

It Isn't Easy Being Green

Those notable words from a well-known frog might become the cry of the next decade as we search for new, sustainable ways to grow the economy, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and dramatically lower greenhouse gas emissions.

It will not be easy. There is no single or simple solution. But it can and must be done. Greening the economy is the right thing to do for the environment, but it can also provide new opportunities to grow, create new jobs and sustain New Jersey's economic competitiveness and quality of life.

New Jersey is ahead of the curve in taking steps to limit greenhouse gas emissions. A year ago, Governor Corzine issued an executive order calling for the development of a new Energy Master Plan to deal with global warming, conserve natural resources and promote renewable sources of energy such as sun, wind, biomass or geothermal energy. These goals were endorsed by the state legislature when it passed, by overwhelming majorities, the Global Warming Response Act, making New Jersey only the third state to have a law to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

The challenge is to reduce energy use across the board by 20 percent, bring down the amount of greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels and in-

crease the amount of power generated by renewable energy sources to meet 20 percent of New Jersey's electric supply requirements – all by the year 2020. In addition, there is a longer-term goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.

New Jersey also is involved in regional efforts to curtail greenhouse gases. Only a month ago, the state legislature passed a law that provides for New Jersey's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a cooperative effort by 10 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states to reduce carbon emissions.

Now comes the hard part: Translating good goals into results – and at a time when energy demand continues to increase. A big problem like climate change needs to be tackled across all sectors – home heating, transportation, energy production and other areas.

Yes, it is not easy being green, but New Jersey has the opportunity to be a laboratory of positive change in the fight against climate change – leading the nation to a greener, brighter future.

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