10 billion for climate-resilience, flood-control, and ecosystem-restoration projects.

Executive Order No. 14154

In January, Executive Order No. 14154 (President Trump) halted the distribution of Inflation Reduction Act funds intended for climate mitigation and adaptation projects, causing significant disruption to state and local planning efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerabilities to climate impacts.⁷⁴

- In April 2025, Federal Judge Mary McElroy ruled the freeze illegal and ordered EPA, DOE, and other agencies to restore access to climate funds.⁷⁵
- In January 2026, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the freeze (i.e., the injunctions that had forced the government to reinstate funding).⁷⁶
- Later in January 2026, a D.C. District Court judge ruled DOE violated the Fifth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause by explicitly canceling \$7.5 billion in grants based on whether the project was located in a state that voted for the president's opponent in 2024. This ruling vacated the specific termination notices for projects such as EV charging and building performance hubs.⁷⁷
- In February 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit began hearing oral arguments in *The Climate United Fund v. Citibank, N.A.* case regarding \$20 billion in EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds.⁷⁸
- In March 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit began hearing oral arguments for *Appalachian Voices et al v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, which concerns the fate of \$3 billion in canceled Environmental Justice Block Grants.⁷⁹

Executive Order No. 14162

In January, Executive Order No. 14162 (President Trump) directed immediate U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and terminated financial support for international climate adaptation initiatives, severely weakening global cooperative efforts to manage climate risks and vulnerabilities.⁸⁰

- In February, *Lightheiser v. Trump* was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana. It includes 22 young Americans and argues that EO 14162 and related energy orders violate their Fifth Amendment rights to life and liberty by knowingly increasing greenhouse gas pollution.⁸¹
- As of April, the case is before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and oral arguments occurred on April 13, 2026, in Portland, Oregon.⁸²

Executive Order No. 14199

In February, Executive Order No. 14199 began the process of withdrawing the U.S. from certain United Nations and international organizations.⁸⁴

U.S. Withdraws from UN Loss and Damage Fund

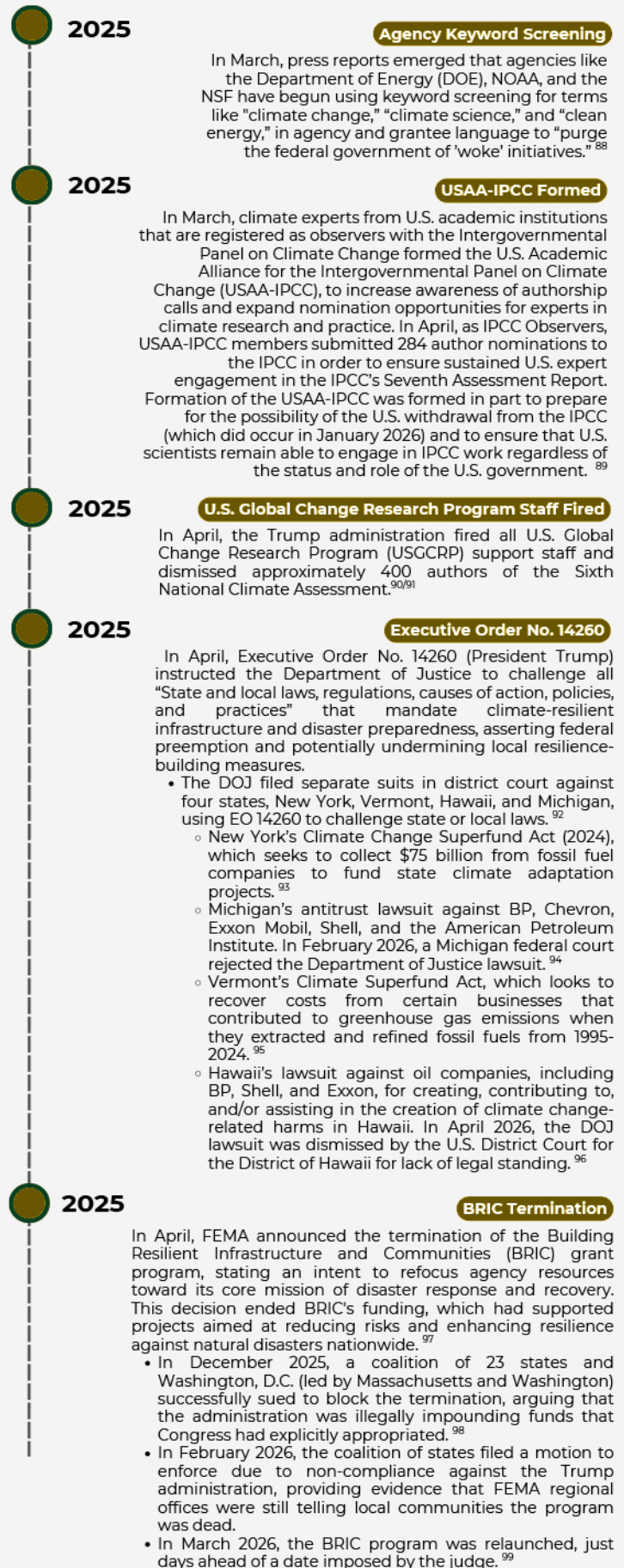
In February, the U.S. withdrew from the UN's Loss and Damage Fund, which provided grants to developing countries that are facing adverse consequences brought about by climate change, such as "the loss of human lives, damage to infrastructure and buildings, loss of property and crops, as well as the deterioration of ecosystems."^{85/86}

Hundreds Exit National Weather Service

In February, through early-exit incentives offered by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), hundreds exited the National Weather Service, reducing the capacity to provide early warnings for extreme weather events.⁸⁷

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2025

FY 2026 Budget

In May, the President's Fiscal Year 2026 budget was released, explicitly seeking to "end the Green New Scam" by cutting \$15 billion in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) "Green New Deal" funds. This included eliminating funding for projects related to global change research at the NSF by 97% and Earth science funding at NASA by half. As of June 2026, this is still unresolved.¹⁰⁰

2025

One Big Beautiful Bill Act

On July 4th, President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), repealing Section 134 of the Clean Air Act, which created the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, rescinding the unobligated balances. While the administration initially claimed this clawed back all \$27 billion, this is currently embroiled in litigation in *Climate United Fund v. Citibank, N.A.*, No. 25-5122 (D.C. Cir. 2025).

- In September, a three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit determined that it did not have jurisdiction over the case, with the funds remaining frozen as the case worked its way further through the proper court.^{101/102}
- In December, the full D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the panel's decision and granted a rehearing en banc, meaning all active judges of an appellate court hear the case, rather than the standard three-judge panel.¹⁰³
- In February 2026, the en banc D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in the U.S. EPA's appeal of a district court's preliminary injunction.¹⁰⁴

2025

USDOE Climate Working Group Report

In July, a U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) Climate Working Group (CWG) released a report that concluded that previous federal climate assessments overstate the risks of greenhouse gas emissions while underestimating the economic benefits of fossil fuel expansion.¹⁰⁵

2025

Endangerment Finding Rescission Proposed

In August, the EPA proposed to rescind the 2009 Endangerment Finding, that climate change poses a danger to human health and welfare, citing the U.S. DOE Climate Working Group report *A Critical Review of Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions on the U.S. Climate*.¹⁰⁶

2025

Expert Review of US DOE Report

In September, in response to the U.S. DOE Climate Working Group report *A Critical Review of Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions on the U.S. Climate*, a collection of 85 experts authored a report titled *A Critical Review of Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions on the U.S. Climate*. Their review concluded that many of the DOE CWG's reports' central claims, such as the absence of trends in extreme weather, or the notion that carbon dioxide is broadly beneficial, are misleading, or outright wrong.¹⁰⁷

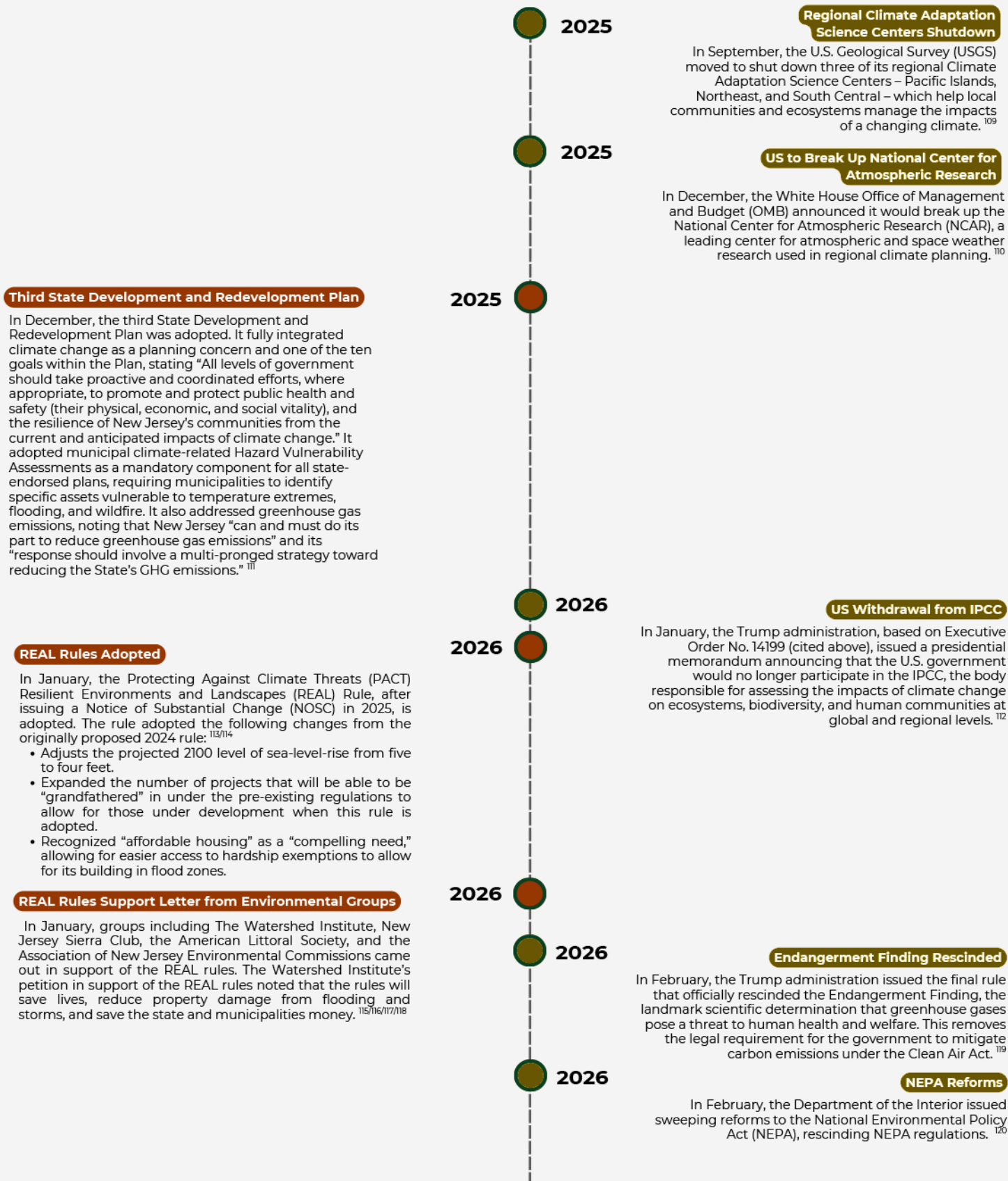
2025

NASEM Consensus Report

In September, in response to the Trump administration's August proposal to rescind the 2009 Endangerment Finding, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released a fast-tracked consensus report, *Effects of Human-Caused Greenhouse Gas Emissions on U.S. Climate, Health, and Welfare*. The report concludes that the scientific evidence for human-caused climate harm is "beyond scientific dispute," affirming that the 2009 Endangerment Finding has stood the test of time and is now reinforced by even stronger observational data.¹⁰⁸

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County Lawsuit over REAL Rules

In February, Cape May, Ocean, and Monmouth counties filed suit against the REAL regulations in the New Jersey State Superior Court.^{123/124}

Senate Concurrent Resolution 106

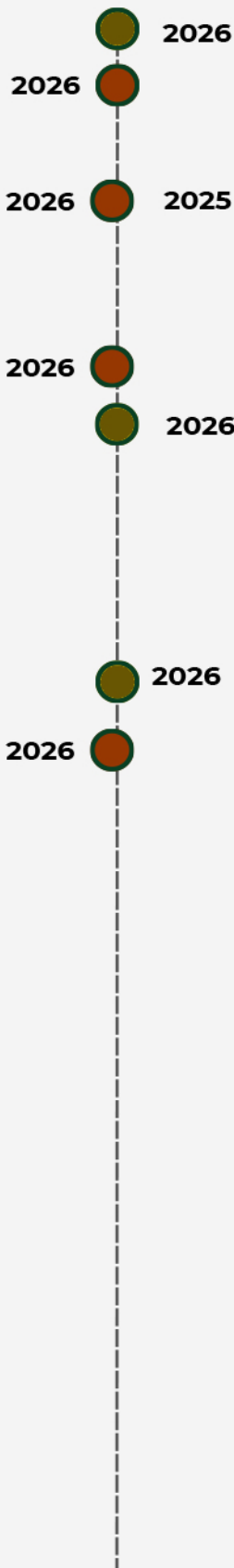
In February, Senate President Nicholas Scutari and Senators Burzichelli and Testa issued Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR106). This resolution uses a rare constitutional power (Article V, Section IV, paragraph 6) to formally declare that the NJDEP's REAL rules, adopted on January 20, 2026, are inconsistent with legislative intent.¹²⁵

Legislative Letter Requested REAL Rules Pause

In March, a bipartisan group of political leaders from the 10th legislative district sent a letter to Acting DEP Commissioner Potosnak requesting a pause on REAL Rules implementation.¹²⁶

REAL Rules Paused

In May, the NJDEP announced it would delay, by a year, the implementation of the Resilient Environment and Landscapes (REAL) rules the state's suite of land use protection regulations that among other things, adjusted coastal Flood Hazard Areas to reflect four-feet of sea-level rise and related storm surges and to create an Inundation Risk Zone for residential buildings and critical structures proposed in permanent or daily inundation areas due to rising sea levels. These rules had been established to account for the impacts of a changing climate, including sea-level rise to better protect public health, safety, and the economy of the state and had been adopted on the final day of Governor Murphy's administration. The pause was enacted to give NJDEP more time to engage with stakeholders "to identify targeted amendments to ensure the rules balance safety, community, development and infrastructure, and environmental goals and concerns."^{130/131/132}



American Public Health Association v. EPA

In February, a coalition of environmental and health groups filed suit (American Public Health Association v. EPA) in federal district court against the EPA over their repeal of the 2009 Endangerment Finding pursuant to the Clean Air Act.¹²¹

- In April, a group of environmental non-profits and Alaskan tribes, led by the Alaska Institute for Justice, joined the lawsuit as co-plaintiffs, alleging that the EPA's rescission of the 2009 endangerment finding disproportionately affects indigenous communities.¹²²

USAA-IPCC Becomes De Facto IPCC Nominating Body for American Scientists

In March, following the Trump administration's formal announcement on January 7 to withdraw the U.S. from the IPCC, the U.S. Academic Alliance for the IPCC (USAA-IPCC), a consortium of universities and the American Geophysical Union established in March 2025, assumed the role of the primary nominating body for American scientists. This ensured that U.S. expertise continues to inform global adaptation standards and local resilience planning despite the cessation of federal support.¹²⁷

Chevron v. Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana

In April, the Supreme Court, in Chevron U.S.A. Inc. v. Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, unanimously agreed that energy companies facing lawsuits over environmental damage to Louisiana's coast from oil and gas production can move the challenges from state to federal courts. The lawsuit was led by Chevron and Exxon Mobil and was supported by the Trump administration.^{128/129}

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