

# Panel 2: Government Transition

*Moderator: Ted Lamm\**

*Speakers: Louise Bedsworth,\*\* Kate Gordon,\*\*\* & Alegría De La Cruz\*\*\*\**

## INTRODUCTION

**Ted Lamm:** Welcome, everyone. This is our next panel, which is the government transition panel. I'll just take a deep breath and let everybody adjust from one event to the other as we're moving between some stacked-up panels here. Thanks very much for joining us. My name is Ted Lamm. I'm a senior research fellow in the climate program at the Center for Law Energy & the Environment [CLEE] here at Berkeley Law.

We have three fantastic speakers today with us from all levels of government. We're really fortunate to have them: Kate Gordon, from the U.S. Department of Energy [DOE], Louise Bedworth from my team here at CLEE, and Alegría De La Cruz from Sonoma County. The focus of today's panel is how government policies currently address a just transition and how they can improve. As a bit of an agenda for the next hour, just briefly, each of our panelists will give some opening remarks. I'll then follow with a moderated Q&A for a few minutes and then I'll move to an audience Q&A. Please send in your questions whenever they come to mind and we'll have them ready to go for the final section there.

Before we get started, just to help frame the discussion, I wanted to share a definition of the just transition—one definition from a 2020 report that was prepared for the state titled *Putting California on the High Road*.<sup>1</sup> It was prepared for the Workforce Development Board and the Office of Planning and Research which I believe Kate was running at the time this report was prepared pursuant to Assembly Bill 398.

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1. CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, PUTTING CALIFORNIA ON THE HIGH ROAD: A JOBS AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN FOR 2030 (2020).

I thought this definition a little long—I just thought it was quite well put together and comprehensive. According to the report authors:

“Just Transition” refers to integrated policy approaches offering protection, support, and compensation for displaced workers and communities in specific industries or regions. This issue often arises in resource-intensive regions that lack overall economic diversity when the region’s major industry is or is projected to be in decline due to the resource itself running out, or more broadly due to global trends in automation, globalization, and climate change. Just transition programs can offer resources for both immediate short-term assistance to workers and communities directly affected by these trends and long-term assistance to communities and workers as they “retool” and adapt to a carbon-neutral economy.

Then the report laid out three principles for interpreting a just transition and high road recommendations. Those were: first, that labor should be considered an investment rather than a cost; second, that policymakers should pay attention to job quality; and third, that deliberate policy interventions are necessary in order to advance job quality and social equity.

I think that that framing is a useful one and a good one. I would love to hear, as our three speakers introduce themselves, if they agree with that definition or if they have different thoughts on that. Although I suspect Kate may not because she signed off on the report. But also know that this was not an official statement of the state, rather just a report that was prepared on its behalf.

With that, I’m going to introduce our first speaker, Kate Gordon. Kate is a senior advisor to Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm with a focus on just transition policy. She previously served as director of the California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research [OPR] and a senior advisor to the governor on climate, the founding director of the Risky Business Project, the co-executive director of the Apollo Alliance, a lecturer at Stanford Law School, a co-author on the Fourth National Climate Assessments chapter on climate risk, and many other leadership positions in climate risk and transition policy. She received her JD and master’s in city planning from UC Berkeley—two of the I believe five UC Berkeley graduate degrees we have on this panel today. With that, I’ll hand it over to Kate. And Kate, I believe you have some slides that you should be able to control.

#### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

**Kate Gordon:** I do. I’m hoping that will work. First, I have to say that you can see that Alegría, Louise, and I, all coordinated our outfits for this panel, so I’m glad about that. Also, I literally wrote that definition, so it would be embarrassing if I disagreed with it. Thank you for using it because we spent a lot of time and thought on that definition, so I appreciate that.

**Ted:** It’s a good one.

**Kate:** I am going to share slides. I promise not to talk for too long. I just find it easier. Tell me if you can see that, Ted. Yes? Perfect.

I'm going to talk about federal government generally on transition, but in the context of DOE, because that's where I sit. I thought it was funny Danny, on the last panel, I'm going to quote him, said he thinks we need to build a lot of stuff and dig a lot of stuff out of the ground to meet our climate goals. DOE's literally job is to build a lot of stuff and dig a lot of stuff out of the ground. We are now trying to do that from the context of this administration, which is both very climate-focused and very equity-focused. I think that's worth noting because we're living those tensions day-to-day at Department of Energy. It's something we're spending a lot of time thinking about, which is why the Secretary asked me to come in and really lead on both transition issues and on place-based strategies generally.

I talk about place-based—I'll explain that in a minute for those who don't know—but I really think of transition issues as fundamentally place-based economic development issues or economic prosperity issues. You see this idea of going from a very technology-focused approach to a place-based approach in a number of the executive orders from this administration. I just put some of them here.

One of the first out of the gate, an executive order on advancing racial equity, very specifically. Executive Order 14008, which was the first climate executive order, interestingly creates both the Justice40 Initiative and the Workgroup on Coal and Power Plant Communities. So, both the laser focus on ensuring support for disadvantaged communities and that work includes a focus on energy transition [are present in this executive order].

Executive order[s] and supply chains I think [are] really important. Again, to Danny's point, we really do need to move beyond this theory that we can put up solar panels and not worry so much about where the manufacturing and supply chains are happening and still have a just and equitable energy approach [with] worker organizing and empowerment. Of course, those jobs have to be good jobs, they have to be right to forming union and access to the jobs, and of course, [we must] look at climate risk across all of them.

The Justice40 initiative, which was created—and I think just important to highlight because it goes to a lot of what we're talking about, and similar in some ways to what California has done in that it really calls out at a White House level ensuring that 40 percent of the overall benefits of our clean energy and climate investments are directed toward essentially disadvantaged communities. That is something we're spending a lot of time thinking through and operationalizing in the work we're doing now.

Why place-based or what is place-based? Again, I really broaden, I would say, and you can tell from that definition I go broader than many people on what just transition is, because to me—and this comes partly from my time in California—it's about our former timber communities that are looking for a diversified economy to get out of the incredible hole that they're in economically.

It's about the agricultural interest[s] that are looking at the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and trying to figure out where they're going to be going forward. It's about oil and gas. It's about coal in many places. It's about losing your auto plant and trying to figure out how to move forward. We're really talking about how to build out a more sustainable and resilient and equitable economy. To me, that is fundamentally a place-based effort. What do I mean by that? I mean, it's different in every place. It looks different in every place. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to this question of what a just transition looks like.

As Louise knows well—we've worked together for a long time—there's no talking point I hate more than the talking point of there are more solar jobs than coal jobs in the United States because that doesn't get to the location of those jobs, the quality of those jobs, [or] the skills needed for those jobs. We need to talk about this step in a very bottom-up place-based way with meaningful community engagement, which is something I know both Alegría and Louise do a lot of work on, with a systems approach that recognizes that this is an integrated interdisciplinary issue and we're constantly learning and adapting.

Right now, we're trying to basically do that through implementation of the single largest infrastructure bill ever passed in this country since the highways were created. For DOE, this is \$62 billion, to our agency. It's the single largest infusion of cash for us since we were formed in 1977. We just reorganized our entire department and announced it yesterday. In order to meet this challenge, [there are] huge opportunities for particularly energy communities, but also huge increases in our support for disadvantaged communities like the Weatherization Assistance Program.

What you see here, if you look at these bullets, it's exactly what we just said. It's a bunch of industrial development and it's a bunch of mining and all of it is intended to support the energy transition. That is something we need to talk about as we're thinking about this transition. Not only how can it create good jobs, access to those jobs, economic anchors, and diversification in communities, but [also] how do we do it in a way, as the folks said earlier, that is attentive to environmental standards?

I wanted to say a couple of words about the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities, and then I'll end. This is the major locus of work. You have to ignore the name because it also includes oil and gas communities but it's where most of the work is happening on transition from an economic development perspective. In this administration, it's run by the White House and then we administer it at the Department of Energy. It's run by the National Economic Council and the Domestic Climate Policy Office.

Again, [the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities was] established in that executive order [14008, and involves] eleven agencies. It importantly includes [the Office of Management and Budget] OMB. I just want to point to one of the important things here, which is that this whole strategy is really driven by many of our economic and budget folks, which makes it very different than prior strategies that have been very much run by a

sidelined, frankly, environmental or climate approach. This is really this administration's approach.

[Editorial note: a new slide shows a map of the United States depicting the top seventy metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas for coal-related employees.] These are the main initial priority communities. I know this doesn't include California. Actually, you can see that blue county in California there, that's Kern [County], not surprisingly.

Our initial set of communities is really prioritizing coal because that's where the transition's happening today or has happened already and there's a lot of need in these places. We are expanding out to oil and gas communities right now. Essentially, we've done an enormous amount of listening sessions. We've talked to over 2,500 people through those listening sessions. We've built this—I really recommend this clearing house, which points to every federal funding opportunity available to support these types of communities, including the infrastructure bill.

We're essentially trying to make it as easy as possible for people to navigate the federal government. We're trying to make it as easy as possible to think about that integrated approach. We're trying to meet people where they are. It is a full-time job for many, many people and extremely intensive. I do not want to lie, this is hard stuff. Transforming economies is hard, but it's really exciting and frankly, this model of approach for an interagency group is now being looked at across the administration, including in some of the rural and tribal and Justice40 work groups as a model for how to organize around listening sessions around action and around bottom-up implementation.

I'm going to stop there. I am very reachable, so please feel free to get in touch. I will end there.

#### STATE GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

**Ted:** Thank you so much, Kate. I have many questions I'd like to ask, but let's go through and get the other two perspectives first. I should have noted at the top that the order of operations here was selected specifically to go federal, state, and then local. That's what we're going to stick with. We're going to move over to Louise Bedworth next.

Louise is the director of the Land Use Program at the Center for Law, Energy, & the Environment CLEE, [and] a good colleague of mine. She also in her role here serves as a senior advisor to our California China Climate Institute. Before joining CLEE, Louise served as the executive director of the Strategic Growth Council [SGC] here in California and deputy director of OPR, the agency that Kate used to head, as well as a research fellow at the Public Policy of Institute of California. She received her master's in environmental engineering and a Ph.D. from the Energy and Resources Group here at UC Berkeley. Welcome, Louise.

**Louise Bedworth:** Thanks, Ted. Great to see Alegría and Kate, fun to be on a panel together. I will probably echo a lot of I think similar themes as what Kate was talking about. I think one thing I'll add, especially from my time working at the Strategic Growth Council and at OPR, I think maybe in addition to the just transition definition, which I think is very inclusive, is continuing to focus and support the communities in California and elsewhere that have just historically borne the brunt of our pollution and has had a legacy of disinvestment.

As we've been doing our work in California, I think for quite some time through the California Climate Investments program, there has been a large focus on disadvantaged communities. I think we have a lot that we can draw from that work as we really broaden this also to think about transition across a number of different types of communities.

As we know, meeting California's climate goals is going to require a complete transformation of our energy systems, transportation and mobility, thinking about how we're building communities, the protection of our natural and working lands, and how we're working in rural and urban communities.

I think the question that I think about a lot is how do we do this while putting communities first? I think this is critically important because in the session yesterday, we were talking about this—people don't live in silos. People live in systems and people live in communities where things work together. California has a number of initiatives that are underway today really that I think are looking at this just transition. I think some have started maybe with a different focus, but really are feeding into this idea.

I'll just highlight a few because I think I started to make a list for myself and I was like, "Wow, there's actually a lot of pieces out there." I think Ted already mentioned the [Senate Bill] SB 398 work which was part of the reauthorization of cap and trade, which is really looking at how do we get on this high road for California? We've also had high-road jobs training partnerships, focus on quality of jobs, and I think increasingly seeing that reflected in our state investment programs. I know it's something we did at the strategic growth council. Really, how do we start to pull these principles into the work that we're doing? There's been a large effusion of money into the community economic resilience fund which builds on a region's rise framework that Kate and others at the beginning of the Newsom administration really put in place, which is, California is going to thrive by all of our regions thriving.

[A]ll of this really sets the roots for thinking about a just transition. OPR is producing a just transition roadmap. The thing I'll talk about [is] how we can build on some of our models of place-based investment here in California. What the Strategic Growth Council was created to do in 2008, so fourteen years ago now, was really to think about how we bring together all of the state agencies that touch on sustainable community development to work together to realize this broad goal.

At the time, it was really with a focus on thinking about reducing greenhouse gas emissions and bringing together transportation and housing. I think increasingly it became clear that that [intersection] touches on economy, that's housing, that's how we're doing agriculture and natural and working lands. SGC really hit its stride in the mid-2010s—does one call that the twenty teens? [chuckles]—when we started to build some of the first, original, newly created programs for the greenhouse gas reduction plans. We were looking at how we're taking cap and trade money and investing [that money] in communities and starting to think about how we do this in really integrated ways. The first of these was affordable housing and sustainable communities that looked at housing and transportation. This initiative also looked at how [we could] bring programming and other services into those investments to marry infrastructure and then also other types of “softer investments” that are critically important as we think about a holistic approach.

I think this really becomes evolved with the Transformative Climate Communities Program. It works at a neighborhood scale, which is, I think, a key piece of what we're looking at, though [we] need to think about how it nests in some of these larger regions. What these investments have done is brought together a collaborative stakeholder structure that's community-led with state dollars to realize a series of projects coupled with investments in workforce and economic development.

These are the transformative plans. Thinking about workforce and economic development, anti-displacement, and again, some of these softer types of investments that can come into a place so that you start to really realize this community-led vision. I think [that] the state of California is at this moment, especially right now with an incredibly historic budget, paralleling what's happening at the federal level quite nicely, an incredibly large opportunity where we have a lot of funding available to think about innovative and creative ways to put it into communities.

Some of the key principles for me are continuing to think through these integrated approaches, really thinking about how we marry dollars to bring the workforce, the economic development, the projects—everything together, [while] leading with community voice. This requires investing in the type of collaborative structures that we need to see in community and in place so that you're truly bringing up the needs of that location, and you're enabling that place-based investment that Kate talked about. Then investing in capacity building and technical assistance [is necessary] to ensure that everybody, every voice has a seat at the table.

A key element for this in California has been that we're identifying priority populations. Again, [this] parallels Justice40 and that idea on the federal level. Ensuring that we are deploying these tools, we're understanding who needs to be at the table and what it is going to take to enable them to be there in a meaningful way. These are a lot of things that the state of California has been doing that

really positions itself to be able to be quite effective leading into a just transition. With that, I will end there and pass it back to you, Ted.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

**Ted:** Great, thanks so much, Louise. It's fantastic that you both have focused so much on the place-based angle because now we're going to have our local government representative who might be able to [add] a little bit of detail on some of those concepts. Our third speaker is Alegría De La Cruz. She is the first appointee as director of the Office of Equity for the County of Sonoma, which is a role she began in August of 2020. She also serves and was recently appointed by Governor Newsom to [the] California Seismic Safety Commission. [She was] appointed last year.

Previously, Alegría served as Chief Deputy in the Sonoma County Council's Office for a number of years, and she's held positions at the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board; the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment; and California Rural Legal Assistance. She also received her JD from Berkeley Law, completing our quintuplet of graduate degrees from our fine institution. With that, I'll pass it over to Alegría, and you also have some slides, which I believe you can control, correct?

**Alegría De La Cruz:** Yes, I believe so. Let's see if this works. Are you guys seeing some slides here?

**Ted:** All good. Yes.

**Alegría:** Here we go. I'm going to get my notes in the right places. Are you looking at a [slide on] five for farm workers or an actual office of equity slide?

**Ted:** Now it is showing what appear to be notes. There we go. There's a slide and it's the cover slide.

**Alegría:** I'm going to try this one more time because my notes are in the wrong place here. Thank you for the grace.

**Ted:** No worries. It is sometimes difficult.

**Kate:** I think Alegría and I might have been at Berkeley Law school at the same time actually.

**Alegría:** I was there 2000–2003, Kate.

**Kate:** Yep, we were classmates, not only Berkeley graduates but actual classmates.

**Ted:** That's very cool, an auspicious time to be here.

**Alegría:** Alright, I'm good. There we go. How's that? Office of Equity slides?

I'm calling in from Coast Miwok, Wappo, and Kashia land. Sonoma County is unique in many ways, but we are also the county in California with the most number of federally recognized Tribes within our jurisdiction. I think it's always important to ground us and recogniz[e] the wisdom and the power of what it means to truly value and think about what traditional practices around land management [exist]. It is especially important to think [about] what this looks



like in a climate-changed world in California and important to recognize that context on the land in which we sit.

Folks typically understand Sonoma County more as wine country, but I think it's really important for us to pull that curtain back and to recognize what it really means to work and to live and to make change in a community that's an agricultural economy. I'm from the Central Valley. I'm the daughter of farmworkers and farmworker organizers. And that foundational understanding of the realities of the people who are really at the front lines of these changes has always shaped my approach to this work in a path towards a just transition.

With that, I also really want us to shift our language, and as a result, shift our responsibility for those of us who sit in these important positions of government. Instead of talking about vulnerable communities, we should talk about people who experience vulnerability because we have caused those vulnerabilities. And that means that we have an ability and a responsibility to change those actions and to shift th[e] outcomes [for] people who experience that vulnerability because of what we have done, [and this framing] really shapes the way in which we understand our responsibility.

A phrase that we at the Office of Equity can share often and loudly is that those closest to the problems are also closest to the solutions, but they can be farthest from the resources and the power to make those changes. I want to do a shout-out to Glenn E. Martin, who is the founder of JustLeadershipUSA for that very succinct and powerful summary for the work that we have ahead of us. As someone from local government, I also want to recognize how critical it is that we have people inside of these institutions who represent and come from those communities that we serve and who we really need to center in our response, in our recovery, and in our shift in mindset and resulting actions.

In the county of Sonoma, our equity work is really race-focused. We recognize the impacts that our history of the country ha[s] had on communities that continue to experience that vulnerability, and we recognize that while we came from a history that had explicit racism and accepted that as part of our foundations, that we've moved [to] more implicit racism, recognizing that explicit discrimination was not acceptable and appropriate as we continued to grow in our teenage sta[ge] as a country, but that discrimination continued alive and well even though that racism moved into a more [im]plicit phase.

I would also say that one of the challenges in California is trying to do this work in a race-forward way with Prop 209 on the books. [W]hat we are now dealing with is a dedication to a race-neutral conversation that I think really frustrates so much of our work to really take action that looks at what are those populations that most need our attention, our love, our focus, our resources, and [it is important to] recogniz[e] that that race neutrality really frustrates so many important policy actions that we could otherwise take.

I think just setting the context here, we're really working at the Office of Equity to shift our community in this bucolic, nostalgia-ridden understanding of wine country to seeing ourselves as a frontline climate change community and

people who are really dealing with the impacts of how important it is to move into this just transition.

So, Sonoma County's 2017 complex fires rocked the national news with a quickly moving unstoppable wildfire that moved from Napa to Sonoma in minutes, then jumped eight lanes of freeway and devastated a suburban subdivision.

And that was just the first of many [disasters] that we and many other communities in California and the country have experienced and seen increasing in both their intensity and their impact. Since that time, we like many other communities have started to shift our conversation, but we really haven't shifted on a local level, I think, in terms of meaningful policy action that centers the philosophies that really ground our understanding of a just transition.

I also come [to] government work from an advocacy perspective, as you shared, Ted. That [perspective] really recognizes the really powerful and untapped assets in frontline communities, versus that deficit frame and versus thinking about what these people need, to recognize [that we have] not yet been able to really jump into that creative, beautiful, and resilient space. Resiliency is a tough word for a lot of these communities right now because it is a result of needing to be resilient, but the goal is to say, "Let's have government change and be resilient and have people experience the same outcomes regardless of the color of their skin or the language that they speak."

Going into what our frame for equity actually means in the county of Sonoma, we recogniz[e] that it's an outcome. It's an aspiration where you can't tell the difference in how well or healthy somebody is based on their race or ethnicity, and it recognizes that in order to achieve that outcome, we've really got to change our processes. And that means explicitly valuing the contributions of people of color, people who are poor, and people who have long experienced underrepresentation and under service as a result of their identities. And that, again, those are the folks who have the solutions to change our outcomes.

So, at the Office of Equity, we're really about looking at the insides of our guts as an institution and figuring out how we're normalizing conversations around race [and] how we're getting much more comfortable, as Californians in a race-neutral world, talking about the importance of framing things in a race-equity lens. We're also working to build organizational capacity, like developing the resources and the infrastructure. My little office was started in summer of 2020, in the middle of our nation's grappling with yet another Black body at the feet of white law enforcement officers and what that actually means for our responsibility to step into that frame.

We're also working to recognize that my little office of three full-time people is not going to be sufficient to change the insides of our guts, so [we also look at] how [we are] also building the capacity. I'm working to build a core team of people who are really looking to build the skillset to understand this work from that race-equity frame, and then to operationalize that work inside of the county. We're really lucky we've got a rac[ial] equity [and] social justice pillar

that our county board of supervisor has adopted. There are internal and external frame[s] to the way that we're doing our work.

But really, I think underscoring all of this is a really important value that I hold dear in this idea of a just transition, and that's self-determination. People have the right to participate in the decisions that impact their lives. And this requires our institutions to really shift and expand our very limited understanding or very limited practice of what democratic governance really looks like. We're working to shift that understanding inside of our local government structures, that there's something really beautiful and powerful about centering in our program design those people who typically can go ignored. That invisibility and the resulting normalization of whiteness actually results in systems that continue to cause amazing amounts of institutional and structural harm and deepen the inequities that just transition asks us to shift.

That frame, that invisibility, or that understanding of a lack or a need, also prevents us from being able to embrace the wealth and the richness that exists in the lived experiences of people on the frontlines of this change. I want to do another shout-out here today for another beautiful group of folks who are also Berkeley alums, and a professor who definitely got me through law school, Professor Angela Harris, who is now at UC Davis Law, and Abby Reyes, who is at the University of California, Irvine, running their community resilience projects.

Harris and Reyes started something called the Just Transition Lawyering Institute that is helping people who are in the practice of law really think about what it mean[s] for us to push our skillset into this just transition idea. I'm going to drop my slides for a second and share something else that I think is really powerful, and that talks a little bit about what you said, Kate, and again, what you said, Louise, about what it looks like on a local level to recognize that at the local level, there are really different solutions that are coming up. And I'm just going to share this slide.

This is something that the North Bay Jobs with Justice has adopted. It's a platform, and it really centers the experiences of farmworkers in wildfires. And you can see we're talking about language justice; we're talking about the fact that folks during wildfires still don't get information about how to keep themselves and their families safe from smoke [and] ash and how to go to work safely. That language justice is very critical. You can see how basic it is on a local level that we're still not speaking to the people who are on the frontlines of these challenges.

Jobs with Justice is asking for disaster insurance, recognizing that so many programs at the federal and the state level actually exclude people who are undocumented [and] who make up a huge population of this workforce. We've actually institutionally excluded folks from being able to actually have the resources that they need to stay safe in the middle of a disaster. Also, thinking about this goes to this idea of how [we are] really elevating the work of people on the ground. Jobs with Justice has trained community safety observers to deal

with the fact that there aren't enough people from the state level or at the federal level, [specifically] from Cal/OSHA and from the Department of Industrial Relations, to monitor what's happening to workers' health and safety during a wildfire emergency. The platform also looks at how do you pay people who are working during a disaster. Premium hazard pay is one of the organization's demands.

Then the fifth one is the one that just gets me. These are folks who were in the field in the middle of the wildfires, [and] they're sitting in mandatory evacuation zones because the County of Sonoma's practice during wildfires is to allow farmworkers to continue accessing evacuation zones that nobody else is supposed to be in, but they're allowed to go in and harvest wine grapes.

In a disaster, when folks are in these fields in these places that are literally deemed unsafe for anybody else, they don't have clean bathrooms and water in the middle of a wildfire emergency. And so, I really want to get grounded on a local level to what it means to provide the conditions for people to feel that self-determination and be part of the conversation and shifting that economy. I raised these policy ideas that came from this very activated group of farmworkers from 2017 to now, that have started to really shift the conversation about what the policy actions [are] on a local level that will get to people's having that sense of self-determination.

I'm going to end there. I know we're going to have some questions and answers, and I'm really looking forward to continuing the conversation.

#### HOW CAN CALIFORNIA ADDRESS EQUITY AND PLACE-BASED IMPACTS IN ITS TRANSITION?

**Ted:** Awesome. Thank you so much, Alegría. That was really fantastic. I'm going to do a few minutes of a couple of the questions that I would like to ask. In the meantime, please add your questions to the Q&A, and then we'll shift over to audience Q&A after that. We've already got a couple, but please don't hesitate to throw those in there, and we'll get to them in about ten minutes or so.

I had planned a few individual questions for each of you but given the presentations and the focus on a place-based approach, place-based job transition, place-based investment in resilience and in economic development, and place-based equity considerations, I just want to go one layer deeper. In a state that is so diverse and has the full gamut of natural disaster risks, the full gamut of resource extraction across its entire history, and the full gamut of displaced and affected communities as a result of those climate-related and climate-impacted factors, how can a state like California—maybe that's a silly thing to say because there's only one—how can California address that four-dimensional matrix of equity and place-based impacts while trying to transition out with the progressive climate policies that it is building? I don't know if any one of you wants to take that first, but it's almost a nation-level task for a single state.

**Kate:** I'll try. I'm really interested in what the others have to say, too. It's funny when people in D.C. say, "Oh, you did just stay stuck in California, so you don't know the broad range of things we have to deal with at the country [level]." I'm always like, "Trust me. [chuckles] It's incredibly diverse, it has every climate impact, massively diversified economy, very resource-based. It's a really complex place."

One of the reasons, and Louise mentioned this, that we put together the Community Economic Resilience Fund right before I left my job at OPR was to take American Rescue Plan dollars from the federal government, and basically just make the case that we needed to create the opportunity for planning at the regional level across every part of California because of these incredible impacts. This regional planning is important because the climate impacts that are coming in are so local and specific, as Alegría was saying, particularly about extreme heat, but also wildfires [and] sea level rise. Also, one of the challenging things about California is that the money that gets put out tends to be put out on a per-population basis. This allocation system means that parts of the state get a lot more resources than other parts. And so, you end up with places with just no resources to be able to address these issues, and then other places that have theoretical resources, but they're inequitably distributed. So, the reason we designed it that way was to say, "Look, every region of the state needs to be thinking about this because every region in the state is in transition, every region." And I think we really saw that with COVID. That's what happens when a major economic shock hits your system.

You see the inequality, you see the industrial impacts, you see the place-based impacts. One thing we need to do, and it goes back to the regions rise idea, is really think of ourselves as an integrated system. There's so much divisiveness right now politically, and also place-based divisiveness, and we just have got to get to a place where we think every place needs this kind of support, [so] how do we do best practices across the board?

**Alegría:** Kate, I so appreciate you talking about planning dollars because I think it's a super huge challenge at the local level to make sure that that planning is inclusive. And even the word inclusive still acknowledges that there are people in positions of power who are asking people to come to a table. I think one of the things that the Office of Equity is recognizing is the importance of saying, "These great ideas are out there. Don't create a new table inside of an institution that has already created exclusion and exclusionary practices and a lack of trust."

Again, during the 2017 wildfires, we saw populations that we really needed in the middle of our planning processes actually not even going to shelters, going out to the beaches, and avoiding those resources because we had people with Department of Homeland Security jackets—that's [the agency] FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] is [housed under]—standing outside of those shelters. People were like, "Oh, hell no. We've been trained on our rights, we stay far away from DHS."

From this experience, we are thinking about how you actually, on a local level, implement planning from a government perspective when government has created such harm in communities that need to be at the table. We've really shifted our understanding and our attempts to say, "Let's go to the tables [that] people have already set for themselves. And how are we listening and lifting up those solutions that exist, because those tables are where actually we need to be," instead of inviting people into our systems where there is that lack of trust and that actual history of harm.

Thinking about at the local level, how are we implementing these planning resources in a way that really transforms our understanding of what community-based planning looks like and feels like? I think that's one of the shifts that local government is really trying to make. It's tough because people [are] angry, they're tired, and they don't have the ability and the resources to come to another Zoom meeting to say what they've been saying for years and years and years to policymakers to have them [respond perfunctorily], "Thanks so much for coming. We're just going to do status quo because it's easy, and we're going to continue doing stuff like that."

So, I think just shifting the way that we at a local level are thinking about planning, [which is] a big, huge push of what we're trying to do inside of the Office of Equity.

**Louise:** I would just add [that] I think there's a parallel that happens from the state to the local level as well. This is something we grappled with a lot at the Strategic Growth Council, which was [that] we were awarding projects. By awarding a housing project here at [one location]—at the end of the day, we're not going to transition. We're not going to solve our climate crisis. We're not going to do all these things with the state sitting there picking project by project. We have to start building from the ground up what these solutions are going to look like. I think it is still actually a challenge to get the right balance and trust and everything to really let that happen in a really meaningful way. This parallels [the] just transition. I think when you look at the implementation of our Sustainable Community Strategies, this is a real challenge. And I do think planning resources that can be put out there to support building a really meaningful ground-up process is a critical step to getting there, because ultimately, we have to do that. We have to do both of these things. I think that you could say that from the state to the local and from the federal to the state. It just nests: it's a nesting doll that we have to empower.

To me, one thing I'm really trying to grapple with is what is necessary to really build that bottom-up top-down in a way that can be effective. It's not going to be all kumbaya. We're not going to solve everything, but we're all talking from a similar place, trusting each other. It's authentic, it's meaningful, it's real, and we [simultaneously] see the local and we see the framework that we are trying to accomplish from a state or federal level. I do think planning is a key piece, and by planning, I think about engagement and technical assistance and capacity building and everything that we're putting all of that together.

**Alegría:** Again, thinking about how that works at the local level, like some of the stuff that we're stuck in, is like, how do we get money to people to come to the table or to support their tables? The bureaucracy in figuring out how to award stipends to community members is mind-blowingly difficult. You think, "Wait, really? I can't figure out how to give you a \$250 gift card because you're giving me all the ideas [that] I need to do my job well?" That's a little mind-blowing when you think about [how] this is how difficult it is to get federal planning money out to community, to create a planning process that actually is meaningful and that does elicit these important solutions that come from community.

We are trying to figure out how [we can] unlock and make more flexible this ability to actually get folks at the table, and to again, create the conditions for people to actually be able to participate. It goes back to this question of, what are the conditions for self-determination, and how are we facilitating those?

#### REIMAGINING DEFICITS AS POLITICAL ASSETS

**Ted:** Building off of the last couple of points made, and going back to the place-based approach, specifically with respect to the jobs and economic transition: Are there ways that the fact that there are resource-extractive communities, that in a true transition there will be a loss of certain kinds of existing employment—that's just factual—are there ways that can be turned into some sort of a political asset rather than a risk? If so, are there examples that you all have seen in your work where that has been an accelerator of a better conversation rather than just a stopping point?

**Kate:** Yes. I think I really love the framing. Alegría said this, and I really subscribe to a way of thinking about this sort of asset approach rather than deficit. This [example] is 100 percent on the energy project side. I will say one of the things I started when I got to DOE is a whole internal project that we call the very exciting name "fossil asset repurposing." It really is about how you actually use [fossil fuel infrastructure] and do something with it that's cleaner. That's an exciting thing actually. If you think about it, one of the things about coal plants, for instance, that have closed down, is they have transmission access, and they have transportation access. They just exist in these places where actually that's really valuable to people who are building things like solar and storage projects, for instance. It allows you to not have to go through a whole process of industrial land transformation and not necessarily to build a new facility. There [have] been really interesting opportunities out there. Oil wells are being used now for geothermal, some of them for energy storage and battery storage. There's really interesting stuff happening that you'd be really surprised [to learn about,] actually. Then of course the whole [complicated conversation] around mining. Just the reality that we import 80 percent of the critical minerals that we use right now in all of the things that we're doing that are good for the energy economy.

So, how do we think about smart ways forward on that? There [are] real opportunities for mining communities that have already [been] done. The[se communities a]re in the middle of reclamation, [and] they're trying to figure out how to use that land. Just in the 2021 Infrastructure Bill, we have a huge set of dollars for DOE for clean energy demonstration projects on abandoned mine lands for this exact reason. There's also a \$750 million manufacturing grant program that's specifically for clean energy manufacturing in communities with closed coal plants and coal mines. So, I think they are assets, actually; I think that the workforce skills are assets. The existing local communities', in some cases, interest in continuing to see this kind of tax revenue, frankly, and job creation but [in a] much cleaner [way] is an asset. [T]here are real concerns with just the conversation about continuing industrial activity in existing industrial places, which have a history in a lot of cases of redlining and racial segregation, so we have to address that. But let's look at this as an asset, not a problem to be solved.

**Alegría:** Again, at the local level, some of the conversations that we're having [are]: how do we move into a conversation about vegetation management that creates great middle-class union jobs for people who right now are working in landscaping [or r]ight now, people who are working in ag[riculture], right? There is a shift that we can see and that's really exciting. Marin County is doing some awesome stuff around their veg[etation] management programs, connecting up with local labor groups to also raise the floor and recognize that [for] landscaping you're working hourly, super low wages. What does it mean to actually have a full, year-round, middle-class job that includes benefits and a path to a different outcome, a different way of life? That feels like a really important conversation.

And I would say that embedded in all of that, especially in the agricultural communities in California, we need to have immigration reform. That underlies so much of the conversation about, again, this question of self-determination, and people being able to access institutions that exclude them because of their status. Some of these silos need to really be brought together, and if we're centering the folks that are in the middle of this transition, the ones who really could benefit from this transition, we have to think about all of the wraparound things that our economies and our policies need to shift in order to make that possible.

#### THE LIMITS OF FEDERAL AUTHORITY AND CHALLENGES IN ASSISTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

**Ted:** I'm going to move to a couple of audience questions. Again, if you have questions, please do submit them via the Q&A and we'll take those as they come in. We've got a question here, which is for Kate about the Supreme Court's recent swing toward nondelegation and major questions issues. I think we can ask that question with specifics to the Department of Energy if there are rules



that you think may come before the Court that are concerning, although I'm sure your ability to speak up about those may be limited. But maybe more broadly, let's talk about the limits of federal authority here, and where the federal government [is] best suited to help the states and local governments achieve a just transition. Where can [the federal government] be the driver? And where [is it] limited [or] prevented from acting?

**Kate:** It's a great question and not only [can] I probably [not] talk about our current legal posture, but I don't actually know what the impacts are going to be on DOE. I think there is, of course, an open question about limits on executive authority generally and what that's going to mean. A lot has been done through the executive branch in the last couple decades, and so I think it's a really important question and one to watch, particularly when it comes to EPA, which exercises that power quite a lot. Most of what I'm doing right now at DOE and what I talked about is actually legislative. We're incredibly fortunate that both the American Rescue Plan and now the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, and building on, interestingly, the 2020 Energy Act, actually give us a huge amount of authority to do a lot of this work and to do it really intentionally.

One of the things we get to do as agencies is interpret a statute and provide the guidelines, and there's a lot of opportunity in providing the guidelines to do things really intentionally and thoughtfully. I think that's important. I think the federal government can do a lot. Obviously, it's a lot of money. The numbers are staggering. I remember when I went to California, I [thought] these are huge numbers, and now I'm like, "Oh, that's only \$25 million, that's like nothing. This program over here is much more." Anyway, it's a lot; they're really big numbers.

But what we are not as good at, and [what] I spend a lot of time talking to people about across the inter-agency world and I'd love to turn to the others on, is exactly this meaningful community engagement piece. We know we need to do bottom-up work, meaningful community engagement, and, as Louise said, really important technical assistance and capacity building. It's very hard to do from the federal level, I'm just going to be really honest. It's really hard for us to pool funding to create a single application for anything because of the limitations we're under.

It's really hard for us to create direct assistance to someone who might be working with stakeholders because we might run the risk of them then applying for some competitive grant and then being disqualified because we helped them with something. The restrictions are serious, real, and legally binding. And so I'm really interested actually in the others' thinking about how we can do better on that, and what are some creative options, because I find that to be difficult.

**Louise:** I mean, one thing I'll say is that is ultimately where Transformative Climate Communities [TCC] came from. I will give a shout-out to the local government commission who went around to all of us at the state level, and basically said, "If you're a local government, and you want to do your sustainability plan or your climate action plan, here are all of the pots of funding that you need to go to that all operate on different timelines with different

guidelines.” And it was a beautiful infographic; I think we all ended up with it on our wall. There was a constant discussion just even for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, a single pot of funding—could we create a common application? That has been an elusive idea for a long time.

I think that is compounded even more when you’re in an under-resourced community in a place where you don’t have a grant writer on staff, you don’t have who knows what [else]. That’s really where TCC came from, was to address that issue. It does very much take an asset-based approach. I always have just loved when I would go to workshops, [that] that was what our staff would lead with, which is yes, we focus on disadvantaged communities because that’s what the state calls them, but that’s not what this program is about. This program is actually about building on your strengths and your assets.

So, another thing that we did in that program was we required a collaborative stakeholder structure with an MOU [memorandum of understanding]. It was actually really structured so that there was accountability between the local government and the community groups and the project partners. All of that was built into the program to say, “We as the state and as the grantee are expecting that you are going to do this work together, and we want to see proof of that.” And so, we would work with them on that.

At the end of the day, though, I think Kate raises an incredibly good point: it’s a tremendous amount of work. [As] we would always say, it’s very high touch. Our program staff were always involved for a lot of reasons: just to provide technical assistance where maybe others couldn’t, to mediate, to bring folks to the table. But I will say, especially in grants that we had over a number of years, you saw evolution, and you saw growth, and you saw engagement happening where we didn’t need to help anymore. And so that was really good to see, and we brought a number of project types together under a single funding umbrella. Those were all really important.

At the end of the day, I think those are the principles that we need to apply across everything. Every dollar can’t run through a single entity or a single program. We need to think about how we break down the barriers to enable this to happen to the fullest extent possible, just among other funding sources that a state has, and to bring the resources that you would need to do that. And I think that’s the next challenge [now] that we’ve been able to demonstrate what you can accomplish if you do that. And so now, how do we build it out in more ways? I think that’s to me, the next step.

**Alegría:** Well, this conversation is so awesome for me, because I’m thinking [that] one of the things that popped up for me was we’ve heard from a lot of our advocacy organizations, “We don’t want another stinking program, we want you to take policy action.” And then our policymakers are like, “Yes, but that costs money, and we only have money for programs, but we don’t have money to implement new policies.” How can money be directed to encourage the adoption and implementation of policies that we know work or policies that

have been raised from communities to make it work? Community members do not want more programs.

There's a woman that we work with on the regular and she [has expressed], "I don't want another stinking program. I just want you to raise the minimum wage in our county, and I want you to stop making farmworkers work in mandatory evacuation zones." Those are policy items. "I don't need your money and I don't want any more planning." That's something at the local level that when you are trying to make a policy that you don't have money to pay for, [you need to think about] how [that can] be understood as a program that's eligible for program funds.

When I think about [North Bay Jobs with Justice's] Five for Farmworkers policy demands, that costs money, and we understand them as a program from a government perspective, and not as a policy action that could also be funded with program funds. And so, I feel like such a bureaucrat having this conversation trying to make the distinction between a policy and a program and program funds to go for policy implementation, but that's literally where we are at the local level. Just thinking about how [we can] expand our understanding of what a program actually can cover to encourage these shifts and to pay for them is important because any more programs, in some ways, it just feels like a drop [in the bucket], when what we need is like a bulldozer to begin creating some new ground.

**Ted:** I'm sorry, go ahead, Louise.

**Louise:** I was going to mention this before. I think we could probably all sit down and fill notebooks with the bureaucratic challenges that come up. Another that I will just highlight that is a huge issue at the state level is the inability to do advanced payment, and this is so bureaucratic, but all of our grants were reimbursement-based. If you want a community-based organization to do a project with you, you're really going to ask them to front \$15,000, or a million dollars, or who knows how much it is, but that is a huge challenge and a really hard one to figure out how to deal with.

The other issue is we would want to work with community-based organizations, and you had to name them all in the contract from the very beginning. You couldn't leave that open. There are just different challenges like that that I think really get in the way of being able to do that meaningful engagement.

**Alegría:** That's such a good point, Louise. We've been literally having small community-based organizations float us no-interest loans of millions of dollars in COVID response, and it's unacceptable, and it's impossible. It makes it impossible for them to do their job.

#### THE ROLE OF JOB RETENTION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**Ted:** Another audience question to actually maybe bridge the policy-program question a little bit, or rather a specific program area is about the reality

of job retraining programs, both essential, and perhaps impractical in some cases, are far too expensive. I'm curious if this is a scenario where it's too many programs, or is this a scenario where we need more, and what is the reality there? Is it practical for the state and for the federal government to provide that kind of support?

**Kate:** Louise.

**Louise:** I was going to say, Kate. [laughs]. This is an area we struggled with a lot. I will just say it within our programs at SGC, it was a lot on the workforce development area. And I think we looked a lot to the Workforce Development Board to help us really frame out how we should be integrating issues around job training that leads to high-quality jobs. That we weren't funding programs that were just churning people through that weren't going to have a place to go. I think we really looked to [the board]. I know when COVID first started in 2020, we all sat down again and looked at this. Could we have a set of guidelines that we could really start to integrate into programs?

I don't think that that answers that question directly other than to say, I think it's something we have at the Strategic Growth Council and our infrastructure investment, but I know now other agencies are doing this as well. Other agencies are really trying to embed those principles, those sort of high road jobs, looking at job quality, not just job quantity, and really ensuring that you're getting folks into good programs. It's a politically very challenging place to be as well, and it really also has a lot of regional implications because of what is available in different parts of the state.

So, there's a lot of complexity there that I certainly can't do justice to, but it's definitely something we worked a lot on to just try to be getting in the right direction. I think [there is] probably still more work [needed] to get there.

**Kate:** I just really recommend everybody to look at the document that Ted started with, which is the Berkeley Labor Center analysis of the cap-and-trade dollars and the jobs created, and the success stories, and the less successful stories around that. One of the things it says, and it's the deepest analysis of this done anywhere of real jobs created by real programs, is that 60 percent of the jobs created by clean energy programs are in construction. In California, I would commend the Highway Construction Career Ladders Program because what that program does is deliberately combine pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship with a deliberate focus on formerly incarcerated folks, people of color, and women, and a deliberate focus on multi-craft training. The program is not just training people to be solar installers, or weatherization energy efficiency auditors, but is really going beyond that, because frankly, even though we are going to get to scale, and this is going to be amazing and create all these jobs—I truly believe that—they aren't, to Louise's point, necessarily all going to be at the same place at the same time.

So, we do need somebody to be able to get a multi-craft career license and be able to do a solar installation one day and frankly fix someone's electricity the next day. It's just really important that we look at the real economy, and not

act as if what we're creating here is some separate thing in some separate bucket. As I always say, it's not about green jobs, it's about greening the economy: we're talking about the entire economy, and I think that's just really important.

**Alegría:** Yep. Going back at the local level to the success of some of those programs [is] their ability to really reach into the populations that we most need to be including in these programs. Our apprenticeship programs need to be delivered in Spanish. Our apprenticeship programs need to be available for people who are undocumented, to have wraparound services, and to find them a path towards adjustment of status. And that's a huge missing opportunity I think in terms of, again, building that bridge wide enough to ensure that enough folks and the right folks are on that bridge.

I also think about, Louise, to your point, what other programs [there are]. The history of the California Conservation Corps that I know is that the first director of that program was LeRoy Chatfield, who was Cesar Chavez's executive assistant for many years. It was a bridge for how you value the work of people who are working outside. How do you actually pay them? How are they covered under a union? That was a path from UFW's attempts to organize farmworkers and have them protected by a union, to then come into state service and to include that population, and what it meant to conserve California's wild spaces in a way that really valued that work and recognized the importance of it.

And so, I think those opportunities exist in our histories, and [we must consider] how we uncover them and tell those concealed stories in a way that shows those opportunities into our futures.

**Ted Lamm:** Wow, I can't think of a better way to conclude. Thank you all so much for a wonderful panel, Alegría, Kate, and Louise. That was fantastic. Thank you all for listening, and with that, I will pass it over back to the team for the next panel. Thanks everyone.

**Louise:** Thank you.

**Kate:** Thank you.

