

## New Jersey Climate Change Alliance

<https://njadapt.rutgers.edu/>

NJ Climate Change Alliance

**The New Jersey Climate Change Alliance is a statewide network of diverse organizations that share the goal of advancing science-informed climate change strategies at the state and local levels in New Jersey.**

### **About Us:**

Climate change is increasing temperatures, causing heavier rainfall events, and raising sea levels affecting the health, welfare, and economy of New Jersey. The **New Jersey Climate Change Alliance** is a network of diverse organizations that share the goal of advancing science-informed climate change strategies at the state and local levels in New Jersey, both with regard to adapting to changing climate conditions and addressing the emissions that cause climate change.

Alliance participants include representatives of public, private and non-governmental New Jersey organizations from sectors including transportation, emergency managements, business, energy, engineering, farming, insurance, environment, health, community planning, Environmental Justice, natural resource management, and others. The Alliance does not work to influence political outcomes or specific pieces of legislation; rather, the work of the Alliance serves to integrate science with evidence and diverse points of view through the voices of Alliance participants for the purpose of informing short and long-term climate change strategies and outlining policy options for New Jersey.

Alliance participants accept three *underlying principles* that include a commitment to:

1. Non-partisan, science and evidence-based climate strategies.
2. Climate change strategies that promote economic growth, equity, improved health outcomes, natural solutions, and sustainable communities; and
3. Thoughtful, respectful and meaningful dialogue among participants as demonstrated by the Alliance's organizational communication practices;

Since its inception in 2011, the Alliance's work has involved:

- Leading demonstration projects that can be replicated throughout New Jersey;
- Identifying evidence-based state and local policy options relevant for New Jersey;
- Conducting outreach and education to state and local officials, communities, leaders, and the general public;
- Linking natural and social scientists, engineers, and other experts to decision-makers, communities, and leaders to inform policy and practice;
- Developing tools and guidance to inform planning and decision-making in the public, private, and non-governmental sectors; and
- Creating a forum that engages a diverse set of perspectives to advance evidence-based climate strategies and policy in New Jersey.

Equity is a critically important principle of the New Jersey Climate Change Alliance. Each Workgroup is expected to consider the implications of its efforts on communities and populations that are most affected by changing climate conditions both with regard to sources of climate emissions and impacts of changing climate impacts.

Originally formed as the New Jersey Climate Adaptation Alliance, the Alliance changed its name in 2018 to better reflect the breadth of its work. The Alliance is guided by two Honorary Chairpersons: former New Jersey Governors James J. Florio and Thomas H. Kean. The Alliance is facilitated by Rutgers University through the Rutgers Climate Institute and the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

## **Alliance Operations**

Two Alliance participants serve as Co-Chairs and work closely with the Rutgers facilitators to manage the operations of the Alliance. The Co-Chairs are also members of the Steering Committee.

### ➤ **Alliance participants:**

- Representatives of organizations that participate in the Alliance embrace the *underlying principles* and organizational communication practices of the Alliance.
- Alliance participants meet twice per year and at an annual conference.
- Any participant of the Alliance is eligible to:
  - Participate in any of the Alliance topic workgroups;
  - Suggest establishment of a new topic workgroup to the Alliance Steering Committee using a template created by the Steering Committee;
  - Use the Alliance logo on their organization's materials and social media;
  - Nominate an organization or individual for the Alliance's annual Climate Change Champion award;
  - Chair a topic workgroup.
- To ensure that the Alliance is maintaining its underlying commitment to being non-partisan, representatives of executive branch cabinet agencies are encouraged to join the Alliance as active participants and to be engaged in topical workgroups and other activities but are not members of the Steering Committee;
- Alliance participants are encouraged to assist in distribution of news and information about the Alliance in their own organizations' communication efforts and to cite their participation in the Alliance in their own websites and social media communications.
- Alliance participants are encouraged to assist with fundraising efforts of the Alliance and to actively participate in Alliance projects and efforts of topic workgroups.
- Alliance participants are encouraged to participate in and assist in planning the annual conference;
- Organizations that are interested in becoming participants in the Alliance are reviewed by the Steering Committee and may reach out to the Alliance facilitators for more information.

### ➤ **Standing Committees:**

The Alliance maintains two standing committees:

- Nominating committee – The Nominating Committee serves to nominate Co-chairs for two-year terms and to nominate new members of the Steering Committee;
- Steering Committee – The Steering Committee oversees the routine governance of the Alliance. The Steering Committee shall be made up of no more than 15 members or less than 11 members of the total Alliance membership. The Nominating Committee will serve to offer suggestions for additional members of the Steering Committee at such time that Steering Committee members depart and/or when the Steering Committee identifies a significant gap of expertise in its membership. The Alliance Co-Chairs and Honorary Co-chairs are automatic members of the Steering Committee but will not count toward the 11 or 15 members. Workgroup Chairs are members of the Steering Committee for the duration of the Workgroup's tenure. Specific operational elements of the Steering Committee include:
  - A subcommittee of the Steering Committee is a Finance and Fundraising Subcommittee that assists the Rutgers facilitators with ensuring the financial health of the Alliance;
  - The Steering Committee may establish an ad-hoc subcommittee to assist the Rutgers facilitators with planning the annual meeting and conference;
  - The Steering Committee may invite non-Alliance subject matter experts to participate in Alliance activities;
  - The Steering Committee meets on a monthly basis either in-person or via conference call and is chaired by the two Alliance Co-Chairs;

- The Steering Committee strives to operate through a consensus process in which members are encouraged to express their views and acknowledge other points of view. Prospective members of the Steering Committee are advised to consider that effective consensus making demands a high level of trust among members, sufficient time for deliberation, full and routine participation of members and members' willingness to listen to ideas from other members. If the Steering Committee cannot achieve an outcome on any given decision in a timely fashion using consensus, the Co-chairs may opt to:
  - Ask the facilitators to investigate the issue further; or
  - Ask certain members to remain neutral on the issue at hand for purposes of their participation in the Alliance.
- Decisions that reside with the Steering Committee include:
  - Adoption of a workplan set of priorities every two years;
  - Establishment of a new topical workgroup both initiated by the Steering Committee and in response to a request from a participant of the Alliance (using a template developed by the Steering Committee);
  - Addition of new Steering Committee members;
  - Approval of new Alliance participants;
  - Approval of subject matter experts to participate in Alliance activities;
  - Public release of Alliance-branded products, including products developed by topic workgroups;
  - Priorities for the agenda of the two annual full Alliance meetings and annual conference.

Decisions of the Steering Committee will be made at monthly in-person and virtual meetings. Pending items to be decided at each monthly in-person and virtual meeting shall be included on agendas sent to Steering Committee members at least two days by the facilitators prior to the meeting/call. Steering committee members that do not participate on a monthly in-person or virtual meeting and do not otherwise provide input on a pending decision are assumed to be in agreement with the pending decision.

➤ **Workgroups:**

Starting in 2020, the Alliance initiated a model in which participants lead Workgroups. The Workgroups provide a forum for Alliance participants to advance issues on specific climate change topics. Workgroups may serve different purposes including:

- Providing a forum for exchanging ideas on an emerging topic;
- Outlining public policy options on a specific topic area;
- Developing guidance, tools and information on specific topic areas.

The length of time that a workgroup may deliberate may vary based on its mission. Each Workgroup will be chaired by an Alliance participant. Each Workgroup chair will serve on the Steering Committee for the tenure of the Workgroup to ensure interconnectivity of Alliance efforts. Any Alliance participant may suggest establishment of a Workgroup to the Steering Committee using a template established by the Steering Committee that considers several factors, including: demonstrated interest among multiple Alliance participants, sustained leadership for the workgroup within the Alliance, unique contribution of the Alliance on the topic, anticipated impact, a defined purpose for the workgroup, among other factors. A workgroup chairperson may choose to invite non-Alliance participants to participate in the Workgroup, including subject matter experts. Workgroups are expected to seek out participation from underrepresented populations and communities on workgroups.

### ***Alliance Organizational Communication Practices***

To achieve the common goals of the Alliance, all participants and facilitators agree to work collaboratively and to operate in accordance with the following communication practices. Alliance participants:

1. Are free to use the information received via Alliance discussions, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any participant, may be revealed;
2. Will not distribute or publish any materials disclosed by other participants at Alliance-related meetings without prior approval of the participant providing the information;
3. Treat each other with respect, allowing fellow members flexibility to explore and consider potential positions without prejudice or recrimination;
4. Keep an open mind and assume good intentions on the part of all Alliance participants;
5. Attend meetings personally rather than send a representative to the maximum extent possible.
6. Manage efficient meetings and communications: stick to the agenda; honor time limits and deadlines; practice email courtesy; (i.e., use email for administrative or information purposes rather than iterative dialogues);
7. Share and promote Alliance analyses, reports, tools, educational materials and other outputs with their networks;
8. Articulate their perspectives on all Alliance topics, including those for which there may be disagreement among Alliance participants;
9. Value the diversity of the participants and the organizations they represent.
10. Generally, agree that Alliance outcomes and outputs will use the following language in public reports and products of the Alliance: This report/product has been reviewed by the Steering Committee of the New Jersey Climate Change Alliance. *While individual participants of the Alliance do not necessarily agree with each and every insight outlined in this product, the Steering Committee concurs that the content of this report/product presents critically important issues facing New Jersey. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of participants of the New Jersey Climate Change Alliance or the funders who supported this work. Rutgers University serves as the facilitator of the Alliance and recommendations in the report do not represent the position of the University.*