

Pathways to an Equitable and Just Transition: Principles, Best Practices, and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement

A Workshop

Speaker Biographies

Darnell Grisby, Beneficial State Foundation

Darnell Grisby currently serves as the Senior Vice President of the Clean Vehicle Assistance Program at Beneficial State Foundation. He is a national thought leader in transportation policy and the mobility justice movement. He is a social entrepreneur and seasoned political professional, who's work includes campaign strategy, anti-racist initiatives, direct lobbying, and grassroots organizing. Darnell has been quoted or featured in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, National Public Radio, and Bloomberg. He is a former senior advisor in the California Legislature, lobbyist, Director of Policy Development for the American Public Transportation Association, and CEO of TransForm. He has degrees from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and UCLA.

David Nahai, David Nahai Consulting Services

David Nahai is the President of David Nahai Consulting Services and the President of David Nahai Associates. David Nahai advises and assists private and public entities involved in the real estate, renewable energy, water, and environmental sectors. Nahai is the former General Manager and Commission President of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power ("LADWP"), former Chairman of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board ("Regional Water Board"), and former Senior Advisor to the Clinton Climate Initiative. Nahai led an overall transformation of the LADWP that included the unprecedented expansion of the utility's renewable energy portfolio; the origination of the City's Water Supply Plan; the attainment of historic reductions in water consumption in the City; the realization of record-breaking energy efficiency levels; and the launch and implementation of water and power infrastructure improvement programs. In January 2021, Nahai was reappointed to the Regional Board by Governor Gavin Newsom, the fourth California Governor to appoint Nahai to this post.

Destenie Nock, Carnegie Mellon University

Dr. Destenie Nock is a leader in energy justice and sustainable energy transition trade-off analysis. In her role as an Assistant Professor in Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE), and Engineering and Public Policy (EPP) she creates optimization and decision analysis tools which evaluate the sustainability, equity, and reliability of power systems in the US and Sub-Saharan Africa. She has pioneered the development of algorithms to identify hidden forms of energy poverty (e.g., forgone heating and cooling in low income households). Dr. Nock is the recipient of six NSF grants on energy, resilience, and energy justice. Dr. Nock holds a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she was an NSF Graduate Research Fellow, and an Offshore Wind Energy IGERT Fellow. She earned a MSc in Leadership for Sustainable Development at Queen's University of Belfast, and two BS degrees in Electrical Engineering and Applied Math at North Carolina A&T State University.

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Diana Hernández, Columbia University

Diana Hernández, PhD is a tenured Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. Dr. Hernández conducts research at the intersection of energy, equity, housing and health. A sociologist by training, her work focuses on the social and environmental determinants of health and examines the impacts of policy and place-based interventions on the health and well-being of socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. Dr. Hernández has operationalized and conducted foundational research on the concept of 'energy insecurity', which reflects the inability to adequately meet household energy needs. Her pathbreaking work on energy insecurity has explored the multiple dimensions of this phenomenon identifying sociodemographic disparities, adverse consequences and promising interventions toward energy justice. Much of her community-oriented research has been done in collaboration with community groups and government agencies around the country. An accomplished scholar, her high-impact and policy-relevant work has appeared in leading academic journals. Aside from research and teaching, Dr. Hernández serves as the Director of the Community Engagement Core for the Center for Environmental Health and Justice in Northern Manhattan and is a Mayoral appointee to the NYC Environmental Justice Advisory Board.

Garvin Heath, National Renewable Energy Laboratory

Garvin Heath is a Distinguished Member of the Research Staff at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). At NREL he specializes in analyzing the environmental impacts of energy systems using the tools of life cycle assessment, air quality modeling and sustainability analysis. He received his PhD in Energy and Resources from the Energy and Resources Group of the University of California Berkeley in 2006. He also holds an MS degree in Environmental Engineering from UC Berkeley. His previous professional experience includes five years as an environmental engineer at the US EPA, in addition to various assignments with researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and Environmental Defense. He currently holds an adjunct research position at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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Gregory Pierce, University of California - Los Angeles

Greg Pierce is the co-director of the Luskin Center for Innovation and the director of the Human Right to Water Solutions Lab within the center. He is also the co-director of the UCLA Water Resources Group within the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, and serves as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the department of urban planning. He is a faculty affiliate of the Lewis Center for Regional Studies and Institute of Transportation Studies in the Luskin School, and Center for Healthy Climate Solutions in the Fielding School of Public Health. Dr. Pierce's research, teaching, and service are motivated by persistent inequities in access to the essential environmental services that we need to survive and thrive. He examines how infrastructure planning and policy efforts either perpetuate or address service inequities, and demonstrates how communities strategically cope with and overcome inequities. His primary focus is on water insecurity, but he also examines solutions to cross-cutting green infrastructure, climate resilience and transport insecurities. Greg received a Ph.D. in urban planning in 2015 and an M.A. in urban planning in 2011, both from UCLA.

James Wilcox, New York State Energy Research & Development Authority

James Wilcox is an interdisciplinary social scientist leading crosscutting energy transition research for the State of New York. As a Senior Project Manager with NYSERDA's Energy and Environmental Analysis group, James oversees economy-wide, multi-sector decarbonization pathways analysis for New York State's Climate Act and fosters interdisciplinary, collaborative research partnerships between academia, civil society, communities and government. James also leads NYSERDA's new Equity and Climate Transformation Research program, which aims to build institutional capacity for engaged social science research that centers the lived experiences of underserved and overburdened communities and supports the articulation and realization of community-determined beneficial outcomes. James holds a PhD in Science and Technology Studies from RPI, where his research focused on the intersection of the energy democracy movement and policy interventions that support community-based energy transitions, and a MA in Media and Urban Studies from the New School.

Jason Beckfield, Harvard University

Jason Beckfield is the Robert G. Stone Jr. Professor of Sociology at Harvard University, where he is also the Associate Director of the Center for Population and Development Studies. He took his PhD. in Sociology in 2005 at Indiana University in Bloomington, and later taught at the University of Chicago before joining the Harvard faculty in 2007. His research and teaching are in the areas of social stratification, political sociology, population health, and climate change. Currently, he is investigating the sociology of energy transitions, with a focus on the petrochemical-rich region of the United States Gulf Coast.

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Leslie Aguayo, Greenlining Institute

Leslie Aguayo is an urban planner and advocate with experience and interest in poverty alleviation, asset building, affordable housing, equitable transportation, and climate change policy for increased upward mobility in urban, suburban, and rural spaces. As a Climate Equity Program Manager at The Greenlining Institute Leslie works to further equitable electric vehicle policy and investments. She leads Greenlining's transportation electrification equity work, advocating to increase racial equity in transportation planning and investments, implementing the Charge Ahead California Initiative—a law that works to make electric vehicles accessible to low- and moderate-income Californians — and advocating for equitable EV charging infrastructure investments at the California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission, and the California Air Resources Board. She has also worked for the San Francisco Department of Public Works, the Center for Responsible Lending, and at TransForm. Leslie was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. Leslie graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Master of City Planning and holds two Bachelor of Arts degrees in Anthropology and Urban Studies from the University of California, Irvine.

Linda Rudolph, Public Health Institute

Linda Rudolph, MD, MPH, is the Director of the Center for Climate Change and Health at PHI. She also provides consultation to local jurisdictions to advance implementation of Health in All Policies, and participates internationally in training and consultation related to HiAP and climate change and health. Previously, Rudolph served as the deputy director for Chronic Disease Prevention and Public Health in the California Department of Public Health, and the health officer and public health director for the City of Berkeley, CA. While at CDPH, Rudolph served as founding chair of the Strategic Growth Council's Health in All Policies Task Force and the California Climate Action Team's Public Health Work Group. Rudolph has also served as chief medical officer for Medi-Cal Managed Care, medical director for the California Division of Workers' Compensation, and a physician for the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers' International Union. Rudolph received her MD from the University of California, San Francisco, and MPH (Epidemiology) from UC Berkeley. She is board certified in Occupational Medicine.

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Madeline Janis, Jobs to Move America

For over 35 years, Madeline has been on the inside and outside of local and state government, working to create equitable economic development, strong industrial policy, and innovative policies to do what she calls "procurement for the common good." She is currently the Executive Director of the non-profit, Jobs to Move America, an organization she helped found in 2013. She serves as an appointee of the California State Assembly Speaker to the California Competes Tax Credit Committee, which awards tens of millions in state tax credits to California businesses each year. Madeline is an expert in public procurement and has extensive experience leading nonprofits, working on urban economic and industrial development, women's rights, immigrant rights, and racial justice. She helped to negotiate the first community benefits agreement in the U.S. and co-authored a book on the subject. She has received many honors, including being a Durfee Foundation Stanton Fellow (2014-15), a Senior Fellow at the UCLA School of Public Affairs, the recipient of the UCLA Law School's Antonia Hernandez Public Interest Award, and commendations from the Los Angeles City Council and the California Assembly and Senate. She received degrees from UCLA Law School and Amherst College in Massachusetts and was granted an Honorary Doctorate in Humanities from Amherst College in 2013.

Mijin Cha, Occidental College

J. Mijin Cha's research and teaching interests are in the areas of climate justice, environmental justice, labor movements, and the intersection of labor and climate justice. Dr. Cha is a fellow at Cornell University's Worker Institute, where she works on the Labor Leading on Climate initiative. Her recent research is on "just transition," how to transition workers and communities equitably into a low-carbon future. Dr. Cha is on the board of the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment and a member of the California Bar.

Nancy Krieger, Harvard School of Public Health

Nancy Krieger is Professor of Social Epidemiology, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Director of the HSPH Interdisciplinary Concentration on Women, Gender, and Health. She has been a member of the School's faculty since 1995. Dr. Krieger is an internationally recognized social epidemiologist, with a background in biochemistry, philosophy of science, and history of public health, plus 30+ years of activism involving social justice, science, and health. In 1994 she co-founded, and still chairs, the Spirit of 1848 Caucus of the American Public Health Association, which is concerned with the links between social justice and public health. Dr. Krieger's current work addresses three topics: (1) conceptual frameworks to understand, analyze, and improve the people's health, including the ecosocial theory of disease distribution she first proposed in 1994 and its focus on embodiment and equity; (2) etiologic research on societal determinants of population health and health inequities; and (3) methodologic research on improving monitoring of health inequities.

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Pjoy Cha, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Pjoy Chua is LADWP's Assistant Director of Power Transmission Planning, Regulatory, and Innovation Division. She is responsible for overseeing compliance with mandatory federal North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) reliability standards including LADWP's regulatory reporting obligations with the California Energy Commission, Department of Energy, California Public Utilities Commission, and other regulatory agencies. Ms. Chua also manages the transmission planning, contracts, and technology applications sections. She has been with LADWP for 19 years with duties spanning from distribution system design to project management and contracts. She holds undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in Electrical Engineering from UCLA and USC respectively. She is a registered Electrical Engineer in the State of CA.

Sacoby Wilson, University of Maryland

Dr. Sacoby Wilson is an Associate Professor with the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health and Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the University of Maryland, College Park School of Public Health where directs the Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH). Dr. Wilson has over 20 years of experience as environmental health scientist in the areas of exposure science, environmental justice, environmental health disparities, community-based participatory research, water quality analysis, air pollution studies, built environment, industrial animal production, climate change, community resiliency, and sustainability. He works primarily in partnership with community-based organizations to study and address environmental justice and health issues and translate research to action.

Sarah Truitt, National Renewable Energy Laboratory

Sarah Truitt joined NREL in 2010 and has served in many leadership positions across multiple areas of the lab. Her experience includes managing multi-technology research portfolios, strategic planning, and implementing DOE programs. Sarah's analytical experience pertaining to workforce spans energy efficiency, solar, wind, manufacturing, hydrogen, and battery energy storage technologies. Sarah is the lead author on multiple DOE-funded, workforce-related publications, including the following reports published in 2022: *Building a More Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Energy Efficiency Workforce*; *Completing the Circuit: Workforce Development for Advanced Building Construction and Grid-Interactive Efficient Buildings*; and *State-Level Employment Projections for Four Clean Energy Technologies in 2025 and 2030*.