

Halito, bon joure, bienvenue, I'm Justin Solet, a member of the United Houma Nation. I was born in the town of Dulac, Louisiana where I grew up in a family of fishermen and fisherwomen. My mother worked in the shrimp processing factory while my father ran my grandfather's shrimp boat. My father also shucked oysters alongside my grandmother between shrimp seasons. Commercial fishing earned my parents a modest living which they used to raise three boys. As the eldest of the three children, when I was old enough to get on the boat—around 7 or 8—I worked with my dad as a deckhand until I eventually went to work in the [Gulf of Mexico](#) as a snubbing hand on oil rigs. On my days off from the rig, I still helped my dad on the boat. Shrimping was not just a job, it was a way of life, not only for my family but our culture and our community.

On April 20, 2010, an explosion aboard the Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico held everyone in disbelief as we found out it took the lives of 11 men. In the coming days and weeks we would learn 5 million barrels of oil spilled into the Gulf. It took 9,700 vessels, 127 aircraft, 47,829 people, nearly 2 million gallons of toxic dispersants called COREXIT, and 89 days to stop the spill. 3,000 miles of beaches and wetlands along the Gulf Coast were contaminated by oil. Even the clean up effort was damaging to the wetlands and vegetation. Our lives were turned upside down with fear, questions, and a future full of unknowns.

BP was a highly visible and catastrophic disaster that received national attention, but my people in South Louisiana feel the impacts from the oil and gas industry on a daily basis and are mostly ignored. You have probably heard about BP and Cancer Alley, but have you heard about these:

- Since 2004, undersea wells owned by Taylor Energy have been leaking into the Gulf of Mexico after they were damaged by Hurricane Ivan. It's the [longest-running oil spill](#) in U.S. history and shows why building this stuff in the path of an active hurricane zone is crazy.
- In two incidents in 2015 and 2018 at a Fieldwood Energy facility in Louisiana, two workers intentionally allowed oil to spill in order to avoid required shutdowns that would have hurt company profits. Workers on one of the company's platforms are reported to have joked that their motto was "[safe and sound until production's down](#)." Putting profits over safety is incredibly common in this industry.

The pipelines needed to transport the oil and gas extracted in the Gulf of Mexico come on shore where they tear through the marsh, one of our most important forms of hurricane defense. That's why Hurricane Ida remained so strong even after it made "landfall." Ida then caused thousands of chemical releases and spills that made a horrible situation even worse.

The oil and gas pipelines don't just cause land loss. They also compete with offshore wind. You can't lay transmission lines near oil pipelines for good reason: disturbing them could cause yet another oil spill. This means that even though people in my community are ready to go to work in the offshore wind industry, the jobs won't be coming to Southeast Louisiana until we clean up our mess.

Tribal lands in my community are being sacrificed to oil and gas. Hurricanes are destroying our precious wetlands which have been weakened by dredging for pipelines. Between the destruction of our land from oil and gas and these storms, some of our people have become Climate Migrants. This cannot continue, we must get our nation's energy from justly sourced materials and renewable energy.

What we're fighting for is the right of the people of Louisiana to remain in their homes and have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. The leadership of this committee and the oil and gas companies have decided Lousianans—especially poor, black and indigenous folks—don't deserve that. It's nuts that we're talking about reinvesting in fossil fuels while wealthier areas are already putting their money in wind so they can make clean energy, create jobs, and keep their people safe.

Unless you live in or around communities like mine that are continually sacrificed for the benefit of a few jobs, which aren't held by the people who are impacted, you have no clue. The generational scars that have been left on my people, the land, and the waters we hold sacred in the name of industry are still painful today. Climate resilience is my community's ability to continue living and working on the land and waters that we have called home for hundreds of years. Because of many factors which include, land loss at the hands of oil and gas cutting through our protective marsh, underinvestment in Bayou communities, and hurricanes, indigenous peoples in Terrebonne and Lafource have become some of the first climate migrants. When can our communities begin to thrive, instead of always being resilient?