FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET STATEMENT

OF

COMMISSIONER BOB MARTIN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

BEFORE THE

SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

MAY 2, 2017
Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I welcome the opportunity to come before you today to discuss Governor Christie’s proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Governor Christie’s budget continues to provide the necessary resources for the DEP to protect New Jersey’s air, land, water, and natural and historic resources. This budget will allow us to continue the important ongoing efforts for the DEP to maintain our core programs that serve to protect the environment and the people of this State.

**Budget Overview**
The DEP’s Fiscal Year 2018 budget is set at $274.3 million. This is a $2.3 million (0.8%) decrease when compared with the Fiscal Year 2017 adjusted appropriation of $276.6 million. The FY18 figure is adjusted primarily as a result of an annual reversal of supplementals that post for Nuclear Emergency Response of $1.2 million, and for the Hunters and Anglers Fund of $638,000. This $274.3 million is only a portion of the total $949.1 million in resources available to and managed by the DEP when factoring in debt service ($39 million), all estimated federal funds ($189 million), dedicated monies ($130.8 million), and special revenue, trust and bond funds ($316 million) expected in FY 2018. In addition, DEP also manages and coordinates with multiple federal agencies to manage the more than $1 billion of ongoing, multi-year Sandy recovery projects.

The FY 2018 overall budget includes the budget appropriation for the in-but-not-of Palisades Interstate Park Commission, which is to be funded at $3 million, the Highlands Council, which is to receive $2.3 million and the Pinelands Commission at $2.7 million.

As defined in the Constitution, four percent of the CBT revenues are allocated to help support DEP’s key goals and priorities: protection of water resources, cleanup of contaminated sites, brownfield redevelopment, underground storage tank closure, capital development of our State parks and natural areas, and open space preservation. The projected CBT dedication level in FY 2018 is $111.7 million and reflects a $7 million increase over revised FY 2017 estimates. This total includes the 71% open space portion of the CBT dedication ($79 million) which is no longer included in the annual Budget, per provisions of the Preserve New Jersey Act, P.L 2016, c.12.
The other 29%, which continues to be included in DEP’s FY18 Budget, will support the following environmental purposes:

- Brownfields ($11.2 million);
- Private Underground Storage Tanks ($10 million);
- Publicly Funded Cleanups ($5.6 million); and
- Water Resources ($5.6 million)

DEP’s overall staffing will remain comparable to its current filled level of Full Time Employees (FTEs). We will continue to backfill all key resources, with priority backfills going to critical areas that protect public health and safety, conserve and protect our air, water, land, and natural and historic resources. This includes maintaining a full complement of forest firefighters, park police, and conservation officers, as well as other critical openings across DEP such as emergency responders and day-to-day operations of our critical programs. We also continue to administer DEP’s Sandy rebuild efforts.

The General Fund comprises less than one quarter of DEP’s operational budget, with the remainder being covered by dedicated and federal funds as well as by administrative fees. The General Fund supports numerous broad-based public functions including forestry management, dam safety, shellfish regulation and now also publicly funded cleanups and water resources. The General Fund also serves to leverage additional funds in critical areas that protect the public.

**Environmental Accomplishments**

This is the eighth time that I’ve come before you to discuss our annual budget and the work DEP continues to do. Given that environmental progress is often long-term in nature, I thought it appropriate to devote this part of my statement to review not just what’s happened since I last came before you, but to give you an overview of the environmental accomplishments achieved during this Administration.

**Protecting Our Air**

Despite being the most densely populated state in the nation and a major northeast transportation corridor, this Administration’s energy and environmental policies have helped to achieve air
quality among the best in the nation while driving down energy costs. New Jersey’s air quality has continued to improve over the past seven years. The most significant contributor to this improvement is this Administration’s commitment to cleaner power generating facilities.

The cornerstone of the State’s Energy Master Plan and our air policies was to shift from coal to cleaner-burning natural gas to meet a larger proportion of the demand for electricity in New Jersey. This reduces pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. Our power sector is, by far, one of the cleanest in the nation.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration ranks state power sectors for emission rates from dirtiest to cleanest. I am proud to report that New Jersey is one of the states with the lowest or cleanest rate of emissions of all the states in the nation. The most recent data released from the EIA for the year 2015 ranks New Jersey:

- 45th lowest in the country for sulfur dioxide emissions;
- 45th lowest for nitrogen oxide; and
- 40th lowest for carbon dioxide.

We also continue to work to make sure the air that comes into New Jersey from upwind states to our west is cleaner, taking all actions available to us including:

- Successfully filing a federal Clean Air Act Section 126 Petition with EPA against the Portland Generating Station in Upper Mount Bethel Township, PA (across the Delaware River from Warren County), forcing it to control its emissions;
- Challenging specific power plants in Pennsylvania to operate emissions controls on peak demand days; and
- Working closely with Pennsylvania to compel its power generators to meet environmental standards.

As a result of this Administration’s strong support for carbon-free solar energy, New Jersey is ranked fifth in the nation in total installed solar capacity. Today, 97 percent of New Jersey’s in-state electricity generation now comes from clean sources, including nuclear, new combined cycle natural gas and renewables. Our in-state generation from renewable sources now exceeds that
generated from coal. New Jersey is now by far the cleanest power producer within the 13-state PJM region. We are a net-exporter of electricity and are taking the lead in displacing electricity historically generated from dirtier sources to our west.

New Jersey is currently measuring attainment of all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) except ozone, the majority of which is due to out-of-state polluters. New Jersey is satisfying all of the other health-based standards: Particulate Matter (PM 2.5), Sulfur Dioxide (SO2), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), Lead (Pb) and Carbon Monoxide (CO).

To encourage adoption of electric vehicles, DEP along with the Board of Public Utilities is making it more convenient for people to own EVs through the “It Pays to Plug In” grant program for employers to buy and install chargers so EV owners can recharge their vehicles while they’re at work. A total of $725,000 in grants have made possible 148 charging stations to date. There is a waiting list for 42 more pending identification of $200,000 in additional funding.

This Administration acted to reduce sulfur content in home heating oil, an important step toward improving air quality and protecting public health in New Jersey. DEP adopted rules requiring significant reductions in sulfur content for home heating oil and other types of fuel oil used in the state. We lowered the standard from 500 parts per million (ppm) to 15 ppm.

New Jersey’s first-in-the-nation grant program is helping remove from the air thousands of pounds of pollutants caused by dry cleaners. The $8 million grant program finances replacement of older dry cleaning machines that use harmful chemicals with new, environmentally friendly models.

Protecting Our Water
DEP implements numerous programs to protect all of the fresh and salt water resources of the State, ensuring that the State’s residents have a constant and ample supply of safe water for consumption and recreation.

New Jersey’s public drinking water supplies are closely monitored to ensure that every person served by a public drinking water system is receiving clean water. In compliance with the Safe
Drinking Water Act, DEP has for many years overseen one of the most comprehensive programs in the country to monitor and test public drinking water systems throughout the State to protect public health from exposure to contaminants such as lead. All 587 public community water systems (which serve approximately 8 million people) and all 747 nontransient-noncommunity water systems (which serve approximately 350,000 people) are subject to Lead and Copper Rule requirements, which include periodic sampling, reporting, and compliance.

Over the past 31 years, DEP and the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust (NJEIT) together have provided more than $6.3 billion in low-interest, long-term loans to local government units for clean water and drinking water projects. Since 2010, more than $1.83 billion in long-term loans have been provided to clean water and potable water suppliers for projects throughout the State. We are currently managing 232 projects actively under construction. In addition, the program issued and is overseeing $522 million in short-term and Disaster relief loans for 80 projects.

To protect New Jersey’s waterways, this Administration has demonstrated leadership by taking the first realistic steps to address the historic problem of combined sewer overflows (CSOs), which degrade water quality by combining, in times of heavy rains, stormwater and wastewater, and then discharging that untreated effluent directly into our waterways. DEP has issued the final 25 new CSO permits, which require development of long-term plans to eliminate the 210 remaining CSOs in New Jersey.

New Jersey’s 127 miles of ocean coastline are one of our state’s greatest natural assets and the cornerstone of a tourism industry that generates $42 billion in economic activity. Our Comprehensive Coastal Monitoring Program helps ensure that our ocean waters continue to be among the cleanest in the nation, and DEP will maintain its commitment to this program in Fiscal Year 2018. More than 200 marine water monitoring stations are sampled at least once each week during beach season. For the past several summers, our ocean beaches were open 99.9% of the time due to the strides that have been made to address stormwater issues to keep them clean.
In the past, a significant number of beach closures we have experienced were due to the coastal Wreck Pond. In collaboration with other federal, state and local agencies, we investigated and successfully tracked down the sources of contamination in Wreck Pond, and stopped it. We also initiated and completed a flood control and ecological enhancement project to alleviate the decades-long problem of Wreck Pond flooding the community, impacting the coastal environment and causing beach closures.

This Administration has been committed since Day One to clean-up the historically dioxin-contaminated Lower Passaic River. Over many years, DEP worked closely with EPA to issue the Focused Feasibility Study and then the Record of Decision, which contains the State’s preferred plan for the actual cleanup of the lower 8 miles of the Passaic River. At the same time, we achieved three settlements that protect New Jersey taxpayers from the risk of paying up to $400 million if this were a publicly funded cleanup. EPA has now begun the $165 million design of the project with monies coming from Occidental Chemical Corporation (the legal successor of Diamond Shamrock).

DEP also received $355 million from polluters of the Passaic River to primarily recover past costs and economic damages to the State:

- With original major polluters Maxus Energy Corporation, Tierra Solutions, Repsol SA (Spanish oil giant) and the YPF SA (national Argentinian oil giant) for $130 million;
- With remaining defendant Occidental Chemical Corporation for $190 million;
- With third parties (more than 200 private and public entities that were brought into the litigation by the original defendants) for $35 million; and
- In addition, out of these settlements the State has dedicated more than $67 million to restoration and public access projects around the river, in the area that was directly harmed by the polluters in the Newark Bay Complex. Most of the $67 million has already been awarded to 13 projects along the Passaic River and in the Newark Bay Complex.

The Administration developed and implemented a 10-point plan to restore and protect Barnegat Bay. That plan is essentially complete, and we are using the science and data collected to begin planning the second phase.
Protecting Our Land

New Jersey has a long history of manufacturing industries, particularly petroleum, chemical and pharmaceutical, as well as agriculture. Under Governor Christie’s leadership, the DEP has demonstrated its commitment to cleaning up contaminated sites and returning them to beneficial use more quickly through the aggressive and successful implementation of the Site Remediation Reform Act (SRRA) of 2009 and the Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) program, which puts the burden of cleanups back on the polluters—not the State.

At the start of the Administration, there were more than 20,000 contaminated sites identified across New Jersey. Over the past seven years, we have reduced that number to about 14,000. During that period, about 26,000 sites have been cleaned up. Today there are more contaminated sites being worked on than ever before, and they are being cleaned up faster than ever before. Over the past seven years, more than twice as many contaminated site cases have been closed than were resolved over the seven years prior to that.

After nearly two decades of failed attempts and mismanagement, DEP, working with the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, successfully closed and properly remediated the former Kingsland Landfill. The closure and remediation of Kingsland, commonly referred to as EnCap, a 1,300-acre site in the Meadowlands, has protected this fragile, urban marshland from further degradation and will now allow for the redevelopment of this site.

DEP has been protecting the land in a variety of other ways as well. We adopted a regulation making it easier for governments and non-profit organizations to construct living shorelines. Living shorelines restore marsh and natural water’s edge environments and thus improve ecological functions. Living shorelines also are an effective flood mitigation method and can often be used in place of more disruptive bulkheads. DEP has already issued 65 permits for such projects.

DEP launched the “Don’t Waste Our Open Space” campaign and accompanying award-winning smartphone app, which gives people the ability to report any incidents they may see of people dumping garbage or other debris on state lands. As of May 1, 2017, State Park Police have arrested 139 people on illegal dumping charges since the campaign’s launch in March 2014. In less than
three years, this initiative has resulted in $1.2 million in fines, and the removal of more than 1,500 cubic yards of illegally disposed debris—enough to fill more than 125 dump trucks.

Through DEP’s Green Acres program, an additional 47,000 acres, of which approximately 8,000 acres are within our urban areas, has been added to New Jersey’s open space inventory over the past seven years. During that period, we also have provided more than $90 million to local governments and nonprofit organizations for development of urban parks. All of this land is now permanently preserved both by the state and by county and local governments.

Today, more than 1.5 million acres across the state is protected forever from future development. That’s nearly one-third of all the land in New Jersey. In the most densely populated state in America, that’s a significant and enduring accomplishment.

DEP revised the previously unworkable Water Quality Management Planning (WQMP) rules, working with county planning departments to identify environmentally sensitive lands—primarily wetlands and Threatened & Endangered Species habitat—that were previously listed as appropriate for sewers and thus for high-density development. As a result of DEP’s efforts, more than 200,000 acres of these sensitive lands were removed from sewer service areas, helping to ensure their protection from development.

**Improving Our State Parks and Forests**

DEP actively oversees, manages and protects 40 State Parks, 11 State Forests, 122 wildlife management areas, 3 recreation areas, over 50 historic sites, 4 State marinas and numerous other areas that encompass a total of nearly 800,000 acres. In 2016, DEP opened the first-ever state park in Gloucester County: the 110-acre Tall Pines State Park. All of our sites are fully open, operational, well maintained, and available to the public.

We also have increased the amenities available in our parks. Ranging from pet-friendly camp sites and Wi-Fi hotspots, replacement of dilapidated yurts with new cabins, to more accurate trail maps and new food, beverage, and activity concessions. New Jersey’s state parks are more visitor-friendly than ever before.
Improving the health and viability of our State Forests has been a top priority for this Administration. This Administration strongly directs a policy of active forestry management to better support habitat, expand biodiversity, protect threatened and endangered species, and minimize the risk of wildfires. We have developed two forest management plans and conducted numerous prescribed burns. We developed a comprehensive, statewide 10-year prescribed burn plan to manage our forests.

**Responsible Fish & Wildlife Management**

The growing population of black bears in New Jersey has been driving them into populated areas, posing a risk to public safety. In 2010, this Administration reinstated an annual bear hunt as part of a Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy (including lethal and non-lethal controls), seeking to reduce human-bear interactions while maintaining a healthy black bear population. Based on science, the policy entails not only a hunt, but also extensive data collection and analysis and increased public education and awareness.

DEP operates two fish hatcheries and stocks over 4 million fish, including almost 600,000 trout, in waterways across the state for freshwater fishing. In addition, last year we hatched over 700,000 larvae-eating fish. This effort has become especially important over the last year as we continue to address mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika, West Nile, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).

In order to maintain New Jersey’s $2.6 billion commercial and recreational fishing and shellfish industry, DEP is responsible for species propagation, management, research and habitat restoration. DEP ensures that all mandated management measures, monitoring/patrolling and enforcement are followed in the shellfish industry to avoid a federally imposed moratorium on the industry.

After years of negotiations, DEP brokered a deal between commercial and recreational fishermen that resolves federal concerns that commercial fishing is hampering recreational fishing on artificial reefs in state waters, and that restores federal funding ($250,000 per year). Two new,
exclusively recreational reefs have received permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and are being constructed, one off Manasquan Inlet and the other in Delaware Bay.

After a recent unfavorable vote from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council to impose additional restrictions on recreational summer flounder fishing in New Jersey, DEP continues to pursue all administrative and legal means to fight it. The recreational fishing industry overall is a key contributor to New Jersey’s economy, directly supporting 20,000 jobs and contributing $1.5 billion annually to the state’s economy.

DEP has been engaged in a very successful program to restore bald eagles to New Jersey. As a result of historic chemical use, the bald eagle population here had declined to only one nesting pair in 1970. Today, as a result of DEP’s efforts to restore and protect bald eagles, we now have 172 nest sites with 150 nesting pairs.

The diamondback terrapin has been declining in population due to overharvesting and loss of habitat. DEP led with an Administrative Order cutting the season. The Administration then took a major step toward protecting this species when it enacted a law declaring the diamondback terrapin a non-game species, thus protecting it from being harvested. DEP thereafter amended its regulations to provide additional protections for this species.

**Superstorm Sandy: Response, Recovery and Resilience**

In the 4½ years since Superstorm Sandy, DEP has worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on the massive undertaking to repair beaches and to build the most comprehensive coastal protection system New Jersey has ever had.

USACE and DEP have completed eight major repair projects, which involved repairing previously engineered and constructed beaches to their original protective design ($345 million). We have completed construction of four major new beach and dune construction projects (Long Beach Island, Monmouth County, Cape May County and Oakwood Beach, totaling $374 million).
USACE and DEP are about to begin construction on two major new beach and dune construction projects (Absecon Island and Northern Ocean County, totaling about $213 million) as well as continuing major flood control projects in Port Monmouth ($105 million) and Union Beach ($202 million).

In addition to beaches, DEP coordinates and assists USACE in the planning, design and construction of flood damage reduction projects for other coastal and riverine areas throughout New Jersey. The projects include Green Brook, Rahway River, Passaic River, Delaware River, Peckman River, Leonardo, Shrewsbury River, Highlands, New Jersey Back Bay Coastal, and New York/New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Coastal Feasibility Studies.

This Administration has committed $300 million in federal and State funds through the Blue Acres Program to give homeowners the option of selling their properties damaged by Superstorm Sandy in tidal areas of New Jersey at pre-storm value so they can relocate out of harm’s way. Once acquired, the properties are demolished and then converted to open space, accessible to the public for recreation or conservation and to serve as natural buffers against future flooding.

To date, DEP’s Blue Acres program has made 859 buyout offers in 14 municipalities, with 642 willing sellers accepting so far. Blue Acres has completed 586 closings and demolished 453 properties.

Superstorm Sandy severely impacted New Jersey’s water and wastewater infrastructure, causing an estimated $2.6 billion in damages. In addition to protecting our water, investment in infrastructure means approximately 20 jobs per $1 million invested. In addition to our annual Base State Revolving Fund (SRF), DEP administers a $229 million Sandy appropriation that NJEIT is leveraging with $90 million tax-exempt bonds. The Sandy SRF program funds projects that repair water infrastructure damaged by the storm, reduce flood damage risk and vulnerability, and enhance resiliency.

Through NJEIT funds, DEP was able to provide more than $186 million in Statewide Assistance Infrastructure Loan Program (SAIL) loans for eight resiliency upgrade projects for water facilities,
including Bayshore Regional Sewerage Authority ($39.3 million) and Middlesex County Utilities Authority ($123 million), with an additional $321 million set to close in the next six months (mostly for Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission). DEP and NJEIT developed the SAIL program to provide immediate emergency financing to impacted facilities, significantly reducing the stress on these communities’ cash flow and resources.

**DEP Transformation**

My first priority when I became Commissioner seven years ago was to transform DEP into an agency that was more effective and efficient in fulfilling its core mission. I knew that we needed to change how we operate and use our resources to make ourselves a more efficient and effective organization. I believe that through our transformation initiative, we have made great strides in achieving that objective.

As part of this transformation, the first thing we needed to establish was our overarching goals. In order to deliver improved service to our “customers”, we set out to:

- Cut through red tape;
- Make navigating through our permitting processes easier;
- Create consistency and predictability in actions;
- Establish mutual expectations; and
- Identify potential fatal flaws or pollution prevention opportunities early in permitting process.

To transform DEP, we needed to transform its culture, the cornerstone of culture change is customer service. All DEP employees, including me, went through mandatory customer service training. We needed to be more responsive to the people we serve. Simple things like phone calls – not letters back and forth – go a long way to helping us to understand and own a problem, not just kick it down the road.

Recently, additional customer service training courses were made available online for all DEP employees. These courses will build on the success of the original first round of training. Every
new employee receives customer service training soon after they join DEP. We will continue with this training to reinforce the culture here at DEP.

As a part of this culture change we needed to:

- Make it easier for our customers to work with DEP through our Office of Permit Coordination;
- Make Alternative Dispute Resolution more effective;
- Reform cumbersome regulations; and
- Encourage compliance.

**Permit Coordination**

The Governor directed me to reform DEP to help make New Jersey a place where businesses can come and grow. To do that, we needed to work with communities, businesses and individuals to ensure projects can navigate the permitting process without getting tangled in red tape. That is why we revitalized the Office of Permit Coordination to help complex projects early in the process.

We are still regulators but creating predictability is part of what we do for businesses. A key component of the application process that we enhanced was pre-application meetings, where we could identify a project’s potential fatal flaws early on. This ensures that business is conducted in a way which protects the environment.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Another aspect of our transformation efforts included the establishment of the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution. Through this office we provide a neutral structure that connects DEP programs with the regulated community to try to resolve legal issues or disputes between DEP programs and applicants before going to an administrative law judge or the courts. This avoids costly legal and court action for both the State and the regulated community.

Since its establishment, the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution has handled more than 344 cases with an 80% success rate.
Regulatory Reform

Another key area that has been a major success for this administration is regulatory reform. During the past 20 years, more than 160 federal and state laws have been passed that deal with the environment or permits. This has created enormous complexity.

Residents, local governments and businesses were having trouble getting permits, and that complexity made it harder to enforce them, as well. That is why regulatory reform is important to our mission of protecting New Jersey’s environment.

With all of the regulatory changes we have made, we have not relaxed a single environmental standard. Instead, we have focused on fixing broken components of the regulatory process. In land use regulation, for example, we have removed some of the complexity while also providing flexibility, but still we maintain a high level of environmental protection.

The goals of reform include:

- Eliminating needless red tape;
- Creating unified standards;
- More efficient/clearer rules;
- Multiple permits at once;
- Permits by rule;
- Instant permits online;
- More general permits; and
- Continue high standards to protect environment.

Our regulatory reform efforts at the DEP have encompassed:

- Electronic submittals;
- Reduced paperwork;
- Transparency; and
- Science-based decision making.
We also have focused on streamlining and aligning rules across the permitting programs. Our efforts have dramatically increased predictability, consistency and transparency in the process. The key area for improvement focused on aligning land use regulations, including the Flood Hazard Rules, the Water Quality Management Planning process, the Public Access Rule, the Coastal Rules (first round) and the Fresh Water Wetlands Rules.

As a result of our changes, this rule will result in a procedural alignment of all three major land use programs. It will also allow for the efficient submission of one land use permit, online, that will cover all three programs. Previously, wetlands, flood hazard, and coastal programs required separate applications with different requirements. This was significantly complicated and wasteful. The online land use permit will greatly simplify the process from a time and cost perspective, and will help applicants obtain permits more quickly.

We have more regulatory reforms to come. There will be a second round of Coastal Rule reforms and we are going to address issues like Waterfront Development Rules concerning applications of the High Rise Rule and developing within V-zones along the Hudson waterfront.

We have made common sense reforms while maintaining the highest level of environmental standards, and you have been helpful to us as we continue to do so. The stakeholder process has been important to us throughout our transformation. We value stakeholder opinions and have made a concerted effort to involve everyone in the regulatory reform process.

Compliance & Enforcement

Of course, one thing we have not changed is our commitment to protecting the environment. In fact, we have not relaxed our environmental standards at all. DEP continues to take swift action against those who intentionally violate environmental laws.

While we remain committed to enforcement of our environmental laws and regulations, our major focus has shifted to an emphasis on promoting compliance. By focusing on compliance—which includes writing clearer, more transparent permits and educating permittees on the goals and outcomes that we are trying to promote, we avoid violations in the first place.
Today, DEP enforcement is more strategic. We still do traditional enforcement inspections and investigations but we also are proactively working with the regulated community through education and environmental stewardship to improve their environmental performance. This leads to more awareness of environmental laws and fewer environmental hazards.

We are finding effective resolutions to protect the environment when there are violations. Our focus here is on outcomes and trends to make the state’s air, water and land cleaner and our natural and historic resources better maintained and protected. Our true measure of how DEP is doing is that New Jersey’s air, water and land are cleaner today than they have been for decades and our environment continues to improve.

**Working with Our Communities**

Finally, one area I am particularly proud of is DEP’s ongoing commitment to work directly with all our communities, but especially our more burdened ones, to help improve the environment and quality of life for our residents. To this end, we have expanded our Community Collaborative Initiative (CCI) and I have reconstituted the Environmental Justice Advisory Council (EJAC).

The CCI is a DEP-wide effort to focus our resources on tangible improvements in various communities throughout New Jersey. This initiative began in Camden and we achieved significant accomplishments in the past seven years: construction of the Kroc community center on a brownfield development area; permitting a new waterfront mixed residential and commercial development south of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge that will be home to United Water’s Headquarters office; improving community relations through a collaborative effort with Camden County MUA to improve flooding conditions in flood-prone neighborhoods; and facilitating several other large-scale developments that will bring jobs and further investment to Camden. We have now replicated this winning formula to other communities in Perth Amboy and Trenton.

In addition, I have reconstituted EJAC with new council members representing various communities and perspectives on how to best improve our overburdened communities. I have
directed this new group to work with our EJ Coordinators and the CCI teams to accomplish tangible improvements around specific projects.

**Closing**

In closing, the budget put forward by Governor Christie will enable the DEP to continue in meeting its core mission of protecting the environment and serving the citizens of the State of New Jersey. The DEP continues to meet the goals of Governor Christie’s environmental agenda.

We have a full agenda for this year as we continue to protect New Jersey’s air, land, water, and natural and historic resources, while continuing to move the State toward greater economic growth and prosperity. I thank you for your support and cooperation over the past year and look forward to working with the Legislature as we move forward.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to come before you. I am available to answer any questions you may have.