LPDD and Social Equity

Updated January 2023

While the LPDD database is primarily organized around identifying legal pathways to address different sources of emissions, rather than different populations, we take seriously the need to address social equity and justice concerns in any holistic decarbonization plan. We highlight the resources below that call special attention to justice and equity issues, and welcome feedback on how we can more broadly incorporate equity concerns in our model laws and resource library.

- **Pathway:** **Equitable Access to Renewables**: Throughout the country, states legislatures and Public Utility Commissions are focused on expanding access to renewable energy through Shared Solar or other Community Renewables models. We highlight some of the best guides, practices, and examples of how to expand this market specifically to low- and moderate-income customers, which can create cost-savings for both projects and customers.
- **Pathway**: **Equitable Access to Electric Vehicles**: As electric vehicles expand, legal tools are being developed – like minimum percentages of charging infrastructure sited in LMI neighborhoods – to make the benefits of electrification accessible to all.
- **Pathway:** **Social Policies to Facilitate a Just Carbon Transition**: As the decline of the fossil economy dislocates workers and communities, governments are concerned with providing training, transition grants, severance or retention, and giving representation to affected communities to advise on a just carbon transition. We highlight examples and proposals here.
- **Pathway:** **Restricting Fossil-Fuel Pollution in Frontline Communities**: Frontline communities are both powerful champions against the expansion of fossil infrastructure and deserving of special concern, as they absorb the brunt of local pollution from these facilities. We highlight resources and examples of legislation defending frontline communities from fossil pollution.
- **Pathway:** **Green Recovery**: The COVID-19 crisis has challenged both local and national governments to respond with recovery efforts that prioritize both social equity and climate action. We catalog notable proposals and examples from around the country.
- **Pathway:** **Reducing Fixed Electricity Charges**: There is a tension in electricity rate-setting between utilities that want to shift their billing towards fixed customer charges (a standard charge for every customer, no matter their usage), and efficiency and low-income advocates who want bills calculated on a variable (per-kWh used) basis. We highlight resources on rate-setting that both incentivizes energy efficiency and reduces the low-income energy burden.
- **Resource:** **Report, Enhancing the Social Benefits of Regulatory Review**. This 2020 report focuses on improving regulatory review processes under the Biden Administration in order to better value environmental costs and benefits, and specifically to better capture "distributional" regulatory impacts – that is, identifying which populations are adversely or disproportionately impacted by regulatory decision-making. These procedural recommendations are framed as helping ensure better social equity outcomes under the Biden Administration.
- **Resource: The** **Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund** (PCEF) provides dedicated funding for climate action that advances racial and social justice. PCEF is supported by the city's Clean Energy Surcharge, a surcharge on large retailers. The Fund touts itself as the nation's first-ever climate-fund created and led by communities of color, centering Black and Indigenous people, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups in addressing the climate crisis.