



Director's Report

Putting the Brakes on Climate Change

In December 2009, the DEP issued its *Global Warming Response Act Recommendation Report* to serve as an action plan for achieving the state's greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and 2050. This report fills in the gaps in the *State Energy Master Plan (EMP)*, as it provides recommendations on improving transportation, green building, carbon sequestration, and planning. Details of the report are covered in this issue of the *ANJEC Report*, starting on page 23.

Over a third of our greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation sources, including cars, trucks, trains, boats and airplanes. And the State estimates that transportation's share of emissions will continue to increase in the coming years through 2020, with on-road gasoline consumption representing the largest share of these emissions.

In its recommendations, the report offers two ways to reduce transportation's share of greenhouse gases – cutting emissions and reducing vehicle travel. The report points to new technology as a way to help keep emissions down. We must meet the state's goal for low emission vehicles (LEV) and improve automobile efficiency, increasing our average miles per gallon to meet or exceed the target of 33 mpg, up from our current average of about 25 mpg. These improvements will need the funding for research and development and the commitment of people to purchase them. However, the return on investment will be great, in energy savings as well as emissions reduction.

Beyond technical improvements, New Jersey will have to look to long-term solutions to meet its emissions goals of 2050. The report calls for limiting vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to a rate of growth of 1 percent per year. Plainly speaking, we need to get people to drive less. Better land use planning can play a significant role in accomplishing this. We need to prevent new sprawl development, and instead encourage compact, mixed-use development or redevelopment, so that people can live near their jobs and shopping.

In addition, we need to invest in mass transit, and our land use planning should encourage population densities that support public transportation systems. Municipalities can complement regional transportation systems by planning higher density "transit villages" near train stations or park-and-rides to encourage bus travel.

Global climate change has created a new urgency for comprehensive planning as mandated by the State Planning Act. *The State Plan* aligns local, regional and state planning around a long-term vision for how the State's land should be used. It sets regions for concentrated growth and for preservation throughout New Jersey.

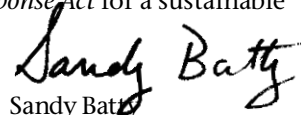
However, although we have had a *State Plan* for nearly 20 years, this *Plan* has yet to be fully implemented. To make the *State Plan* effective will require increased commitment from the State government. The State Planning Commission should be elevated to a cabinet level department

so it can coordinate the regulations and expenditures of all State agencies. New Jersey needs to invest and regulate growth guided by the principles and policies of the *State Plan*. The *Energy Master Plan* and *Global Warming Response Act* recommendations should be integrated into the *State Plan*.

The State Plan also needs the support of local governments to accomplish comprehensive regional planning that is beyond the scope of separate municipal planning boards. We can't afford to continue to plan as if each town were an island unto itself. For example, many towns put traffic-generating "big box" stores and strip malls on the edge of town, so that the town will not feel the impact of the traffic that the stores generate. The result is that town residents and nonresidents alike have to drive extra miles to shop at these stores. It would be better to mix retail with residential and commercial uses.

The State has the tools to coordinate state, county and municipal levels of government as they make important land use decisions that combat greenhouse gas emissions. We can use these tools to

achieve the goals of *Energy Plan* and *Global Warming Response Act* for a sustainable future.



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