



Interfaith Power & Light

New Mexico

& El Paso Region

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February 14, 2022

Re: Environmental Justice Act

New Mexico & El Paso Interfaith Power and Light is very supportive of Environmental Justice for All Act to create a Federal Energy Transition Economic Development Assistance Fund.

New Mexico is one of the poorest states in the nation. We are the second largest fossil fuel producing state in the nation. Over decades the fossil fuel industry has not brought us out of poverty, rather, we now face lessening water supplies, polluted land and water, orphaned wells and miles of snaking pipelines from oil and gas sites to tanks and other fixtures that will probably never be cleaned up. What were ranching and farming areas seem to be destined for toxic wastelands. We have uranium mining legacy sites that we still seek funds for clean-up that we hope will provide training and jobs for our Navajo communities well into the future. But, we should not have to rely on clean-up of pollution for job training and jobs. We should not be left as a sacrifice zone or part of what Pope Francis calls the "Throw Away Culture".

We have created some avenues to begin just transition in our state and the federal legislation would go along way in moving this forward for justice and rights for our frontline and underserved communities. Here is a statement from a community group that we work with in the Permian Basin.

Statement from Kayley Shoup, Organizer, Citizens Caring for Future, Frontline Community in SE New Mexico Permian Basin.

"My hometown of Carlsbad, New Mexico is home to the Permian Basin. Also known as the largest oil field on the planet and likely the nation's top emitter of methane. While Southeast New Mexico is home to rich reserves of oil, we are also uniquely positioned to become a manufacturing hub for many different supplies that are used in the production of renewable energy. With the investment of time & resources that The Environmental Justice for All Act will provide we can create the political will in our communities to transition to a more sustainable economy, instead of continuing to be shackled to the oil industry. An industry that not only harms the health of those of us that live among it, but also harms the world with its contribution to global warming. Small oil towns in the most prolific basin in the world want a seat at the table in a green economy, and this act gives us an opportunity to take that seat."

For decades rural states like New Mexico have provided fossil fuels in many forms for the growth of the nation at the expense of communities. It is morally and ethically responsible that some way to address just transition be moved forward for our communities.

Peace and good,

Sr. Joan Brown,osf

Executive Director, New Mexico & El Paso Region Interfaith Power and Light