



# Accountability for Climate Change Harms in New Jersey: Scientific, Legal and Policy Perspectives

August 19, 2020 | 3-4:15 p.m.

## Speaker Bios

### Introductory Remarks

**Joseph Cryan**, New Jersey State Senator

Joseph Cryan was elected to the Senate in 2017. A former member of the New Jersey General Assembly, Cryan represented legislative District 20 from 2001 to 2015. He resigned upon being elected sheriff of Union County. Cryan served as the Majority Leader in the Assembly and chaired or served on over a dozen different committees in the legislature. After leaving the Sheriff's Office, he became the executive director of the Middlesex County Utilities Authority in April of 2018. As executive director, he is committed to promoting public health, protecting environmental resources and sustaining the development and growth of Middlesex County through efficient and responsible operations of the Wastewater Treatment Facility and Landfill, which has a direct impact on the quality of life of over 800,000 residents and businesses in Central New Jersey. He has been honored and recognized by many organizations throughout his career. Cryan was also the first general chairman of the Union County Saint Patrick's Day Parade committee and is the standard bearer of the Cryan Association, an Irish-American civic charitable organization.

### Panelists

**Brenda Ekwurzel**, Director of Climate Science,  
Union of Concerned Scientists Climate & Energy Program

Brenda Ekwurzel is a senior climate scientist and the director of climate science for the Climate & Energy program at the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). In her role, she ensures that program analyses reflect robust and relevant science, and researches the influence of major carbon producers on rising global average temperatures and sea level. Dr. Ekwurzel is a co-author of the fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4) Volume II. She presents frequently to a range of audiences on climate science, educating the public on practical, achievable solutions for climate change. Prior to joining UCS, Dr. Ekwurzel was on the faculty of the University of Arizona in the department of hydrology and water resources, with a joint appointment in the geosciences department. She has studied climate variability in places as disparate as the Arctic—where her research brought her to the North Pole—and the desert Southwest. Earlier in her career, Dr. Ekwurzel was a hydrologist, working with communities to protect groundwater source.

### **Marco Simons, General Counsel, EarthRights International**

Marco Simons oversees ERI's use of legal strategies to work with communities around the world in protecting their human rights and their environment. With ERI, Marco has served as counsel on transnational corporate accountability cases including *Doe v. Unocal*, *Wiwa v. Shell*, *Bowoto v. Chevron*, and *Maynas Carijano v. Occidental Petroleum*, and submitted amicus briefs in numerous other cases. He has written or coauthored several articles and publications on corporate accountability for earth rights abuses as well as taught college and law school courses on human rights. Marco previously worked for ERI on the Robert L. Bernstein Fellowship in International Human Rights after graduating from Yale Law School. Prior to returning to ERI, he clerked for the Honorable Dorothy Wright Nelson on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and worked for the civil rights law firm Hadsell & Stormer, which was co-counsel on *Doe v. Unocal* and *Bowoto v. Chevron*. Marco holds an undergraduate degree in environmental science and, prior to law school, worked on developing educational materials on conservation biology. He is currently admitted to the bar in California, Washington, D.C., and Washington State (inactive), as well as in the U.S. Supreme Court and several other federal courts.

### **Nathaly Agosto Filión, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Newark**

Nathaly Agosto Filión serves under the leadership of Mayor Ras J. Baraka as chief sustainability officer for the City of Newark. In this role, Agosto Filión is the city's leading sustainability strategist, convening interdepartmental teams to make Newark a cleaner, greener, healthier, better-prepared, and more engaged city. She also serves as a bridge linking a diverse network of community, nonprofit, academic, institutional, philanthropic and governmental partners advancing a variety of sustainability, greening, environmental health, and quality of life initiatives across Newark. Prior to staffing Newark's Office of Sustainability, Agosto Filión worked as a resiliency manager with Sustainable Jersey, connecting post-Sandy communities with recovery and resiliency resources. Before relocating to New Jersey, she worked as a program officer with the Institute for Sustainable Communities helping to develop, design and deliver national and regional capacity-building programs for local government climate and sustainability practitioners. Agosto Filión earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in Natural Resources from the University of Vermont. Over the course of her career, she has worked as an urban sustainability training support specialist, municipal climate action planning consultant, community organizer, and environmental educator.

## **Moderator**

### **Randall S. Abate, Rechnitz Family and Urban Coast Institute Endowed Chair in Marine and Environmental Law and Policy, Monmouth University**

Randall S. Abate is the inaugural Rechnitz Family and Urban Coast Institute endowed chair in marine and environmental law and policy, and a professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology, at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey. He also serves as the director of the Institute for Global Understanding at Monmouth. He teaches courses in domestic and international environmental law, climate justice, constitutional law, and animal law. Professor Abate joined the Monmouth faculty in 2018 with 24 years of full-time law teaching experience at six U.S. law schools. He has published six books on environmental and animal law topics, including *WHAT CAN ANIMAL LAW LEARN FROM ENVIRONMENTAL LAW?* (ELI Press, 2d ed., 2020); *CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE VOICELESS: PROTECTING FUTURE GENERATIONS, WILDLIFE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES* (Cambridge University Press, 2019); *CLIMATE JUSTICE: CASE STUDIES IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES* (ELI Press, 2016); and *CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON OCEAN AND COASTAL LAW: U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES* (Oxford University Press, 2015). He holds a B.A. from the University of Rochester and a J.D. and M.S.E.L. (Environmental Law and Policy) from Vermont Law School.