

Feb-13-07 Governor Corzine Calls for Sweeping Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in New Jersey

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GOVERNOR CORZINE CALLS FOR SWEEPING REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN NEW JERSEY

TRENTON - Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed an Executive Order to adopt proactive and ambitious goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in New Jersey. The order specifically calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, approximately a 20 percent reduction, followed by a further reduction of emissions to 80% below 2006 levels by 2050. New Jersey is one of the first states in the nation to adopt such aggressive goals.

"Today we have taken steps to preserve our planet for our children and grandchildren by adopting aggressive goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions," Governor Corzine said. "In the absence of leadership on the federal level the burden has now fallen upon state executives and legislatures to lead the way on this issue and I'm proud that New Jersey is helping to blaze that trail."

To reach this goal, the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will work with the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and other stakeholders to evaluate methods to meet and exceed the 2020 target reductions. The DEP Commissioner will make specific recommendations to meet the targets while taking into account the economic benefits and costs of implementing these recommendations. This evaluation will be done in conjunction with the state's Energy Master Plan, which will incorporate the new greenhouse gas reduction goal.

The order calls on the DEP to develop a 1990 greenhouse gas emission inventory as well as a system for monitoring current greenhouse gas levels so that progress toward goals can be accurately tracked. DEP will report progress towards the target reductions no less than every two years and if necessary will recommend additional actions to reach the targets. To further reduce emissions, the order calls for the Director of Energy Savings to develop targets and implementation strategies for reducing energy use by state facilities and vehicles fleets.

"Global warming is the most urgent environmental challenge of our time, and Governor Corzine rose to that challenge today by establishing a firm, far-reaching, science-based commitment to reduce New Jersey's global warming emissions," said Suzanne Leta Liou of Environment New Jersey. "His support for policies needed to achieve steep reductions will ensure New Jersey tackles this problem head-on and sets a vital precedent for strong national action."

The administration will call on other states to join in its efforts and will work closely with the Legislature to pass legislation to support and strengthen the targets set out in the Executive Order. Senator Barbara Buono (D-Middlesex) and Assemblywoman Linda Stender (D-Union) are currently working on a bill to accomplish that goal.

As a member of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cooperative effort of Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states working to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, the Corzine Administration will set up a cap and trade program to help limit carbon dioxide pollution from electric power plants. Under this system power plants that exceed a predetermined level of carbon dioxide emissions will be required to pay a fee for each ton of carbon emitted over the limit. Governor Corzine will work with the Legislature to dedicate up to 100% of these funds to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy as well as other projects that benefit electric users. Senator Bob Smith (D-Middlesex) and Assemblyman John F. McKeon (D-Essex) are currently working on legislation to accomplish this goal.

The Executive Order is below.

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 54

WHEREAS, the vast weight of scientific evidence compels the conclusion that global climate change is currently underway and is directly driven by the emission of greenhouse gases resulting from human activity; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has acknowledged that fundamental and accelerating changes to this planet are being caused by the use of carbon fuels and have resulted, in some cases, in dramatic changes that include increases in air and ocean temperatures, a rise in sea levels, geographic shifts in habitat of plants, animals and insects, melting glaciers and sea ice, increases in the intensity of storms and widespread increases in temperature extremes; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey is particularly vulnerable to the economic and environmental effects of climate change as a result of our coastal topography, coastline subsidence, and the high density of our coastal development; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has led the nation with a variety of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, the adoption of greenhouse gas emissions standards for new automobiles and light trucks, the implementation of renewable portfolio standards, an Energy Master Plan that will not only require 20 percent of the electricity used in the State to come from Class One renewable energy sources by the Year 2020 but that will reduce future electricity consumption by 20 percent from projected 2020 consumption levels, the adoption of comprehensive appliance and equipment energy efficiency standards, and the establishment in the Department of Treasury of the position of Director of Energy Savings that will coordinate efforts to reduce energy use by State agencies; and

WHEREAS, a coordinated and focused strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will not only support New Jersey's economic growth by fostering new technologies for energy efficiency and independence but will spur innovation and job growth and enhance New Jersey's competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, our recognition of climate change must be accompanied by even more aggressive and substantive efforts to forestall the course of irreversible climate change;

NOW, THEREFORE, I JON S. CORZINE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT;

1. The following statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets are hereby established for New Jersey :
 - a. Stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by 2020; and
 - b. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 2006 levels by 2050.
2. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in coordination with representatives of the Board of Public Utilities, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Community Affairs, and stakeholders, shall, over the course of the next six months, evaluate policies and measures that will enable the State to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reduction levels called for by this Order, including any additional steps that will be required if New Jersey is to exceed the 2020 stabilization target, and make specific recommendations on how to achieve the emission reduction targets and evaluate the economic benefits and costs of implementing these recommendations.
3. DEP shall further coordinate its evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions reduction policies and measures with the work of the Energy Master Plan Committee established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27F-14 and ensure that all elements of the Energy Master Plan incorporate the stabilization of State greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by 2020.
4. DEP shall also develop a permanent system to monitor and report the State's greenhouse gas emission levels on an on-going basis and develop an inventory of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions in the State. DEP shall provide to the Governor and the Legislature, on an annual basis, its inventory of greenhouse gas emissions within New Jersey.
5. Every other year, DEP shall identify the rate of progress toward achieving the State's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and recommend to the Governor and the Legislature, as necessary, any additional actions that will be necessary to achieve the reduction targets.
6. Within six months from the date of this Order, the Director of Energy Savings in the Department of Treasury shall develop specific targets and implementation strategies for reducing usage by State agencies through improved energy efficiency at State facilities and by reducing the State's vehicle fleet's fuel consumption.
7. DEP and the Director of Energy Savings are authorized to call upon any department, office, division or agency of this State to supply them with the data and any other information, personnel or other assistance available to such agency as deemed necessary to discharge their duties under this Order. Each department, office, division or agency of this State is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate fully and to furnish such assistance on as timely a basis as is necessary to accomplish the purpose of this Order. DEP and the Director of Energy Savings may consult with experts or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector on any aspect of their mission.
8. This Order shall take effect immediately.