



# Meeting Minutes

## Meeting Details

Meeting Details	
Project Name	Meeting Date & Time
Indiana Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Public Meetings	11.08.2023 6:00 PM
Meeting Venue	Duration
Ferdinand	1 hour 45 minutes
Meeting Purpose	Minutes Recorded By
Gather public input on CPRG Climate Action Plan for State of Indiana	ClimeCo

## In Attendance

Attendee's Name	Dept./Organization
Chief of Staff Parvonay Stover, Scott Deloney, Susan Bem & Jessica Murray	IDEM
Caroline Kelleher, Noah Godrey & Kamayani Barshilia	ClimeCo
In-person (40ish) & (14) virtual stakeholders	-

## Agenda Item

Agenda Item	Owner
Welcome	ClimeCo
Grant Overview	ClimeCo
Opportunities to Participate	ClimeCo
Public Comment	All

## Meeting Minutes

### Discussion

Meeting Notes
<p><b>Randy Lawe – VP of SW Indiana for citizens of quality of life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Randy has undertaken 6 year effort to prevent the construction of coal-to-diesel plant</li> <li>• Concerned about permitting</li> <li>• Concerned that politics may affect the grant distribution and direction</li> <li>• Randy has been fighting for environmental protection – wants to make sure there is a seat at the table</li> <li>• Expressed a desire to move away from fossil fuels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Jane Mklere – Jasper Indiana</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane is an advocate for clean air and water regulation, forest protection, sensible agriculture, and other land use patterns</li> <li>• Expressed concern that Indiana has low rankings in air and water quality because of manufacturing that emits large quantities of toxic pollutants</li> <li>• Expressed a lack of trust for intergovernmental agencies</li> <li>• Wants more emissions regulation aligned to stringent standards</li> <li>• Requests focused emphasis on clean water and non-destructive farming patterns</li> <li>• Primary concerns for IDEM:</li> <li>• More air quality monitors; better interagency coordination; focus on natural carbon sequestration; better wetland protection; soil conservation; less toxic farming practices; rail, public transport, and walkable and bikeable communities instead of more roads; limit mining etc;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Steven Steward – National Forest Alliance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steven expressed concern for the long-term health and well-being of national forests</li> <li>• Explained that forests are carbon sinks – requests improved reforestation and improved forest management</li> <li>• Steven opposes transportation corridors that will increase carbon emissions</li> <li>• Indiana has bad metrics around energy use and intensity</li> <li>• Suggested to expand wetland and cropland as carbon sinks</li> <li>• Protecting forests is a key priority – lots of co-benefits beyond carbon sinks (flooding, air pollutants)</li> <li>• Increase urban tree cover – especially in disadvantaged areas</li> <li>• Oppose the Midstate corridor (and other transport corridors) – already a huge part of the state’s carbon footprint</li> <li>• Oppose secondary effects – it will increase development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mary Haas - Southwestern Citizens for quality of life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests more meetings in Southern Indiana</li> <li>• Concerned about toxic emissions – Indiana has 2<sup>nd</sup> highest toxic emission per square mile and is at the bottom of all quality metrics</li> <li>• Concerned about toxic refineries – 2.2 million tonnes of GHG annually – requests that IDEM focuses on not permitting industries that add to the problem</li> <li>• Questions:</li> <li>• With the CAP – will we continue to allow the fossil fuel industry to expand?</li> </ul>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will IDEM reach out to local groups for facilitation? Suggests they want to be part of the conversation moving forward</li></ul>
<b>Joel Showltide – Evansville (did not catch org)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priorities:</li><li>• Suggested exploring opportunities to designate funds to local communities, especially environmental justice communities – a lot of them have CAPs in place already, and there are lots of opportunities to partner with them</li><li>• Suggested to keep holding public meetings and use their input to inform CAP</li><li>• Suggested solar and battery storage in municipal batteries and schools – lower energy costs for municipalities and employ a lot of Hoosiers</li></ul>
<b>Bill Keller – Ferdinand resident</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priorities – start with community/person-to-person level</li><li>• Advocated for Solar – expressed the opportunities of subsidies for home installation, expanded municipal use</li><li>• Suggested compost at a grassroots level – expand education for people to do this at home</li></ul>
<b>Steve Osbourne – Resident</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggested compliance monitor for weatherization</li><li>• Believes we can expand weatherization efforts (legislative lens)</li><li>• Steve wants to ensure there will be classes and certifications for expanding weatherization efforts.</li><li>• Expressed a desire to include RNG from landfill in CAP</li><li>• Concerns for air quality</li></ul>
<b>Gene Webb – Sierra Club</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evansville CAP, believes current CAP has weaknesses in short-term goals and transparency</li><li>• Wants to see short-term goals and a publicly available dashboard of progress (show energy usage and GHG)</li><li>• Priorities: have cities track urban canopies and report progress over time (focus on metrics and KPIs)</li></ul>
<b>John Blaire – Valley Watch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priorities: Public health and the environment</li><li>• Requested that IDEM should require offsets on all new Title V permits for all GHG</li><li>• Also suggested to phase in offsets for Title 5 permits for renewals</li><li>• Expressed concern about carbon capture and sequestration from industry as there is a lack of auditing. Does not support carbon capture and sequestration from industry as he believes it is inefficient because of how much energy it uses – concerned it is only a way to promote the fossil fuel industry</li><li>• Nuclear energy – believes nuclear energy is the most expensive energy.</li></ul>
<b>Tom – Tristate creation care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A good plan will always be aspirational – but believes this plan is subject to politics</li></ul>
<b>Lany Etheridge – Evansville</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggests the climate reduction plan doesn't focus on climate enough</li><li>• Suggests that projects should significantly cut carbon emissions in a verifiable way</li><li>• Priority: clean and renewable energy like solar and wind and battery storage</li><li>• Proponent of Evansville climate plan – wants to see these actions included in the State plan</li></ul>

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- Priorities:
- Listen to the needs of communities across the state
- Wants more EV charging stations across the state – especially across non-major urban areas
- Expanding forestry conservation
- Actions to expand regenerative farming
- Electrification of buildings
- Energy efficiency of buildings
- Expand solar energy – rooftop and battery
- Community solar should be available
- Net metering should be pursued
- Statewide green school (powered by solar energy)

### **Chris – local resident in Ferdinand**

- Upset with super polluters in the state
- Wants to see more green businesses and promotion of green jobs
- Request more green energy and incentives for solar
- Public transportation – for senior citizens and any creative ideas to increase senior citizens' mobility
- Green space and trails – how to promote little forests and turn them into recreation areas and parks etc, so that they won't be logged

### **Christopher – Solar United Neighbors**

- Many family members are involved in the coal industry – lots of experience in coal country.
- Coal closure is leading to the downsizing of towns and the closing of community spaces.
- Requests to revitalize green energy
- Priorities:
- Plan should support communities and organizations that have implementation ready to go
- Suggests direct investments to organizations with CAPS already in place
- Supports local solar
- Building out a solar school (green schools)- and job training programs as part of the technical schools. Co-benefits of this – education and changing attitudes
- Suggested concern of utility-scale solar – suggested that utility-scale solar can lead to monopolies
- Requested to see more community and/or rooftop solar
- Expressed concerns about blue hydrogen

### **Mark – Sierra Club – Coalition of Mid-state Corridor**

- Prioritize the need to educate the lawmakers on why climate action is necessary.
- Suggested a mandatory climate change education plan

### **Rick Piner – Jasper Group**

- Desired more meetings
- Suggested to prioritize solar in the CAP
- Expressed a desire to focus on the EPD/embodied carbon economy (where lower embodied carbon would be more competitive)

### **Rock Emmert – 47532**

- Suggested that it would have been nice to have the meeting in a larger town at a more approachable time.



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- Expressed concern with past IDEM policies
- Requests a green recreation trail for better transport – especially following the highway
- Requested better funding/incentives for rooftop solar
- Requested better forest management
- Expressed the necessity to reclassify forests as parks for better protection
- Sees this as the greatest opportunity since the New Deal

### **Bill Young – resident**

- Would like the grant language to focus on Air Pollution before Community Benefits.
- Would like to see the plan focus more on addressing pollution and public health.
- Wants to see KPIs around public health as a result of climate actions
- Wants public health KPIs dashboard to be publicly available and easily accessible

### **Jerry Steckler – Grazing dairy**

- Owns a 100% grass-fed farm
- Likes the agriculture measure – requested a desire for holistic resource management
- Wants more education in regenerative practice for farms, gardens, and lawns
- Wants better soil carbon/microbe content
- Requests additional measures for renewable energy production
- Suggested that grazing grassland is the number one carbon sequestration method for natural lands
- Suggested that education will have the greatest output

### **Myer – southwest citizens for quality of life**

- Would like to involve youth and the education system
- Question on how much of the grant funding will go to the energy producers

### **Charlene Urbanczyk**

- Healthcare community representative
- Expressed concern regarding cancer rate and high infant mortality rate

### **Follow up Tasks**

Consider additional outreach in Ferdinand, Gary and Evansville



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## Appendix 1: Non-Exhaustive List of Meeting Participants

Jeanne Melchior		Meeting 4
Greg Painter	Jasper Group	Meeting 4
Mark Noack	Sierra Club	Meeting 4
Danni Schaub	Pharma with Danni	Meeting 4
William Teajae	Hoosier Energy	Meeting 4
Rogan Skayg-Boss	Sierra Club	Meeting 4
Jean Webb	Sierra Club	Meeting 4
Tom Bogenschutz	Tri-State Creation Care	Meeting 4
Bill Brown	IN ERI	Meeting 4
John Blair	Valley Watch	Meeting 4
Christopher Norrick	Solar United Neighbors	Meeting 4
Sarah Winner	Santa Clause Resident	Meeting 4
Gale Blacklock	Santa Clause Resident	Meeting 4
Bill Young		Meeting 4
Kris Lasher	Ferdinand Resident	Meeting 4
Tamara Miller	Town of Ferdinand	Meeting 4
Ken Sicard	Town of Ferdinand	Meeting 4
Rock Emmert	Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality.....	Meeting 4
Joab Schultheis	Sierra Club	Meeting 4
Don Foerster	Town of Ferdinand	Meeting 4
Mary U. Hess	Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality.....	Meeting 4
Kathy Tretter		Meeting 4
Lauren Norvell	City of Evansville	Meeting 4
Alice Boyer	Citizens Climate Lobby	Meeting 4
Phobie Brockman	Valley Watch	Meeting 4
Sr. Jeana Visel	Sisters of St. Benedict	Meeting 4
Jerry Steckler	Regenerative Farmer	Meeting 4
Lauren Kussler	Earth Charter Indiana	Meeting 4
Jane Schipp		Meeting 4
John Stucker		Meeting 4
Steven Stewart	Indiana Forest Alliance	Meeting 4
Lani Ethridge		Meeting 4
Sr. Jean Marrie Ballard		Meeting 4
John Paud		Meeting 4
Stephen Osborne		Meeting 4
Chris James		Meeting 4
Wayne Wernie		Meeting 4
Lisa Neihaus		Meeting 4
Brian Meyer		Meeting 4
William Keller		Meeting 4
Eric Whittaker	Duboise Herland + Spencer Journal	Meeting 4
Meredith Voegerl	Duboise County Council	Meeting 4
Charlene Urbende		Meeting 4

## Appendix 2: Meeting Attachments

### Comments on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

After having attended the public meeting in Ferdinand, I have the following comments to offer toward effective implementation of this grant in Indiana in the future. First of all, it seems that any plan like this that has any hope of making significant change should start with the low hanging fruit that is easiest to implement and has the best chance of effecting that change. As some of the commentors mentioned in their comments, trees are a natural and possibly the best way to sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

Many of those commentors were wrong, however, by asserting that forests should be left alone unmanaged to sequester that carbon. Well managed forests can be regularly harvested for timber and wood products, and those products then go into long lasting products like houses and flooring and cabinets and furniture. That sequestered carbon remains sequestered for the life of the wood product, and the forest from which those products came can continue to grow existing



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trees and new trees to sequester additional carbon. Wood is a renewable resource and forest conservation and establishment should be a major part of any climate change plan.

Indiana currently has a relatively low amount of public land that would conserve such forests if figured on a per capita or land percentage basis. Most of the forest land in Indiana is privately owned and has no guarantee of remaining forested into perpetuity as owners die, and ownerships change. Consequently, it should be a major goal of any climate change plan to expand the amount of forestland in the public landbase. This could be done on either federal or state lands, but there is always a need for funds to buy additional land to be added to the state forest system. As previously mentioned, active forest management on state forests is totally compatible with sequestering carbon and adding value to local wood products industries. Wood is a renewable resource which also helps offset many of the non renewable products currently used in society. Any newly acquired land not already in forest could be planted to trees to add to the forest landbase.

So, providing a large and sustainable source of funding to buy and conserve private land into the public forest land base would be one of the largest and most significant actions to consider and probably one of the best bangs for the buck.

Secondly, as also mentioned by other commentors, Indiana needs to undergo a paradigm shift to stop encouraging rampant development for the sake of “economic development.” This is in direct contradiction to any attempts to limit climate change. IDEM in particular needs to stop allowing and rubber stamping pollution permits for new industries – which is also in direct contradiction to limiting climate change. Any source of additional air pollution or climate warming gasses needs to be curtailed or extremely limited. Which also brings into question one of the objectives of this plan as proposed to encourage economic growth. Many times, those two objectives are in opposition to each other. I don’t think economic growth/development should be an objective of a climate plan. There are certainly sideline benefits to encouraging the use of renewables like solar and wind if those new energy sources lead to more economic potential, but in general, economic development strategies run quite counter to environmental conservation.

Thirdly, the aforementioned renewable energy sources like wind and solar should be encouraged and incentivized over traditional fossil fuels in this state. Which is another area where a paradigm shift needs to happen. The legislature in this state has been outright hostile to distributed energy generation by individuals with solar panels. This needs to be stopped and completely reversed to stop giving monopolies to large centralized energy production by large companies who seem to be built upon and prefer traditional fuels like coal. This would also go a long way toward positively affecting climate change goals.

Fourthly, there is entirely too much emphasis placed upon building new roads that are not needed in this state. This only serves to destroy more greenspace, introduce new dissections of a rural landscape, and more trash on the roadsides, and salt and oil pollution from road runoff. This state does NOT need any more roads. In fact, I would suggest that a law get passed that for



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every new mile of road that some politician thinks absolutely needs to be built, another mile of existing road needs to be removed and turned back into greenspace. I bet that would substantially cut down on the number of new road projects getting pushed through. The currently being considered – mid states corridor – is a prime example of a new road that does not need to be built and is only being given life because of corrupt politicians like Mike Braun and wealthy people like Hank Menke who use the power of eminent domain to steal private land and destroy it to build new roads that only benefit their businesses. This practice absolutely needs to stop in this state – for a multitude of reasons – but climate change being one of them.

Additionally, there was an anti wetlands bill that got passed within the state legislature in the last few years and it is a disgrace to this state. The fact that people supposedly representing their constituency thought it was a good idea to step back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century where man was at war with nature and thought they needed to drain every wetland is an abomination and every legislator who voted for it should be ashamed of themselves – and thrown out of office. Draining wetlands for farming or development can only accelerate climate change and this state needs to get its act together to totally reverse course and stop the loss of wetlands and other greenspace. I propose additional incentives get incorporated into any plan that puts a premium on preserving wetlands.

Lastly, one of the things mentioned as a possible point of emphasis from the presentation was the use of mass transit for transportation. While this may indeed be a noble goal in larger cities, the reality of the matter is that this approach will not work in Indiana, where most people own their own car, or want to own their own car and do not prefer to partake of public transportation. Indeed, in most cases, it is not even feasible. When people who live in a rural area, or even in suburbia, all need to travel to separate workplaces on a daily basis from their scattered homes, how would public transportation even work? It may sound like a good way to combat climate change and air pollution, but in reality, it is a non starter in this state and should probably be abandoned totally or extremely limited to only the largest urban areas. Likewise, for all the talk of light passenger rail, we already have an infrastructure built on roads and automobiles – not trains. And building an entirely new rail infrastructure would only destroy more greenspace and not replace the existing highways and cars already here. I would certainly drop that idea from the plan.

Wayne Werne





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## CITY OF EVANSVILLE

Evansville Climate Collaborative

One NW MLK Jr. Blvd, Suite 302; Civic Center Complex; Evansville, Indiana 47708

Ph: 812-435-6145 Fax: 812-435-6155 Email: climate@evansvillegov.org

November 8, 2023

RE: CPRG climate action plans

IDEM panel on CPRG:

I applaud you for participating in the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, and developing a Climate Action Plan for Indiana. Thank you for providing an opportunity for Hoosiers to give input on behalf of their communities, and for considering it as you develop the plan.

The vast majority of Hoosiers want their state and local leadership to proactively prepare for climate impacts already taking place statewide. Furthermore, Indiana citizens are eager to do their part to mitigate further climate change through local actions in their own communities.

As the Climate Director for the City of Evansville, I am happy to be here to represent our city leadership and those passionate citizens that want to contribute. But local leadership and passion will only get us so far. We also need technical assistance and funding to launch action. We need support from the state.

IDEM's draft pollution reduction plans are promising to enact large-scale progress statewide. But we also need local grassroots action that is customized to suit each community. Cities like Evansville have developed local action plans, but have struggled to launch implementation due to funding and technical shortfalls. While there are plenty of resources currently circulating, they are often awarded to larger cities, states, or coalitions, leaving smaller cities and towns without vital support. Therefore, I would ask IDEM to consider using a significant portion of CPRG funds to support the smaller cities and towns in their local implementation efforts.


Thank you for leading this vital effort to prepare for climate impacts and address climate change.

Sincerely,

Lauren Norvell  
Climate Action Director

*It will provide resources for local action, + Amplify IDEM's capacity for impact + most importantly incentivizing local govts to take notice + consider planned actions in their policies.*

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 Gmail

## Rock Emmert Comments to IDEM, Public Meeting, Nov. 8, 2023

1 message

Rock Emmert  
To: Rock Emmert

Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 5:14 PM

Indiana Department of Environmental Management Inflation Reduction Act Meeting 4 of 4  
Ferdinand Branch Library  
Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Citizen comments submitted by  
Rock Emmert

Retired English/humanities teacher at Forest Park High School  
co-founder in 2010 of environmentally-themed Ferdinand Folk Festival  
Second Vice-president of Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality of Life  
Former officer in Healthy Dubois County

### PRIMARY COMMENTS MADE OR SUMMARIZED AT THE PUBLIC MEETING

My name is Rock Emmert. I am from Ferdinand and am an officer in the grassroots, all-volunteer group Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality of Life. For context for tonight's meeting, for the past five and a half years, our group (many of whom are here this evening) has spent hundreds of hours of work, lost sleep, and large sums of money fighting IDEM and Riverview Energy. Our most recent IDEM public meeting was a hearing nearly five years ago, Dec. 10, 2018, when 400 citizens packed the nearby Heritage Hills High School auditorium.

Fifty-two people braved the microphone that night. Forty-six of us spoke adamantly against the unconscionable proposal that Riverview—a massive, experimental, first-ever-in-the-western hemisphere, 500-acre, coal-to-diesel refinery—would be built in this neighborhood, in Dale, literally five miles upwind from Ferdinand and our prevailing southwesterly winds.

The speaker list imploring IDEM to not overburden our well-known state sacrifice zone here in southwestern Indiana with yet another toxic, cancer-causing, super-polluter included the executive director of Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a renowned area pediatrician, a local family medical doctor, a chemist, a chemical engineer, sisters from the Ferdinand monastery, local business and tourism leaders, college professors, high school teachers, children, parents, and singer-songwriters—all sharing facts and common sense concerns about the proposed refinery's effect upon our health, economy, and quality of life.

The six who spoke in favor of the refinery offered no scientific analysis and/or stood to potentially profit from the refinery.

IDEM officials listened, took notes, and then summarily and promptly within a few weeks listened to the six, ignoring the 46. In total, 257 written comments opposed the refinery; only 10 were in favor. This is IDEM's well-known, well-documented mode of operation for many years. Those dozens of well-informed, conscientious citizens who spoke in favor of clean air for our region vs another massive source of greenhouse gases, carcinogens, and other hazardous emissions were completely ignored. The fact that this one plant would have annually emitted 14 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>—the equivalence of the exhaust from 3 million automobiles—didn't phase IDEM. The fact that Spencer County already ranked in the worst one percent in toxic emissions made no difference. Citizens voices have not mattered. Indiana hasn't and doesn't consistently rank first to fifth most polluting state in the nation by accident. We don't consistently rank among the lowest in public health and quality of life by accident either.

Relying on fossil fuels and denying any ties to our poor health are baked into our state government. Even our recent official motto, "Indiana: a state that works" implies a state that works without hindering regulations, but anyone who researches Indiana's reputation sees what the motto consciously leaves out. Indiana: a state that works for industrial profit at the expense of public health and quality of life.

Our only resort was litigation, which dragged on for over four years. In my court affidavit and deposition, I represented Ferdinand, the area's tourism, our upcoming Christkindmarkt, our rural beauty, recreation, forests, and way of life, to try

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to preserve and build upon this area's identity and charm. I made the case that being a few miles directly downwind from a dirty, polluting giant emitting toxins and sulfur's stench of rotten eggs would forever negatively affect this community and the area. IDEM fought back against us all, siding with Riverview President Greg Merle, calling educated, concerned citizens drunken and irresponsible.

About three months after receiving word this past August from our Earthjustice attorneys that IDEM had finally, after multiple missed deadlines and false promises from Mr. Merle, declared that Riverview's air quality permit was no longer valid, here we are again in a meeting with IDEM related to pollution and public health. We are grateful for this sudden irony and this opportunity to share our hopes for how this bi-partisan IRA money can be best utilized here, but we hope you can understand our severe skepticism that IDEM suddenly, inherently has our backs.

It's taken a historic act of Congress to hopefully get Indiana and the other most environmentally irresponsible states to finally start to take public health, quality of life, and human-caused climate catastrophe seriously. As the American poet laureate Maya Angelou stated, "When you know better, you do better". From a scientific perspective, we know better. We've known for far too long, and Indiana under IDEM's watch has failed to do better for far too long.

Under IDEM's watch, we have many pockets of special education rates near the super polluting plants over twice the national average—with no studies, no questioning the cause, no visible care or concern whatsoever from IDEM officials, no increased or reliable monitors, etc. IDEM's mission statement includes the words "to protect human health". Under IDEM's watch, we consistently have some of the nation's highest infant mortality rates. Under IDEM's watch, we have cancer clusters unchecked—like the 16 families near Bristow who a few years ago collectively asked state officials for some investigation and some answers to explain the outbreak but were completely ignored by all relevant state agencies including IDEM. IDEM, to my knowledge, employs no medical doctor on its staff . . . in a state that ranks at the top in pollution and subsequently near the bottom in public health.

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Going forward with the implementation of this historic bill, we are watching our governor and legislature. Will they allow IDEM to undergo a paradigm shift—to take full advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to do better, for the sake of our children today and, as our Native Americans repeatedly emphasize, for the good of our children seven generations from now? If IDEM takes well-informed citizens' input seriously, the agency will include our group at the table and other equally sincere, well-informed grassroots citizens' groups. This would go a long way toward repairing the mistrust.

The last time our state had access to such a financial windfall was in the 1930s when FDR's New Deal gave us many jobs and our beloved Ferdinand State Forest, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which helped spawn this area's conservation clubs. Several Ferdinand citizens have often dreamed about a walking and bicycle trail joining the town with the forest, running parallel to the scenic Ferdinand Forest Road. Europe is decades ahead of us with these types of trails / infrastructure promoting no fossil fuel use and exercise. This trail would connect perfectly with the mission of Y and possibly even lead to a future designation from Ferdinand State Forest to Ferdinand State Park . . . to return to a focus on recreation (swimming, hiking, outdoor classes, music, etc.) and wilderness regions vs the current state policy that has turned our state forests essentially into tree farms, routinely desecrating beautiful hiking trails into seas of stumps and invasives. "Timber management" and "board feet" is the current mantra, not recreation, ecology, and climate change mitigation. Like ignored citizens, hundreds of state scientists' professional views are currently ignored by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources as we lose the last of our older growth forests and wilderness areas every year.

I would love to see greater and more affordable access to geothermal energy and rooftop solar. My wife and I enjoy both of these to help power our home and our plug-in hybrid car and we even contribute some energy into the grid, but it's come at a price. Indiana not surprising currently ranks among the most backward states when it comes to incentivizing homegrown sources of energy to make geothermal and solar much more affordable for everyone. The IRA, wisely enacted here, could bring a welcomed sea change for home and business owners who want to get off of fossil fuel use but can't afford to. Once again, Europe is decades ahead of us. Many years ago I witnessed many rooftops in Germany covered in beautiful, emission-free solar panels. Now would be a perfect time for Ferdinand and Jasper and the area to finally learn from our German cousins and make rooftop solar common here.

An energy efficiency and conservation program similar to the Energizing Indiana program arbitrarily eliminated by then Governor Pence could be improved and reinstated, immediately cutting back on fossil fuel dependency and offering savings to homeowners, commercial and industrial businesses, and schools.

Now could be a great opportunity to start reversing Indiana's dismal reputation of catering to polluting industries over public health.

I have other hopes and priorities regarding wise use of the available funds, to grow a healthier, stronger, and more sustainable economy while also being responsible stewards of the earth and the world we will leave our children. Those ideas are included here in my full written comments.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

### 1. LOCATION AND PUBLICIZING OF THIS EVENING'S MEETING:

IDEM's having only one of these relatively unpublicized meetings south of Indianapolis, in a small room in a small town, screams volumes about how much our state leadership cares about southern Indiana. This negligent action parallels IDEM's track record on multiple fronts: the lack of functioning IDEM air quality monitors in our most polluted part of the state, IDEM's recent radical approval of Riverview Energy's air quality permit, IDEM's failure to serve as a health-monitoring, watchdog agency that can identify illness clusters and hold nearby polluters accountable, exhibiting behavior that puts industrial profit over human health. In Indiana, by careful design and corrupt systems of checks and balances, the foxes are guarding the henhouse—to great peril and financial/economic losses for families overburdened with health crises.

There should be listening sessions in multiple other southern Indiana locations. We are tired of being the dumping ground for the worst ideas, the most polluting industries.

Why wasn't this event more publicized? No one on the Ferdinand Town Council, the town manager, and the local newspaper editor received word about this meeting. I personally had to let them know, and I may not have heard about it had it not been for fellow concerned citizens, some from northern Indiana, who had heard about it and let me know.

2. Why are there so few if any functioning air quality monitors here in the sacrifice zone where we need them the most?

3. Why doesn't IDEM want to know what is in our air?

4. Why are some of the few air monitors not functioning on the worst/most polluted days of the summer?

5. How can IDEM allow crop dusters to spray chemicals onto our fields especially on days when our air is already thick and the AQU off the charts from the Canadian wildfires?

6. What recourse do citizens have when they must breath in the toxins from crop dusters?

7. What recourse do citizens have when they have to breath in toxic air from the state's (DNR's) prescribed burns?

8. What recourse do citizens have when they find dead endangered Eastern box turtles burned alive on the state forest floor after the DNR prescribed burns?

9. Has IDEM ever rejected an air permit application, especially based on public health?

10. Why do our rural southwestern Indiana suffer from such high cancer rates and weird cancer clusters? What exactly is IDEM doing to investigate and mitigate this?

11. Why are there so many schools here with special education rates twice the national average (13% vs 26+%)? EWhat exactly is IDEM doing to address this crisis in public health and education?

12. Why is IDEM approving the use of extremely toxic chemicals like atrazine sprayed onto our agricultural fields that subsequently end up in our drinking water? What studies is IDEM engaging in to investigate the documented correlation between spikes in atrazine presence in our drinking water and parallel spikes in birth defects when children are conceived during months when the water supplies' atrazine rate are high, when pregnant moms are consuming atrazine-laced tap water?

13. Indiana has one of the highest percentages of infant mortality in the US. Exactly what is IDEM doing about this data? From a state governmental agency standpoint, Why doesn't IDEM take into account our high volume of toxic emissions into our air and water (pollution) when permitting and monitoring sources of emissions?

14. Unfortunately, Indiana has few environmental investigative journalists to hold accountable the polluters and their enablers in the statehouse (and subsequently IDEM, in the Department of Public Health, in the Indiana State Medical Association, in the Department of Natural Resources, etc.). And so the public remains ignorant, in the dark, and it's "business as usual" in the Hoosier State. And "business as usual" means we perpetually stay at the bottom nationally in virtually every environmental, public health, and quality of life study. More importantly, this means a disproportionate number of infants, families, loved ones suffer and die here compared to the majority of other states.

Why doesn't IDEM do a better job with educating the public and answering our questions?

15. Why would IDEM and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) site the proposed Riverview Energy coal-to-diesel refinery here in neighboring Spencer County, a county that is already one of the, if not the most, polluted

## Meeting Minutes

counties out of all 92 Indiana counties, consistently ranking in the worst 1% of counties in the US?

16. These facts scream that our elected officials and the governor-appointed leaders of IDEM are turning their backs on their own constituents here in this neglected part of the state.

Little to no progress environmentally and with regard to public health would be happening here now if it weren't for the bipartisan IRA . . . and Infrastructure Act. How many US reps voted for this very bill we're here tonight to discuss?

7 out of our 9 voted against both the Inflation Reduction bill and infrastructure bill (only Democrats Andre Carson and Frank J. Mrvan voted for it)

Our representative Bucshon voted against both bills.

Both our US Senators voted against both bills.

### **OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IDEM USE OF IRA FUNDS**

1. Give incentives for family farms / upstarts that are eco-friendly and do not rely on the use of industrial chemicals (all the -cides).
2. Give incentives for people to grow pollinator gardens and fields to help with our declining bee population.
3. Fund cancer studies specific to citizens concerns.
4. Include environmental groups and natural partnerships in the brainstorming, planning, and implementation of the IRA and infrastructure funds.
5. Have many additional electric vehicle charging stations.
6. Safely clean up Indiana's national-leading number of toxic coal ash ponds derived from our many coal-fired plants.
7. Commit to a bold new paradigm shift that puts the environment and public health above all else.
8. Work to attract businesses to our region that are truly clean and sustainable environmentally.
9. Say no to any industry or business that will not commit to being responsible steward of the earth and public health.
10. Promote high-speed rail in our state that connects with an efficient national, modern transportation system that rivals other advanced societies.

## Meeting Minutes

Kris Lasher

I appreciate this opportunity to share ideas of how to create a healthier, greener state. As you already know, we are surrounded by super polluters at this end of the state. We need green businesses here. We need IDEM to say "no" to more polluting industries and "yes" to our health. Please stop allowing us to be a sacrificial zone. Create comprehensive air and water monitoring procedures so we can accurately measure the level of toxins we are breathing in daily.

We need green energy to be more accessible, affordable, and encouraged. For example, while other states are incentivizing solar, we are financially punishing those who ~~choose~~ <sup>choose</sup> it.

We are obviously considered a rural area which makes many forms of public transportation financially unsustainable, but let's get creative. Perhaps a county-wide trolley or train system that can connect to more urban areas. It is a hardship for our senior citizens to let go of their driver's licenses because doing so will keep them from getting where they need and want to go.

Finally, we should increase our green space, trails, and recreational options in this part of the state. But, in addition to planting new trees, how can we keep the ones we already have? We have a state forest just a few miles from here. Instead of the forest service's current policy of clear-cutting and burning, our citizens and tourists would benefit from turning our state forests into state parks. I know there are some foresters that enjoy and believe in burning and cutting our forests, but others do not. As a fellow state agency, can IDEM not work with the state forest service to protect our trees and pursue funding from green business and tourism instead of logging?

I would love to see some progressive environmental movement from IDEM. Based on the number of polluting businesses that IDEM has granted permits, I admit I am skeptical. Please actively work to improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens and our environment before permitting any further polluting industry.

Thank you.

## Meeting Minutes

My name is Randy Vaal, and I am vice-president of the Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality of Life. I was born and raised here in Ferdinand, and I'm proud to call it my home.

I was involved in a 6-year effort to prevent the construction of a coal-to-diesel plant in nearby Dale, Indiana. This plant involved a chemical process that had never been done in the United States and had only been performed by entities like Nazi Germany when they did not have access to oil. It is a filthy, polluting process, and would have emitted millions of tons of CO2 every year.

My group's battle was not just against Riverview, the sponsoring company, but against IDEM, who seemed to support Riverview's effort every step of the way. To my knowledge, IDEM never questioned the legitimacy of the coal-to-diesel scheme. It only wanted the paperwork to be filled out properly.

What's worse, the head of IDEM is appointed by the governor, who famously met with the Riverview President on a trade mission in Switzerland. We were told that the governor told the head of IDEM, to "make this plant happen."

In 1972 I had a summer job mowing lawns at the Ferdinand State Forest. And when the political party changed to the Republicans I lost that job. I lost a job pushing a lawnmower for \$2.75 an hour because of a change in a statewide political party. So don't tell me that politics doesn't matter at IDEM. I know it does.

Despite all the odds against us, Southwestern Citizens won the battle, and the plant will not be built. But it begs the question: why does Indiana, and IDEM, think that the battle is industry versus the environment? When in fact it could be industry because of the environment?

Indiana has a long history of worker friendly and industry friendly practices. We can have a history of environmentally friendly practices as well.

I think it's important to note that our group has been fighting for environmental protection for six years. And we won a critical battle. We deserve a seat at the table. The problem we face is local support. Everyone is either tied to fossil fuels, knows someone in fossil fuels, or has a client/customer in fossil fuels. We need a way to make it profitable for people to move from fossil fuels.

My group may have won the battle, but we are losing the war. Indiana is in bed with polluters. This has got to stop. Our industries have got to know that this is not a place where they can pollute.

How about changing your name to the Indiana Department of Environmental Protection?

Other states are attracting industry because of environmentally friendly practices. Indiana has a big hurdle to jump in this regard, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't start trying. We could leverage all we have going for us with a commitment to the environment and really put our state on a sound foundation for the future. Thank you.

# Meeting Minutes



To: Indiana Department of Environmental Management  
From: Chris Chyung, Indiana Conservation Voters  
Subject: Submission of written comment for Climate Pollution Reduction Grant town hall in Portage  
Date: November 2, 2023

Prioritization of mitigating industrial emissions is critical for a manufacturing-intensive state like Indiana. Legislation or regulations must be considered for the future to restrict industrial emissions and/or incentivize industrial emissions reductions technologies.

To support Indiana's steel mills' and their economic competitiveness, state government officials must consider maximizing federal incentives and regulations in combination with state and local incentives, planning, and action. Labor, industry, environment, and communities must be brought together under a climate pollution reduction plan to chart a future to keep Indiana's industrial backbone strong and prepared for a changing future.



# Meeting Minutes



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## Meeting Minutes



Good evening. I am Steven Stewart and I am the Hoosier National Forest Program Director for the Indiana Forest Alliance, a non-profit, statewide organization founded in 1996. We are dedicated to the long-term health and well-being of Indiana's native forests. We applaud the state's efforts to develop a Climate Action Plan and want to address two topics that seem to be missing from the consideration so far: forests as carbon sinks that can mitigate our emissions and transportation corridors that will increase our carbon footprint.

At this unique time in human history, Indiana needs to both reduce emissions and maximize carbon capture. Indiana's economy is contributing to climate change, producing more greenhouse gasses than most other states because of our heavy reliance on coal for electricity and our steel industry. Indiana is 8th in the nation for per capita energy use and ties for 5th place among all states for carbon intensive energy supply. Because of our disproportionate contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, Indiana has a responsibility to do more than other states to address climate change.

Forests are an important natural solution to climate change – in fact, forests are the best proven technology we have for capturing carbon. While scientists are searching for ways to store carbon underground, these methods are still experimental and unproven. Trees have been doing this for millions of years.





**According to the International Panel on Climate Change, keeping climate change in the range of 1.5°C goal will require massive forest restoration to remove excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.** Reforestation and improving forest management together have great potential to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Scientists estimate that these “natural climate solutions” could provide 18% of cost-effective carbon capture through 2030.

Forests actually help reverse the impacts of climate change. Forests are carbon sinks - areas that store more carbon than they release. Trees use solar energy to capture carbon dioxide from the air. Ultimately the carbon ends up in wood, leaves, roots and soils. Globally, forests provide green infrastructure that removes around a quarter of the CO<sub>2</sub> that we humans add to the atmosphere, keeping climate change from getting worse.

Wetlands and even some croplands can also be carbon sinks as well, but forests capture more carbon than most other ecosystems. And while trees store carbon in their trunks and other tissues, the majority of forest carbon is stored underground.

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Preserving & Restoring Indiana's native hardwood forest ecosystem for the enjoyment of all.

615 N. Alabama Street, Suite A  Indianapolis, IN  317-602-3692  [info@indianaforestalliance.org](mailto:info@indianaforestalliance.org)  [www.indianaforestalliance.org](http://www.indianaforestalliance.org)

# Meeting Minutes



Protecting our EXISTING forests must be a top priority. These forests are providing ecosystem services that are easily taken for granted, but that provide great value to Indiana residents. In the face of extreme summer heat, forests help cool the land. They provide shade but they also provide a kind of natural air conditioning that cools temperatures well beyond their shade.

Forests also help absorb stormwater that is expected to increase with climate change. Tree canopies slow down rainwater, reducing the impact on soils and minimizing erosion. Humus and duff on the floor of the forest and tree roots absorb stormwater - some trees absorb up to 150 gallons per day. Plus, tree roots hold soils and stream banks in place. Forests, especially forested wetlands, act like sponges to store stormwater and reduce flooding.

Trees also remove air pollutants, buffer noise, and provide wildlife habitat. Above all, forests help mitigate climate change impacts. Climate change is already resulting in weather extremes, with more severe precipitation events and more precipitation overall, especially in fall and winter months.

These co-benefits of forests are especially important in urban areas, where most of our population resides, including some of our **most disadvantaged populations**. Cities also tend to be heat islands because all the asphalt and concrete absorbs heat, so urban forests are especially important.

Our state and national forests are currently being managed largely for timber production under plans that are expired and woefully outdated, but our forests are worth more standing! The carbon capture and co-benefits that forests provide are more important than timber production. Managing our forest lands for maximum carbon sequestration is one of the best ways to counterbalance our emissions. This means managing forests without timber harvest or with much longer harvest rotations. It is imperative that saving our older growth forests and increasing our forests acreage statewide be part of Indiana's first ever climate action plan.

Now I am going to shift gears a bit and talk about roads and transportation corridors. The state is currently considering a "Mid-States" highway that would extend and expand a transportation infrastructure that is already causing a huge chunk of Indiana's emissions (21% according to their chart). New highways will have an enormous carbon footprint during the construction phase, as well as ongoing maintenance and routine use. In

*increased Property Prices, More Development*

Preserving & Restoring Indiana's native hardwood forest ecosystem for the enjoyment of all.

# Meeting Minutes

To IDEM Regarding the Climate Action Plan, Reading 11/8/2023



In addition this proposal would destroy many acres of forest and farmland that could be capturing carbon.

Prepared by Steven Stewart and Dr. Rae Schnapp, Indiana Forest Alliance  
Statement delivered by Steven Stewart 11/8/2023

## Meeting Minutes

To IDEM Regarding the Climate Action Plan. Ferdinand November 8, 2023

My name is Jeanne Melchior, and I live in Jasper Indiana. Though I taught college level English for about 30 years, I have been a long-time advocate for clean air and water regulation, for sensible farming practices and other land use patterns, and for forest protections, all of which are deeply interconnected and necessary to sustain all life.

Indiana has a very low environmental ranking in air quality, water quality, etc. likely because, among other things, this state is also a leader in manufacturing of diverse kinds; and a good many of these emit large quantities of toxic pollutants which are damaging the health of people and the livability of the planet. I am aware that many people, including agencies which advocate for the health and well-being of the people of this state, have lost trust in IDEM and other government agencies, and I speak for many who would like to see the tax-payer supported agencies regain the trust of the people who count on them to provide adequate information about what goes into the air, water, soil, etc., and to carefully regulate emissions according to the highest possible good of all living creatures. Because clean air and water, and non-destructive farming practices are essential to the health and quality of life for all people, maintaining high standards should be the primary concern of all agencies, and supersede industry demands.

For IDEM, the following are of primary concern:

- Install way more air quality monitors, and rely less on industry reports.
- Rigid enforcement of laws and better inter-agency co-ordination as well as more co-ordination with various health and environmental advocacy groups.
- A focus on natural carbon sequestration, such as more old-growth forests, and green spaces, better wetland protection, soil conservation, and less toxic farming practices.
- Support for Public Transportation, rail, and walkable, bikeable communities rather than building new highways.
- Limiting permits for mining and fossil fuels extraction as well as use in Indiana.
- A mindfulness that any plan to mitigate the effects of the changing climate will involve curtailing energy use. Unlimited growth is not possible on this finite planet.

Thank you for hearing my concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Melchior



## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 8, 2023  
Ferdinand Branch Public Library, Community Room  
112 E 16th St,  
Ferdinand, IN 47532

Re: Comments from Solar United Neighbors at CPRG Community Engagement Public Meeting on November 8, 2023 at the Ferdinand Branch Public Library

To the Indiana Department of Environmental Management CPRG community engagement team,

Good evening. My name is Christopher Norrick and I'm the Indiana Program Associate with the national non-profit Solar United Neighbors.

I really do appreciate IDEM and the ClimeCo team for holding these public engagement meetings. ~~and~~ having discussions on developing a state-wide Climate Action Plan is truly unprecedented and I'm excited to see this action in Indiana.

This is in sharp contrast to the setbacks we've experienced at the statehouse. Regressive policies in distributed generation and refusal to even discuss climate change have set Indiana behind nationally.

I've lived in Evansville for the last 25 years and grew up in Gibson county for 23 years before that. Both my father and uncle worked over at the Old Ben coal mine in Pike County for many years. My brother-in-law works at the Gibson Generating Station. I've lived and worked near the AB Brown coal plant my entire time in Evansville. I could see the plumes coming out of the stacks every day as they drifted East across the city in the prevailing wind. With that experience I think I have a pretty good understanding of both city and small town life in Indiana coal country.

Coal mine closures and population reductions in this area of the state are threatening small town existence. One of many examples is in Gibson Co where the only school in Francisco, a school where my mother taught and my wife and other family went to grade school, closed forever this year. It is a traumatic event for any community's survival.

My genuine hope is these federal investments can help turn things around by bringing back local clean energy jobs and building wealth for those that have sacrificed a lot over the last couple of centuries to make sure the lights come on.

With that in mind, here are a few specific suggestions for the plan and observations about how you all can improve the process moving forward.

First, the state's plan should support communities that have already created local or regional plans. These investments need to quickly flow to the communities that are primed and ready to act. The priority plan should go after the low hanging fruit. It just makes the most sense when time is of the essence. Direct the investments to communities with CAPs already in place and organizations doing the work right now on the ground serving the folks highlighted in the Inflation Reduction Act that have continuously been left behind.

## Meeting Minutes

Second, let's clearly support local solar in the plan. We are looking to build local ownership, control, and participation in the new energy economy. Local distributed solar does that and I'm happy to see it listed as the first action in the slide deck on slide 11 and in Actions 24 & 25 in the spreadsheet. I ask why is it not also included as a Tier 1 action in the methodology document?

Building out a solar schools program is something else that I don't see listed in the draft action spreadsheet or Tiered Actions. That also happens to be one of the best win-win's I can think of. The utility bill cost savings alone will help with tight budgets and might prevent school closures like what happened to Francisco Elementary. Renewable energy topics can also be integrated into the educational curriculum. Solar energy spans a wide range of STEM+ topics and those can be taught with hands-on experiential learning. This could lead to a job training program at the tech schools.

I'll point out that your perspective changes as an added benefit when you install solar on your home, or your child's school, or participate in a community solar project. You really start to think about energy differently. You're no longer just a consumer, you're a participant, not only in your energy use, but also in your neighbors'. Topics like energy efficient appliances and EVs are just more meaningful when it's your electrons powering them. This leads to additional pollution reductions with home and transportation electrification. And you are building local wealth. For example just one kW of solar increases a home's value by \$4,000. Not to mention direct savings on utility bills. That is critical in areas with such high energy burden's as ours.

Distributed solar technology is here now and it can be deployed quickly. It is the cheapest and greenest form of energy generation that exists, even recently surpassing fossil fuel based energy production. No new technological breakthroughs are needed. It has proven to create local, good paying, skilled jobs in every part of the state. These are all goals listed in the CPRG draft.

Third, I hope you can clear up some additional confusion of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 draft actions listed in the methodology document with the ones listed in the slide deck. The very first action listed in Tier 1 in the doc is expanding utility-scale renewables. That's not what the people are looking for. You won't find any CenterPoint customer that supports giving more incentives to that monopoly.

Fourth, I also see a Tier 2 Action for utility-scale blue-hydrogen with carbon capture. We don't want to see actions that support continuing to burn stuff that produces more carbon. Or any actions that I would call "mathematical pollution solutions" such as carbon markets.

In closing, I have a criticism of the CPRG process' lack of inclusiveness. Hosting this meeting an hour away from the major population center in this part of the state, that's Evansville, combined with a different time zone, really put working folks in Evansville at a disadvantage of attending in-person. Add on the additional burdens Justice40 and Low to Moderate Income communities have to deal with, and this location really shuts them out of a discussion that they are required to be a part of in the Justice40 goals.

An additional meeting in the Southwestern part of the state could also be justified with the fact that we have a disproportionately high number of super-polluting fossil-fueled power plants located in our communities. There are 8 located within 40 miles of Evansville. As I understand, 40 percent of the state's electricity is generated in this area and we only have 6 percent of the population.



## Meeting Minutes



When you look at the Department of Energy's Coal Closure Energy Community map, there is a solid stripe of orange from Evansville to Terre Haute. We are often told we live in "the sacrifice zone" due to our above average health issues from the resulting air and water pollution of those power plants. I think the sacrifice zone deserves an additional meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



# Meeting Minutes

IDEM Meeting – November 8, 2023

Good evening,

My name is Mark Nowotarski. I am a member of the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter Executive Committee, Conservation Committee and Energy Committee. I am also co-lead for the Coalition Against the Mid-States Corridor.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the group –

IDEM's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program is intended to promote sustainability, enhance Indiana's environmental challenges and safeguard our natural resources, which are all positive goals.

The greatest need I have found in this area of Indiana when meeting with county and city council members and even our state representative is the need to educate them on the real growing climate issues and the need for climate mitigation along with the actions that counties and local municipalities can take. There are a lot of people and political leaders that have no knowledge of the need for creating and implementing a climate action plan.

With that said, the first and most crucial priority is the need to focus on reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by supporting legitimate clean energy sources including solar and wind but not necessarily exclusive to those options. We need stricter actions to move more aggressively away from highly polluting fossil fuel options. With that said I support your plan to conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

In regard to developing a Priority Climate Action Plan, <sup>another</sup> ~~the first priority~~ <sup>is</sup> needs to focus on supporting natural forms of carbon sequestration by protecting and restoring our wetlands and protecting our mature and old growth forests from the destructive actions of clear cutting, burns and chemical sprays. Not by harmful and potentially dangerous unproven methods like the proposed carbon sequestration project in Vigo County.

Finally, included in any Climate Action Plan is to stop destructive and polluting projects throughout the state that will only contribute to our climate issues like highway expansion projects and new terrain highway projects like the Mid-States Corridor that will only add to our greenhouse gas emissions.

Again, thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Nowotarski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

## Meeting Minutes

Comment on IDEM's Indiana Climate Action Plan

Mary V Hess, President Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality-of-Life

I am Mary Hess, president of Southwestern Indiana Citizens for Quality of Life. Congratulations on receiving this grant and we appreciate you having a meeting in our part of the state. We are very much concerned about the toxic emissions in our state. As of the October 2023 Toxic Release Inventory report from the EPA, Indiana stands at number two out of 56 states and territories for toxic emissions per square mile. According to the US News Best States Rankings, Indiana is number 50 in Natural Environment. Air and water quality from this report stands at #35 and pollution stands at #49. For five years we fought to prevent a toxic refinery from coming to our area and it would, according to their air quality permit, emit over 2.2 million tons of greenhouse gases annually. Since we are at number two on toxic release and number 49 on pollution, we feel IDEM needs to focus on not permitting industry that will continue to add to this horrible ranking. One of the major contributors of climate change is fossil fuels. IDEM needs to stop contributing to the problem when permitting industry to add to the problem.

The state of Indiana spent 13 years courting Riverview Energy with nothing to show for it. It took local citizens at the grass roots level to continuously send IDEM information about what was not happening with the permit to finally get them to act and revoke their permit. I realize you are short-handed, but you cannot allow industry to regulate themselves. This refinery should not even have been permitted according to some of the science-based comments against the project.

This brings me to my question. With the climate action plan will you continue to permit fossil fuel industries that will continue to add to the problem or will IDEM along with the State of Indiana make the bold move to protect all Hoosiers and make the move away from fossil fuels? With the rankings the state has received, this should be the first move. Also, since there are many active environmental advocate groups in the state, with some of those being here tonight, will IDEM reach out to them and give them a seat at the table on this climate plan? Environmental advocates are your eyes and ears in our communities. If you leave them out of this plan, you are silencing the people your agency is responsible for protecting their health and quality of life and this plan will not be for Indiana. It will only be for industry. Which leads me to the second part of my question. Will health officials also be at the table in this planning session?

## Meeting Minutes

To: IDEM

RE: Indiana CAP/CPRG Comment

Date: November 8, 2023

I live in Vanderburgh County on the northwest side of Evansville.

I hope that the Indiana Climate Action Plan will focus on actions to swiftly cut the greenhouse gases that threaten our climate and economy. Projects included in the plan should significantly cut carbon emissions in a verifiable way. Clean and affordable renewable energy sources, like solar and wind, combined with battery storage, should be preferred whenever possible. Projects that build environmental resilience in BIPOC and low-income communities should be integral to the plan.

Evansville adopted its own Climate Action Plan in 2021

[http://www.evansvillempo.com/Docs/City\\_of\\_Evansville\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.evansvillempo.com/Docs/City_of_Evansville_Climate_Action_Plan.pdf), and those goals and actions should be included in the state plan, as well as more ambitious actions that PCRGS grants will enable.

Particular actions I'd like to see in the state CAP:

--Lots of EV charging stations added in downtown Evansville and at other major destinations in the city and throughout southwest/southern Indiana so that people can feel confident that if they buy an EV, chargers will be available. (People at an EVs for EVV event in Evansville in September were interested in the cars but concerned about the availability of charging stations.)

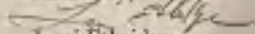
--Investment in maintaining and expanding healthy forests, such as Hoosier National Forest, with the aim of sequestering carbon, while incidentally protecting wildlife and sources of water that serve our communities. Urban forests should be expanded to sequester carbon and reduce the temperature of surrounding property.

--Actions to expand regenerative farming and practices to sequester carbon while building healthy, more productive soil. (A regenerative ag event held in NW Vanderburgh County a few years ago drew quite a number of interested farmers from the area, even during harvest season.)

--Actions to encourage/require electrification of buildings and energy efficiency in buildings, both new construction and retrofits. Electrification reduces carbon emissions, eases the transition to clean energy, allows for more energy-efficient appliances, and reduces toxic pollution inside the home.

--Actions to expand solar energy, including rooftop solar and battery storage, which can reduce energy costs for the homeowner as well as reduce peak demand on the electrical grid and make it more resilient. Community solar should be available for those that cannot make use of rooftop solar. Net metering should be pursued. There should be a statewide "green schools" program to power schools by solar energy.

Sincerely,



Lani Ethridge