



## **Blue Star Required Options (Choose 1 of 5)**

### **Climate Adaption: Flooding Risk Action\***

This Sustainable Jersey priority action, under the category of “Climate Adaptation,” is designed to help communities identify: 1) your community’s vulnerability to flooding impacts (both coastal and inland) and 2) ways to improve your community’s overall resiliency. This action focuses on the various causes of flooding that could impact a community, either now or in the future, including increased precipitation, increased frequency of heavy precipitation events, sea level rise and storm surge<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Why is it Important?**

Historically, communities developed near rivers and streams because they provided transportation and power, and because adjacent floodplains were flat and fertile. In the more recent past, development along the ocean coast has boomed because it offers enhanced living conditions and access to recreation. New Jersey has 1,792 linear miles of coastal shoreline subject to tidal influence, sea level rise and storm surge. The New Jersey coastline along the Atlantic Ocean supports a large coastal economy, and the four coastal counties along the Atlantic Ocean (Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May) make up approximately 15 percent of the state’s total employment and approximately 18 percent of its total population.<sup>1</sup>

Living near water bodies has always had inherent risks for flooding hazards and the joint influence of global climate change and land development have increased these risks. Flooding is not only due to climate change<sup>4</sup>, it can result from excessive rainfall, rapid snow melt, and severe coastal storms. More impervious surfaces resulting from development also increase the risk of flash flooding. These flood events not only damage life and property, but can have a dramatic impact on water quality.

Both the *NJ Flood Mapper Tool* and the *GTR Tool* were developed as non-regulatory tools to help local decision-makers reduce their vulnerability to an increase in the severity and frequency of heavy precipitation events, sea level rise and storm surge, and build capacity for community resilience. The *NJ Flood Mapper Tool* is an interactive GIS system designed to provide visual representations of FEMA’s 100-year floodplain for both inland and coastal flooding and different sea level rise scenarios.

#### **What to submit:**

To be awarded credit for this action, towns must complete the following three steps **from within 3.5 years of the June submission deadline:**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions-certification/actions/>

1. Form a team capable of and dedicated to addressing this action. This team could be the town's Green Team, but more likely will include representatives from the various local agencies that deal with planning, zoning and emergency management. This team will be responsible for the following two steps.
2. Utilizing the *NJ Flood Mapper Tool* to visually assess your community's vulnerability;
3. Completing the on-line *Getting to Resilience: Community Planning Evaluation Tool* (hereafter referred to as the GTR Tool), which assesses a town's readiness to deal with flooding situations.

Points are earned when the town submits the documented output from the GTR Tool, along with proof of team formation and a detailed discussion of how the *NJ Flood Mapper Tool* was used.

Please see the full documentation of this action at Sustainable Jersey.

*\*This option should be completed according to the Sustainable Jersey instructions, and will also be awarded points through the Blue Star Program as a required action.*

## **Innovative Water Quality Community Project\***

A lack of working examples often limits the acceptance of new technologies and programs. Therefore, projects that showcase new approaches to improving water quality are essential to making progress. These initiatives should have a demonstrable impact on water quality and be models that can be replicated by other towns. They can include ordinances, implementation of alternative or new technologies, policies, practices, or programs. To complement the effort, an educational component that promotes public awareness of the value of the project to the community is *required* for this action. In particular, projects that showcase the use of Green Infrastructure, source tracking and repairing water quality issues, or providing dedicated funding for solving water quality problems are being sought. Specific examples include: innovative bioretention systems, permeable pavement projects, novel source tracking methods that lead to infrastructure repairs, or increasing litter enforcement and making the funds available for water quality improvements.

### **Why is it important?**

Non-point source pollution is the largest contributor to water quality issues in New Jersey's watersheds. Stormwater runoff, in particular, overwhelms our water bodies with litter, fertilizers, pesticides, and pathogens. Green infrastructure practices use natural processes to filter stormwater, and can often save money, create healthier communities, and improve quality of life. Your municipality can also improve water quality by using creative methods to identify, assess, and repair local pollution issues, or implementing a funding source to address water quality issues. In addition to providing replicable models for businesses, residents, and other municipalities, these projects offer educational opportunities and may be incorporated into local school curricula. Finally, the projects raise the municipality's green profile and can help brand the municipality as innovative and forward thinking.

### **What to submit:**

To earn credit, municipalities must provide Clean Ocean Action with a short narrative (300 word max) summarizing the project including what the project is, who was involved in implementing it and its impact in your community. In addition, include the following supporting documentation:

- Evidence that the project was completed, which may include executed contracts, articles, minutes from public meetings, pictures, analyses – virtually any documentation that will verify the information provided.
- Examples of the community education and outreach that was associated with the project. This could include a snapshot of information posted on a website, published articles, pictures of signage posted at the project site explaining the project to the public, etc.
- Documentation illustrating the outcome of the project on water quality. Please include as much specific information as possible. (Example: the enforcement of litter laws has resulted in a 40% reduction in litter according to a monthly visual assessment by town staff. In addition, \$3000 has been raised through the program, and dedicated to environmental programs). Describe any lessons learned from the project that might benefit other towns, whether positive or negative. Please discuss your project with Clean Ocean Action prior to beginning to make sure there is a measurable outcome.

**All documentation should be from within 5.5 years of the June submission deadline. Please denote the timeline of the project in your documentation.**

*\*This action may be eligible for credit under the Innovative Community Project 1, 2, or 3 action through Sustainable Jersey. Please contact both Clean Ocean Action and Sustainable Jersey prior to beginning your project to ensure you will receive credit.*

## **Model Stormwater Control Ordinance for Municipalities\***

Adopt the forthcoming Sustainable Jersey Model Stormwater Ordinance in your municipality. This action is expected to be introduced in the Spring of 2015.

*\*This action may be eligible for credit under equivalent action through Sustainable Jersey. Please contact Sustainable Jersey prior to beginning your project.*

## Plastic bag ban or fee

Pass an ordinance that either bans the distribution of plastic bags at all retail shops in the municipality or charges a minimum five-cent fee per plastic bag provided to customers at checkout. This initiative will benefit the environment by reducing demand for plastic bags (which are produced from petroleum) and the number of plastic bags entering our waterways and marine environment, while also saving retailers money by reducing or altogether eliminating the need to purchase plastic checkout bags.

- If a ban is selected, within 12 months of the passage of the ordinance, all retail shops within the municipality shall provide only reusable bags and/or recyclable paper bags to customers at checkout.
  - Exemptions may be granted for bags provided for the transport of medications, prescriptions, or veterinary products; for deli products or other perishables; or for special care garments or laundry.
  - Retailers may choose whether and how much to charge customers for reusable and/or recyclable paper bags.
  
- If a fee is selected, then within six months of the passage of the ordinance, all shops must begin collection of a fee per plastic bag issued to customers.
  - Exemptions may be granted for bags provided for the transport of medications, prescriptions, or veterinary products; for deli products or other perishables; or for special care garments or laundry.
  - Funds generated by the collection of the fee must be remitted to the municipality on a quarterly basis for deposit into a fund that is used to support municipal water quality improvement programs, natural resource conservation, energy conservation, waste reduction, and/or environmental education programs. These may include green infrastructure projects; illicit connection identification and rectification; storm water system marking, cleaning, or retrofitting; installation of lidded trash and recycling bins in public spaces; or other uses approved by Clean Ocean Action.
  - The municipality may dedicate a portion of the funds generated toward purchasing and distributing reusable bags to low-income and elderly inhabitants who may be disproportionately impacted by the establishment of a plastic bag fee.
  - The municipality may allow business establishments affected by the fee to withhold a portion of the funds collected to offset the administrative costs of compliance; however, this amount must be set at no more than 20% of the amount collected each quarter.

Municipalities must also couple the passage of the ordinance with the initiation of a public awareness campaign that informs merchants and the public of the pending changes. If the fee option is selected, the municipal campaign must also educate merchants and the public on how funds generated from the fee will be used. COA encourages the municipality to be creative in their messaging and creation of educational elements about the benefits of plastic bag reduction and reusable bag use.

### Why is it Important?

Americans use an estimated 100 billion plastic carryout bags annually. Plastic bags are produced from petroleum, a non-renewable resource, and do not break down naturally in the environment. Single-use plastic bags are difficult to recycle and most recycling facilities are not equipped to process them. As such, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

estimates that fewer than 5% of single-use plastic bags are actually recycled, with the remaining 95% ending up in our landfills or environment, where they can entangle or choke wildlife. Data collected during Clean Ocean Action's bi-annual, state-wide Beach Sweeps events have consistently placed plastic shopping bags in the "Dirty Dozen" top twelve most commonly-recorded debris items, indicating their high prevalence in New Jersey's coastal and marine environments.

**What to submit:**

To earn credit, a municipality must provide Clean Ocean Action with a maximum 300-word description of actions taken, a copy of the plastic bag ban or fee ordinance (visit [www.plasticbaglaws.org](http://www.plasticbaglaws.org) or contact COA for sample ordinances), and any printed materials associated with the public awareness campaign. If a fee option is selected, a municipality must also provide a brief description of who is responsible for collecting the funds and how they will be administered.

**Resources:**

<http://plasticbaglaws.org/> - A resource for legislative bodies considering laws limiting the use of plastic bags

<http://www.surfrider.org/pages/plastic-bag-bans-fees> - A list of checkout bag legislation across the U.S.

<http://plasticbagbanreport.com/category/legislation/> - News and information on plastic bag legislation and ordinances around the U.S.

## Stormwater Utility Support Resolution

The Stormwater Utility Support Resolution is a public affirmation of a municipality's intent to support the establishment of a dedicated fund to address stormwater pollution within the state of New Jersey. This tool provides a model resolution to be adopted by a municipality as a first step toward establishment of a regional or state stormwater utility. As a result, communities will be moving toward improved water quality by supporting a cross-municipality, dedicated mechanism to fund stormwater water quality improvements in New Jersey.

### Why is it Important?

Stormwater runoff from rain events is the main vehicle for non-point source pollution in our developed landscape. With increased development and aging infrastructure, the investigation, maintenance, and repair of stormwater related issues is often delayed or prevented due to a lack of stable funding. A stormwater utility establishes a mechanism to directly fund stormwater improvements within a jurisdiction. Many municipalities, regions, and states have successfully implemented stormwater utilities to establish permanent funding for infrastructure improvements that ensure a sustainable future for their community.

### What to submit:

In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

- 1) The governing body must adopt a Stormwater Utility Support resolution. The resolution must be **from within 3.5 years of the June submission deadline** and in effect for the year in which you are applying for certification to receive credit for this action.
- 2) The adopted Resolution must be distributed to relevant agencies, boards, and commissions. If the adopted Pledge is more than 3.5 years old for the year in which you are applying for certification, the municipality must submit documentation that it has been redistributed to these bodies.

Please see sample Clean Ocean Action's sample Stormwater Utility Support Resolution for guidance.



## BLUE STAR SAMPLE STORMWATER UTILITY SUPPORT RESOLUTION

[Municipality]

### Resolution Supporting the Establishment of Stormwater Utilities in New Jersey

WHEREAS, [municipality's name] strives to reduce pollution in its waterways, much of which is directly contributed by stormwater pollution and failing stormwater infrastructure, and which can be reduced by retrofitting , and installation of green infrastructure and low-impact development practices; and

WHEREAS, [Municipality] hereby acknowledges that the residents of [Municipality] desire pollution free waters, both within the municipality and in successive downstream waterways, continuing to and including the ocean, in which they swim, fish, boat, and engage in other recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, [Municipality] wishes to support a model of government which benefits our residents now and far into the future by exploring and adopting sustainable and economically-sound government practices that address our most pressing environmental and societal issues; and

WHEREAS, by endorsing stormwater utility development in the state of New Jersey, [Municipality] is pledging to educate itself and community members further about stormwater infrastructure, green infrastructure solutions, and stormwater pollution, and to urge other towns, counties, utility authorities, and the state to support the repair and improvement of stormwater infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, as elected representatives of [Municipality] have a significant responsibility to provide leadership which will seek community-based sustainable solutions to strengthen the community and provide residents with a clean, livable, resilient environment:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that to focus attention and effort within [Municipality] on matters of water quality protection, the [Municipality's Governing Body] supports the establishment in New Jersey of Stormwater Utilities as a dedicated funding mechanism to support the necessary costs associated with the installation, maintenance, retrofitting, improvement and repair of stormwater infrastructure to improve surface water quality in our towns, counties, and state.