

# **“Use the Power of the Election Season to Fight NJ Warehouses”**

**By: Zero Emissions & Warehouse  
Organizer, Tolani Taylor**

**Clean Water Action Virtual Training  
Thursday, September 28, 2023**



# Welcome!

- **Introductions!- Please state your name & which town/city in New Jersey you are from in the chat.**



# Purpose of training

- **To empower NJ voters to be more proactive in both local & state government to slow the growth of warehouse development**
- **To understand the connection between local public official's role in accepting or rejecting warehouse development**
- **To provide you with the most effective strategies to use for holding public officials accountable when it comes to deciding on what warehouse development is allowed or not**



# Structure of training

- **The following topics will be covered: 1) Making the most out of Public Meetings 2) Meeting with Public Officials 3) Using the press to your advantage and 4) Being a responsible voter**
- **In between each topic there will be a quick quiz session where you will answer some questions based on the information presented**
- **There will be guest speakers joining the training and there will be time designated after they are done presenting to ask them questions and at the end of the training. All are welcome to post questions in the chat.**



# Guest Speakers

- **Joaquin Castillejos, Organizing Coordinator, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice**
- [Stacey Fox, Executive Director of Mercer County Defense League,](#)



# INTRO:

## Make the most out of Public Meetings!

***Why is this important?*** It allows you as a resident of your city or town to voice your concerns about something going on in your community that needs to be addressed. It also gives you the opportunity to suggest ideas or initiatives that would be worthwhile.

***Examples of public meetings:*** Township Committee Meetings, Planning Board Meetings, Town Council Meetings, Senate Committee Meetings, County Committee Meeting

***How does this connect with warehouse developments?*** Once a warehouse developer submits their application to a town or city's Planning Board, the Planning Board has to review the application and take into consideration the concerns of comm



# Make the most out of Public Meetings!

- Know when public meetings are taking place(social media, town/city website,newsletters,etc).
- Develop and review your talking points to 2 to 3 key messages
- Brings copies of factsheets and other relevant data to distribute to government officials and community members
- Emphasize the problems that a particular issue poses to you and your community and coordinate with others to do the same
- Time your yourself and practice your testimony-Maximum amount of time that you'll be given is 3 minutes to speak
- Encourage those from your community to also show up-there is power in numbers!



# Giving testimony at a public meeting





# Quick Quiz!

- **What are examples of public meetings?**
- **How much time will I have to speak?**
- **What should I include in a testimony at a public meeting?**



# Why meet with your legislators

***Why is this important?*** You have a higher chance of getting a NJ legislator to commit to supporting a bill on a issue you care about after meeting with him/her in-person.

***Examples:*** I recently meet with Assemblyman Sauikie's R (District 12) Chief of Staff to discuss some of the warehouse bills he has proposed recently and strategies that could be used to get at least one passed before the end of the year.

***How does this connect with warehouse developments?*** Unless a state law is passed that properly regulates warehouse development for all towns and cities of NJ, proposals will continue to be approved which will result i overdevelopment of land and very little open space, worsening air quality from the fleet of delivery trucks that would be used,, increased risk of flooding due to impervious surfaces. NJ Assemblyman, Assemblywoman and Senators have enough influence in the State House to get a warehouse bill passed into law.



# Preparing to meet with legislators

- **Call legislator's office. Ask to meet or speak with your legislator and explain the purpose of meeting. You might meet with staff – that's OK.**
- **Talk to legislator's staff to find out legislator's position and provide them with background materials**
- **Plan to Take another constituent along with you. Assign roles for each person and set clear goals *before* the meeting. Think carefully about who should attend – who will help or hinder meeting's success and persuade.**
- **Learn as much as you can about the problem and how it affects you**
- **Do your homework on your target-your representative**



# What to do *during* your meeting with a legislator

- During the meeting, be concise-the more simply and clearly your position can be explained, the better chance you have of getting people to listen and respond
- Be honest. Do not exaggerate to make a point or answer a question if you are not sure of the facts. If you don't know the answer to a question, you can always follow-up later
- Make your “ask” early
- Tell your story
- Don't lecture, but engage in a dialogue
- Offer possible solutions to the problem
- Take notes of what was said and commitments made.



# What to do *after* your meeting with a legislator

- **Send a follow up letter thanking them for the meeting and reiterating what was agreed to (if they responded favorably). Supply information if promised.**
- **Exchange business cards and write a note to remind yourself of what was talked about during the meeting**
- **Always try to end the meeting with a date established to discuss the issue you are raising further**
- **Make note of what was NOT covered during the meeting and follow up in a email**
- **Always thank them for their time and any relevant policy that they voted in favor of passing that relates to your issue**



# Meeting with your Mayor and/or Town Council

- **Local government politics plays a critical role in warehouse developments being approved.**
- **Local mayors or town councils are responsible for updating municipal Master Plan , Zoning ordinances and appointing planning board members.**
- **Planning Board examines the project further and votes on the approval of the project.**
- **Check the dates of when mayor and council meetings will be happening in your town/city and make plans to attend**
- **Prepare your statement ahead of time and practice reciting it**



# Talking to public officials at informal events (community events, coffee shop, etc)

- Greet them and politely ask if they can speak with you
- Get right to the point and bring up the issue at hand and (In this case it would be warehouse development)
- State why this issue is important and ask when would be a better time to talk about the solutions for the issue
- Thank them for their time and follow up with them within the next few days



# Staying connected with legislators

- **Share news articles relevant to the issue you want addressed via email along with your thoughts and ideas on solutions**
- **If there was anything during the meeting that was not addressed, set up a meeting to discuss that topic specifically.**
- **Send invitations to events you may be hosting**
- **Prioritize a good relationship with the chief of staff of the legislators you are meeting with**



# Stopping Senator Cory Booker for a Picture



# Assemblyman Dan Benson speaking at a Clean Water Action Warehouse Convening



# Quick Quiz!

- **Where are some of the things I can do to stay up to date with what my state legislators are doing?**
- **How do I find out who my local leaders are?**
- **TRUE or FALSE: It is ok to threaten a legislator.**
- **TRUE or FALSE: I should assume that the legislator knows everything about my issue.**
- **TRUE OR FALSE: It is best practice to not follow up with the legislator and/or the legislator's chief of staff.**



# INTRO: Using the press to your advantage!

***Why is this important?*** Raising awareness about an issue to the press is a great way to attract more help/supporters

***Examples of creating your own press:*** Letters to the Editor, Op Eds and Editorials, Social Media

***How does this connect with warehouse developments?*** Most people within their town or city are not paying attention to warehouse development from its beginning stages. However once its broadcasted in the news, it definitely will draw more attention from them and encourage them to do something about it.



# Using the Press to get public officials attention

- **Politicians tend to read editorial page and letters to the editor**
- **Public officials hate being put on the spot-use that to your advantage by holding them accountable for their inaction towards the issue in question**
- **Emphasize the impact that the issue in question poses and why leadership and action is desperately needed**
- **Don't tarnish someone's image-just simply state the facts and stay on topic**



# Using the press to your advantage!

- **Anticipate any difficult questions you might be asked and prepare responses**
- **Frame your answers to draw attention to your key messages not simply to answer reporters' questions**
- **Use the “flip” technique to move conversation back to you point**
- **Fix errors-correct if reporter got a point or fact wrong**
- **Create an electronic media list with name of reporters, what they cover, name of media outlet, email, twitter handle & phone number. Set up and update easy BCC group email.**
- **Create your own publicity & media**



# News article links I have been quoted in

- <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/environment/2023/07/13/nj-warehouses-spread-possible-health-impact/70403247007/>
- <https://allentownboronj.com/index.asp?SEC=565CCF08-FEF5-4C74-B76F-C96852FBBF05&DE=CBA2F433-2626-4F58-B9B8-A3BBF9A17846&fbclid=IwAR1ctgsCgO4%C2%A7Kgtz8gIzVOM8xcCOW0FsHDRIWCPIInnGopkt1mwGniCpdmRU%C2%A7aem%C2%A7Aa3YIFj3%C2%A7Zy5wugDi8g1BO1RRGZ-yZY7DzSlqjlrADG4ie-H2PmK%C2%A7fGREqn5-MGZ32o>



# Quick Quiz!

- **How can I create my own press?**
- **What should you NOT do when talking to a reporter?**
- **TRUE OR FALSE: It is ok to speak about a topic I know nothing about to a reporter?**
- **TRUE OR FALSE: It is acceptable to change the subject while being interviewed by a reporter?**



# Providing testimony on a warehouse bill in the State House



# INTRO: Being a Responsible Voter!

***Why is this important?*** The outcome of local elections is one of those things will directly impact you and your community. Mayors and town councils at the local level of government have the final say in what warehouse development is allowed or not. They also appoint planning and zoning board members.

**NJ cities and towns need more progressive and environmentally-conscience public officials in office and less greedy and corrupt ones.**

**Increasing voter turn-out in local elections would definitely help with ensuring the right individuals are being elected and appointed that are reflective of residents concerns and recommendations.**



# Being a Responsible Voter!

- **Use non-partisan sources like Vote Smart, Vote 411 & Ballotopia to get information on candidates and the issues they care about**
- **Browse a candidate's website and social media pages to learn about their priorities, values, who they align with and style.**
- **Stay connected with your local news to stay up to date on when local candidates may be making public appearances and any statements they may have shared on a particular issue**
- **Speak with community members in your area (friends,coworkers, neighbors,family,etc.) and local groups to get a feel for the candidates.**



# NJ Voter Deadlines

**9/23- Start of Mail-in ballots for General Election**

**10/17- Voter Registration Deadline for General Election**

**10/28-11/5- Early Voting Period (in person at designated locations)**

**10/31- Deadline to apply for a Mail-In Ballot by mail for General Election**

**11/7- General Election Day**

- **Know Your Voting Rights!**  
**<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights>**



# Important upcoming election dates

## 11/7- General Election Day

- **Use sample ballot generators like Vote411 & Ballotopia to check and see when the next election in your state and locality is taking place in addition to the candidates that will be running**



# Quick Quiz!

- **True or false- One should vote for a candidate without doing research on them first**
- **Name at least one online source you can go to, to look up info about candidates**
- **True or false-local election turn-out is extremely high compared to federal elections**



# Warehouse Questions to ask your public officials

- **When was the last time the zoning for our town/city has been revised?**
- **Have you examined the existing traffic pattern in that a proposed warehouse project will be built and taken into consideration how that would change?**
- **Over the course of your time in office, what is an example of something you have done that has directly impacted residents?**
- **Have you considered other economic impacts that the approval of this warehouse project would have?**



# Q/A Session

- **Any unanswered question posted in the chat and Facebook Live will now be answered at this time**
- **If you would like to ask your question out loud just click raise hand and unmute yourself when called**



# Thank you & Keep in Touch!

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Follow us on Social Media!  
Facebook: Clean Water Action New Jersey  
Twitter: @CleanWaterNJ  
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# CLEAN WATER ACTION

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS: PEOPLE • ACTION • JUSTICE

## Take Action!

- **Become a Clean Water Action Member today!**  
**<https://cleanwater.salsalabs.org/50th-anniversary-sign-up/index.html>**
- **Sign this warehouse petition!**  
**<https://cleanwater.salsalabs.org/nj-petition-warehouse-freehold/index.html>**
- **Apply the strategies and information learned in today's training back in your community and share this training with others!**



**Thanking you for joining today & let's keep fighting!**

