

ENERGY DEMOCRACY

Building a Green, Resilient Future through
Public and Community Ownership

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY AGENDA

Laura Williamson
Senior Policy Analyst

Lew Daly
*Senior Policy Analyst +
Senior Advisor for Policy Development*

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“The struggle against the extreme fossil fuel agenda is a struggle for system change, for an alternative system. It is a struggle for community health, community resilience, and community empowerment... The struggle to achieve that kind of alternative is fundamentally a struggle for democracy.”

– Denise Fairchild and Al Weinrub¹



The Problem

Energy is an integral and indispensable element of our daily lives. From the fossil fuels that still run much of our infrastructure to the wind and solar energy that power our 21st century homes and workplaces, our lives are made possible by energy. Energy is such a critical element of our existence that people should have a say in when, where, and how energy is produced, and we should benefit from its production, especially when it happens in our communities.

However, today this vital resource is privatized and commodified beyond recognition, and the benefits of energy generation accrue to a small body of corporate and wealthy actors rather than to the communities from which energy is sourced. Private control of energy has served as a linchpin of structural oppression of white over Black and brown, and rich over poor. The dominant power resource since the late 19th century, fossil fuel energy was originally developed to facilitate and protect an expansive system of settler colonial and capitalist exploitation.² Today, more than a century since the rise of industrial-scale fossil fuel development and use, the co-

lonial-capitalist system has concentrated vast wealth in the hands of a few, all while perpetuating white supremacy and threatening the very existence of our planet.

The energy that has enriched us so unequally is fueling the destruction of our planet at an alarming rate. According to a 2018 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, written by 91 scientists across 40 countries, rising temperatures globally will lead to substantial increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events like floods, droughts, heat waves, fires, and hurricanes over the coming years, and we have just 12 years left to prevent the worst of the global destruction these events will unleash.³ The destabilization of polar and coastal ice sheets and rising sea levels will submerge coastal communities in the United States and other parts of the world, and may submerge entire island nations, while increasing ocean acidification and atmospheric warming will lead to dramatic changes in plant and animal life both in our oceans and on land.⁴ As Cecilia Martinez, co-founder and executive director at the Center for Earth, Energy, and Democracy (CEED), said, “In the span of less than 300 years, we have managed to seriously impair the quality of our air and water, alter the Earth’s climate systems, and craft the beginning of the planet’s 6th mass extinction.”⁵

While climate change is undeniably an existential threat to all humanity, it is not impacting everyone equally. Instead, the consequences of climate change, which has been prompted and accelerated by the wealthy, industrialized nations of the global north, are playing out most tragically in the resource-poor nations of the global south.⁶ Within the United States, low-income communities, especially Black and brown communities, who have for decades been on the frontlines of the dirty energy economy and suffered severe health impacts like higher rates of asthma and cancer as a result,⁷ are the same communities that are most vulnerable to severe impacts of accelerating climate change, from hurricanes and other extreme weather to deadly heatwaves to prolonged drought.⁸ From the decades-long practice of situating toxic factories and farms along the fence lines of communities of color,⁹ to the utterly inadequate and highly racialized government responses when extreme weather devastates entire communities,¹⁰ people of color bear the brunt of both the creation and the consequences of dirty energy.¹¹ In most parts of the U.S., Black and brown people also have the least say in how energy is produced, and reap none of the benefits of its generation.

Black and brown communities also spend more of their income on energy and face higher rates of energy insecurity. African American and Latinx communities experience, on average, a median energy burden that is 64 percent and 24 percent

greater, respectively, than that faced by white communities.¹² Native Americans face energy insecurity at rates double that of the general population.¹³ On top of the ways it has ravaged our planet, climate change has exposed and further entrenched the racial and economic inequities that pervade our society, themselves the result of intentional policy choices and systemic disinvestment in communities of color.¹⁴

Grassroots organizers in the hardest hit communities are doing inspiring and transformative work to move America and the world toward a sustainable, clean energy economy. This vital, planet-saving effort presents an opportunity to make generational investments in frontline communities. It also provides an opportunity for fresh thinking about how energy is produced, moving away from monopolistic, corporate control, and toward a more democratic energy system.

However, we cannot take for granted that the transition to renewable energy will inevitably lead to greater equity and justice. In fact, the current model and market for renewable energy development is an extension of the undemocratic fossil fuel energy production model. This model continues to see energy as a commodity to be commercialized and profited from, and it perpetuates investor and corporate-owned infrastructure and production divorced from the needs and decision-making of the communities that utilize the energy.¹⁵ The mainstream transition to renewable energy has been built on the extractive and capitalist logic of the fossil fuel economy, leveraged as a business opportunity to continue extracting wealth from communities and transferring profit to corporations and others who trade in the “financialization of nature.”¹⁶

For example, under the dominant renewable energy model, the role of communities remains narrowly defined as that of passive consumers, i.e. the “ratepayers.” As mere consumers, communities are denied the opportunity to participate in decisions and determine key choices about when and how energy is produced and distributed. Instead, decisions related to environmental risks and protections are being made by the corporate energy producers and private, investor-owned utilities, whose overriding motivation is profit, or by unelected public utilities commissions, without input from communities who are subject to the consequences and the potential benefits of such decisions.¹⁷ Private, investor-owned utilities put profit over the needs of people and planet, clinging to dirty energy infrastructure and fighting renewable energy at every turn, while also charging low-income consumers higher rates and then shutting off heat in the middle of winter for failure to pay.¹⁸ Public utility commissions, while theoretically public, are in many cases unelected bodies with little accountability to the communities impacted by their decisions.¹⁹

Also under this model, low-income communities that already spend a significant portion of their income on utilities²⁰ are denied any financial benefits of renewable energy production, and are left with few avenues for challenging this exploitative structure. Further, some communities are actually experiencing even greater environmental harm as a result of market-based renewable energy strategies like carbon trading and carbon taxes. For example, as companies are allowed to buy carbon permits—essentially, rights to pollute—the people of color and low-income people who live nearby experience heightened pollution burdens.²¹

Climate change is among the most pressing issues of our time, and its devastating effects are falling disproportionately on communities of color, low-income people, and other populations who have contributed least to its onset. The transition to renewable energy aimed at combatting climate change presents a unique opportunity to democratize the entire energy system and chart a more just, equitable path to a green future. Doing so will build healthier, more resilient and sustainable communities, and strengthen our democracy.

THIS CAN'T WAIT
TIL I'M BIGGER



The Solution: Energy Democracy

Lawmakers at all levels of government, regulators, clean energy developers, and other actors in the transition to renewable energy should adopt *Energy Democracy principles* that center racial, social, and economic justice in the transition to renewable energy.

States and localities must transition from privately-owned and run utilities to *public or community ownership* of energy distribution and rapidly expand distributed renewable energy infrastructure.

States should provide upfront capital for public and community-owned energy through a *robust government-funded, low-cost loan program* and through *outright grants* to localities and communities, rather than tax credit-based investment models.

States should develop pricing structures for energy created in communities that *build market power for community-owned energy* relative to utility monopolies, and in so doing, level the market for public and community-owned energy.

If the problem of corporatization and privatization of the green economy feels familiar, so should the solution: the democratization of power (energy itself, as well as economic and political). Specifically, we must democratize the vital energy resources that fuel our lives, via public and community ownership of the energy sector. We must transition from an understanding of energy as a commodity to be produced and sold, through which immense profits are reaped by a few corporations and their shareholders and dire consequences are faced by both people and planet, to one of energy as a resource to be created and owned by those who utilize it, in the service of healthy, sustainable living and environmental protection. While the concept may seem far-fetched in a country where many of the fundamental systems are deeply privatized, the idea of energy democracy is gaining traction among advocates and policymakers and galvanizing a movement.²² Not least, advocates for energy democracy are forging a distinctive pathway for marrying climate goals and community empowerment in a time when both are under assault by corporate power in the energy system and political power in federal and state governance.

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Embracing an Energy Democracy Framework

Energy democracy is a framework that originates with, and centers justice and equity for, the communities most harmed by climate change and environmental injustice. The framework exists alongside strategies for halting and repairing the extensive environmental damages of the dirty energy economy. According to one of the U.S. energy democracy movement's leading advocates, Dr. Denise Fairchild, the energy democracy movement:

“...seeks to replace our current corporate fossil fuel economy with one that puts racial, social, and economic justice at the forefront of the transition to a 100% renewable energy future. In particular, energy democracy acknowledges the historical and contemporary perspectives and experiences of frontline communities... [and] prioritizes the needs and concerns of working families, indigenous communities, and communities of color in the struggle to define a new energy future.”²³

Energy can be democratized most effectively through transitioning from private, investor-owned utilities to public ownership or community ownership of renewable energy infrastructure. Public ownership of utilities means governments, rather than private, for-profit corporations, own and run these key actors in the energy system. Community ownership means the people ourselves have a direct say in when, where, and how energy is generated in our communities. It also means that the financial rewards of energy creation benefit us, not monopolistic corporations. Both approaches promote greater energy democracy and are described more fully below.

Because energy utilities control a significant portion of the energy supply chain, transforming these entities holds the potential to meet the urgency and scope of the problem by quickly supplanting fossil fuels with renewables, pursuing equitable wealth distribution over the goal of profit maximization, and democratizing decision-making processes related to energy creation and distribution.²⁴

Transitioning to Public Ownership of Utilities Can Build Energy Democracy

Publicly-owned and run utilities have existed in the United States since the 1880s, and today they operate in 49 states and 5 territories, supplying power to more than 2,000 communities and roughly 50 million people. About 15 percent of Americans get their power from public utilities.²⁵ These utilities power communities as small as Hammond, Wisconsin (home to about 2,000 people) and as large as Los Angeles, California.²⁶ They span in size from hyper-local utilities fueling a few thousand people to the Tennessee Valley Authority, which provides electricity to approximately 10 million people across 7 Southern states.²⁷

Public utilities are place-based, meaning they are located and operate in the geographic area they serve, and they reinvest revenue back into these communities.²⁸ Unlike privately-owned utilities, they also distribute wealth more equitably internally. A recent study of publicly- and privately-owned utilities found a 10-fold difference in pay between the highest-paid and average lineman employees at publicly-owned utilities, compared to a 100-fold difference in privately-owned utilities.²⁹

With some exceptions, public utilities often have higher levels of renewable energy than private utilities,³⁰ and their purpose and accountability structures make them more likely to embrace renewable energy moving forward.³¹ Public utilities also better serve their customers than do private utilities—on average, consumers who get their energy from public utilities pay 13 percent less than customers of private utilities, and they are without power for an hour less per year than those serviced by private utilities.³²

Critically, while communities are entirely locked out of decision-making by private, investor-held utilities, the governance and accountability structures of public utilities mean communities can hold greater influence on decision-making and have greater recourse when utilities do not act in their interest.³³ Private, investor-owned utilities make profit-driven decisions about energy generation and distribution at the guidance of their shareholders. Public utilities, on the other hand, in theory allow for greater input by local communities impacted by those decisions, by providing greater transparency, more opportunities for participation, and improved accountability.³⁴

In practice, however, public utilities are not always much more accessible than private utilities; they often do not proactively consult with or act accountably to

communities they serve, and in most places the public's knowledge about and engagement with their utility is fairly limited. Consistent with their status as *public* entities, public utilities should adopt the principles of energy democracy and make a commitment to democratic governance.

The New York Energy Democracy Alliance recommends doing so by “creat[ing] mechanisms to ensure widespread and meaningful participation in democratic decision-making, transparency, and public accountability.”³⁵ These include robust and ongoing community consultation, from regular and well-advertised public meetings that are accessible to working-class families and non-English speakers, as well as repeated opportunities for input from local organizing bodies like neighborhood assemblies.³⁶ Additionally, public utilities could reserve seats on their governing boards for community members, elected through regular public elections, and for non-leadership workers within the utility.³⁷

One powerful proposal for democratizing energy via public control at the federal level is the Community Ownership Power Administration (COPA) plan advanced by Soulardarity, We Own It, and the Next System Project of the Democracy Collaborative.³⁸ In proposing public control of energy utilities, COPA calls for democratized administration and decision-making via “multi-stakeholder boards,” through which workers, community members, and elected officials work together to most effectively govern energy in the interests of communities. It also proposes regular and robust neighborhood meetings, which could deal with everything from worker rights and needs within the utility to energy rates and potential new renewable energy projects. These meetings would serve to “decentralize participation and draw upon local knowledge—be it technical expertise or pure lived experience—across their service area” and, in turn, to ensure that low-income people and communities of color can access and influence energy decisions in their interests.³⁹

Given the potential for democratizing energy, community activists, city leaders, and even former presidential candidates are throwing their efforts behind making utilities public. In Boulder, Colorado, residents have been organizing since 2010 to municipalize the city's privately-owned utility,⁴⁰ and in October 2019 they achieved

a major victory: the state's Public Utilities Commission approved the transfer of some of the assets necessary for a community-owned, city-run public utility.⁴¹ After multiple votes in support of the municipalization over the last decade, Boulder voters will make an ultimate decision on the future of the public utility in 2020.⁴² After a privately-owned PG&E power line sparked a devastating wildfire in California in 2018,⁴³ both state lawmakers and city governments alike are considering opportunities to municipalize the utility.⁴⁴ Elected leaders in New York and Chicago are also considering municipalization.⁴⁵ And Senator Bernie Sanders has proposed a plan for 100 percent public power, which would de-commodify energy generation and prioritize justice and equity in the transition to a fully nationalized, entirely renewable energy system.⁴⁶



Community Ownership Creates Even More Democratic Energy Systems

Because renewable resources like wind, solar, and geothermal heat are distributed—meaning they can come from many places, including homes, businesses, and open lots, rather than from big, centralized power stations—they can be harnessed and converted into energy directly in communities. As communities become both producers and consumers, it is possible for them, rather than remote corporations, to own and exercise sovereignty over energy resources and, in turn, to build political and economic power.

Communities reap many benefits from democratic governance of their energy resources. First and foremost, they can weigh costs and benefits of energy-related options and make decisions that take into account both energy needs and the health and wellness of community members and the environment, ensuring energy is produced and distributed in an equitable, sustainable way.⁴⁷

Additionally, since they are not paying the costs of fossil fuels or of transporting energy from centralized production sites, community ownership can significantly reduce the price of energy—a critical development in low-income and utility-burdened communities. In fact, while communities may choose to produce only what they need, local ownership means that any financial benefit from surplus energy will accrue to communities themselves, not to the shareholders of multinational corporations.⁴⁸ According to the Institute for Local Self Reliance, “every

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megawatt of solar installed locally adds \$2.5 million and 20 construction jobs to the local economy. In its 25-year lifetime, a locally owned solar project will redirect an additional \$5.4 million of electricity spending back into local pockets.” When wealth generated by local ownership stays local, community members are better equipped to face the ever-rising costs of living and to build long-term economic assets.

Finally, through a democratic governance structure, communities can develop renewable energy projects that prioritize local hiring, sourcing, and management, meaning more and better jobs for their residents and more efficient, equitable use of local resources.

While the definitions of community energy vary, the most basic distinction is twofold, encompassing 1) community control of the sources of electricity, and 2) sharing of renewably-sourced electricity production within communities. The first usually takes the general form of community choice aggregation (CCA), a system of full or partial municipal control of the mix of energy sources generating the electricity distributed by utilities. The second and more truly localized approach comprises a range of “shared solar” models designed for community access to power production. Shared solar models expand access to solar power to the substantial share of renters who cannot access their rooftops, and to homeowners who cannot install their own solar installations due to location or financial factors. Critically, community shared solar also has the potential to remedy stark racial disparities in rates of rooftop solar deployment, which persist even after controlling for income and homeownership rates.⁴⁹ Community shared solar is a powerful tool for addressing present-day inequities in access to solar power.

1. Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Through Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), local governments aggregate the electricity needs of all their residents and then purchase electricity collectively for everyone in the community. The existing utility continues to deliver that electricity to customers through its infrastructure, but communities are empowered to make decisions about where that energy comes from.⁵⁰ CCA gives communities the power to negotiate better rates through aggregated demand, as well as the ability to choose greener power sources.⁵¹ In addition to local control and lower rates, CCA’s benefits include more efficient energy production, greater price stability, and more renewable energy alternatives.⁵² Massachusetts pioneered CCAs in 1997. Since then, 6 other states have adopted the practice, and several others are considering legislation to allow CCA.⁵³

2. Community Shared Solar

A more decentralized and democratized alternative to community choice aggregation, community shared solar essentially means giving multiple households access to the value of renewable energy through a common solar array installed in available space nearby. The common solar array for multiple households is an alternative to the individual household arrays installed by individual homeowners, businesses, and other property-owners. While it comprises only a very small fraction of electricity production today, as shared solar expands it can also become an accessible, reliable, and more equitable alternative to the existing structure of monopoly electricity supplied by utilities through the mainline grid.

Shared solar can take a variety of different forms.

Utility-owned shared solar:

The most prevalent form by volume currently is utility-owned shared solar. This is a consumer model where, in most cases, a utility builds and owns a sizeable solar installation in a given billing district, and district ratepayers choose the solar offering by paying an upfront or monthly charge on a fixed contract. Depending on fluctuation of energy prices over contract periods, ratepayers theoretically can enjoy a modestly reduced energy bill, while utilities benefit from providing more customer choice and potentially more resilience due to community proximity of energy sources. However, upon closer examination, the main beneficiary is clearly the utilities. Most conspicuously, this model seems designed to secure and “lock-in” their ownership and control of alternative energy sources. Some community solar advocates view this model as simply a takeover of alternative energy by the very same corporations and elites who have contributed to the existential crisis of climate change. This model has other major flaws as well.⁵⁴

Community shared solar:

In contrast, community shared solar is a real alternative to utility power, democratizing energy by generating power for the benefit of community residents who are effectively stakeholders in a local power plant.⁵⁵ This generally takes the form of subscriptions in a nearby solar power plant, which are remunerated in the form of electric bill credits based on a subscriber’s relative share of total electricity output of the plant. Community solar benefits, in turn, are enabled

by a billing procedure called virtual net metering, where multiple households who subscribe to a common offsite solar array receive retail-rate bill credits proportionate to the share of energy production attributable to their subscription.⁵⁶ Community solar can also be implemented “on site,” for example with multi-tenant buildings that provide for individual unit subscriptions in a solar plant sited on the rooftop of the building.

However, while resident subscribers are beneficiaries of the local power production, their subscriptions typically cannot be amassed as upfront investment needed to build the local power plant and grid connections. Thus, without utility resources at their disposal, communities must come up with front-end capital financing to build the plant and grid connections, which can be tricky for low-income communities and communities of color.

Community-owned shared solar:

From an equity standpoint, community-owned shared solar goes further than conventional subscription models. With community ownership of local energy production, the energy system can literally be taken back from fossil fuel monopoly. Communities hardest hit by pollution, climate change, and compounding effects of racial and economic injustice—not the corporations running the fossil fuel and conventional renewable energy markets—benefit most. Esteemed frontline leader Elizabeth Yeampierre, executive director of UPROSE, an intergenerational, multi-racial grassroots organization in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, explains that “[t]his is the whole idea of a just transition... We want to move toward local, livable communities where people actually own the infrastructure that will help them thrive economically, and not have to depend on fossil fuel.”⁵⁷

Specifically, under a community ownership model, local residents:

1. Develop and own energy infrastructure, through which they are able to prioritize local hiring, sourcing and management;
2. Have full decision-making power over how those resources are distributed and can weigh community and environmental health alongside economic considerations; and
3. Reap the economic benefits of the energy they produce, reducing the cost of energy for utility-burdened communities while building long-term economic assets.⁵⁸

Community-owned renewable energy models “regenerate, rather than extract, wealth from the local community.”⁵⁹ This is a particularly critical development for people of color whose stolen labor financed the very rise of U.S. capitalism, even as they’ve been disproportionately burdened by energy costs and received the fewest economic benefits of the current energy system. Community ownership of energy can help to reverse these trends. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance finds, for example, that locally-owned wind projects create twice as many jobs as non-locally-owned wind projects, and the total economic value of the projects is 50 to 240 percent greater for communities.⁶⁰

Elizabeth Yeampierre’s vision is embodied in her own community with the development of the Sunset Park Solar project, New York City’s first cooperatively-owned community solar array. The massive (685-kilowatt) rooftop solar garden, to be built atop the city-owned Brooklyn Army Terminal, is co-owned and managed by UPROSE and the NYC Community Energy Cooperative.⁶¹ The array will provide reliable clean power to approximately 200 local households and small businesses, and is projected to result in more than \$1 million in net electricity bill savings for subscribers over 25 years.⁶² Additionally, the project will build community wealth⁶³ from its inception by recruiting and hiring local residents, who will participate in a 2-week long free solar technical training program. Project installers have committed to hiring trainees for Sunset Park Solar project installation.⁶⁴ Sunset Park Solar is pioneering what cooperatively-owned community solar can look like in densely-populated urban areas, and is a model for communities across the nation.

Creative Financing Solutions Can Address Challenges to Full Community Ownership

Despite the promise of community energy and its success in some places, significant financial, legal, regulatory, and technical barriers stand in the way of fulfilling this promise on a large scale. Major policy changes are needed to reduce these barriers and, more broadly, to counter the entrenched market advantages currently afforded to monopoly energy.⁶⁵

As noted above, the biggest challenge facing development of community-owned renewable energy projects is meeting upfront capital costs. The conventional model of solar project financing most often requires an equity investment from a private source of capital, which then owns the infrastructure, rather than the community. A second source of funding for these projects is debt financing through loans, but traditional lenders generally require a level of credit “worthiness” that can be a challenge for low-income communities. A robust government-funded, low-cost loan program could lower the costs of development, allow for creative alternatives to traditional credit checks for demonstrating a community’s ability to repay, and entertain higher levels of risk, given that the lender is a public entity. The loans could be large enough to offset the need for an equity investor in the first place, and thus facilitate community ownership from the beginning.⁶⁶ Additionally, current and future tax incentives for solar development are not available to non-taxable entities, excluding low-income households and non-profits with little or no taxable income. These incentives should be restructured as outright grants to ensure that all community organizations and households can benefit.⁶⁷

Upfront financing is also a principal barrier to public ownership of energy, given the government’s inability to utilize tax credits to finance upfront capital costs. As a result, governments often will enter into third-party power purchase agreements to cover the capital costs for developing solar infrastructure on the roofs of publicly-owned buildings, essentially privatizing any solar energy generated on public roofs. Local governments need to be able to install and own solar systems on schools, libraries, transportation terminals, or other public facilities, so that cities and residents can benefit by reducing municipal energy bills.

Even better, governments could donate appropriate public spaces to community solar projects. For example, Sunset Park Solar’s local power plant sits on the roof of the Brooklyn Army Terminal. To make full public ownership of renewable energy

projects possible, states should provide cash grants to municipalities and local governments, so that they can develop solar projects on public buildings. For its part, the federal government can provide grants to public housing authorities for financing solar operations that benefit public housing residents, as recently proposed by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.⁶⁸

In addition to policies that make capital available upfront to communities and municipalities, there is a need for pricing structures that build market power for community-owned energy relative to utility monopolies. The current energy pricing structures heavily advantage large utilities that have a monopoly on the market, making it exceedingly difficult for public and community-owned energy projects to compete. One way to level the energy market for distributed energy production and, in turn, bring community energy to scale would be to adopt advantageous pricing structures which credit community energy owners not just with energy savings but, in some circumstances, for surplus energy they can supply to the grid.

One such model is the feed-in tariff (FiT), like those employed in Germany and other European countries. Through FiTs, utilities purchase wholesale power from renewable energy generators at a price based on the cost of generating the electricity plus a reasonable return, and the rate is fixed under lengthy contracts to ensure revenue stability. Additionally, utilities are required to connect the renewable energy projects to their grids, creating a reliable market for the community-owned energy and providing predictable revenues for the developers of the projects. Because the rates paid to renewable energy generators under FiTs are often significantly higher than those set by the markets, renewable energy projects, especially local and community-owned ones, are significantly more viable.

Additionally, communities and local governments often do not have the technical expertise to start up energy projects on their own, and face numerous legal and regulatory hurdles to community energy ownership, from determining appropriate entity and governance structure and obtaining business and land use permits to navigating costly compliance requirements set out in state and federal securities law.⁶⁹ Organizations like the NAACP,⁷⁰ the Institute for Local Self-Reliance,⁷¹ and the Sustainable Economies Law Center,⁷² alongside many state and local groups, provide legal, technical, and financial support for communities looking to pursue local ownership of their energy.

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The struggle against fossil fuels and the dirty energy economy is not just one to save our planet. Rather, it is a struggle for community health, resilience, and empowerment. It is a struggle for democracy. It is a struggle which, in the words of Denise Fairchild, can facilitate an “emancipatory energy transition,” through which we build a new, just economy that values the planet and embraces the needs of all communities. It will require new models of thinking, new structures and institutions, and in many cases, new financing to meet this vision. But the goal of democratizing energy and power, such that communities have control over the precious resources that power our lives, is an essential one in a vibrant, inclusive democracy.

Endnotes

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