DRAFT FOR COMMENT (v6.1)

(note to reviewer: focus is on municipalities GHG emission reductions)

Honorable Governor Murphy:

The signers represent NJ environmental organizations concerned with more quickly advancing NJ efforts to combat climate change. We thank you for the leadership you continue to demonstrate in addressing climate change. We believe NJ must use every available tool to reduce 2005 levels of GHG emissions 50% by 2030 through a combination of legislation, regulation, and incentives.

In a July 2 response to “Ask the Governor”, your policy Advisor Ms. Hannah Thonet, provided a thorough response. Ms. Thonet then asked how to facilitate local action in municipalities. This letter answers that request. We recognize the source of the majority of NJ GHG is from within municipalities.

**EXAMINE HOW GREEN TEAMS AND SUSTAINABLE JERSEY CAN HELP MEET NJ GHG REDUCTIONS**

One channel for NJ GHG reduction is "Green Teams", created by the ruling Council/Committee in most NJ municipalities and guided by SustainableJersey.com.  Initial GHG reductions can be achieved by following the Sustainable Jersey "Gold Star in Energy", which fully documents and supports Green Team "Actions" to reduce major GHG sources within municipalities. Paths to 50% GHG reductions by 2030 might be achieved by enhancing existing support from Sustainable Jersey to NJ municipalities.

Although “Gold Star in Energy” has existed four years, only Woodbridge Township has achieved the “Gold Star in Energy”. It is now tracking GHG reductions.

Attractive incentives and an NJ mandate will ensure that each NJ municipality track and control their GHG reductions.   
We recommend a mandate that each city create a 10-year energy and emissions reduction plan and commitment to reach a 50% reduction in Greenhous Gas (GHG) by 2030 (and further goal of at least 80% reduction in GHG by year 2050). The “Middletown Energy Plan” [[1]](#endnote-1) is one example of such a plan (currently under consideration by Middletown Township).

To support the municipalities in creating plans and reaching their goals, we recommend that the state work with Sustainable Jersey to establish and fund a clean energy resource center to provide expertise, guidance, technical support, useful statistics, information sharing, model plans, and other resources to each municipality, and to review, provide feedback on, and approve the energy and emissions reduction plan for each municipality (recognizing differences among municipalities). Annually, each municipality shall report its progress to Sustainable Jersey and appropriately update its plan. New Jersey shall monitor and review municipal progress and reports, and New Jersey shall publish an overall report on progress as well as maintain a publicly available website containing all the municipal plans and reduction reports for every year.

**EXAMINE HOW CITIES CURRENTLY HELP STATES AND THE U.S. MEET GHG REDUCTION GOALS**

An “All-of-Society” strategy is required to reduce U.S. GHG emissions 50% below 2005 levels by 2030. Thousands of U.S. organizations and municipalities under the “America Is All In” movement have adopted this principle. Key Messages are defined on page 2 of [“An All-In climate strategy can cut U.S. emissions by 50% by 2030”](https://www.americaisallin.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/all-in-climate-strategy-report2021rd3-3.pdf) [[2]](#endnote-2) ; see endnotes for links to “America’s Pledge” GHG reduction analyses for 2018, 2019, and 2020. Current recommendations are based upon the “[Working Paper](https://www.americaisallin.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/all-in-national-climate-strategy.pdf)” [[3]](#endnote-3)

The “Race to Zero” initiative is recruiting 1,000 cities in support of the COP26 Roadmap of Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency to the UNFCCC. Details are found in <https://citiesracetozero.org>.  
This coalition of cities uses science-based targets and start implementing inclusive and resilient climate action ahead of and beyond the COP26 in Glasgow. Cities are adopting the platform created by C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), CDP, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Resources Institute (WRI).

**BUILD A SOCIAL COMMITMENT WITHIN NJ STAKEHOLDERS**[[4]](#endnote-4)

GHG reduction requires major stakeholder engagement campaigns to build a broad societal awareness of local, state, and national benefits of net-zero energy pathways. We will need acceptance, management, and mitigation of impacts on landscapes and communities associated with the transition. In addition, we need major consumer awareness campaigns and incentives to drive low-carbon energy investment decisions. One source for creation of such campaigns is the Princeton University (12/15/2020) “NetZero America” report. (See section beginning on page 335, “A blueprint for Action in the 2020s” [[5]](#endnote-6)).

Attachment 2 provides examples for communication of NJ-wide initiatives to the public.

Thank you for your ongoing clean energy transformation leadership.

We also thank Hannah Thonet for her thoughtful 7/2/2021 email response to an “Ask the Governor” question submitted by Jeffrey Davis of our group. Hannah requested our thoughts on options to facilitate local action. Her request is answered by this cover letter and attachments.

Signed by: "50 x 30" Team, which includes members from:

Climate Reality Project NJ Gateway Chapter (\*add note: endorsed by “50 x 30 Team” of the NJ Gateway Chapter- requires vote of the entire “50 x 30 Team”)

Middletown for Clean Energy

NJ Sierra Club Jersey Shore Group \*NOTE: we hope to expand to endorsement by NJ Sierra Club Chapter

CC: Hannah Thonet, Policy Advisor | Energy + Environment, Office of the Governor; Hannah.Thonet@nj.gov

1. <http://climate.smiller.org/energy-plan/Middletown-2020-Energy-Plan/MiddletownEnergyPlan-V2-2020-8-8.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.americaisallin.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/all-in-climate-strategy-report2021rd3-3.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.americaisallin.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/all-in-national-climate-strategy.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://netzeroamerica.princeton.edu/img/Princeton_NZA_Interim_Report_15_Dec_2020_FINAL.pdf> (page 337) [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://netzeroamerica.princeton.edu/the-report> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)