



Summary: Making Sense of Federal Policy Series

Funder Briefing: 3

Date: March 27, 2025

Topic: [CNJG Making Sense of Federal Policy-Understanding What It Means for NJ: Environment](#)

Speakers: **Chris Miller**, Environmental Lawyer/Executive Director - Eastern Environmental Law Center;
Alison Mitchell, Executive Director - New Jersey Conservation Foundation;
Dr. Barbara Blumenthal, Research Director - New Jersey Conservation Foundation;

HIGHLIGHTS

Eastern Environmental Law Center (EELC) – Chris Miller

- EELC is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to ensuring environmental laws are upheld, communities are protected, and open space and natural resources are preserved for future generations.
- **Clean Water Act:**
 - In 2023 the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the Sackett v. EPA case limits the Clean Water Act protections, affecting intermittent and ephemeral streams.
- Loss of wetland protection means increased flooding risk, with impacts on wildlife habitat and drinking water sources.
- EPA estimates that over 4.2 million New Jerseyans receive drinking water from the public water system that rely at least in part on intermittent and ephemeral streams.
- EELC helps defend regulation against legal challenges.
- **Air Quality & Climate Regulations:**
 - On March 12, 2025, EPA announced rollbacks of 31 environmental protection - Biggest Deregulatory Action in U.S. History.
 - Proposed rollbacks of important EPA air pollution standards, like 2009 endangerment findings - including greenhouse gas, emissions from vehicles and power plants. With regulations like this we risk public health.
 - Significant potential reductions in emissions from stricter vehicle standards aimed at improving air quality and health benefits - Estimated \$370B in climate and public health benefits from 2024 – 2047.
- **Environmental Justice:**
 - The federal government's withdrawal from environmental justice initiatives threatens funding and collaboration with local communities.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation – Alison Mitchell

- New Jersey Conservation Foundation is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to protect land and natural resources throughout the state of New Jersey for the benefit of all.
- Importance of funding for land preservation and stewardship in New Jersey amidst federal cuts.

- **State vs. Federal Funding:**

- New Jersey has robust state funding for preservation; federal cuts threaten key preservation and stewardship programs.
- Stakeholders need to focus on protecting state funding to maintain and enhance local conservation efforts.

- **Land Conservation Goals:**

- Goal for land preservation – permanently preserving significant acreage to combat development pressures.
- Engagement across various partners and stakeholders to achieve land conservation objectives.

- **Advocacy and Community Engagement:**

- Need for grassroots advocacy and community engagement to resist adverse federal policies.
- Collaboration with funders to bolster state-level initiatives aimed at strengthening environmental protection.

[New Jersey Conservation Foundation](#) - *Dr. Barbara Blumenthal*

- Clean Energy Policy – it's an area that's largely unaffected by federal changes.

- **Impact of Federal Policy on Clean Energy:**

- Current administration's stance on clean energy, particularly limiting offshore wind projects, poses challenges to New Jersey's clean energy goals.
- Potential uncertainty surrounding funding opportunities, including significant tax credits under the Inflation Reduction Act.

- **Opportunities for Investment:**

- Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund as a potential resource for supporting clean energy projects in low-income communities.
- Regional collaboration to maximize available funds and investments to meet New Jersey's clean energy goals.

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- **Community and Regional Focus:**

- Educating communities and building awareness regarding funding opportunities for clean energy initiatives.
- Stakeholders need to work collaboratively to harness funding that will advance clean energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.