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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 26, 2007

## **NJMC Hosts First Climate Action Workshop for Meadowlands Mayors**

**LYNDHURST, N.J.** – The NJMC today brought officials from the 14 Meadowlands District municipalities together for a workshop on local government strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The workshop was highlighted by the announcement that the agency has joined ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability on behalf of the more than 450,000 residents that make up the region.

“The municipal officials of the Meadowlands District have demonstrated a concern for the region’s environmental impacts and a progressive spirit to start finding local solutions to the global climate problems of our times,” said Acting NJMC Chairman Charles Richman, also Acting Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. “ICLEI offers cost effective strategies, including switching to LED light bulbs, turning off building lights at night, encouraging public transit, adding reflective coatings to rooftops and planting trees, to help every municipality make a positive difference.”

The NJMC will provide financial and technical assistance to the Meadowlands municipalities to join the ICLEI individually. As members, the municipalities will have access to tools and international networking capabilities to develop local climate action strategies. Chief among the ICLEI tools is the Climate Action Handbook, a set of milestones created for mayors to guide the implementation of climate protection actions and join more than 770 cities worldwide in the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. Participating jurisdictions save taxpayer dollars on rising energy costs, improve air quality and public health, reduce traffic congestion, and spur the development of new jobs and cutting-edge business sectors.

Additional ICLEI membership benefits include an Urban Forestry Toolkit, Transportation and Land Use Toolkit, and partnerships with the US Conference of Mayors, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Earth Day Network, National Wildlife Federation and other organizations. The NJMC has already begun assisting municipalities with ICLEI participation by working to develop a model for the carbon footprint for the

Meadowlands District and an Energy Master Plan targeting 20 Megawatts of solar, wind, tidal and other renewables, as well as measures in energy efficiency, by the year 2020.

“As a regional state agency, the NJMC is uniquely poised to lead. By upgrading our buildings to LEED standards, constructing our new Center for Environmental and Scientific Education to a LEED Gold standard, converting the vehicle fleet to fuel-efficient hybrids, and powering the NJMC buildings with solar power, we believe we can continue to demonstrate that sustainability is the key to the Meadowlands' future,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio.

In the summer of 2006, the NJMC centralized its climate action policies around the Kyoto Protocol, an international commitment to lower greenhouse gas emissions seven percent below levels recorded in 1990 by the year 2012. By the end of the year, all 14 Meadowlands municipalities joined the agency in this effort, and the mayors of Kearny and Jersey City had signed the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement.

In June 2007, the NJMC announced plans for a 700 kilowatt startup solar array on its properties in Lyndhurst. The array will fulfill half of the energy requirements of the NJMC campus. It will reduce greenhouse gas emissions the equivalent of 1 million pounds of carbon dioxide, comparable to taking 88 cars off the road each year or planting 136 acres of trees. In the next phase of the solar project, the agency will work with municipalities and school boards across the region to develop requests for proposals for additional solar arrays.

“Local governments across the country have led the effort to advance climate protection. Cities, towns, and counties from New Jersey to California are informing and inspiring others with a can-do attitude and a solutions-oriented approach,” said Kim Lundgren, ICLEI Northeast Regional Director. “ICLEI is proud to support these efforts and looks forward to continuing our work with New Jersey communities.”

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