



**new energy economy**

Opportunity for New Mexico  
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## **CLIMATE PROGRAM WILL PROTECT NEW MEXICANS AT MINIMAL COST**

*Santa Fe, NM* -- Today the non-profit organization, New Energy Economy, will file expert testimony from four prominent witnesses with the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board (EIB). The testimony shows that global warming emissions can be reduced with minimal economic impacts to New Mexicans.

New Energy Economy filed a petition with the EIB in December 2008 asking the state to reduce emissions based on the best available science. A consensus amongst mainstream scientists have concluded that developed nations must reduce global warming pollution by at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 to avoid catastrophic changes.

The four witnesses for NEE include:

- Professor David Gutzler from the University of New Mexico, a prominent climatologist with expertise on the impacts of climate change on water resources;
- Professor Paul Epstein, a public health physician from Harvard University and author of many reports on the public health and economic impacts of climate change;
- Matt Pawa, the lead counsel representing states in their lawsuit against major utilities for contributing to climate change and author of papers on the relationship between global warming and public nuisances;
- Steve Michel, chief counsel for the Energy Program for Western Resources Advocates with 30 years of regulatory experience related to gas and electric utilities.

In the newly filed testimony New Energy Economy asks the EIB to phase in a climate program with a three year trial period that would require only the electricity and oil & gas sectors of New Mexico's economy to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 3 percent per year from 2010 levels. The regulations would be revisited in 2014, at which time they could be expanded to other sectors, with updated requirements. The regulations being proposed also provide for compliance flexibility and a cost cap.

Energy expert Steve Michel says in his testimony, "The economic impact of these regulations will be negligible. The additional cost for electricity production will increase average electricity prices in the state less than one percent per year. The additional cost to the oil and gas industry will be a fraction of a percent of the price of those commodities."

"In the absence of federal action on climate change, it is incumbent upon states to step up to the plate. These state-based regulations provide critical leadership by beginning to reduce emissions at minimal cost to New Mexicans" said Dr. John Fogarty, President of New Energy Economy.

Dr. Epstein from Harvard University notes in his testimony that in New Mexico:

- 1) Climate change will create longer and more frequent heat waves, elevated ground-level ozone and higher pollen counts that are projected to increase morbidity and mortality, especially among those with chronic heart and lung disease.
- 2) Warmer average temperatures will enable the proliferation of mountain pine beetles and the destruction

of forests, setting the stage for more wildfires that cause injury, respiratory disease and death.

3) Weather extremes accompanying climate change will increase the risk of hantavirus and San Joaquin Valley fever outbreaks.

4) New Mexico's freshwater supplies will become even scarcer as 50-80% of the state's water supply originates from snow pack, which is projected to decrease in the state by as much as 60% by 2040.

Steve Michel goes on to say, "there is a lot of misinformation circulating about the proposed regulations and greenhouse gas regulation in general. Before making claims about the economic impact of a particular regulatory regime, it is important to understand ... the proposed regulations require sources to pay only for the emissions they reduce, and not pay a fee for the tonnage they emit... the cost of compliance is minimal. In other words, this regulation is driven by reduction requirements rather than permits for emissions."

In a series of hearings over the last year, the EIB has agreed to hear the climate petition and has ruled that it has jurisdiction to decide the case. The NM legislature created the EIB to be responsible for the promulgation of rules and standards for safe water, air quality, and to avoid public nuisances. Public hearings about setting a state cap on global warming pollution began March 1<sup>st</sup> and expert testimony will start June 16, 2010.

An impressive group of co-petitioners and businesses have joined the petition pending before the EIB. The organizations include the New Mexico Pediatric Society, NM Physicians for Social Responsibility, Amigos Bravos, Southwest Organizing Project, Center of Southwest Culture, League of Women Voters (NM), Center Advancing Sustainable Architecture, Earth Care International, NM Interfaith Power & Light, Conference of Churches, Sierra Club, Western Resource Advocates, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, and VAWT Power. The co-petitioners will show that replacing fossil fuels with clean energy sources is not only essential to addressing climate change but can stimulate a lagging economy. To view the petitions filed from the organizations in support New Energy Economy's, go to <http://newenergyeconomy.org/EIB>.

The written testimony for the four witnesses is attached.

*New Energy Economy is dedicated to creating green jobs, boosting the economy and solving global warming.*

[www.newenergyeconomy.org](http://www.newenergyeconomy.org)

INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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