

Republican Leader David B. McKinley
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
“The CLEAN Future Act and Environmental Justice:
Protecting Frontline Communities”

April 15, 2021

As prepared for delivery

Recently I read an article citing the world health organization’s definition of “poverty.” But their measurement of poverty, simply in terms of per capita income, is inadequate.

According to the article: among the poor poverty is better understood in terms of, shame, powerlessness, hopelessness and humiliation. This hearing on environmental justice is central to an agenda to eliminate fossil fuels from the power sector by 2035.

The consequences of which will leave workers, families, children and entire communities in poverty. Where is the justice in that?

Think about it extremists have spent years shaming coal miners and oilfield workers, blaming them for causing: wildfires, flooding and droughts, hurricanes, low birth weight babies, premature cancers, and asthma.

In this new political environment, fossil fuel workers feel powerless as liberal democrats and the administration team up to take away their life-long jobs.

When their jobs are lost and there are no other opportunities in their area hopelessness will take hold. Will they have to move away to find work? Leave their family? Their community? Their church? Their house is usually their largest asset, but who will buy a house in a dying community?

And finally coal miners and oilfield workers have provided a reliable, dependable income for their families. Now they will be humbled into welfare and food stamps. and waiting for transition jobs that historically never materialize. Workers will be losing their dignity not for what they did but rather for what their government did to them.

And the cruel irony of all of this -- as America dismantles its fossil fuel economy the rest of the world will be expanding its use of coal, natural gas, and oil and emitting GHGs at an alarming pace.

By eliminating jobs in fossil fuels congress will be sentencing Americans all across the country to poverty how is that outcome any different than the injustice created in the past? So maybe it's time for the men and women of government to lose their sanctimonious attitude and walk in the shoes of these families who are about to experience poverty, all in this guise of justice

Oh, yes, workers will be offered unrealistic promises about a "just transition" into jobs in the renewable sector. But even former Sec. Muniz has concluded that new, replacement "green jobs" pay significantly less. And workers in coal and natural gas industries are well aware of how government injustices in the past betrayed fellow workers in: steel, electronics, and textiles.

Look, fossil fuel workers simply want to keep their jobs, not get a government program or a handout. This misguided congressional pursuit of environmental justice will no doubt create poverty causing shame, powerlessness, hopelessness, and humiliation to hard working Americans.

So instead of perpetuating another generation of injustice wouldn't it more respectful to accomplish our mutual objective of reducing carbon emissions by using innovation and research and advancing efficiencies, renewables, nuclear, and batteries?

Look, poverty is poverty, injustice is injustice. Whether it's in an urban area or rural community. Mr. Chairman: if you could prevent poverty for just one family in your district, i'm confident that you too would fight like hell in their behalf.

So, I'm confused. why is the rest of your party turning a deaf ear to the pleas of men, women, and children with fossil fuel jobs and subjecting whole communities to poverty? is that what democrats call "environmental justice"? Hurting working families is not a "justice" that any of us should embrace. Thank you and i yield back