

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 244

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JAMES J. KENNEDY

District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Urges NJ to join United States Climate Alliance Natural and Working Lands challenge.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the Governor to have New
2 Jersey join the United States Climate Alliance’s Natural and
3 Working Lands challenge.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, Global surface temperatures have risen two degrees
6 Fahrenheit over the past century, and the rate that temperatures are
7 rising has tripled over the last 30 years; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Human activities, specifically the emissions of heat-
9 trapping greenhouse gasses (GHG) from fossil fuel production and
10 combustion, deforestation, and land degradation, have contributed
11 to global warming trends; and
12 **WHEREAS**, Global warming and climate change have resulted in rising
13 sea levels, increased storm severity, increased risk of wildfires,
14 damage to agriculture and fisheries, heightened air pollution, and
15 certain adverse health effects, which are predicted to increase into
16 the future; and
17 **WHEREAS**, Due to its geography, population, and other factors, New
18 Jersey is especially vulnerable to the negative effects of climate
19 change; and
20 **WHEREAS**, In an attempt to mitigate the effects of global warming and
21 climate change, the United States Climate Alliance is inviting state
22 and local governments, nations, businesses, indigenous
23 communities, and other actors to join the Natural and Working
24 Lands (NWL) challenge, which has the collective goal of
25 maintaining natural and working lands to reduce GHG emissions
26 and increase carbon sequestration; and
27 **WHEREAS**, Natural and working lands are forests, farms, ranches,
28 grasslands, wetlands, and urban greenspaces, which can be publicly
29 or privately owned, and are managed for a variety of purposes
30 including commercial use, recreational open space, and wildlife
31 habitat; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Natural and working lands, if maintained and managed
33 properly, can serve as carbon sinks, which capture and store carbon
34 dioxide in vegetation and soils where it remains separated from the
35 atmosphere; these lands sequester carbon while providing
36 significant and cost-effective opportunities to reduce GHG
37 emissions; and
38 **WHEREAS**, Maintaining the resilience of natural and working lands
39 through land conservation, restoration, and improved management
40 can also support watersheds and food systems, improve air quality,
41 protect against sea level rise, and preserve the beauty and function
42 of natural areas and parks; and
43 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s Global Warming Response Act 80x50
44 report, published in October 2020, detailed that additional efforts
45 are needed in order for the State to meet its goals of reducing 80
46 percent of GHG emissions by 2050 including improving the State’s
47 carbon sequestration; and

1 **WHEREAS**, The goals of the NWL challenge are consistent with those
2 of the Paris Agreement and those of the New Jersey Global
3 Warming Response Act and, for these reasons, New Jersey should
4 join the United States Climate Alliance’s NWL challenge and
5 continue to combat climate change and global warming; now,
6 therefore,

7
8 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
9 *Jersey:*

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11 1. This House urges the Governor to have New Jersey join the
12 United States Climate Alliance’s Natural and Working Lands
13 challenge.

14
15 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
16 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
17 Governor of the State of New Jersey and the United States Climate
18 Alliance.

19
20
21 **STATEMENT**

22
23 This resolution urges the Governor to have the State of New
24 Jersey join the United States Climate Alliance’s Natural and
25 Working Lands (NWL) challenge, which aims to mitigate the
26 adverse effects of global warming and climate change through
27 proper maintenance and management of natural and working lands.

28 Global warming is the rise in the average temperature of the
29 Earth, and its related effects. Human activities, specifically the
30 emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gasses (GHG) from fossil
31 fuel production and combustion, deforestation, and land
32 degradation, have contributed to global warming trends. Rising sea
33 levels due to global warming and climate change will lead to coastal
34 flooding on the Eastern seaboard, including New Jersey. As a result
35 of global warming and climate change, forests, farms, and cities
36 will face troublesome new pests, heat waves, heavy downpours, and
37 increased flooding which will collectively damage or destroy
38 agriculture and fisheries. Melting glaciers, early snowmelt, and
39 severe droughts will cause more dramatic water shortages and
40 increase the risk of wildfires. Collective preventative action is
41 imperative in order to mitigate the adverse effects of global
42 warming and climate change.

43 The United States Climate Alliance is inviting state and local
44 governments, nations, businesses, indigenous communities, and
45 other actors to join the Natural and Working Lands (NWL)
46 challenge, which has the collective goal of maintaining natural and
47 working lands as a resilient net sink of carbon. Natural and
48 working lands, if properly maintained and managed, can serve as

1 carbon sinks, which capture and store carbon dioxide in vegetation
2 and soils where it remains separated from the atmosphere. These
3 lands sequester carbon while providing significant and cost-
4 effective opportunities to reduce GHG emissions. In addition,
5 maintaining the resilience of natural and working lands through
6 land conservation, restoration, and improved management can also
7 support watersheds and food systems, improve air quality, protect
8 against sea level rise, and preserve the beauty and function of
9 natural areas and parks.

10 The NWL challenge encourages its participants to consider, and,
11 as appropriate, adopt practices that increase long-term carbon
12 sequestration in forests, protect existing natural and working lands
13 from conversion, support healthy soils on farms and ranches, restore
14 coastal wetlands and sub-tidal habitats that protect shorelines from
15 sea level rise, restore ecosystems and protect open space
16 watersheds, and grow the urban forest and other greenspace to
17 improve health and livability. The goals of the NWL challenge are
18 consistent with those of the Paris Agreement and also with the
19 State's carbon sequestration recommendations listed within New
20 Jersey's Global Warming Response Act 80x50 report, published in
21 October 2020. For these reasons, the Governor is urged to have the
22 State of New Jersey join the United States Climate Alliance's NWL
23 challenge, so that the State can improve its carbon sequestration,
24 reduce GHG emissions, and further mitigate the adverse effects of
25 global warming and climate change.