

Evaluation of the Barnegat Bay 10 Point Plan - April 2014

American Littoral Society Clean Ocean Action Pinelands Preservation Alliance
Save Barnegat Bay



1. **Close Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant** - Approximately 2 billion gallons of Barnegat Bay water is strained of life by the cooling systems at Oyster Creek each day. The plume of polluted, heated water is then released back into the Bay disrupting the Bay's natural ecology. The state negotiated and entered into an agreement with Exelon Corporation to cease electric generation operations at the Oyster Creek Generating Station by 2019. **If this happens, it will be a BIG win for Barnegat Bay.**



2. **Fund Stormwater Runoff Mitigation Projects** - Stormwater runoff that is polluted with nitrogen and other nutrients is a leading cause of the Bay's decline. There are about 2,500 stormwater basins in the Barnegat Bay watershed that do not adequately capture and treat this pollution, so increasing their ability to remove harmful pollutants is an important strategy. The State has authorized low-interest and grant funding for stormwater basin improvement projects but to date only a small fraction of basins have been improved. The NJDEP has also provided support for other approaches and tools to reduce stormwater pollution. In addition, the Governor signed legislation requiring the State Department of Transportation to plan for improvements of the pollution removal abilities of state highway storm basins but, unfortunately, progress on this work has not been communicated to the public. **To be effective, many more stormwater projects must be funded and completed. The reporting and improvement information must be communicated to the public.**



3. **Reduce Nutrient Pollution from Fertilizer** – Large quantities of pollution enter Barnegat Bay from the use of lawn fertilizers. On January 5, 2011, Governor Christie signed a law that established the most restrictive standards in the nation for nitrogen and phosphorous content in fertilizer products and the application amounts and timelines for its use. **This is a success and an example of grassroots and government collaboration.**



4. **Require Post-Construction Soil Restoration** - Healthy soils are key to a healthy Bay. They allow water to recharge into the ground instead of becoming storm-water run-off and carrying pollution to our waterways. Too much of the land area that drains to Barnegat Bay has been over-developed and the soils are no longer able to provide clean water benefits. On January 5, 2011 Governor Christie signed legislation establishing soil restoration standards and practices. Unfortunately, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, through the State Soil Conservation Committee, have yet to develop strong, effective standards. **The current standards are weak and flawed, and will not accomplish the intent of the legislation.**



5. **Acquire Land in the Watershed** - Because Ocean County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the state of New Jersey, natural lands are vanishing at a rapid pace. Acquiring available, ecologically sensitive lands along the Barnegat Bay and its tributaries is a cost-effective and critical measure to prevent development activities that could further degrade the Bay's water and ecological quality. The Governor set a 30,000 acre in 30 year goal for land acquisition; in the first 3 years of the Governor's program over 2,000 acres have been purchased. However, the state is out of Green Acres funds, the Legislature has failed to advance a mechanism to renew these funds, and Governor Christie has not offered a plan of his own. **If this item is to ultimately succeed, the Governor needs to work with the Legislature to secure a stable source of funding for the program.**

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6.  **Establish a Special Area Management Plan** - Science has shown that runoff from development is a major source of pollution causing the Bay's decline. A comprehensive, land use approach to managing growth and development aimed at restoring the Bay was to be accomplished through a proposed "Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)". **The last meeting held with public partners was in 2011 and the community has yet to see any action. Instead, the Christie administration has supported legislation and regulatory changes weakening protections for clean water statewide.**

7.  **Adopt More Rigorous Water Quality Standards** - Barnegat Bay's health is determined by water quality measurements set forth in the Clean Water Act. The 10 Point Plan set out to "*adopt more rigorous*" standards to ensure that pollution control efforts could be measured. After adopting narrative nutrient criteria for coastal waters on December 21, 2010, the DEP launched a revised water quality monitoring network in the Barnegat Bay on June 6, 2011. Several years have gone by, but **the state has neglected to use existing evidence that will trigger the standard. As a result, the DEP has failed to declare Barnegat Bay impaired for nutrients, the first step in developing a pollution reduction budget or Total Maximum Daily Load.**

8.  **Educate the Public** - Public engagement and education is critical to the success of any plan to protect and restore Barnegat Bay. The DEP and its employees have committed resources to the Barnegat Bay Blitz, a bay-wide clean-up initiative. **Grassroots community and environmental groups appreciate this opportunity to raise awareness about ALL of the problems facing the Bay.**

9.  **Fill in the Gaps on Research** - The DEP has initiated new scientific studies to fill in research gaps. **This research is valuable but not necessary to legally determine that the Bay is impaired or "unhealthy," and establishing stronger approaches supporting its restoration.**

10.  **Reduce Water Craft Impacts** - Boats and personal water craft can harm the Bay by damaging underwater plants and disrupting aquatic habitats. Designation of a Conservation Zone, similar to the one at Island Beach State Park, can reduce such impacts. The DEP held stakeholder meetings in 2012 which helped to identify 16 ecologically sensitive areas that can be damaged by water crafts. **The department hasn't updated the website with any new information in 2013 and seems to have stalled on making any more progress.**

Lend Barnegat Bay a Hand – Sign the petition to have it declared impaired under the Clean Water Act!

http://www.change.org/petitions/new-jersey-department-of-environmental-protection-commissioner-martin-declare-barnegat-bay-impaired-under-the-clean-water-act?recruiter=2373822&utm_campaign=twitter_link&utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=share_petition