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Scorecard Shows Many Legislators Still Not Making the Grade

**Legislature urged to counter Christie's past and Trump's present
in lame duck and next session**

20 NJ legislators named 'environmental heroes' and join call for action

Trenton, NJ -- The NJ legislature again failed to provide adequate environmental safeguards or effectively counter the Christie administration's anti-environmental agenda, according to the 2015-17 Clean Water Action Scorecard (<http://www.cleanwateraction.org/NJ-scorecard-2017>) released today.

Legislators on average scored a mere 53% in 2017, not much different than 2015's 47% or 2013's 48%. Despite these overall scores, there are shining stars. Many of Clean Water Action's "Environmental Heroes" were present at its press conference. **(See our attached Heroes' quotes)**

"We really are at a critical juncture. We are experiencing human-caused climate change daily – Sandy, Harvey, Irma and Maria are painful lessons for the legislature to hide their heads in the sand is a dereliction of public trust," **says Janet Tauro, Clean Water Action, NJ Board Chair and Jersey Shore resident.**

The Scorecard is a comprehensive evaluation of how the NJ legislature as a whole and individually rate on 20 key environmental and public health issues over the past 2 years (2015-2017). Unlike most scorecards and for greater accuracy, Clean Water Action not only tallies specific votes but also awards extra credit and demerits for leadership on the 20 scored actions and efforts that never reached the full legislature (e.g., the government shutdown and governor's book deal/attack on free press package).

Over all, the Scorecard shows Democrats continuing to score on average higher than Republicans, however, they also failed to take action to overcome Christie's anti-environment agenda (flood hazard, Highlands, and Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) even when they had the votes to do so.

Most Republicans failed to buck the governor even when they disagreed with him (lead contamination, smoking in public parks and beaches, and oil bomb trains).

As a result, the legislature too often refused to use its 3 most powerful tools – overriding vetoes, legislative intent resolutions, and amending the constitution – to overcome Christie's opposition.

"We have to do better. With Christie having dismantled hard won state protections established over the past 40+ years and Trump and Congress trying to do the same now in DC, a strong state legislature is ever more important," **stated Sharon Finlayson, Clean Water Action's NJ Political Committee Chair.**

While there were more heroes than in years past, there were also more zeroes, and Senator Loretta Weinberg (D-37) continues to be the only legislator in leadership to make the hero grade. To be a Clean Water Action Hero, one had to score above 80%. A “Zero” scores below 20%.

“We applaud our heroes. We need more heroes. We hope with the changing of administration in the governor’s office, more legislators will choose to be heroes instead of zeroes,” **stated Amy Goldsmith, Clean Water Action’s State Director.** “To do so, Democratic leaders need to move pro-environmental legislation Christie can no longer stop and more Republicans need to vote environment as they did before Christie took office.”

The scorecard concludes with specifics, urging the current Legislature and newly elected legislators to:

- Block Christie’s effort to rollback protections in the Highlands and flood hazard rules;
- Fast track enabling legislation on the soon to be passed constitutional amendment to ensure the natural resources are restored where the damage occurred;
- Override governor’s veto of the oil bomb train legislation;
- Oppose publicly new fracked gas pipelines like PennEast;
- Pass strong solar energy legislation; and
- Work with the next governor to fast-track legislation for strong renewable energy standards, environmental justice, safe (pesticide free) playing field, and offshore wind, end clean energy fund raids now, and repeal rollbacks and otherwise further strengthen clean water protections.

“Moving forward, the legislature must set a course that prioritizes environmental solutions, which are the best economic ones. Energy efficiency, clean water and renewables not only mean clean air and water, but also good paying jobs and more money in your pocket book,” **concluded David Pringle, Clean Water Action’s NJ Campaign Director.**

For the full Scorecard report, individual, caucus, leadership and regional legislative charts, Hero quotes and press release, go to <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/NJ-scorecard-2017>

Clean Water Action is New Jersey’s largest grassroots group active on water, energy, climate resiliency, environmental justice and health. With nearly 1 million national and 150,000 statewide members, Clean Water Action works for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health-threatening pollution and creation of environmentally-safe jobs and businesses. Clean Water Action’s nonpartisan campaigns empower people to make democracy work.

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