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Response to Governor Murphy's Climate Speech Action Today Can Stop Climate Change Tomorrow

New Brunswick, NJ - "We need to walk and chew gum at the same time -- taking steps already primed for tangible action today as we begin to advance a broader suite of harder but essential policies outlined by Governor's Murphy announcement today," stated **Amy Goldsmith, Clean Water Action's NJ State Director**. Her full statement is below.

The climate and environmental justice lawsⁱ and executive ordersⁱⁱ Governor Murphy signed between 2018-2021 are a powerful framework to combat the climate emergency, promote environmental justice (EJ), create good jobs and grow NJ's economy, save lives, and protect property and the environment.

We appreciate it takes time to get rules and other policies right, but we've run out of time when it comes to climate change and Governor Murphy's term of office. Even after discounting COVID, the adoption and implementation of these laws and orders are way behind scheduleⁱⁱⁱ. But all is not lost. Governor Murphy must take decisive action today as we simultaneously ensure more benefits and fewer harms in BIPOC and low wealth communities by:

- **Signing the EJ rule today** so that it can go into effect in March^{iv};
- **Taking a stand now against any of (all?!!!) pending major NJ fossil fuel projects^v;**
- **Committing now to adopting the strongest Advanced Clean Car II rule in 2023** in time to apply it to the next (second) model year^{vi};
- **Ending Clean Energy Fund and NJ Transit capital budget raids in his Feb. 28th speech** and proposed FY 2024 budget^{vii};
- **Settling the lawsuit filed by Empower NJ before March 1st Appellate division oral argument over NJDEP's failure to implement the 2019 Global Warming Response Act** and immediately commence rulemaking to establish and reach annual benchmarks to reduce climate emissions 80% by 2050;
- **Adopting the Inland Flood Protection rule by May 1st;** and
- **Proposing coastal, wetland and other land use (REAL) rules by May 1st** to protect against the ravages of more severe weather due to already baked in climate change^{viii}.

We need to walk and chew gum at the same time -- taking these steps already primed for

-- more --

tangible action today as we begin to advance tomorrow a broader suite of harder but essential policies outlined by the governor just now at Rutgers to:

- **Accelerate electrification** of heating/cooling buildings and the transportation sector;
- **Chart a path for getting New Jersey off natural gas** and other fossil fuels; and
- **Codify a truly Clean^{ix} Energy Standards (CES)** that phase out nuclear power at the end of their current license and green up both in-state and out-of-state (PJM) electrical generation faster and more significantly – 100% truly clean by 2035.

While these policies may still need to go through a formal rulemaking process, we need to learn from other states so we can fast track them to the finish line by date certain. Then we need to fully fund and dedicate staff towards their implementation before Governor Murphy leaves office. Otherwise, the potential for a new administration and legislature to derail or at best delay the good work and progress achieved to date is a REAL threat to mitigating climate change and its potentially deadly impacts.

“Framing up a house is not the same as finishing it so you can live in it. Proclaiming climate leader status is not the same as actually being out in front of the pack. We need to act today, not just plan for tomorrow. To get ahead of the pack, Governor Murphy needs to stop advancing fossil fuel projects and move even faster towards comprehensive rule adoptions and a truly equitable green economy future,” **concluded Goldsmith.**

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Since the organization's founding during the campaign to pass the landmark Clean Water Act in 1972, Clean Water Action has worked to win strong health and environmental protections by bringing issue expertise, solution-oriented thinking, and people power to the table. www.cleanwater.org

ⁱ Most notably the July 2019 amendments to the Global Warming Response Act, the January 2020 short-lived climate pollutants law, and the September 2020 EJ Law.

ⁱⁱ Most notably the EJ EO 23, Energy Master Plan EO 28, Protection Against Climate Threats (PACT) EO 100, and EO 274 which follows the science to make state policy cutting climate emissions 50% by 2030.

ⁱⁱⁱ Governor Murphy ordered DEP in January 2020 via EO 100 to adopt roughly a dozen PACT rules by January 2022 -- 4 have been adopted (on average 7 months late), 2 proposed and may be adopted 15 - 20 months late, 5 have yet to be proposed, and one was rejected after being proposed a year late.

^{iv} The Administration promised to adopt this rule that allows the 2020 EJ law to go into effect by Nov. 2021.

^v Pending projects include the Hudson County Turnpike Expansion, Gibbstown LNG port, REAE gas pipelines, and the CPV, NJT or PVSC gas plants, while past projects the Governor has opposed include the North Bergen gas plant, PennEast and NESE gas pipelines.

^{vi} Unlike other states, New Jersey missed applying these stronger standards for the first model year.

^{vii} In each of his first 5 years in office, the Governor broke his 2017 promise to end these raids.

^{viii} The Governor ordered these rules in January 2020 to be adopted by January 2022.

^{ix} Cannot include garbage incineration, renewable natural gas (RNG), hydrogen, carbon capture, etc.