

**Advanced Solar Products • Atlantic Climate Justice Alliance • Clean Water Action •
Environmental Defense Fund • Environment New Jersey •
Forward Ever Sustainable Business Alliance • GreenFaith • Health Care Without Harm •
Ironbound Community Corporation • Isles, Inc. • Jersey Renews •
NAACP New Jersey State Chapter • Natural Resources Defense Council •
New Jersey Education Association • New Jersey Future •
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters • New Jersey League of Women Voters •
New Jersey Sustainable Business Council • New Jersey Work Environment Council •
Regional Plan Association • Rock-Bailey Enterprises • Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter •
Solar Landscape • Sunowner, Inc. • Sustainable Somerset/Somerset Business Partnership •
Tri-State Transportation Campaign • The Nature Conservancy • UUFaithAction NJ •
Vote Solar • Wind of the Spirit, Immigrant Resource Center**

May 2, 2022

Governor Phil Murphy
Office of the Governor
225 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act Implementation and Stakeholder Engagement

Dear Governor Murphy:

We are writing on behalf of a broad coalition of groups representing New Jersey's environmental, business, planning, social justice, health care, conservation, labor, and climate advocacy communities to express our enthusiasm for the federal Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)) and our interest in working with you and your state agencies to ensure these funds are strategically implemented to achieve positive outcomes for climate, health, jobs and justice in New Jersey. This funding marks an opportunity for transformative and systematic changes in the way New Jersey invests in our communities, especially neighborhoods overburdened by pollution and underserved by clean energy, and we stand ready to support the Administration in reaching this goal.

We understand that you have appointed Richard Sun as the IIJA Coordinator for the State of New Jersey. This is a critical step towards ensuring a transparent and robust public engagement process not only for groups like ours that work in communities, but also for county and municipal representatives who will also play an important role in determining the success of this once-in-a-generation opportunity. **However, given the enormity and scope of the IIJA, we urge you to provide additional resources and technical assistance for state agencies,**

counties, and municipalities, including additional staff at the state agencies. In order for New Jersey to take advantage of the billions of dollars being made available through competitive funding under IJA, the State will need to ensure that all levels of government have appropriate capacity to directly apply for the competitive funding and to manage and oversee implementation of the funds.

By providing billions of dollars in funding to modernize our infrastructure, support family-sustaining jobs, address environmental injustice, and bolster our climate resilience, the IJA creates an opportunity to build a better, more equitable future for all New Jerseyans. However, the extent to which New Jerseyans see these benefits is dependent on how the State both uses the funds provided through set formulas and seeks additional funding through available competitive grants and loans. As the Biden Administration has made clear, “The federal government cannot build a better America alone—it needs state and local leadership to act as coordinators and help prepare communities to benefit from transformative infrastructure funding.”¹ We are eager to work with you to ensure IJA investments are implemented in a fair and transparent manner to achieve our shared economic, equity, climate and labor goals.

The IJA funding represents a generational opportunity and the public engagement and stakeholder process needs to meet this moment. We urge you to provide a thoughtful and intentional process that allows residents, especially in overburdened communities, to have a voice in the decisions that will influence and change their neighborhoods for years to come. This means providing timely information to the public, robust public comment periods, and opportunities to influence the decision-making process. Additionally, we ask that there are clear points of contact within the Governor’s Office and state agencies, opportunities for public comment and feedback through multiple forums tailored to impacted stakeholders, consistency and commitment to a robust stakeholder process across state agencies, and established criteria to ensure climate-protective and equitable outcomes.

Prioritizing federal funds to projects that will reduce emissions more rapidly, especially in overburdened areas, and support renewable energy will help ensure that New Jerseyans across the state benefit from a competitive economy and healthy communities. Funding should be implemented in a way that accelerates an equitable transition to an economy based on clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency, which will in turn help ensure a diversified energy supply, more jobs, and a healthier environment with cleaner air for our residents. Further, we strongly support President Biden’s directive that these federal investments be prioritized for communities historically disenfranchised and disproportionately impacted by economic disinvestment, health challenges, and environmental harms. A fundamental purpose of our state government is to ensure that it supports improved conditions in the places where people live,

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/BIL-Factsheet-Local-Competitive-Funding.pdf>

learn, work, and play; the IJA funding can help improve the “social determinants of health” and quality-of-life, especially for under-served communities.

As you have often noted, we are at a pivotal point in the global fight against climate change. Unfortunately, we are already seeing the impacts of climate change here in New Jersey—and they are both deadly and costly. Hurricane Ida is blamed for the loss of 30 lives and Superstorm Sandy in 2012 topped nearly \$30 billion in damages in New Jersey alone.

The science is clear: we must act now. A recent Rutgers University study found that sea level in New Jersey is rising more than two times faster than the global average. In Atlantic City, tidal flooding occurs ten times more frequently than it did in the middle of the last century; by 2050, Atlantic City could experience high-tide flooding 120 days a year.² Now is the time to seize the opportunity for investments that drive equitable economic recovery, justice for communities, and rapid greenhouse gas reductions.

Many of these federal investments are already making their way to New Jersey. We urge you to thoughtfully engage stakeholders and act strategically to ensure New Jersey makes the most of this historic funding opportunity. Likewise, there are countless competitive federal grant opportunities through IJA that the State would be well-positioned to pursue and should be proactive in seeking out—and which other states will take advantage of if New Jersey’s agencies and municipalities are not positioned to do so first.

Collectively, we encourage you to:

- Prioritize at least 40 percent of investments communities overburdened by pollution and underserved by clean energy, in line with President Biden’s Justice40 initiative
- Prevent projects that exacerbate pollution or perpetuate inequities in overburdened communities
- Encourage our schools to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements (IJA Section 40541)
- Make needed, strategic investments in electric grid resilience and reliability, including preparing our grid for increased offshore wind energy production (IJA Sections 40103, 40105, 40106)
- Equitably electrify our transportation system by prioritizing public charging infrastructure, including in new office, retail and multi-unit residential developments, transitioning school, public transit, and government vehicle fleets to zero-emission vehicles, and using funds to electrify depots (IJA Division J-1, Sections 11401, 11403, 30018, 71101) (Low or No Emission Grant Program, Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program)

² New Jersey’s Rising Seas and Changing Coastal Storms: Report of the 2019 Science and Technical Advisory Panel (November 2019) (https://climatechange.rutgers.edu/images/STAP_FINAL_FINAL_12-4-19.pdf).

- Focus on reducing emissions at our ports, including addressing emissions from trucks traveling to and from the ports through our most vulnerable communities (IIJA Division J-2, Sections 11402, 11403) (Maritime Administration’s Port Infrastructure Development Program)
- Advance pedestrian-oriented development investments that reduce our dependence on cars and increase our ability to walk, bike, and take public transportation (IIJA Section 11101, Division J)
- Invest in green infrastructure projects in overburdened communities that create jobs, mitigate flooding and combined sewer overflows, and reduce neighborhood temperatures (IIJA Section 11406)
- Support clean and healthy buildings by harnessing grants for energy efficiency, weatherization, and beneficial electrification for new and existing buildings (IIJA Sections 40502, 40511, 40551, 40552)

As the State moves to implement IIJA and future federal investments, we urge you and your state agencies to remain clear-eyed on what is at stake and not lose sight of the opportunity to transform our communities, accelerate our transition to a clean energy economy, improve health outcomes, benefit New Jersey’s families and working people, and help to ensure our economy and communities are more resilient.

Our organizations and members stand ready to work with you in advancing transformative investments to build a stronger, fairer and more resilient New Jersey for all.

Sincerely,

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Advanced Solar Products, Inc.

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Center

cc: Lt. Governor and Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs, Sheila Oliver
George Helmy, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Jane Cohen, Executive Director, Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy
Richard Sun, Policy Advisory, Office of the Governor
President Joe Fiordaliso, NJ Board of Public Utilities
Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, NJ Department of Transportation
Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Acting Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan, NJ Department of Education