

Monthly Public Meeting

Accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels as we collaborate, cooperate and coordinate with climate crisis fighters in and around Santa Fe

Date: April 11, 2020

Place: via Zoom

Attendees: Robert Cordingley, co-facilitator; Paul Biderman, co-facilitator; Greg Sonnenfeld, Sue B, Gary Payton, Stephen Schmidt, Chris Mann, Maria Spray, Julia Ying, Teresa xxx, Lucy Foma, Jim Eagle, Adam Wasserman, Jean Darling, Barbara Sinha

Current Business

Welcome and introduction

The meeting began at 11:00 am. Robert explained that when participating in a Zoom meeting, it is best to have yourself on mute, then toggle to unmute when you want to speak. He pointed out the Chat button as a way to communicate.

Team Progress Reports

Paul's update on the **Carbon Pricing Team** team included the fact we want to stay involved with Citizens' Climate Lobby, at least for their proposed federal legislation. This team would gear up if receptive legislators and a new president are elected in 2020. He stated that Citizens' Climate Lobby will have a virtual Earth Day meeting on April 25th. If anyone wants to be a liaison with a New Mexico Congressman or Senator, let Paul know.

The **Climate Action Simulation Team** is led by Jim Eagle. He has not met with the rest of the team for an official meeting yet. The plan for this team is to investigate all ways the simulation can be used. He reported that the team knows what direction they want to go.

Greg Sonnenfeld, team lead for the **Climate TRAC team** said he is putting together an agenda for a meeting with his team in the next few days. They plan to learn what other groups are doing in order to coordinate and collaborate with other activists.

Robert is the lead for the **Communications Team**. He said the Wiki for 350 Santa Fe has some basic structure and is set up for additional entries. There have been a couple of people who have volunteered to work on a newsletter.

Regarding the **Legislative Action Team**, Paul said there has been no team meeting yet. He pointed out we need to get organized soon since he expects many relevant bills to be introduced in the 2021 legislative session. One thing the team could pursue is to research the Transportation and Climate Initiative, a regional cap-and-invest program under consideration by a block of states in the Northeast U.S., and see how it might be adapted to our part of the country.

The **Positive Public Education Team** is led by Adam Wasserman. Adam had the first meeting of his Green New Deal class this morning using Zoom and Meetup. He said the team will meet on Monday, April 13.

Jean Darling gave an update on **Earth Day** and **Stop the Pipeline** events. Interested people have drafted a letter to the CEO of Wells Fargo, chosen because of its extensive financial interactions with major oil companies. They could not reach an agreement about whether to send the letter so she asked for input from attendees. Adam believes the pandemic has changed the market for oil and he anticipates many fracking companies will go out of business. Because of that situation, he stated this is a good time to send the letter. Greg thought one letter would not have much impact but he agreed it would be a good time to send it. In fact, he suggested sending some version of the letter to Wells Fargo every month. Chris Mann mentioned the pictures he has seen of beautiful vistas now visible as a result of decreased air pollution, a consequence of stay at home orders related to COVID-19. There was additional discussion in the Chat section of Zoom and ultimately it was agreed to send the letter.

Robert recommended if someone is interested in any of the teams, they can reach out to the person noted in the agenda or use the 'Contact Us' page of the website.

Invited Talk

Methane Emissions Rules

Speaker: Camilla Feibelman, Director, Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

Camilla gave an overview of things the Sierra Club has been involved in related to methane emissions. It started at the federal level in the years of the Obama administration and the Paris Agreement. Two possible rules were drafted:

1. The Bureau of Land Management would treat it as a waste issue and address methane produced on public lands.
2. The Environmental Protection Agency would treat it as a clean air issue and oversee new and modified sources of methane emissions.

Camilla described co-pollution in which methane gets mixed up with a variety of other toxic chemicals, e.g., hydrogen sulfide and NOx. These other components might have more adverse health effects than the methane itself.

In the Trump administration both of the rules have been rolled back. The program for leak detection and repair has been rolled back. The EPA rule would especially impact companies operating in New Mexico.

Camilla said the Sierra Club takes a “Do it right” approach. They realize there is little chance of a fracking ban and yet there are people who are suffering the health consequences of fracking. So the approach is to make sure that extraction is done in a way that minimizes health effects.

At the state level the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) has been working with the Environment Department (NMED) toward developing rules governing methane emissions. A Methane Advisory Panel produced a technical white paper in December 2019 and there was a public comment period for people and groups to react to that paper. Right now it looks like there will be two rules:

1. The EMNRD will regulate waste methane.
2. The NMED will regulate ozone.

She expects the EMNR rule will be substantially finished by late summer. The ED rule may be finished by mid-Fall. She said the Sierra Club could use help from 350 Santa Fe during the public comment period in the future.

Q & A section

- Discussion about the way to deal with the fact New Mexico relies heavily on oil and gas revenue while that industry historically goes through boom and bust cycles. Camilla noted the governor does not have much authority to actually limit oil or gas production. There is a related issue that methane gathered in connection with natural gas may be treated differently than methane produced as a by-product of drilling for oil.
- Chris Mann asked a technical question about a graph showing the carbon budget, noting that it could be interpreted two different ways. Camilla said she will forward the technical comments she has to Robert, Paul and Chris.
- Greg talked about a Swedish company that found a way to use methane to produce energy right on site. He asked whether that company should comment during the public comment period. Camilla said they should. That is just the type of input the regulators need.
- Jim wanted to know what Camilla thought about the earthquake that occurred near Carlsbad recently and whether any seismic concerns were being addressed in the methane rules. Camilla responded there is some chance there is what Oklahoma calls induced seismicity in the Permian basin. It may depend on

whether there is injection of fluids or more of an extraction process. She predicted at some point we probably do need a rule about well spacing.

Webinar Review

Why Carbon Pricing is a Public Health Issue

Source: State Carbon Pricing Network webinar held on March 17, 2020 (Segment starting at about minute 20)

This section of the webinar was presented by Dr. Jonathan Buonocore, lead author of a study done in 2014. The study examined what effect a carbon pricing bill under consideration to be implemented in Massachusetts would have on the health of people living in Massachusetts. The study concluded that the health benefits resulting from carbon pricing are immediate — they occur almost right after emissions reductions begin, while climate benefits resulting from the bill actually take much longer to come to fruition. When examining long-term monetary benefits, those around public health actually exceed climate benefits.

Discussion after viewing the webinar: Chris pointed out how quickly and broadly societal changes were put into effect once the threat from coronavirus was acknowledged. Adam commented that health effects might be a very powerful argument in China and India, where air pollution is visible and its effects are felt by huge populations. Paul would like to see our comments about methane emission rules include something about the health effects on children.

Next meeting

Robert asked how attendees feel about the current meeting day and time. He noted that originally the Saturday meeting was set up according to availability of a meeting room at the public library. However, that is not a restriction now. Attendees voted using the Zoom poll feature and the vote was 12 – 1 in favor of retaining the meeting on Saturday morning for at least one more month. As good weather draws people outdoors more, we may need to re-consider. The next meeting will be Saturday, May 9 via Zoom.

Meeting ended at 12:35 pm

Notes taken by Barbara Sinha