



February 21, 2020

Attn: Ryan Heater
Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission
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The Indiana State Conference of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) represents over 5000 members, 35 branches, including Youth and College Chapters across the State of Indiana and the communities we serve.

We write to respond to the preliminary approach to studying the 21st Century Energy Policy Taskforce and to address the Indiana General Assembly in House Enrolled Act 1278 (2019) that tasked the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (“Commission”) with conducting a study of the statewide impacts of transitions in fuel sources and other electric generation resources, as well as the impacts of new and emerging technologies on electric generation and distribution infrastructure, electric generation capacity, system reliability, system resilience, and the cost of electric utility service for consumers.

The study, the Commission is working with the State Utility Forecasting Group (SUFG), which is studying transitions in fuel sources, primarily modeling future scenarios; The Indiana State Conference of the NAACP recommends no scenarios for any fossil fuel source, unless it is inclusive of its impacts on environmental justice communities from the fracking impacts primarily on the Indigenous people, to pipeline burst, and toxic gas emissions, such as methane and its impacts on frontline communities health, as well as the impact it may have on water, land and air quality.

The U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory, Lawrence Berkeley (LBNL), which is studying new and emerging technologies, including the potential impact of such technologies on local grids or distribution infrastructure; The Indiana State Conference of the NAACP believes the geotechnologies do not address the root causes of greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutants, the study should look at merely how to ramp up solar, wind and geothermal technologies. Studies on how to ramp up building energy efficient housing, requiring all new housing, buildings and multifamily be energy efficient and have rooftop or community solar.

Indiana University, which will prepare an analysis of local economic, fiscal, and social impacts of the transition in generation resources, particularly on rural communities. . This study needs to include the local economic, fiscal and social impacts of transition in generation for urban and environmental justice communities as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency executive order 12898. The study needs to consider the loss of tax revenue to the communities that are bearing the burdens of fossil fuel emissions and how the demolition of archaic coal plants and the health impacts, property values already impacted . In addition, African Americans have a high energy burden according to NAACP Lights Out in the Cold Report and ACEEE, Lifting the High Energy Burden in America's Largest Cities, Indianapolis ranked 10 of high energy burdened cities. Need to look at community solar models.

We believe everyone has a right to safe and affordable energy.

Unfortunately, energy companies and the energy industry do not operate under this principle. The way they do business not only impacts the environment but the people who live in it, which results in health problems and other issues for the African American community and communities who are low-income.

More African Americans live near coal fired power plants, nuclear power plants, or biomass (where waste is burned to make energy) power plants than any other demographic group in the U.S. Over the past several decades, approximately 68% of African Americans live or have lived within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant. As a result, African Americans are more likely to suffer health problems from the pollution that these facilities produce.

Since 1909, the NAACP has addressed a vast array of civil rights issues including education, employment, housing, civic engagement, health, and criminal justice. Communities of color nationwide are, and have historically been, beset by human and civil rights violations, including disproportionate exposure to pollution, crime, substandard living conditions and more.

African Americans who reside near energy production facilities including coal fired power plants, nuclear power plants, or biomass power plants, are more likely to suffer the negative health impacts of prolonged exposure to smog, lead, asbestos, mercury, arsenic, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and other toxins than any other group of Americans.¹²³⁴ Prolonged exposure, to toxins from these energy production facilities, is tied to birth defects, heart disease, asthma attacks, lung disease, learning difficulties, and even lower property values.

Approximately 68% of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant, which produces the largest proportion of energy compared to any other energy production type. The health conditions associated with exposure to toxins coming from these plants disproportionately affect African Americans. An African American child is three times as likely to be admitted to the hospital and twice more likely to die from an asthma attack than a white American child.

Though African Americans are less likely to smoke, they are more likely to die of lung disease than white Americans are.⁵ A 2010 report by the National Research Council (NRC) calculates that particulate matter pollution from U.S. coal-fired power plants is solely responsible for causing approximately 1,530 excess deaths.

In addition, properties in close proximity to toxic facilities average 15% lower property values.⁶ At the same time, many of the same polluting facilities that affect the daily health and well-being of host communities are major contributors to the greenhouse gases that are driving climate change. Carbon dioxide emissions are the leading cause of climate change and coal-fired power generation accounts for 67.9% of all emissions.

Not only do low-income neighborhoods and communities of color suffer more of the direct health, educational, and economic consequences of these facilities, but also devastating natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, along with rising food prices and water shortages, harm low-income people and people of color disproportionately partly due to pre-existing vulnerabilities.

While African Americans are enduring most of the harmful impacts of energy production, they are reaping few of the benefits from the energy sector. According to a 2010 study by the American Association of Blacks in Energy, while African Americans spent \$41 billion on energy in 2009, they only held 1.1% of energy jobs and only gained .01% of the revenue from the energy sector profits.

Therefore, there is both inequity in the incidence of disease and the economic burden for communities of color that host energy production facilities. African Americans should no longer abide by the millstone of the noxious facilities and continue to be overlooked by the energy industry while living in blight. Given that the unemployment rate for African Americans has consistently been nearly twice that of the national average and the average wealth of white Americans is 20 times that of African Americans, it is past time to revolutionize the relationship communities of color have with this multi-billion dollar industry. Leading in a new energy economy serves as pathway out of poor health, poverty and joblessness while establishing a foundation of energy resources and security for generations to come.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Indiana State Conference of the NAACP

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