

## 2023 – NJ 50x30 Building Electrification (BE) ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**2021-2022 Recap:** After the work of 2018-2019 as Middletown for Clean Energy, dedicated to advocating for Middletown and surrounding towns to commit to 100% clean energy by 2050, it seemed that climate action in government was paused during the pandemic in 2020, just as the NJ Energy Master Plan (EMP) had been finalized and published. By 2021, we decided to broaden our approach to the entire state and ask for an interim target of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% by 2030 (“50x30”), forming the NJ 50x30 team. The team wrote letters and met with and called officials all over NJ to advocate for clean energy. We also sponsored several webinars on clean energy to educate the general public. (We had developed close working relationships with Climate Reality Project and Sierra Club NJ chapters, Sustainable Jersey and Green Teams, the local Citizens Climate Lobby groups, and several other environmental and faith groups.) In **Nov of 2021**, our efforts were rewarded when Gov Murphy issued Executive Order (EO) 274, stating a goal of 50% GHG reduction by 2030 for NJ, just as we had asked.

The EMP had highlighted that the top 3 sources of emissions in NJ were transportation, electricity generation, and buildings. Therefore, those were the 3 highest priority sectors to address to meet the 50x30 goal. By late 2021 there were programs being launched in the state to address emissions reduction in transportation and electricity. We saw a missing piece, programs to address buildings emissions, that we could fill, primarily by advocating for households and businesses to switch from burning fossil fuels to electric heat pump and other efficient electric technologies.

**In early 2022** we redirected NJ 50x30 to become NJ 50x30 BE. We agreed on a set of recommendations re BE for various NJ state departments and agencies to reach the overall 50x30 goal. These included setting targets and timeline for number of homes/businesses electrified, increased incentives for electrifying and weatherizing buildings (along with suggested funding sources), new building codes for all-electric new buildings, stronger measures for low-income and affordable housing, and training in BE for HVAC vendors. We met with representatives of most of the state offices involved in these measures in May-June 2022. These included BPU, Dept of Consumer Affairs – Div of Codes, Gov Office of Climate, Rutgers Center for Green Building. We reviewed and suggested upgrades to current legislation, wrote new legislation where needed, and began to meet with legislators. To educate consumers, we instituted the monthly BE webinars and wrote at least one article on BE for each quarterly Jersey Sierran newspaper. Later in 2022 our BE campaign got a boost from the signing of the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), providing some of the BE incentives we had asked for from the state.

### 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In Feb 2023 Gov Murphy issued 3 EOs: 315, 316, and 317, which ordered the state to deliver many of the provisions we had advocated for: 100% clean electricity by 2035; targets for zero-emission heating and cooling (i.e., heat pumps) in buildings by 2030 (400,000 homes, 20,000 businesses electrified, 10% of all LMI be electric-ready); a plan for the future of gas in NJ; and all new cars and light-duty trucks be EVs by 2035. In Feb-Mar, our BE working group regrouped to generate a plan to advocate for the rules, regulations and statutes needed to enforce the governor’s EOs.
- **Monthly BE webinars.** Held 11 webinars in 2023, each describing one or more case studies of home or business electrification projects. 700 unique people have attended our BE webinars. Event notices are widely distributed by the several organizations we work with and are posted

in social media. Attendance has ranged from 35 to 70, plus additional registrants who watched the recordings later. Speakers have included homeowners, engineering or architectural consultants, HVAC business owners, the Executive Director of Passive House Network, the Engagement Mgr of a Community Solar developer, and an Icelandic tourist guide talking about Iceland's geothermal (steam from volcanoes) heating network.

- 3 summer BE webinars (July-Sep) featured the popular host of the CA-based "Ask Sean Show" giving electrification advice for NJ-based case studies.
- Several of our members, family and friends have started electrification projects on their own homes and reported to webinar audiences.
- **Presentations on IRA and BE.** Attended training/workshops on IRA from both Climate Reality and Sierra Club and made presentations on the IRA's incentives for individuals plus examples of BE projects to many different audiences (in-person, online, or both). Some audiences were NJ-wide, such as NJ Clean Energy Conference and NJ DEP Sustainability Speaker Series, and some were national, such as a talk on "Achieving Net Zero" at the US Green Building Coalition Net Zero Summit.
- **Articles for Jersey Sierran.** Wrote articles on BE for each of the 4 quarterly issues.
- **Comments for official hearings.** Several members attended and provided individual oral and/or written comments at hearings:
  - BPU straw proposal for utilities' second triennium (2T) 2024-2027 programs to provide BE-related incentives to customers,
  - BPU FY23 and FY24 programs and budgets,
  - BPU public stakeholders meeting on 2T building decarbonization (i.e., BE) plans for NJ utilities,
  - Senator Bob Smith's Energy Committee meetings,
  - DEP/BPU stakeholder hearing on IRA grant funding,
  - BPU IRA HOME and HEERA state rebate programs to include BE,
  - League of Conservation Voters forum on offshore wind,
  - One member commented on dozens of hearings, including those above, plus monthly BPU Energy Efficiency (EE) stakeholder meetings, DEP Regional Greenhouse Gas (RGGI) proceeding, and others, and on subjects such as zero-energy new homes construction, industrial heat pumps, building benchmarking, BPU Whole Building Pilot, Solar for All grants to include BE, and energy programs for low-income families.
- **Conferences/rallies.** Attended Sustainable Jersey Sustainability Summit May 5, Rally for Offshore Wind in Long Branch Jun 10, March to End Fossil Fuels in NYC Sep 17, Rally for Clean Energy in Trenton Nov 20.
- Individual work with different **faith communities.** As one example, a Climate Action Team maintains constant congregational attention to BE and Climate by hosting an Earth Day service once a year, providing "Dialog" discussions a couple of times/year, and writing a weekly climate column in the church "eBlast" to all members. We analyzed data showing a 79% reduction of GHG emissions, and 81% reduction of church utility bills via building efficiency, solar, and heat pump installations over 20 years. We applied for an "Energy Saver Award" in a national contest by Interfaith Power & Light and won 2<sup>nd</sup> place and a \$500 award.
- We are having ongoing meetings with **AARP** staff and volunteers who are advocating for AARP to take on a national BE campaign for its members of all political stripes. The campaign will be called "Power Your Savings" and will feature 3 selling points for electrification: 1) Energy cost savings, 2) Safer, healthier, and more comfortable homes, and last 3) Emissions savings. We

hope to help launch a NJ pilot program. A NJ group got Loretta Weinberg to endorse the program to NJ state AARP.

- One member completed the **Electrification Coach** course from Rewiring America and is awaiting a Coaching certificate. We know of programs in MA and NY that provide this service to consumers and we are considering a similar program in NJ.
- One member writes the free Substack newsletter, [ClimateFriendlyLifestyle.substack.com](https://ClimateFriendlyLifestyle.substack.com), on energy topics along with a collaborator. Among the topics is a series for homeowners on "Electrify Everything- Make a Plan", and a series called "Breaking the Grid", about how the national electric grid is operated and its challenges.
- Plans in the works with North Jersey Sierra Club for an April 2024 viewing and public Zoom panel discussion about the movie "Nuclear Now". Speakers will include Anjuli Ramos and Meredith Angwin.