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# Annual Report



## August 2022

Coalition of Sustainable Communities New Mexico  
c/o Santa Fe Community Foundation  
501 Halona St, Santa Fe NM 87505  
[www.coalitionscnm.org](http://www.coalitionscnm.org)

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## SUMMARY

Dear Coalition Members:

We have passed through a year of both challenge and joy. Our FY2022 witnessed the re-emergence from COVID and extreme weather events across New Mexico – drought, high temperatures, wildfires, extraordinary monsoons and floods. And, we experienced high economic stress as the rate of inflation skyrocketed. Still, it is our joy to expand our Coalition membership to welcome the Town of Taos and Taos County.

This is the context in which we highlight the critical need for resiliency planning and adaptation to climate change, especially for those most vulnerable in our communities. The Coalition continues to expand its focus on the inequities exposed during these times and how to offer solutions that reduce the stresses on those most vulnerable to the impact of climate and economic changes. The Coalition has shown determination over this past year in ensuring the development of meaningful solutions.

Our leadership took many forms and leveraged as well as strengthened the higher profile we have achieved in our **advocacy role** in both the state legislature and in the administrative functions at the PRC. Additionally, as an important initiative of NMED, we advocated for the passage of the Clean Cars NM by the Environmental Improvement Board and the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board. Altogether, our advocacy registered for stronger action around sustainability, equity and climate change. Some highlights:

- In the legislative area, we refined our process for assisting members in the development of their legislative priority resolutions and keeping members informed about the status of priority bills. We recommended actions during legislative hearings by our members and were vocally supportive of key bills supported by our member communities. Our voice has become significant in advocating on behalf of our local governments, which represent over 40 percent of our state's population.
- Continuing our engagement in the development of rulemaking for community solar at the PRC, we took a leadership role in working in a coalition of kindred organizations who have been involved in ensuring that the community solar program not only follows the intentions of the statute but also provide the best results for our communities,

especially those low-income communities. The Coalition has co-signed on numerous official comments presenting jointly with our collaborators – CCSA, CVNM, Vote Solar, and GRID Alternatives – to the PRC to influence the outcome of rulemaking regarding such matters as low-income participation and development of the criteria for scoring and selecting community solar projects. It is noteworthy that the PRC’s team used many of the recommendations of the “Joint Commenters” in refining rulemaking and responding to cynical efforts by a utility company to delay the implementation of the community solar program. We have engaged with many of our members not only on the details of the rules, but also the various ways in which their local governments can be directly involved in the development of community solar facilities.

- We continued our advocacy for serious climate action on the world stage at COP26 in Glasgow, November 2021. As “Official Observers,” three from our Coalition attended COP26, covering many sessions and topics that we shared with our members and others while there and upon our return. Those who went to Glasgow representing the Coalition were Beth Beloff, delegation leader, Randall Ryti, and Mark Hayden. COP 26 was the most important international climate conference since the Paris Agreement was reached at COP21 in 2015. The UN invitation for permanent official observer status for the Coalition, through its fiscal sponsor the Santa Fe Community Foundation, positions the Coalition to play a leadership role in coordinating the engagement of representatives from New Mexico (governmental or NGO) before and during the conferences.

Our equity-focused work centered on ***solutions development*** for our low-income population, exploring ways to begin reducing their energy burden and increasing livability through energy efficiency, electrification, home improvements, and increased opportunities for their participation in the use of solar energy, both through community solar and through onsite subsidized solar installations. We participated in contract work to further these developments, as well as participation in the development of scalable pilots.

- As affirmation of our leadership role in shepherding the low-income part of the community solar program’s development, the Coalition entered into a contract with the PRC on behalf of its team - Prosperity Works, Partnership for Community Action, and GRID Alternatives - to develop strategies for low-income participation in New Mexico’s community solar program. This entailed developing a comprehensive understanding of how to best access members of low-income communities through community-based organizations that are trusted by them. Further, the team developed training materials

and recommendations on protocols for setting up an ongoing program of outreach to low-income households within the community solar program.

- The City of Santa Fe rolled out the Solarize Santa Fe pilot project, with the support of Coalition staff and partners at Santa Fe Public Schools, area credit unions, and the Sierra Club, to bring onsite solar to low-to-moderate income households in Santa Fe.
- In order to scale up the Solarize Santa Fe pilot, the Coalition Team assisted staff in the City of Santa Fe to develop and get approval for funding of the establishment of a Clean Energy Fund (also called a “green bank”). The program will seek to lower the energy burdens of low-to-moderate income households by creating more energy efficiency, electrification, discounted community solar subscriptions and solar low interest loan products while serving as a pilot for expansion to other New Mexico cities and counties. It is noteworthy that in 2020 the green financing and energy efficiency financing roundtables led directly to the Coalition’s efforts to consider new financing solutions to ensure financing for low-income households to reduce their energy burdens, including the “green bank.”
- Other pilots under development in which the Coalition played a collaborative role are 1) an EV car-sharing program for low-income households, and 2) BCarbon, an innovative carbon soil sequestration certification program for ranchers and farmers.

The Coalition advanced its work in **knowledge development** through various means:

- Thirteen roundtables and webinars were presented on topics of importance and presented by experts. All video recordings of these virtual presentations can be found on our website.
- Publications by the Coalition include an equity-focused policy paper titled “[Tackling Energy Burdens in New Mexico](#)”, which points policy makers to impactful solutions.
- The Coalition coordinated and collaborated on a report to the PRC titled [Strategies for low-income participation in NM’s community solar program](#). The report provides perspectives from other markets, published reports, community solar developers, and feedback from community-based organizations. Primary recommendations are focused on making low-income enrollment easy, offering meaningful economic savings, and working with trusted partners.

## ***Membership and budget***

With the lifting of COVID restrictions, this was the year to make personal visits to potential new members. The Town of Taos and Taos County both joined the Coalition after presentations to their governing bodies. We are so pleased to welcome them to our Coalition! We thank those members who contacted colleagues from other local governments to consider joining our Coalition. It takes all of us to grow this organization, and we have an important track record of results now to share with prospective members.

The Coalition continues to operate with a Team of four - two of whom serve pro bono - on a small budget with the major effort provided without cost. We accomplished much with our budget and ended the year in the black, though the need to grow our Team with paid personnel continues as we expand our member services and contract work related to our mission.

***In conclusion***, we feel that we made a significant contribution as a collective voice in ***advocacy*** that was clearly stronger than what single voices could be; in so doing, we placed the Coalition in a ***leadership*** role in the legislative, administrative, and agency arenas. We filled some gaps in the social equity area through our ***solutions development*** work in areas of rooftop and community solar, and found areas in which to deepen ***knowledge*** through our presentations and publications. Our membership survey indicated that you, our Members, feel that our work is of value. We look forward to furthering the value of our service to you in expanded ways in the coming years in support of your leadership!

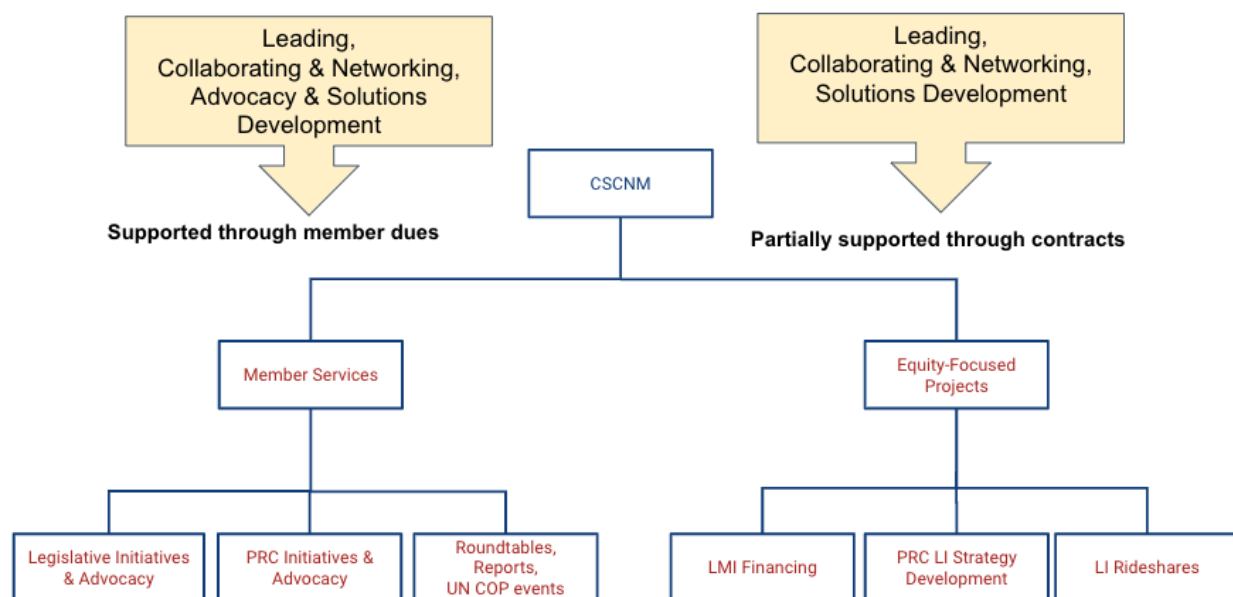
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Beloff". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Sincerely," text.

Beth Beloff, Executive Director

## COALITION WORK SECTORS

The Coalition’s work is focused on creating resilient, equitable, and sustainable communities, and can be roughly divided into two sectors, as shown in the figure below.



The left sector involves leadership, advocacy, and collaboration that aims at supporting our Member governments in priority areas of legislation, state and local regulatory issues, and education through webinars, roundtables, reports, and participation in UN COP (Conference of Parties) meetings. This work is primarily supported through Member dues. The right sector is focused on leadership and collaboration on developing and implementing equity-focused solutions to energy and climate challenges faced by some of our most vulnerable communities. This work has recently focused on ways of making electric transportation, solar electricity, and energy efficiency more widely accessible. This work is primarily funded through contracts.

## ADVOCACY

In FY2022, the Coalition continued to express a clear collective voice advocating for legislation, regulations, and administrative actions for energy choice, resource conservation, equity, and greater climate action at the state and local level.

- Number of bills supported in the 2022 legislative session: **21**
- By area: **Energy (10), Environment (8), Governance (2), Finance (1)**
- Number of supported bills which passed: **4**

- Number of formal comments submitted to PRC: **4**
- Number of PRC updates/strategy meetings with Coalition Members: **5**

### *Legislation*

Despite the introduction of a host of climate action and sustainability bills by House and Senate members, only a limited number cleared both chambers and gained the Governor’s signature. Other priorities dominated the session, and valuable committee time was consumed in the debates over Hydrogen Hub development with none advancing.

While the overall outcome was modest in scope, important bills were signed into law in the 2022 session. These included HB37, the Community Energy Efficiency Development Block Grant; HB163, extensions of the Solar Market and Sustainable Building Tax Credits; HB2, funding “plus ups” in departments and agencies for climate and conservation staff; and HJR1, a proposed New Mexico constitutional amendment to remove some restrictions on the “anti donation clause” now in the constitution.

### *Rules and Regulations*

The Coalition provided expert input to help shape rules and regulations at the state level impacting individual member communities.

**Clean Cars NM:** Through supportive oral and written comments by Coalition elected officials and staff members to the Environmental Improvement Board and the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board, we contributed to the passage of “Clean Cars New Mexico”, an initiative of NMED, an Ex-Officio Member of the Coalition. The regulations adopt stricter emission standards for new cars and trucks, tighten standards for Low Emission Vehicles, and expand delivery of EVs to dealers.

**PRC rulemaking for Community Solar:** The Coalition continues to play an active role in advocating for the implementation of a community solar program that will bring meaningful financial and environmental benefits to all New Mexicans, especially those that are struggling financially.

- The Coalition participated in the PRC workgroup process led by consultant Strategen from June - October 2021, in preparation for the rulemaking process.
- The Coalition was active during the PRC rulemaking process from November 2021 to May 2022. This included online oral comments during workshops, providing leadership on the development of project selection criteria, and submitting multiple written comments in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA), Vote Solar, and GRID Alternatives.



- The Coalition managed a 4-month PRC contract with three other organizations focused on successful low income participation in the upcoming community solar program. The Coalition presented recommendations at a PRC implementation workshop.
- The Coalition is preparing to submit a legal document if investor-owned utility Southwestern Public Service Company (SPS/Xcel) appeals to the NM Supreme Court their motion for a stay of the community solar program, which was denied by the PRC.

**Bi-monthly meetings** were held to discuss ongoing PRC hearings, with emphasis on electric utilities in each of the three service territories. Members were informed of cases, hearing timetables, and opportunities for intervention or participation. Email updates are sent out periodically to Members.

## KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

The Coalition supports networking, sharing of knowledge and best practices, as well as development of new policies and collaboration among Members and other stakeholders through the publication of papers and reports and the facilitation of roundtables tailored to meet Member priorities.

- Number of virtual roundtables/webinars: **13**
- By topic: **Energy Efficiency, Financing, Legislation, Hydrogen, Public Power, Purchasing, Clean Cars, Climate Change, Transportation and Land Use**
- Number of participants per event: **4 - 45**
- Participant composition: **local government, non-profits, utilities, citizens, congressional**
- Number of policy papers/reports: **2**

### *Virtual Roundtables and Webinars*

The Coalition hosted a variety of roundtables and webinars over the past fiscal year. Most roundtables took the form of presentations by topic experts followed by questions from the participants. Recordings and presentations from roundtables and webinars can be found on our website.

Roundtables offered to Coalition Members in FY2022:

- Water Challenges and Solutions in NM, July 6 2022
- Community Solar, June 25 2022
- Sustainable Transportation, May 26 2022
- Managing food waste, April 28 2022
- Building Electrification, March 29, 2022
- Building & Transportation Electrification with Senator Heinrich, Jan 27, 2022

- Public Power in New Mexico, Jan 13, 2022
- COP26 Summary, December 16, 2021
- Hydrogen As a Fuel, December 6, 2021
- Sustainable Procurement, October 19 2021
- Federal Funding Opportunities, September 30 2021
- Clean Car Rulemaking, September 21 2021
- BlocPower: Building Electrification for Low Income, Sept 15 2021

### *Publications*

The Coalition published an equity-focused policy paper titled “[Tackling Energy Burdens in New Mexico](#)”. Energy burden is the fraction of a household’s income that goes to household electricity and heating, and can reach 10-30% of low income (LI) family budgets. The paper provides detailed examples of how NM policymakers can increase access to energy efficiency (EE) in LI communities through the expansion of existing projects, developing new financing programs, and prioritizing energy efficiency in new construction. The paper also documents how rooftop solar and community solar can reduce utility bills.

The Coalition coordinated and collaborated on a report to the PRC titled [Strategies for low-income participation in NM’s community solar program](#). The report provides perspectives from other markets, published reports, community solar developers, and feedback from community based organizations. The primary recommendations are focused on making low-income enrollment easy, offering meaningful economic savings, and working with trusted partners.

### *USDN Partner Network Program*

The Coalition continues to participate in the USDN Partner Network Program, which is a group of local governments throughout the nation that meet quarterly to share knowledge and best practices on topics of government sustainability policies and programs.

### *COP26 Participation*

With the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change approving the Official Observer status of the Santa Fe Community Foundation in July 2021, we developed a program of education, orientation, and coordination to assist our Coalition delegation and others before and at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland (October 31-November 13).

Our delegation consisted of Beth Beloff, ED; Councilor Randall Ryti (Los Alamos County), and Mark Hayden (GSD). In advance of the conference we also briefed Secretary James Kenney (NMED) and Secretary Alicia Keys (Economic Development) on the UN process, environs, and

potential outcomes. Of note, our delegation met with Governor Lujan Grisham and party in Glasgow to discuss the connections between state and municipality climate actions.

Participation in COP26 underscored the importance of “sub-national” actors (states, cities, and counties) and civil society organizations (including NGOs) in advancing climate action and contributing to the worldwide effort to keep global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. Now as an Official Observer, we can expect the opportunity to attend future COPs sharing the message of city and county sustainability and climate actions while bringing new ideas back to New Mexico.

## SOLUTIONS DEVELOPMENT

The Coalition engages in collaboration with Members and other stakeholders to develop equity-focused solutions to priority challenges, including developing policies, programs and pilot projects.

### *Community Solar*

The Coalition continues to show leadership in the development of an equitable community solar program in New Mexico, which will provide meaningful financial savings to low-income households. In addition to active participation and advocacy during the rulemaking process over the last year, the Coalition was awarded a contract by the PRC to provide recommendations to support low-income participation in the community solar program. The Coalition partnered with three other organizations on the contract: GRID Alternatives, Prosperity Works, and Partnerships for Community Action. The team conducted interviews of key stakeholders in community solar programs in other states, surveyed community solar developers, and conducted orientation sessions for over 27 different organizations statewide. The orientation sessions focused on low-income serving organizations that were interested in learning more about community solar, how the program might benefit their constituents, and how they might partner with developers to help with education and enrollment. The organizations also shared their perspective about potential challenges for low-income participation. The team delivered a final report with recommendations for supporting low-income participation and training materials to the PRC. The Coalition also presented the team’s findings to participants in a community solar implementation workshop at the PRC.

### *Solarize Santa Fe*

The City of Santa Fe rolled out the Solarize Santa Fe project, with the support of Coalition staff and partners at Santa Fe Public Schools, area credit unions, and the Sierra Club. The pilot project resulted in 39 contracts signed for rooftop solar on homes in and around Santa Fe,

including one pole mounted array, with 20 of them for households earning below 80% of area median income.

### *Clean Energy Fund (Green Bank)*

Assisted the City of Santa Fe to develop and approve \$500,000 for the establishment of a Clean Energy Fund in the municipality's FY2023 budget. The program will scale up Solarize Santa Fe as well as help create more energy efficiency and solar loan products for low-to-moderate income households, while serving as a pilot for other New Mexico cities and counties. a

### *EV Car-sharing Program for LI Households*

The Coalition continues to support the slow roll-out of a DOE funded grant won by the non-profit Forth Mobility to bring electric car sharing to residents at public housing sites in Santa Fe County and Albuquerque. The Coalition will share lessons learned from the pilot program with other Coalition Members to replicate the successful aspects of the program in their own communities.

### *BCarbon Program and New Mexico Pilot*

In 2019, the Coalition was invited to join the Rice University Baker Institute's working group to develop a national protocol for the capture of carbon in soil to significantly counter the impacts of climate change. The formal group is called BCarbon, a Texas nonprofit soil carbon storage certification entity. The focus of the protocol has been on landowners primarily in the agricultural sector - ranchers and farmers. BCarbon has advanced this process to now be piloting its processes and protocol, including landowners in New Mexico. The purpose of the pilot is to research and assess carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere and stored in the soil as well as to create and transfer credits for that removed and stored carbon.

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK**

Eleven staff members, elected officials, and ex-officio's completed our annual survey evaluating work completed over the past year, as well as providing input for future directions.

Reviewing the Coalition's work over the past year, the greatest support from all respondents was given for the Coalition's legislative advocacy for bills, and supporting Members with the development of their legislative priorities. Members also saw value in the development of a pilot Clean Energy Fund, ongoing webinars and roundtables, and the Coalition's ongoing work on community solar and PRC updates.

In terms of focus areas for next year, feedback prioritizing legislative advocacy and supporting Members with policy development. In terms of specific areas, most respondents prioritized energy efficiency policy and projects for low-income households and development of a regional Green Bank. Most Members support ongoing community solar work as well as expansion into areas of water conservation. There is also support for involvement in work around soil carbon sequestration and low-income car shares.

## MEMBERSHIP EXPANSION

**New Members:** The Coalition recently increased its membership, adding the Town of Taos and Taos County. We now cover jurisdictions encompassing 43 percent of the state's population. Two new Ex Officio Members are the State Environment Department and General Services Department.

**Outreach:** Local governments that may be interested in joining the Coalition have been approached directly by staff or with letters signed by Commissioner Hansen or Mayor Webber, including: Rio Arriba County, Dona Ana County, Mora County, Bernalillo County, San Miguel County, Grant County, Town of Bernalillo, City of Bayard, Town of Santa Clara and Town of Hurley. With decreasing COVID risks, staff intend to hit the road not only to aid current Coalition Members but to recruit new Members by explaining our work and the value we can add to their sustainability aspirations.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Coalition continues to do a lot with a little!

- Number of pro-bono hours: **Beth (1250 hrs); Gary (500 hrs)**
- Number of paid hours: **Ken (336 hrs) and Christian (711 hrs)**

Throughout FY2022, the Coalition operated under the budget approved by the Executive Committee in its August 2021 annual meeting. During the year, revenue was \$74,813, carry over from FY2021 was \$28,910, against expenses of \$65,743. We enter FY2023 with a carryover of \$37,980. Carryover funds are important to cover operations at the beginning of the fiscal year and before membership dues are received.

	<b>FY2022 Actual</b>	<b>FY2023 Proposed</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
<i>Membership Dues</i>	\$70,000	\$70,450*
<i>Contract Services</i>	\$4,813	\$35,000**
<i>Carry Over</i>	\$28,910	\$37,980
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	\$103,723	\$143,430
<b>Expenses</b>		
<i>Staff Hourly Wages</i>	\$57,595	\$65,000***
<i>Sub-Contractors</i>	\$0	\$25,000****
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	\$2,000	\$2,000
<i>Travel</i>	\$548	\$1,500
<i>Contingency</i>	\$0	\$10,000*****
<i>Fiscal Agency Fee</i>	\$5,600	\$11,500
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	\$65,743	\$115,000

\* Dues receipts may increase with continued membership growth

\*\* Contract services may increase with work on Clean Energy Fund, Solarize Santa Fe pilot, etc.

\*\*\* Wages to include support for GRT and a 5% inflation adjustment.

\*\*\*\*Sub-Contractor fees anticipated for strategic planning, contract administration, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*Contingency line for legal expenses, etc.

With the Santa Fe Community Foundation as the fiscal agent for the Coalition, the Coalition served as the “pass through” organization to pay partners in the award of the PRC Community Solar RF contract.

- Received \$25,825 from the PRC. Dispersed \$21,012 to GRID Alternatives, Prosperity Works, and Partnership for Community Action. \$4,813 came to the Coalition as revenue in this past fiscal year, with an equivalent amount to be reflected in the FY2023 budget.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In the year ahead, the Coalition will continue to focus on its core mission of advancing equity-focused climate action and sustainability for its Member communities and for New Mexico at large. Through leadership, advocacy, knowledge and solutions development, the Coalition moves into its fifth year of existence with clear purpose. Equitably expanding access to renewable energy, reducing the burden of energy on low and middle income citizens, emphasizing energy efficiency opportunities, and more will guide the work. In supporting our Members' emphasis on the importance of equity in the work we do, we believe it is imperative to create greater collaboration with the community-based organizations who best know the priorities of marginalized communities.

As the impact of the climate crisis grows more severe with each year, so does our resolve to act at the community and state level. Our participation in the COP27 Climate Summit in Egypt will also allow the voice from New Mexico to be heard at the global level.