



CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY

SUMMARY

New Jersey became a national player in clean, renewable energy in the early 2000s as a mechanism to fight pollution. The combination of a new Clean Energy Fund created by the deregulation of the state's energy markets in 1999 and a new gubernatorial administration led to the creation and strengthening of a Renewable Portfolio Standard by the state's Board of Public Utilities. More than a decade ago, New Jersey became a national leader by requiring 22.5% of its energy come from clean, renewable sources by 2020. But the progress New Jersey was making came to a sudden halt with the onset of the Christie Administration.

During the course of the Christie administration, the state's solar sector has continued to expand because the state's clean energy program was institutionalized into law right before Gov. Christie took office. Despite initial promises to expand off-shore wind and even signing legislation to do so, the Christie Administration has stalled all progress on off-shore wind. But the clearest sign of the Administration's hostile view to renewable energy was the immediate effort to throw out the work of the Corzine Administration's extensive Energy Master Plan and the abandonment of a revised RPS of 30% clean, renewable energy by 2025.

While New Jersey has essentially sat out of the national race to a clean, renewable future, other states have moved ahead. Two years ago, California legislated that 50% of its energy must come from clean, renewable sources by 2030, and is now on the cusp of passing legislation to move to 100% clean, renewable sources by 2045. Hawaii has already signed legislation to reach 100% by 2045. New York has committed to reaching 50% clean, renewable energy by 2030. The call for aggressive state action has only intensified since President Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Accord.

New Jersey has clearly lost much ground since we vaulted to the top of the national stage on clean energy in the early 2000s. But the groundwork of our early successes – and the urgent need for action on climate change – provide needed momentum to achieve our Global Warming Response Act goals of 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and put people to work creating clean, renewable energy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. REVISE ENERGY MASTER PLAN

Re-open the current Energy Master Plan, which was recently revised by the Christie Administration, and redraft the document to acknowledge the impacts of climate change, the potential for clean energy technologies like offshore wind, solar and energy efficiency, and the importance of reducing greenhouse gases to revitalize New Jersey's clean energy economy.



2. UPDATE RENEWABLE PORTFOLIO STANDARD

Increase the current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to reach a minimum of 80% clean, renewable energy by 2050. The revised RPS should have clear benchmarks of 30% clean, renewable energy by 2025 and 50% clean, renewable energy by 2035. These benchmarks should ultimately be codified in legislation, but the regulatory Board of Public Utilities process allows the quickest implementation. Expand the renewable carve-outs for both off-shore wind and solar that will be aligned with the RPS.

3. MAINTAIN CLASS I RENEWABLES DEFINITION

Ensure that the Class I Renewables definition is not altered. Class I renewable energy is defined as energy generated from solar, wind, tidal, geothermal, and sustainable biomass. While there is expected to be growth in alternative clean technologies like wave and geothermal, the most aggressive growth will be in solar and off-shore wind.

4. ENSURE SMOOTH TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE POWER

Ensure Class I Renewables replace the state's four nuclear plants as they go off-line, at the end of 2019 for Oyster Creek, and no later than 2036, 2040, and 2046 as each of the remaining three nuclear plants' current operating licenses expire. Require aggressive decommissioning immediately upon closure, with ample labor engagement and joint planning throughout, to minimize short-term job loss and reduce risks to public health and safety.

WE WANT

CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY

30% BY 2025

50% BY 2035

80% BY 2050

www.jerseyrenews.org