



STATE OF NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Governor Christie Fulfills Pledge to Clean Up and Restore Barnegat Bay; Announces Comprehensive Plan of Action

The ecological health of Barnegat Bay is in decline, threatening the economic health of the region. Governor Christie has made addressing the degradation of Barnegat Bay—including resolving the issue of a cooling system at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant—one of his Administration's top environmental priorities. The Bay cannot be restored to pristine condition, but further degradation can be prevented and some restoration is possible. Input gained from extensive stakeholder involvement complemented the scientific data and research conducted by the Department of Environmental Protection and other researchers to provide the basis for the Administration's action plan for Barnegat Bay.

1. Closing Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant

The State has negotiated and entered into an agreement with Exelon Corporation to stop electric generation at the Oyster Creek Generating Station by December 31, 2019. In order to ensure that the Oyster Creek plant closes on time and operates safely during its remaining life, the DEP will enter into an Administrative Consent Order with Exelon that provides for specific activities and milestones that Exelon must meet; stipulated penalties for failure to do so; and the establishment of an Oyster Creek Safety Review Panel to supplement ongoing DEP safety inspections and oversight at the plant.

2. Funding Stormwater Mitigation Projects

The State will identify and prioritize for funding projects designed to address nutrient pollution of Barnegat Bay from stormwater basins at the beginning of next fiscal year. Eligible project types will include but not be limited to stormwater sewer repairs, stormwater basin retrofits, salt dome coverings, truck wash facilities, street sweeping/leaf collection equipment, septic management, and land acquisition.

- State Revolving Funds (SRF): \$10 million in grants
- New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust (NJEIT): targeted at \$100 million over the next decade for zero-interest or very low-interest loans

3. Reducing Nutrient Pollution from Fertilizer

Governor Christie will sign legislation that establishes the most restrictive standards in the nation for nitrogen content in fertilizer and application rates for use, reducing excess nutrient runoff into the Bay by decreasing the total amount of nitrogen in fertilizer and increasing the amount of slow release nitrogen.

4. Requiring Post-Construction Soil Restoration

The Administration will support pending legislation that requires the State Soil Conservation Committee to establish standards that ensure soil is restored to the greatest extent possible through aeration and re-vegetation to prevent soil compaction, which contributes to an increase in stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution in New Jersey's waterways.

5. Acquiring Land in the Watershed

Critical lands need protection from the impacts of development in order to prevent pollutants from entering the Bay. The Green Acres program will identify and prioritize these lands for acquisition and work with willing sellers to purchase them. State Revolving Fund (SRF) monies may also be used for land acquisition, as well as resources from other ecological restoration funding programs.

6. Establishing a Special Area Management Plan

A Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) will be developed in collaboration with members of the Barnegat Bay Partnership and other planning authorities in the region. The primary goal of a Barnegat Bay SAMP is to improve coordination among planning jurisdictions. The SAMP will take a total of five years and will be funded through the Coastal Zone Management Program's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Section 309 of the Clean Water Act funds, ensuring that the SAMP will be developed without additional cost to the State.

7. Adopting More Rigorous Water Quality Standards

The DEP will adopt narrative nutrient criteria for coastal waters and establish a process to further assess and address water quality impairments in Barnegat Bay. The DEP also will investigate the feasibility of establishing numeric targets or criteria which could lead to establishment of a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for the Bay.

8. Educating the Public

Changing the behavior of the base and summer populations along the Bay can have significant impacts. The DEP will develop a strategy that leverages the media, environmental advocates, and the Barnegat Bay community to educate the public on how actions as simple as how people landscape their homes, maintain their septic systems, operate and maintain their boats and where they wash their cars cumulatively have significant impacts on the Bay.

9. Producing More Comprehensive Research

Over the years, extensive research has been conducted on Barnegat Bay, but the work has not been coordinated- resulting in some key gaps in the data. The DEP will work with the Science Advisory Board, Ocean County College, State Universities, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop and fund additional research projects including:

- Evaluating the effect of modifying wastewater treatment plant discharges in order to improve circulation and recharge treated water to the groundwater.
- Establishing the baseline conditions of the Bay.
- Developing a hydrologic model for the Bay.

10. Reducing Water Craft Impacts

Boats and personal water craft such as jet skis can harm the Bay by damaging submerged aquatic vegetation and disrupting aquatic habitats. The DEP will review existing research that identifies the locations of these sensitive areas to evaluate the designation of a Conservation Zone.