



new energy economy

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Ten Statewide Groups Support Petition to Address Climate Change

Today an impressive group of co-petitioners and businesses joined a petition pending before the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) calling for a cap on global warming pollution in New Mexico. The organizations include: the New Mexico Pediatric Society, NM Physicians for Social Responsibility, Amigos Bravos, Center of Southwest Culture, the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, League of Women Voters (NM), Center Advancing Sustainable Architecture, Earth Care International, NM Interfaith Power & Light, and Wild Earth Guardians.

The New Mexico based non-profit organization, New Energy Economy, filed a petition with the EIB in December 2008 – asking the state to reduce emissions based on the best available science. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), composed of more than 1,200 leading international scientists, has concluded that developed nations must reduce global warming pollution by at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 to avoid catastrophic changes. Should the petition be passed, New Mexico would lead the nation with the strongest regulations in the United States.

In a series of hearings over the last year, the EIB has agreed to hear the petition and has ruled that it has jurisdiction to decide the case. Public hearings about setting a state cap on global warming pollution will begin in March, 2010 in Santa Fe, and expert testimony will start in the following months.

The co-petitioners will to show that replacing fossil fuels with clean energy sources is not only essential to addressing climate change but can stimulate a lagging economy.

“New Mexico has some of the best renewable energy resources in the country, but we are falling behind other states. A cap on global warming emissions will spur the development of renewable energy industries and create new jobs locally,” says John Fogarty, Executive Director of New Energy Economy.

Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) has led an effort to oppose the petition and has argued for a “business-as-usual” approach that includes more development of coal, oil and gas. Two weeks ago PNM convened businesses from around the state and claimed that it would cost too much to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy.

Co-petitioners in the case will show that if no action is taken to curb global warming emissions, the economic effects from climate change will be dire. Researchers in the Program on Climate Economics of the Climate Leadership Initiative estimate the minimum annual cost to each New Mexican household will be \$3,430 by 2020 and could rise as high as \$12,000 per household per year in 2080. The total costs for New Mexico would be \$3.2 billion in 2020 and \$18.4 billion in 2080.

Scientists have shown that climate change will lead to hotter temperatures throughout New Mexico – increasing heat related illnesses and asthma. Public-health related costs will be one of the largest contributors to the costs of climate change to New Mexico.

John Ratmeyer, M.D., from the New Mexico Pediatric Society, said "climate change is real. Our children need us to act now, to protect their future health and preserve our air and water quality in New Mexico. Without action to mitigate climate change, we risk crop failures, water shortages, worsening natural disasters, and more infectious and respiratory diseases, all of which disproportionately affect children."

Rising temperatures in New Mexico will reduce water resources and increase the frequency of wildfires throughout the state. Thomas Fingar, the U.S. intelligence community's top analyst, highlighted in a security report earlier this year that the southwestern U.S. will face "dust bowl" conditions, if global warming is not slowed.

"The EIB has the authority under existing law to implement statewide limits on global warming pollution, and we have asked them to exercise that authority in a manner consistent with the latest scientific consensus on climate change," says Jonathan Block, an attorney from the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, which is the legal team supporting the petition.

To view the list of co-petitioners for New Energy Economy's petition to the Environmental Improvement Board, go to <http://newenergyeconomy.org/EIB>.

INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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