

# Truth Matters NP

Lookingleftnj.com

May 17, 2020  
Volume 1. Issue 9

## New Jersey Rejects Fracked Gas Pipeline

May 15, 2020 marked a major step forward in the effort to end fossil fuel distribution in New Jersey. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection rejected the permit requests from Williams' Transco to construct the Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline through portions of New Jersey and the Raritan Bay.



The DEP's action prevented construction of a pipeline which would have been placed in Sayreville, Old Bridge and portions of the Raritan Bay, with a compressor station in Franklin. The pipeline was intended to carry fracked natural gas. To its credit, the DEP said that the developers failed to demonstrate the pipeline would not adversely affect aquatic wildlife and water quality.

Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, also mentioned the NY State rejection of the same project in his comments.

"Gov. Murphy and the DEP stood up for the environment by denying the permits for this dangerous pipeline," he said in a statement. "This a big win for climate change and a big blow for the battle against fracking. Since New York also denied it, this is a one two punch against this project and may be a knockout."

This news just came out Friday afternoon May 15th and should provide a major boost for the groups fighting to reduce the influence of the fossil fuel industry in New Jersey.

## Coronavirus Tragedy in Senior Living Centers

This is the second in a series of articles about the Coronavirus and nursing homes. The first article dealt with the reporting of cases and deaths in nursing homes across the country. In this article I will discuss the challenges senior living centers have faced during the pandemic.

### Senior Living Centers Preparation

The simple truth is nursing homes have never been designed, prepared, stocked or staffed to handle a crisis of the magnitude of the current pandemic. The evidence for this is everywhere since the first nursing home case in Kirkland, Washington. Headlines about bodies stacked in storage rooms, high infection rates in employees, lack of protective gear and more cover the media.

Nursing and senior living centers were overwhelmed and most attempts to make corrections and catch-ups were unsuccessful. One would expect those nursing homes with poor records would perform poorly in the battle to protect their residents. Problem is, many very well-run

Coronavirus Tragedy continued from page 1

nursing homes with responsible leadership were also unable to prevent the spread of Covid-19, despite taking extreme measures to treat and isolate their residents who became infected.

### **Why Covid-19 Took Over Senior Living**

#### Senior Vulnerability

Nursing homes exist for people who are no longer able to live in the community due to physical and health related impairments. In nursing homes, we find the most ill, the most frail, least wealthy people in our society living in close proximity. This, as one would expect, is a recipe for rampant transmission of such a virulent disease as Covid-19.



#### Adequate Staffing

Nursing homes have a reputation for inadequate staffing secondary to pay which does not always represent a living wage. The result is often a care-giving staff unable to cope with such a massive challenge as a once in a century world wide pandemic. In spite of extremely dedicated and caring staff in many facilities, it is simply not enough to overcome the vulnerabilities mentioned above.

#### Inadequate Regulation and Oversight

Senior living facilities are, in almost all cases, regulated by City, County, or State agencies. With some exceptions, the training, staffing and procedures of these agencies can vary widely based on location, funding, staffing, and regulations. These regulatory agencies were totally unprepared for a crisis of this magnitude occurring in their jurisdictions. This led to no consistency of approach throughout the industry and thus a loss of control over the situation.

There are many more factors one could attribute to the crisis now faced in our senior living environments. The complexity of the situation makes it nearly impossible to identify all the root causes of this unfolding disaster. This makes it extremely difficult to identify the best approaches to overcome these tragic outcomes we are all witnessing.

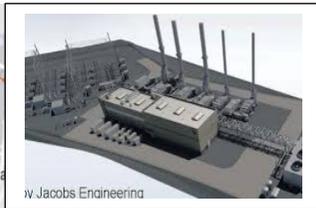
#### **Note:**

Allen Swanson spent the last twenty years of his career working in nursing home settings as a Speech Pathologist and Director of Rehabilitation. Previously in Maryland he served as the President of the Board of Directors of the Howard County ARC which, in part, ran 23 group homes.

The first article in this series, Covid-19 Reporting in Senior Living Centers, may be found at the link below:

<https://lookingleftnj.com>

## NJ Transit Power Plant Set for Kearny Location

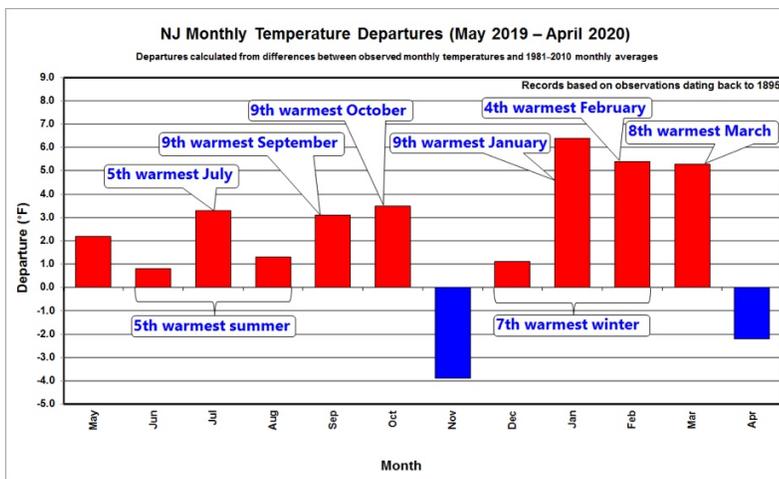


The construction of the New Jersey Transit 140-megawatt power plant in Kearny is rapidly moving toward a construction start date in early 2021. The \$546 million project was intended to be a “back-up” in the event there were a power outage to Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor, the Morris/Essex lines of NJ Transit and the Hudson-Bergen light rail. The stand-by plan to provide power following a disaster similar to Sandy in 2012, has apparently been shelved in favor of operating on a continuous basis. In 2019 NJ Transit indicated that this power plant would be using renewable energy sources (solar). Current documents now show that the fuel source for the plant will be natural gas.

The site is located along the Hackensack River in Kearny on county-owned property. Mayor Al Santos of Kearny told NJ.com that he “was not involved in the planning process of the site and would not receive property taxes.”

As one would expect the plan to construct and operate this plant has not been without controversy. Numerous environmental groups have expressed concern over the negative environmental impact from the plant. Among the criticisms is the significant impact the plant will have on air quality in an area of New Jersey which already has some of the worst levels of pollution in the nation. A detailed discussion of the negative effects of the project was developed by the Hudson County Group of the New Jersey Sierra Club. It can be found at the link below.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hudson-county/proposed-nj-transitgrid>



Monthly temperature data as compiled by the Office of the NJ State Climatologist - Rutgers

Truth Matters NP is edited by Allen Swanson and Brian Haas. All articles are written by Allen Swanson unless otherwise indicated. Questions, comments or suggestions should be directed to [truthmattersnp@gmail.com](mailto:truthmattersnp@gmail.com). More information may be found at <https://lookingleftnj.com>