

# New Mexico Climate Change Task Force Climate Equity Guiding Principles

## Introduction

The New Mexico Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) develops and implements climate change mitigation and adaptation actions (“climate policy”) through its member agencies and seeks to formally integrate equity priorities into climate policy actions by adopting the following guiding principles. The CCTF co-chair agencies convened a climate equity working group with community advocates and environmental justice experts from around the state in May and June of 2021 to help develop these principles. As defined by the working group, climate equity affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, and cultural self-determination of all people.

The CCTF will evaluate proposed and in-progress strategies against these principles and report on progress as outlined in the first principle on accountability and transparency. These principles are intended to complement and do not supersede existing environmental justice and other policies agencies may have as a result of applicable federal or state legal requirements.

## Climate Equity Guiding Principles

### Principles Regarding Processes to Develop and Implement Climate Policies

1. **Engage Overly Burdened Communities.** The CCTF must make measurable efforts to solicit and incorporate the ideas, concerns, and solutions from overly burdened communities<sup>1</sup> and their leadership in creating and implementing climate policy, including the process of aligning policies with these equity principles. Where possible and permitted by law and available funding, the CCTF will compensate and recognize communities for their time and intellectual labor.
2. **Respect Tribal Sovereignty and Require Collaboration and Consultation.** Climate policy must respect tribal sovereignty and be created with tribal collaboration, and where appropriate, consultation with New Mexico’s Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. Collaboration and consultation will support indigenous well-being, health, energy independence, traditional knowledge, and cultural sustainability. The CCTF recognizes that consultation may not equal consent and will engage early and often with the state’s Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos in this work.
3. **Maintain Accountability and Transparency.** CCTF policies must be measured against these equity principles, including input from overly burdened communities. In providing publicly available reporting, the CCTF must explain how equity principles were or were not adhered to, including the methodology and the extent to which data collected or used in policymaking represents overly burdened communities.

### Principles Regarding Design and Effects of Climate Policies

4. **Incorporate Traditional Knowledge and Experience.** While advancing science-based climate solutions, the CCTF shall consider overly burdened communities’ historical, cultural, and environmental experience and knowledge of the land, water, plants, medicine, and peoples, including New Mexico’s Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. When developing climate policy, the CCTF

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<sup>1</sup> “Overly burdened communities” as used in these guidelines means: a community or population—especially people of color, women, tribal communities, immigrants, youth, low or no-income earners, rural communities, and communities dependent on extractive industries—for which multiple systemic burdens, including environmental and socioeconomic inequities, negatively affect their health, economic prosperity, and environment. The CCTF may use state or federal datasets e.g. [the CDC’s social vulnerability index](#) or data on “disadvantaged communities” as defined in the recent [Justice40 Initiative Interim Guidance](#) to help track progress, but must also include data on overly burdened communities, as defined above, not covered by federal terms and datasets.

shall encourage policymakers to honor and protect the values and intention of overly burdened communities as an integral part of envisioning a just transition.<sup>2</sup>

5. **Advance Equitable Economic Transition.** The CCTF shall advance economic policies that support a just transition for overly burdened New Mexicans in rural and extractive-industry dependent communities by providing adequate job training and placement for living wage and leadership positions, workforce development opportunities, and early investments in economic diversification initiatives and infrastructure.
6. **Prioritize Creating and Maintaining Universal Access to Utilities.** When decarbonizing energy or increasing the resilience of infrastructure, the CCTF shall prioritize strategies that:
  - a. create and maintain overly burdened communities’ full access to sustainable utility infrastructure, including running water, renewable electricity, safe roads with multimodal transportation options, and broadband;
  - b. ensure that these communities are not further underserved, burdened, or harmed;
  - c. reduce the energy burden on low- and no-income households; and
  - d. provide adequate funding and technical support for climate change adaptation in these communities.
7. **Reduce Health and Environmental Impacts.** CCTF policies must assess any potential unintended consequences to overly burdened communities, including health impacts and racial disparities.<sup>3</sup> The benefits of climate policies cannot result in increased negative health impacts or environmental degradation of overly burdened communities experiencing the effects of climate change. Instead, CCTF policies should reduce or eliminate these burdens to the furthest extent practicable and maximize benefits to impacted communities to achieve equity objectives.

### New Mexico Climate Equity Working Group

The CCTF is grateful for the expertise, time, and contributions of the working group members below.

Name	Title	Organization
Castille Aguilar	Youth Organizer	Earth Care
Damian Artalejo	Student	Youth Action League
Mayane Barudin	Interior West Director & Tribal Liaison	Vote Solar
Nena Benavidez	Community Organizer	NM CAFé
Marcela Diaz	Executive Director	Somos un Pueblo Unido
Joseph Hernandez	Diné Energy Organizer	NAVA Education Project
Seneca Johnson	Youth Organizer	Youth United for Climate Crisis Action
Paige Knight	Research and Policy Analyst	NM Voices for Children
Desiree Loggins	Research Assistant	UNM Center for Community Geography
Sofia Martinez	Co-Director	Los Jardines Institute
James Povijua	Policy Director	Center for Civic Policy
Maria Romano	Community Organizer	Somos un Pueblo Unido
Angelica Rubio	NM State Representative	NM State Legislature

<sup>2</sup> The [Just Transition Alliance](#) defines “just transition” as follows: ““Just Transition” is a principle, a process and a practice. The principle of just transition is that a healthy economy and a clean environment can and should co-exist. The process for achieving this vision should be a fair one that should not cost workers or community residents their health, environment, jobs, or economic assets. Any losses should be fairly compensated. And the practice of just transition means that the people who are most affected by pollution – [overly burdened communities]\* – should be in the leadership of crafting policy solutions.” \*replaced “frontline workers and fenceline communities” with working group preferred term of “overly burdened communities.”

<sup>3</sup> CCTF leadership will work to provide guidance on specific tools to assist agencies with health and racial impact assessments.