



Final Notes

Climate Action Plan Community Conversations

Silver City, NM

3.13.2025

Welcome

Clarify objectives, group agreements, Lilly Irvin-Vitela and Melissa Ontiveros:

- Listen to understand
- Be respectful of common ground and differences
- Share the space
- Remember your voice matters.

Provide context and expectations, NMED and EMNRD by Becky Smith, PhD:

- The aim of the NM Climate Action Plan is
 - [1] To reduce climate pollution by 45% by 2030 (compared to 2005).
 - [2] To lead New Mexico to net zero climate pollution by 2050.

- The planning process includes exploration across NM of New Mexicans personal values, local priorities, and state priorities to inform the approaches that are adopted in the New Mexico plan.
- Some of the parameters that will guide the selection of approaches include feasibility of implementation, cost and the availability of funding, the impact of the strategy or tactic on pollution reductions, the transformative impact, and community values.

Community Values

- Participant from Silver City, NM is frustrated because has not heard about natural climate solutions in NM as an option. For example, carbon draw down. This is concerning because 90% of our ecosystem is scheduled for ecological conversions- there are opportunities for reforestation.
- A participant has been engaged for 30 years in forest restoration, energy waste and materials- industry. The two largest wildfires in NM history occurred 2 years ago. This lead to smoke and carbon dioxide contributions. Could have capacity with proper forest management to use carbon sequestration.
- Another participant sees a huge opportunity in NM for carbon draw downs in agriculture and range lands. We can have a significant impact with education and land management.
- Another participant came because they want to learn.
- A participant is interested in how public lands might be involved in conservation.
- One participant mentioned fire and water concerns, other places it was easier to grow stuff, federal unrest- how does that impact us at the state level.
- A participant from Silver City, NM feels despair- long term our growth economy is unsustainable. New Earth Project work with kids in composting and making soil. We should invest resources into youth engagement and education and consider using New Earth as a model.
- A participant from Pinos Altos wants to hear what people said to save the planet.

It is the basis for all life and future generations. Cannot disappear on our own ranch. The installed their first solar panels in the 1980's and drove an e-car powered by solar panels. However, what is missing is strong government leadership to incentivize making better choices.

- Another participant from Pinos Altos fears potential for wildlife, evacuation is scary. Moving forward, we may not have federal support to safeguard communities that are at a high fire risk or have already experienced fire.
- Another participant met wife in Shiprock on the Navajo Nation. While there they breathed sludge air from the Four Corners power plant. It was reminiscent of New Jersey. They have lived in places where you cannot see another city across the bridge because of air pollution. Snowfall had dropped significantly from 1996. Trees are dying right and left. They moved to Grant County for the Gila and too are too damn close to too many forest fires. Concerned about future generations. Unless something changes dramatically, we may not avoid destruction. Involve youth-use energy and intelligence. Activate youth, including politically,
- Another participant worked on the mayor's climate task force, sustainability plan, and many climate issues. Feels like Deja vu. When will we act?
- Another participant, a retired librarian, expressed concern as a citizen and grandparent about future generations.

What are the best practices for us at this time in history? How do we communicate with and educate people with the changing climate, energy consumption intelligently. Concerned about the Gila and protecting it. Concerned about the role of the federal government not taking climate change seriously.

- Another participant works with Representative Terrazas as the district legislative aid. He expressed concern about fire mitigation and it's seriousness our communities face. We have residents who cannot be insured because they are in wooded or other high risk areas. When it comes to solutions, there's concern about follow through because contractors installing backup equipment and create a path forward are in short supply. His goal is to gather and share information with Representative Terrazas.
- A participant from Pinos Altos is part of the local Indivisible Climate Action Committee. They read Governor Lujan Grisham's plan, and it was well researched and well thought out- not just aspirational. Plus, every part community has made are excellent suggestions. There are professional scientists-managers that have 20 years ahead. People know how to address climate change. Strategies have been tested with good qualitative evidence and financial analysis. Concern about federal rollback on progress and the need for state action. Centerpiece putting a price on carbon markets. For example, Washington State invested millions, and money saved from less energy use was used to support

those without weatherization and replace old appliances.

- Participant from Silver City- we have been impacted by dust storms. We must address the absence of federal support and who fights our fires. They believe we are way behind on climate plan, increased solar potential, recycling potential, range land restoration, steel recycling, water conservation, and building recycling.
- A participant from Silver City believes our food systems are vulnerable. Suggests that we decentralize food systems and increase local food. They stated that the climate crisis is real.
- A participant is interested in food and gardening. They noted that legislation SB4 failed because of one vote. They would like to see less oil and gas influence and to see more intergovernmental cooperation.
- A participant explained they were a member of the Mayor's Climate Action Committee. They focused on resources, weatherization, and e-vehicles. Because of finance and public transit there are limits. NM does not have mass transit fund. Local communities need cash, and our state should take an active role in communities that are walkable, mass transit, and implementation of climate action plans.
- Participant from Silver City, asked how can we bring state resources to the community.
- A participant who is new to Silver City has a background in horticulture, organic, permaculture, and learning how to survive climate change. They also noted

that walking and biking are important to lowering our carbon footprint. They want to help others to garden in this environment.

- A participant representing Catron, Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo counties noted that water, housing, and economic development are driving issues in the region. Also, other considerations that fit the region are: geothermal opportunities; water and wastewater infrastructure that use solar to lower cost of rates for families in rural, and underserved communities; increase money for weatherization to lower heating costs; prevent or manage fires- grassfires, wildfires, dust storms leading to loss of life on I-10 and hazard to air and health.
- A participant noted serving on a local climate advisory committee. Feels a responsibility to children and future generations. Support emissions reductions and echo carbon draw down. Resilience is a concern for example we cannot produce enough food here-food security is a big issue. Want collaboration and leveraging- example Community Forestry Project 1000 trees to areas across SW NM. Water and wildlife are also a concern.
- A participant is curious about how at local and regional level we can switch our risk. Agree with others about responsibility to future generations and other species. We can focus on landfill reduction and look at soil reclamation.
- A participant retired to Silver City. In 1976 they worked in the governor's energy office in Wyoming. We cannot go back to that time but in the west we have a

special obligation to decrease carbon dioxide as fast as we can, with conservation.

- A participant from Silver City noted that we cannot just reduce carbon emissions. We must also find natural solutions for carbon neutrality. These strategies are essential to the survival of all species, enforceable regulations, authority to implement, enforceable standards, help developing local plans, and funds to implement local ideas. They also expressed concern about oil, gas, and emissions.
- A participant who is new to Silver City is concerned about groundwater penetration. The Gila retains moisture. Long timers have shared insight about the drop in snow fall over the years. There is concern about corporations benefiting from the grids more than ever day people. But they like the idea of micro-grids or off grids tied to tax breaks or incentives.
- Participant wants to see what the state is doing or thinking about. Things that concern, so much land is overgrazed, is there any research about planting plants and trees in burn areas, 6 stop lights, 6 cars-pollution.
- A participant knows how to handle overgrazing, but at the same time seem to have no clue. Deeply involved in conservation of CA gas stations-smell gas at gas station, is expensive-new stations recycle fumes. Forests burn but why can we harvest trees. Housing shortage-mixed use with stores and residential, natural gas leakage in fields.
- A participant from Catron and Grant counties, was a rancher for 25 years. They

note they cannot overgraze and stay in business. They explained the community talk across the aisle and have influence

with education. They have big concern about the lack of water and clean water.

Transportation

Together participants analyzed and prioritized the following priorities, raised, and answered clarifying questions, and identified missing strategies/tactics related to the transportation.

- Create communities where it is easy and safe to get around without a car.
 - 37 people identified this as an effective strategy.
 - 2 people saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Increase safety, availability, and efficiency of public transit.
 - 37 people identified this as an effective strategy.
 - 2 people saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Make it cheaper and easier to buy and charge electric vehicles (trains).
 - 25 people identified this as an effective strategy.
 - 6 people saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - 2 people opposed this strategy.
- Make it easier and cheaper for freight, buses, delivery, and ride share vehicles to use cleaner fuels.
 - 31 people identified this as an effective strategy.
 - 3 people saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Help people repair and replace high polluting cars.
 - 16 people identified this as an effective strategy.
 - 17 people saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - 1 person opposed this strategy.

Clarifying Questions:

- Are these strategies statewide or local or both?
- What do we mean about cleaner fuels? (electric, biofuel, and hydrogen)
- How will people determine what is the best option of repairing or replacing high polluting cars?
 - Will there be consideration of embedded energy and recycling old vehicles?
- Where are the youth in decision making?
 - They will live with the implications across their life spans.

What's Missing?:

- Drive less (walkability, bike)

- Land use planning to facilitate compact development (good planning important)
- Workforce (explicit)
- Highways
- Rail transportation
- Solar development (trains)
- Wildlife quarters
- Walking distance-economics
 - True livable cities
- Creating bike lanes
- Increase desirability of public transportation and decrease desirability of nonpublic transportation
- Getting traffic lights inline computerized lights
- Economics circularized
- Nonmotorized vehicles
- Train expansion

Priorities:

- Create communities where it is easy and safe to get around without a car.
- Increase safety, availability, and efficiency of public transit.
- Make it cheaper and easier to buy and charge electric vehicles (trains)
- Make it easier and cheaper for freight, buses, delivery, and ride share vehicles to use cleaner fuels.

Energy

Together participants analyzed and prioritized the following priorities, raised, and answered clarifying questions, and identified missing strategies/tactics related to energy.

- Make it easier and cheaper to install solar panels and batteries for homes.
 - 29 participants supported this strategy.
 - 2 participants saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Expand and make electrical grid more efficient to support adding cheap and clean renewable power.
 - 6 participants supported this strategy.
 - 24 participants saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Make it easier and cheaper for homes and businesses to save energy. Including upgrading appliances and HVAC systems and replacing gas, propane, or oil powered appliances with electric appliances.
 - 8 participants supported this strategy.

- 19 participants saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
- No one opposed this strategy.
- Adopt and enforce the most recent building and energy codes for greater energy and safety.
 - 7 participants supported this strategy.
 - 19 participants saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - 5 participants opposed this strategy.
- Make it easier for homes and businesses to get paid for utilizing less energy during peak demand.
 - 22 participants supported this strategy.
 - 5 participants saw positives and negatives of this strategy.
 - No one opposed this strategy.

Clarifying Questions:

- What about reducing energy use?
- Building electric codes are expensive and can be cost prohibitive in rehabilitating old building that have been vacant and do not meet current day codes. Will this be reexamined?
 - Reviewing and updating codes
 - Building codes –alternative in solar
- Incentives instead of regulation of codes
- Who is “making” people do things in all of the goals begin with making?
- What do you mean by expand?
 - Change to make more efficient
- Microgrids-expand

What’s Missing?:

- Think about hydrogen
- Think about what technologies we already have
- Community solar
 - Special rate for electric water heaters
- Leadership from representatives
- Incentivize building codes
 - Build on IRA
- Workforce! Must be woven throughout
- Public owned utilities
 - Rebates
 - Lower rates
- Fully backed up solar for water
 - Built in protection
- Need education at all levels
- Enforce codes
 - Require replace gas with electric appliances

- Need electricity for electrification (long term)

Priorities:

- Managing goals begin with “making” but specify who is making things happen.
- Reduce power-liability
- Loss of efficiency- do not want to replace gas with electric (think of whole cycle)
 - On grid, natural gas
- Make it easier and cheaper to install solar panels and batteries for homes.
- Make it easier and cheaper for homes and businesses to save energy.
- Make it easier for homes and businesses to get paid for utilizing less energy during peak demand.

Agriculture, Forest, Wilderness

Together participants analyzed and prioritized the following priorities, raised, and answered clarifying questions, and identified missing strategies/tactics related to agriculture, forest, and wilderness.

- Implement landscape- scale wildfire reduction and prevention practices in high-risk and high-priority watersheds throughout NM.
 - 21 people supported this strategy.
 - 1 person open to the strategy but expressed some hesitation.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Incorporate landscape-scale restoration that supports native plant communities, carbon storage, drought prevention, and future climate resilience on natural and working lands.
 - 29 people supported this strategy.
 - No one expressed hesitation.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Identify and implement strategies for collection and use of carbon data to evaluate climate efforts, carbon sequestration opportunities, and participation in carbon markets.
 - 22 people supported this strategy.
 - 1 participant was open to the strategy but expressed some hesitation.
 - No one opposed this strategy.
- Prioritize land for low carbon uses like parks, recreation, green spaces, conservation, and community gardens, particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities.
 - 25 people supported this strategy.
 - 1 participant was open to the strategy but expressed some hesitation.
 - No one was opposed to this strategy.
- Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous land management practices in conservation and forestry efforts.
 - 26 people supported this strategy.
 - No one expressed hesitation.

- No one opposed this strategy.
- Encourage agricultural soil management practices that enhance carbon storage and water retention.
 - 26 people supported this strategy.
 - No one expressed hesitation.
 - No one opposed this strategy.

Clarifying Questions:

- Why are wilderness concerns not infused throughout all areas?
- In southwest NM, most of the land on ranches is owned by BLM, Forest Service and the State of NM!
 - That means that any overgrazing or other lack of proper maintenance is probably in violation of agreements.
 - With the current White House occupant, we cannot expect much enforcement from the Feds.
 - That does not keep NM from enforcing lease provisions.
 - Way too much bare ground! Could NMSU do research to help grazing land recover?

What's Missing?:

- Good policy around forest restoration by Senator Padilla.
- Addressing overgrazing
- Changing food production systems
- Missed 2 degrees Celsius
 - Moving high risk to very high-risk future where Gila and high mountains are transformed

Priorities:

- Incorporate landscape-scale restoration that supports native plant communities, carbon storage, drought prevention, and future climate resilience on natural and working lands
- Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous land management practices in conservation and forestry efforts.
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- Encourage agricultural soil management practices that enhance carbon storage and water retention.

Waste and Materials

Together participants analyzed and prioritized the following priorities, raised, and answered clarifying questions, and identified missing strategies/tactics related to waste and materials.

- Capture waste gas (methane) from sites like landfills and dairies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or make electricity and cleaner fuel.

- 17 participants supported this strategy.
- 1 participant was open to the strategy but expressed some hesitation.
- No one was opposed to this strategy.
- Support wastewater treatment plants in creating compost from treated waste.
 - 8 participants supported this strategy.
 - 5 participants were open to the strategy but expressed some hesitation.
 - 4 participants opposed this strategy.
- Make it easier to compost at home and places where food is served.
 - 14 participants supported this strategy.
 - 2 participants were open to the strategy but expressed some hesitation.
 - No one was opposed to this strategy.
- Reduce the amount of construction and demolition waste.
 - This strategy had unanimous support with 16/16 supporting.
- Make it easier and cheaper to use low carbon concrete and other materials.
 - 9 participants fully supported this strategy.
 - 6 participants were ambivalent about this strategy.
 - No one opposed the strategy.

Clarifying Questions:

- Treated waste safety? What safeguards are in place or can be in place?
- Encourage? Use implement encourage- Agriculture
- What happened to building-repurpose, refurbish, and reuse
- Low carbon concrete: how long do they last are they as strong as regular concrete?

What's Missing?:

- Divert organic materials from landfills
- Wildlife (overarching) stronger language

Priorities:

- Reduce the amount of construction and demolition waste.
- Capture waste gas (methane) from sites like landfills and dairies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or make electricity and cleaner fuel.

Industry

Together participants analyzed and prioritized the following priorities, raised, and answered clarifying questions, and identified missing strategies/tactics related to industry.

- Continue to invest in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas activities, for example by identifying and fixing leaking infrastructure or electrifying equipment.
 - There were 13 who supported this strategy.

- 1 that was neither for nor against this strategy. No one opposed this strategy.
- Continue to plug or remediate abandoned wells and oil and gas infrastructure throughout NM.
 - This strategy had unanimous support 14/14 in favor.
- Continue to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through carbon capture efforts.
 - There were 4 who supported this strategy.
 - 6 that was neither for nor against this strategy.
 - 4 participants opposed this strategy.
- Increase monitoring and enforcement capacity for state emissions regulations.
 - There were 13 who supported this strategy.
 - 2 of the group were ambivalent about this strategy.
 - No one was opposed to the strategy.
- Create a clean hydrogen hub in NM.
 - 2 participants supported this strategy but there were 2 people who identified the need for more information.
 - 11 opposed this strategy.
- Explore opportunities for carbon markets in NM.
 - 2 participants were supportive of this strategy.
 - 11 participants were unsure of supporting or opposing this strategy and 2 participants opposed it.

Clarifying Questions:

- What is meant by remediating oil wells?
- “Pink,” “blue,” “green” What is clean?
- Clean hydrogen? The same as what the governor proposes.
- Specify carbon capture efforts?
- New hydrogen hub, are we talking about recycling and using new technology?
 - “New construction”
- What about geothermal energy?
 - What is the governor’s plan?

What’s Missing?:

- Carbon markets
 - Price on carbons (good and ones that are worse)
- Safety
- Geothermal
- Over regulations as risk
- More inspectors/workforce
- **Plan for climate migration

Priorities:

- Continue to plug or remediate abandoned wells and oil and gas infrastructure throughout NM.
- Continue to invest in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas activities, for example by identifying and fixing leaking infrastructure or electrifying equipment.
- Increase monitoring and enforcement capacity for state emissions regulations.

Next Steps and Opportunities to Participate

- Notes will be sent early next week for review by everyone who signed-in and shared their e-mail. Participants will be given an opportunity to review and send feedback.
- The values and priorities will help shape the next round of community meetings and ultimately, the drafting of New Mexico's statewide Climate Action Plan.
- Participants who have not completed the Climate Action Plan survey are invited to share their voice in that way too.
- The planning team will invite everyone who registered or attended this meeting to future planning meetings and continue widening the public outreach efforts.
- Participants are also encouraged to invite others.