

CLIMATE



Climate change is a growing public health crisis in New Jersey. We are witnessing extreme heat, flooding, polluted air, and water harming communities across the state. Yet the impacts are not felt equally. Low-income and BIPOC communities bear the brunt due to long-standing environmental injustices and inadequate infrastructure.

- From 2011–2023, New Jersey experienced **14 federally declared climate disasters** and received **\$7.4 billion in post-disaster federal aid**.
- Since 1980, **75 weather and climate events** in the state have exceeded **\$1 billion in damages**.
- **1.2 million residents** live in properties at high risk of flooding.
- **Sea levels in NJ are rising faster** than the national average—projected to rise **2 feet by 2050** and over **6 feet by 2100**.
- More than **15% of New Jersey's land** is paved, worsening flood and heat risks.



HEALTHY & EQUITY RISK

- Overburdened communities often lack air conditioning, face high energy bills relative to their income, and live in heat islands with not enough green space.
- Flood-prone neighborhoods suffer from combined sewer overflows, contaminating waterways with pathogens such as cholera and hepatitis.
- Extreme heat and stormwater-related pollution are intensifying health disparities rooted in racial and economic inequities.

PROGRESS

In 2024, New Jersey advanced climate resilience by releasing the NJ PACT rules, which will establish critical flood protection measures. It's essential for these protections to be adopted and strengthened to protect all New Jerseyans, regardless of income level.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Pass legislation for a Clean Energy Standard:** 100% clean electricity by 2035.
- **Pass legislation to** establish a Climate Superfund Act and make polluters pay for the damages they've inflicted in communities.
- **Establish permanent resiliency funding** (e.g., bond initiative, insurance surcharge) with dedicated investments for overburdened communities.
- **End raids to the Clean Energy Fund** and use the funding for its intended purpose.
- **Coordinate climate revenues** under a unified, strategic state framework.
- **Aggressively reduce emissions of carbon dioxide** and other harmful greenhouse gases, while equally weighing the most problematic co-pollutants.
- **Expand investment** in land conservation, flood buyouts, and resilience projects.
- **Prioritize green infrastructure** and stormwater-friendly parks in vulnerable areas.
- **Continue and grow technical assistance** and funding for local/regional stormwater utilities.
- **Promote stormwater fees** as a long-term funding strategy for flood defense.

