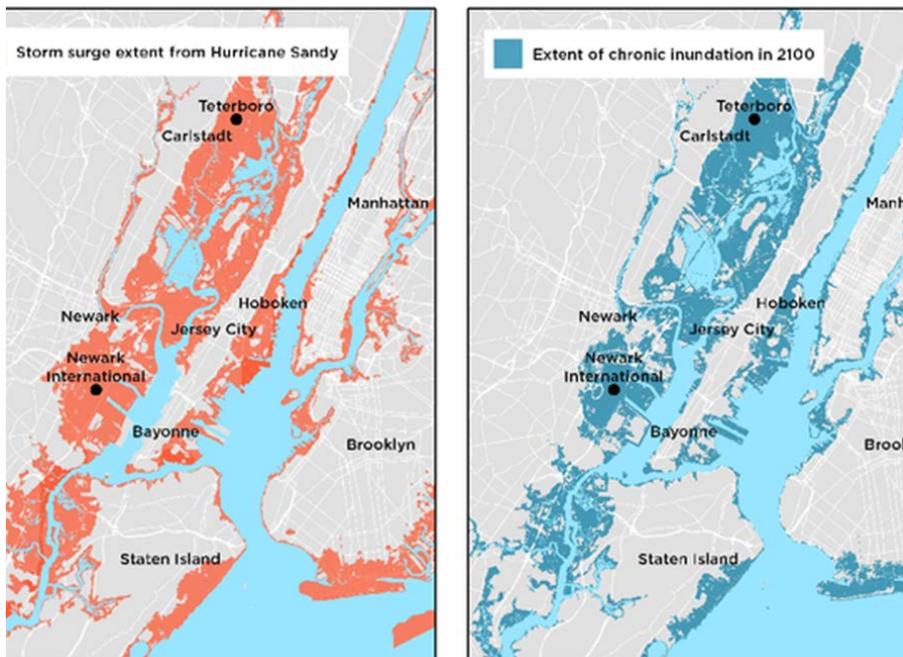


Critical Comments on the DRAFT Energy Master Plan (EMP)

An article by Scott Fallon and Andrew Ford in the North Jersey Record on August 23, 2019, [The effects of climate change in New Jersey are already here. They're everywhere.](#), comprehensively lays out the case that climate change is no longer an abstract concept that we can afford to ignore.

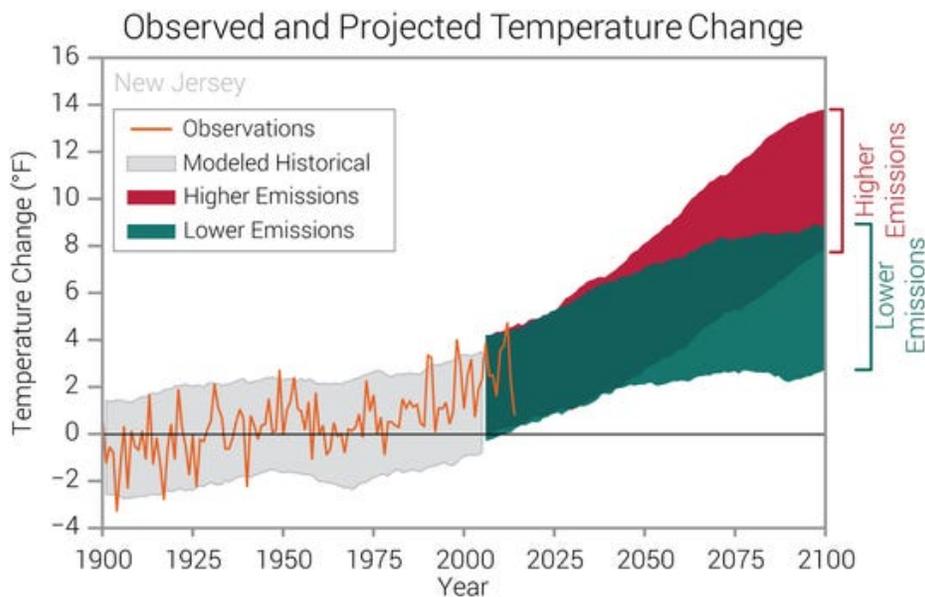
Among the points the authors make are:

- The 10 warmest years in New Jersey since 1895 have all occurred after 1990. 2012 was the hottest year on record. NJ temperatures are rising faster than the national average, with at least a 3 degree rise since 1895 – some estimates put the increase as high as 3.6 degrees.
- Mild winters allow disease-carrying insects to live longer, increasing the health risks to New Jerseyans from West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, and other diseases. Longer warm seasons allow more ticks and mosquitos to survive the winter. A record 61 West Nile cases were reported in 2018, including 3 deaths.
- This summer's exceptionally wet and warm weather has been a trigger for toxic algae blooms in many lakes in the state.
- Sea level rise in New Jersey is twice the global average.
- Open water in the Meadowlands has increased by 147% from 1889 to 1995, reducing the amount of land and marsh available to absorb storm water and abate flooding in the region. Sea level rise threatens to engulf what land remains.
- Rutgers marine biologist Malin Pinsky reports that ocean temperatures along the East Coast have risen 3.5 degrees in the last 30 years. Warming water results in a shift of marine life to cooler waters farther north, affecting our fishing industry.
- A team of Rutgers scientists [projects](#) that sea levels at the Jersey Shore would rise 3 ½ feet by 2100. Inland locations along major rivers such as Trenton, Camden, and Bayonne could see water *persistently* rise 3 feet – comparable to Sandy's effect.



(Photo: Union of Concerned Scientists)

- [Rutgers research](#) estimates that rising sea levels increased the levels of flooding by Sandy to affect 40,000 more residents than would have been the case without sea level rise.
- The New Jersey State Climatologist lists average temperature of the 10 warmest years in New Jersey since 1895:
 - 2012: 55.9°F
 - 1998: 55.2°F
 - 2016: 55°F
 - 2006: 55°F
 - 2011: 54.9°F
 - 2010: 54.7°F
 - 2017: 54.6°F
 - 1990: 54.5°F
 - 1991: 54.4°F
 - 2002: 54.3°F
- Climate models show yet more increases in temperature. **The severity of the increase depends on our progress in containing greenhouse gas emissions.**



(Photo: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

EmpowerNJ encourages citizens to utilize this information in comments to the BPU on its Draft EMP (<https://nj.gov/emp/pdf/Draft%202019%20EMP%20Final.pdf>). Comments pointing out the effects of climate change on New Jersey should be accompanied by strong demands for **immediate actions** to address this problem.

In order to effectively slow/stop climate change, **a critical element that must be included in the next version of the EMP is a very robust near term target for cutting greenhouse gases (GHGs) in NJ.** The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report called for a 45% cut in global GHGs (over the 2010 level) by 2030 in order to prevent global warming from exceeding 1.5°C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of climate change. Currently, the only target for GHGs in the EMP is to cut 80% by 2050. **This is too late and insufficient.** The EMP must support the

IPCC goal and set a 2030 target to cut GHGs by 45% (or an amount based on New Jersey's emissions that supports this global objective).

The message is that the EMP plan coming out in December needs to show much faster progress on cutting GHGs with a specific and aggressive target for 2030. If the world does not hit this goal for 2030 to keep warming below 1.5°C, it will not make much difference what is achieved in 2050 as the battle will have been lost. Without this pressure, the EMP GHG reductions will likely be backloaded and NJ will see minimal progress for 2030. Alternatively, if NJ can make a significant cut by 2030 it will be in much better shape to make an effective 2050 target. Even if the EMP does not set a target of 45% by 2030 we should ask to see a model of what it would take to get there, and not settle for an opaque answer that it costs too much or is just not feasible.

The Office of the Governor's Key Initiatives web site (<https://nj.gov/governor/initiatives/>) states: *"Governor Murphy recognizes that climate change is a fact and an existential threat to our state."*

While the IPCC report calls for limiting global warming to 1.5°C to avoid the worst effects of climate change, the *Record* editorial states that NJ's average warming has already exceeded this (3°F = 1.67°C) and is warming more rapidly than the national average. Existential threats such as this must be met with powerful responses that sometimes require extraordinary efforts outside the political comfort zone of leaders.

EmpowerNJ recommends that, in addition to demanding the BPU/EMP planners impose a near term moratorium on new fossil fuel projects, commenters also demand an aggressive target for GHG reductions by 2030 that supports the IPCC recommendations and treats climate change as the existential threat the Governor has described.

Just as the moratorium is an all encompassing action that addresses many separate issues raised by individual fossil fuel projects, setting a robust goal for 2030 addresses many separate issues and plans across all GHG producing sectors of the NJ economy – transportation, housing, energy production/distribution and commercial/industrial buildings. Each of these will be forced to implement challenging targets and aggressive actions that together meet the 2030 goal.