

Climate Defenders New Mexico

Date: July 20, 2019

Place: Home of Paul Biderman, Santa Fe

Attendees: Paul Biderman, co-chair; Bob Kreger, co-chair; Gregg Manoff, Mark Bourke, Jim Bradbury, Dick Cramer, Stephen Schmidt, Robert Cordingley, Noa Dalzell (by phone), Barbara Sinha

Meeting started at 10:30 am

Introductory comments

Paul described some new developments related to Climate XChange. Bob reported on the possibility of having a 350.org chapter in Santa Fe. He has arranged to have a separate Climate Defenders New Mexico email list to keep it separate from the Citizens' Climate Lobby email list, as requested by the national CCL office.

Phone call with Climate XChange

As arranged, Noa Dalzell, the State Carbon Pricing Network Coordinator at Climate Xchange, joined the meeting by phone. She explained that Climate XChange works to get carbon pricing in place at the state level. The organization is based in Massachusetts but they have connections with 42 states. They have a research team that makes recommendations specific to a state. They will be hosting a series of regional events. The first one will be in what she referred to as the "Four Corners" area. The target states for that event will be New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona. The tentative plan for the first regional event is for the first day to be advocate training for state legislation. The evening of the first day will be a reception with keynote speaker. The second day will be invitation-only for certain business leaders and policy makers and they will discuss next steps for their state.

(Move indoors to allow phone conversation to continue.)

Noa stated she will be the point person for the regional event and she would welcome input about locals who need to be 'at the table' or part of the conversation.

Paul asked about the status of having a staffer in New Mexico. Noa replied they are still working on that possibility and that it might happen after the regional event.

Question and Answer portion of the phone call

Question from Mark: What do you think a reasonable goal might be for the next year or two regarding New Mexico? Answer from Noa: Shooting for state carbon pricing legislation in that time frame.

Question from Mark: In general we can put effort toward politicians or the public. Is it appropriate to weight it one way or the other? Answer from Noa: Educating the public is critical and outreach is being done but political officials will be the priority in New Mexico.

Question from Mark: I would like to request an anecdote [from your experience] about engaging a business leader. Answer from Noa: We start with individuals we know care about the environment and who see strong potential of a carbon fee coming. We urge them to become a leader instead of being left in the dust. We have a business association for this purpose in Massachusetts. One idea is to start with people in the solar energy business.

Paul commented that the ability to get others engaged will best be done by collaborating with other groups. **Coalition building is critical.** We will need to endorse other approaches in addition to carbon pricing.

Question from Noa: What organizations do you know of we could contact? Answer from Paul and Bob: 350 NM, Sierra Club, Climate Reality, Retake Our Democracy, New Energy Economy. Bob adds that she can refer to the Power Map for New Mexico done by Climate XChange. Question from Noa: Is it okay for me to reach out to these people? Consensus answer: Yes.

Comment from Mark: A potential challenge for Climate Defenders New Mexico is that the members are older people, mostly male. We should be looking at diversity issues. Response from Noa: That is a widespread pattern in climate change organizations.

Comment from Paul: New Mexico is a “blue” state but some people in the state think the carbon fee is an imposition on low income and rural people. Response from Noa: We need to put environmental justice aspects as a central part of our workshops and presentations. Make it a main point. It is a challenge.

Comment from Robert: We have seen support from young people associated with Earthcare and the Sunrise Movement. Comment from Barbara: Perhaps Bob can send Noa a link about the youth group since their identity is not simple to define.

Follow-up on diversity from Gregg: The Sierra Club is now supporting the Green New Deal.

Question from Bob: Do you have a place picked out yet? Answer from Noa: Santa Fe, probably the first week in October. Bob suggests the Courtyard by Marriott and then Paul asks: What size group do you expect? Answer from Noa: 50 people; 30 for the dinner. Amanda at CX will be looking into venues. Regarding the proposed date, there was discussion about avoiding the Jewish high holidays in September and October.

Attendees voiced their appreciation for what Climate XChange is doing. Call ended at 11:35 am. Paul announced he has accepted a job as a contractor with the new New Mexico Ethics Commission. This work will mean he has less time to devote to Climate Defenders New Mexico and related activities.

Feedback from each individual

Paul wanted to determine how attendees feel about assisting or coordinating with Climate XChange on the regional event in October. Gregg suggested we take a step back and find out where people are regarding the future of Climate Defenders New Mexico. A rough summary of each person's comments is presented next.

Gregg ~ I do not want to be identified individually or as a group with Climate XChange. I believe this could be perceived as being a front for an out-of-state group. I no longer see myself as primarily focused on carbon fee and dividend. Piecemeal solutions are a distraction. I am interested in policy development at the state level, launching off from the Governor's Task Force. I am drawn to something similar to the emissions reduction and renewable energy measure recently passed by the State of New York and signed by the Governor. I would like to encourage the effort by youth to push the Democratic National Committee to pass a resolution to have a debate solely about climate change.

Barbara ~ My position has also evolved. I was convinced by Paul's argument after the last New Mexico state legislative session that carbon fee and dividend will not work at the state level. I attended the climate strike planning meeting organized by youth. I see their effort as a genuine movement and I support much of it. However, I have reservations about some points of the Green New Deal, which they fully support. I am still open to what evolves for Climate Defenders New Mexico.

Mark ~ I support Climate XChange. I want to put my shoulder to the wheel for anything that works.

Dick ~ I am firmly behind carbon fee and Climate XChange.

Stephen ~ I am firmly behind the Green New Deal. I see no conflict between that and Climate XChange.

Jim ~ I support Climate XChange and the carbon fee. Also, Paul Gibson and Retake Our Democracy came out with a 40-page report on New Mexico state legislation.

Robert ~ I am reading about climate change, including The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace-Wells, Drawdown by Paul Hawkes and Tom Steyer, and things Bill McKibben has written. My big concern with social justice advocates is how well they collaborate. The other side is the fossil fuel industry and they are very

focused. I am involved in exploring the possibility of forming a 350.org Santa Fe chapter. We want to collaborate and coordinate with other groups yet not duplicate what they are doing. We have a three-person organizing committee, which realizes we will need to prove to the national organization that we are serious. We need to fix the split that is dividing environmental groups into factions. We plan to have a kick-off meeting with specific points.

Bob ~ I have minutes of a recent 350 New Mexico meeting. The Albuquerque chapter has about 300 members. Climate XChange has the right approach if you look at it this way: Putting carbon pricing in place state by state will result in so much chaos in the areas of fees and regulations that the fossil fuel industry will come to prefer and even advocate for federal regulation. That's when there will be a big push for federal carbon pricing. Based on what I have observed of personnel at state agencies and elsewhere, I want to encourage training policy makers about climate change. I have become aware of a stunning tool created by people at MIT. The World Climate Simulation is a role playing exercise of the UN climate change negotiations for groups. It is unique in that it uses an interactive computer model to rapidly analyze the results of the mock-negotiations during the event. I feel this has a more visceral effect on people than PowerPoint presentations. I propose we become a team of facilitators for this three-hour game. As a first step I propose we all go to the Taos meeting where this game will take place (September 14).

Paul ~ These are challenging issues. I think there is a chance of getting state carbon pricing legislation passed, depending on how the legislation is drafted. Climate XChange is offering the service of arranging collaboration. They have the resources needed to make this happen. Climate Defenders New Mexico does not have the time or effort to do what Gregg proposes. I suggest we use the regional event discussed during the phone call to do the collaborations we want. My prior experience as Secretary of the Energy and Minerals Department included trying to give away money for energy alternatives. I am convinced there will be no change in our transportation habits until gasoline prices increase. I support devoting our time to the Climate XChange event and then support the climate solutions that emerge.

Mark ~ Coalition is (necessary but) not sufficient. Consider the Democrats, who have many like-minded individuals and yet they are divided.

Robert ~ We could draw on the concept of adversarial allies as described in a book I read. There are ways to enhance chances of social change happening.

World Climate Simulation

Bob played a short video as an introduction to the simulation he mentioned earlier. During the game, which typically takes about three hours to complete, the participants get feedback on the consequences of their decisions.

Possible next steps

- A. Support the Climate XChange regional event
- B. Become a 350.org Santa Fe chapter
- C. Use World Climate Simulation as an educational tool
- D. Conference in 2020 – Paul will speak with Camilla and Sue; Barbara mentioned the upcoming 30-day session may or may not be the appropriate time to advocate for climate-related legislation; Paul said if it has taxes in it or the governor supports it, then it is considered “germane” and may be introduced during a short (one-month) session.
- E. State legislation – Students from Santa Fe Prep are still involved; they obtained Rep. Abbas Akhil as a new sponsor
- F. Citizens’ Climate Lobby meetings – could have them on a quarterly basis
- G. Green New Deal for New Mexico
- H. Influence Governor’s Task Force – Gregg will write a one-page letter to the Governor’s Task Force

Next meeting

The next meeting will be Saturday, August 10, at the Public Library downtown.

Meeting ended at 1:15 pm

Minutes taken by Barbara Sinha