



Interfaith Power & Light New Mexico & El Paso Region

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September 25, 2021

Chair Phoebe Suina and
New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board Members
% Pamela Jones, Hearing Administrator
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Dear Chair Suina and New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board Members,

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres' called the recent UN Intergovernmental Panel Climate Change report a "code red for humanity". As faith leaders, we understand that code red means we all must take urgent action to care for life and our sacred Common Home. All of our religious traditions require caring for our neighbors as the ultimate commandment and act of Love. Every person, creature and element are neighbors.

In New Mexico, we have an opportunity in the regulatory process to say yes to life and the future. By approving strong ozone precursor rules that address methane pollution through the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) hearing, we can join in community to make a positive and important difference. The work our state agencies do is so important to address the climate crisis facing New Mexico. Thank you for engaging the public in the EIB hearing process for new Methane rules. We are grateful for the Governor and our agencies who work toward climate justice, resiliency and the Common Good.

Methane pollution contributes to accelerated climate change and an uncertain future for New Mexico's children. Pope Francis, in the teaching encyclical Laudato Si: On Care of Our Common Home instructs us that the work for climate justice is not optional. We must work for clean air, water, land and community health as we address climate justice. Here in New Mexico this means addressing methane waste, which is a potent greenhouse gas 84 times more powerful than carbon dioxide in the near term. In fact, methane pollution contributes to about 25 percent of the global warming we are experiencing today. New Mexicans are already experiencing severe impacts of climate change – harming our health, air, land, water, and economy.

With a few key improvements, these rules can ensure that we really are protecting our frontline communities and address environmental and economic justice as we care for family, mother's and children's health and well-being. While the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has put

forward a strong proposal, three key additions are critical to meet Governor Lujan Grisham's goal of enacting "the country's toughest methane and air pollution rules." The final rules must protect those living closest to development by requiring more frequent inspections to find and fix leaks; require operators to control pollution during the completion of an oil or gas well or when they redevelop an existing well; and strengthen requirements to cut pollution from pneumatic controllers that are used in oil and gas production. We also believe that good rules make no difference unless the state puts resources for enforcement.

As faith leaders who minister in a variety of ways, we call for strong rules to care for the Common Good, our neighbors and all of creation, which we work to honor and care for. Climate change is happening now and we have a moral and ethical responsibility to act now in faithful ways.

In peace and good,

Sr. Joan Brown, osf, Executive Director, New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
Sr. Rose Marie Cecchini, mm, Office of Life, Peace, Justice & Creation Catholic Charities Gallup, Gallup
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The Rev. Holly Beaumont, D.Min. Organizing Director Interfaith Worker Justice –NM
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