

**SENATE CONCURRENT  
RESOLUTION No. 179**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
218th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator BOB SMITH**

**District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)**

**Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Amends Constitution to prohibit construction of new fossil fuel power plants.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** proposing to amend Article I of the  
2 New Jersey Constitution by adding a new paragraph thereto.

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4 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the  
5 General Assembly concurring):

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7 1. The following proposed amendment to the Constitution of  
8 the State of New Jersey is agreed to:

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10 **PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

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12 Amend Article I of the State Constitution by the addition of the  
13 following paragraph:

14 24. No person shall construct or reconstruct, and the State shall  
15 not permit or otherwise approve the construction or reconstruction  
16 of, any new electric power generation facility in the State that  
17 produces electric power, in whole or in part, from the combustion of  
18 coal, natural gas, oil, or petroleum products. The prohibition in  
19 this paragraph shall not apply to the repair or maintenance of an  
20 electric power generation facility in existence prior to the adoption  
21 of this amendment.

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23 2. When this proposed amendment to the Constitution is finally  
24 agreed to pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, it  
25 shall be submitted to the people at the next general election  
26 occurring more than three months after the final agreement and  
27 shall be published at least once in at least one newspaper of each  
28 county designated by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the  
29 General Assembly and the Secretary of State, not less than three  
30 months prior to the general election.

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32 3. This proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be  
33 submitted to the people at that election in the following manner and  
34 form:

35 There shall be printed on each official ballot to be used at the  
36 general election, the following:

37 a. In every municipality in which voting machines are not used, a  
38 legend which shall immediately precede the question as follows:

39 If you favor the proposition printed below make a cross (X), plus  
40 (+), or check (✓) in the square opposite the word "Yes." If you are  
41 opposed thereto make a cross (X), plus (+) or check (✓) in the  
42 square opposite the word "No."

43 b. In every municipality the following question:

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	<p>YES</p>	<p>CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PROHIBIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FOSSIL FUEL POWER PLANTS</p> <p>Do you approve amending the State Constitution to prohibit the construction of new fossil fuel power plants in the State? Fossil fuel power plants produce electricity by burning coal, oil, natural gas, or petroleum products.</p>
	<p>NO</p>	<p>INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT</p> <p>This amendment to the State Constitution would prohibit the construction of new fossil fuel power plants in the State. Fossil fuel power plants produce electricity by burning coal, oil, natural gas, or other petroleum products. This amendment would also prohibit the State from approving the construction of new fossil fuel power plants. The prohibition would not apply to the repair and maintenance of existing fossil fuel power plants.</p>

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STATEMENT

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This constitutional amendment would prohibit the construction of new fossil fuel power plants in the State.

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Fossil fuel power plants produce electricity by burning coal, oil, natural gas, or other petroleum products. The burning of these fuels produces greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change. New Jersey is already experience the impacts of climate change, as evidenced by warmer temperatures, changing weather patterns, more severe storms, sea level rise, dangerous algal blooms, and the spread of vector-borne diseases. Average temperatures in the State have climbed by 2 degrees Celsius since 1895 – double the average for the lower 48 states. Nine of the ten hottest calendar years on record for the State have occurred since 1990. The Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in October 2018, found that greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced from 2010 levels by 45 percent by 2030 and to net zero by 2050 in order to limit the rise in atmospheric temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a level that results in severe ecological, health, and economic impacts.

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Fossil fuel power plants are one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the State, and a significant source of air pollution. Despite this, new fossil fuel power plants and related

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**SCR179 B.SMITH, BATEMAN**

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1 infrastructure continue to be proposed and constructed in New  
2 Jersey. In 2007, the Legislature adopted the “Global Warming  
3 Response Act,” which requires the State to reduce its emissions to  
4 80 percent below the 2006 level by the year 2050. In order to meet  
5 this ambitious target, and curb the effects of climate change in New  
6 Jersey, more aggressive action to curb greenhouse gas emissions is  
7 needed. This constitutional amendment would prohibit the  
8 construction or reconstruction of new fossil fuel power plants in the  
9 State. It would also prohibit the State from permitting or otherwise  
10 approving new fossil fuel power plants. The constitutional  
11 amendment would not apply to the repair or maintenance of an  
12 existing fossil fuel power plant.