

"Net-Zero" Is A Dangerous Distraction

October 27, 2021

As the climate crisis worsens and demand grows for governments and companies to increase climate ambition, Big Oil, Big Agriculture, Big Banks, other polluting corporations, and governments have lined up to proclaim one “net-zero by 2050” pledge after another. This is a dangerous greenwashing gimmick. It is the latest scheme by polluters — and their financial and political backers — to promote a facade of talking about climate action while actually exacerbating the crisis to protect their profits and power. “Net-zero” is premised on unjust offsetting schemes and removals of massive quantities of carbon from the atmosphere through unproven technologies, large-scale land grabs, and/or interference in the Earth’s climate system via geoengineering. “Net-zero emissions” is not the same as “zero emissions,” and 2050 is too little, too late.

Net-zero-by-2050 pledges by corporations and governments are:

- **Ineffective and dangerous.** Echoing scientists who wrote [Climate scientists: concept of net zero is a dangerous trap](#) — “*The idea of net zero has licensed a recklessly cavalier ‘burn now, pay later’ approach which has seen carbon emissions continue to soar. It has also hastened the destruction of the natural world by increasing deforestation today, and greatly increases the risk of further devastation in the future.*”
- **Unjust.** Net-zero schemes perpetuate environmental racism and injustice, including maintenance of pollution hotspots in BIPOC and low wealth communities.
- **Inequitable.** As the largest historical carbon polluter and among the world’s wealthiest countries, the U.S. must decarbonize much sooner than 2050. The U.S. must do its fair share¹ of the global effort to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C through drastic domestic emissions reductions without offsets and robust provision of international finance for developing countries.
- **Greenwashing.** Polluting corporations, their political acolytes, and their financial backers continue business as usual, doing little-to-nothing to actually reduce their own climate pollution, while touting industry scams like carbon offsets, ineffective or even non-existent negative emissions technologies like carbon capture and storage or direct air capture, and geoengineering.

We call on government policymakers at all levels — from the Biden Administration to Congress to state and local governments — to say no to the “net.” The United States must drastically reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through absolute reductions. Laws and regulations must keep fossil fuels in the ground; eliminate sources of non-fossil-based climate pollution, including industrial wood biomass and emissions-intensive agricultural practices like factory farming; and facilitate a Just Transition² to clean, renewable energy and regenerative farming rooted in principles and methods of agroecology. The United States must also transfer funds and technical assistance to developing countries to enable global climate action.

¹ www.usfairshare.org

² Climate Justice Alliance, Just Transition Principles: https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CJA_JustTransition_Principles_final_hi-rez.pdf

100 Grannies for a Livable Future
198 methods
350 Brooklyn
350 Butte County
350 Colorado
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley
350 Eugene
350 Hawaii
350 Kishwaukee
350 New Hampshire
350 New Orleans
350 NYC
350 PDX
350 Pensacola
350 Seattle
350 Sonoma
350 Triangle
350.org
50by40
A Community Voice - Louisiana
Academic Pediatric Association
Action Center on Race and the Economy
ActionAid USA
Active San Gabriel Valley (ActiveSGV)
AFGE Local 704
Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
Alaska's Big Village Network
ALDF
All Our Energy
Alliance for the Wild Rockies
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc
Animas Valley Institute
Anthropocene Alliance
Arizona Interfaith Power & Light
Atchafalaya Basinkeepe
Athens County's Future Action Network, acfan.org
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
Azul
Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.
Benson Memorial United Methodist Church, Church
& Society Committee
Bergen County Green Party
Berks Gas Truth
Better Path Coalition
Beyond Efficiency Inc
Beyond Extreme Energy
Biofuelwatch
Black Voters Matter Fund
Blacks In Green
Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project
Bold Alliance
Boston DSA's Ecosocialism Working Group
Breathe Project
Bronx Climate Justice North
Buckeye Environmental Network
Bucks Environmental Action
Businesses for a Livable Climate
CA Businesses for a Livable Climate
CA Dem Party Environmental Caucus
California River Watch
Call to Action Colorado
Campaign for Renewable Energy
Carolina Biodiesel, LLC
Catholic Divestment Network
Catholic Network US
Catskill Mountainkeeper
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Coalfield Justice
Center for Environmentally Recycled Building
Alternatives
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
CEO Pipe Organs/Golden Ponds Farm
Church Women United in New York State
Citizen Power, Inc
Citizens Action Coalition
Clean Energy Action
Clean Energy Now Texas
CleanAirNow
Climate Crisis Policy
Climate Hawks Vote
Climate Health Now
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Justice at Boston College
ClimateMama
CO Businesses for a Livable Climate
Coalition Against Pilgrim Pipeline
Coalition of Community Organizations
Coastal Plain Conservation Group
CODEPINK
Collins Grazing
Columbus Community Bill of Rights
Concerned Health Professionals of New York
Conejo Climate Coalition
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Cooperative Energy Futures
Corporate Accountability
CWA Local 1081
Daily Acts
DC Environmental Network
Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Department of Environmental Studies, SUNY
Potsdam

Divest LA
Do It Right Computers, Inc.
Dogwood Alliance
Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition
Don't Waste Arizona
Earth Action, Inc.
Earthkeeper Health Resources
Eat with B the RD, LLC
EcoEquity
EcoHealth Network
Eco-Poetry.org
Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization (EEECHO)
EGG 350.org
Electric Auto Assn of Central Coast CA
Empower our Future - Colorado
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Action Coalition
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane
Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Protection Information Center- EPIC
Extinction Rebellion New Orleans
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
Factory Farming Awareness Coalition
Fair Start Movement
Fair World Project
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
Family Farm Defenders
Farm Forward
Fayetteville Police Accountability Community Taskforce
Florida Student Power Network
Food & Water Action
Food & Water Watch
Fossil Free California
Fossil Free Tompkins
Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard
FrackBustersNY
FracTracker Alliance
Fresh Water Accountability Project
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Fuerza Mundial Global
Future Coalition
Gas Free Seneca
GASP
Gender Action
Georgia Conservation Voters
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
Global Justice Ecology Project
Global Witness
Government Accountability Project
Government Accountability Project Food Integrity Campaign
Grassroots Environmental Education
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Great Plains Action Society
Green Delaware
Green Education and Legal Fund
Green Newton
Green State Solutions
GreenFaith
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace US
GreenRoots
Greenvest
Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy
Heartwood
Hilton Head for Peace
<http://thewei.com>
I-70/Vasquez Blvd. Superfund CAG
Idle No More SF Bay
In the Shadow of the Wolf
Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition
Indigenous Environmental Network
Indivisible Ambassadors
Indivisible Pittsfield
Indivisible San Jose
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
Institute for Social Ecology
Interfaith Earthkeepers
International Indigenous Youth Council Los Angeles
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Jewish Climate Action Network
John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute
Keely Wood-EnvironmentalLEE
Klamath Forest Alliance
Labor Network for Sustainability
Land and Leadership Initiative
LandStream
LaPlaca and Associates LLC
Lean and Green Kids
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Los Padres ForestWatch
MADRE
Maryknoll Sisters, Eastern Region, USA
Massachusetts Forest Watch
Mazaska Talks
Mid-Missouri Peaceworks
Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light
Mission Blue / Sylvia Earle Alliance
MIT Divest
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement Association
Mothers Out Front Tompkins
MoveOn.org Hoboken
Nancy E Anderson Associates
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
National Family Farm Coalition
Native Movement
Nature Rhythms
NC Climate Justice Collective
NC Council of Churches
NC Interfaith Power & Light
Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force
New Jersey Tenants Organization
New York Climate Action Group
New York Communities for Change
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New York Youth Climate Leaders
Ní Btháska Stand Collective
NJ State Industrial Union Council
Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson
Non Toxic Communities
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)
North Bronx Racial Justice
North Range Concerned Citizens
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Interstate Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH)
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
Northeast Organic Farming Association, Mass. Chapter
Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
NY Climate Advocacy Project
NYC H2O
Occupy Bergen County
Ocean Conservation Research
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition (OVEC)
Oil and Gas Action Network
Our Climate
Our Revolution Michigan
Pacific Environment
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Pax Christi USA, New Orleans
Peace Action WI

Peak plastic foundation
People of Albany United for Safe Energy, PAUSE
People's Justice Council
Peoples Climate Movement-NY
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
PlantPure Communities
Plastic Pollution Coalition
PlasticFreeRestaurants.org
Ponca Nation
Preserve Wild Santee
Princeton Student Climate Initiative
Progressive Democrats of America
Protect All Children's Environment
Public Citizen
Public Justice
Pueblo Action Alliance
Rachel Carson Council
RadiationTruth.org
Rainforest Action Network
RapidShift Network
Recycle Brevard
RedTailed Hawk Collective
Reedsburg Area Concerned Citizens
Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga (RAFT)
Resource Renewal Institute
Revolution LA
Rio Grande Valley Broadband
River Guardian Foundation
Rogue Climate
RootsAction.org
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
Sanford-Oquaga Area Concerned Citizens (S-OACC)
Santa Barbara Standing Rock Coalition
SASD
Save RGV from LNG
SAVE THE FROGS!
Seeds for the Sol
Seneca Lake Guardian
Sequoia ForestKeeper®
Seventh Generation
Shenandoah Energy Services
Sierra Club Long Island Group, Energy Chair
Sisters of Charity Federation
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Small Business Alliance
Social Eco Education (SEE-LA)

Socially Responsible Agriculture Project
Soil Carbon Coalition
SolidarityINFOService
Sonoma County Climate Activist Network
(SoCoCAN!)
Soul Fire Farm
South Shore Audubon Society
Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality of Life
Spirit of the Sun
Spottswoode Winery, Inc.
Spruill Farm Conservation Project
Stand.earth
Stone Quarry House
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
Stop WMA Biomass
Strategies for Ethical and Environmental
Development, Inc., SEED
Sunflower Alliance
Sustainable Tompkins
System Change Not Climate Change
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The Climate Mobilization
The Descendants Project
The Earth Bill Network
The Enviro Show
The Forest Foundation, Inc.
The Green House Connection Center
The Last Plastic Straw
The People's Justice Council
The Planetary Health Collective
The Raven Corps
The River Project
Thrive At Life: Working Solutions
TIAA Divest!
Toxic Free NC
Toxics Information Project (TIP)
Transformative Change
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
Unite North Metro Denver
United for Action
United Plant Savers
Valley Watch
VeganZine
Verde
Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance
Wall of Women
Wallingford Indivisible
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
Washtenaw 350
WATCH, INC
Waterspirit

Western Rural and Plains States (WRAPS) Project
WildEarth Guardians
Win Without War
Wisconsin Creation Care Ambassadors
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
(WECAN) International
Women's Environment & Development
Organization (WEDO)
World Animal Protection
Youth United For Climate Crisis Action
Zero Hour