

November 2023 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Barbara Menne, Chuck Jensen, Debra Grady, Nancy Atwood, Sue Lepore, Linda Cohan, Mustafa Haziq, John Doherty, Jason Berkowitz.

This ZOOM meeting screen was enhanced with closed captioning.

Reports

John Doherty—The November 7 elections

In terms of climate, the results were relatively heartening in some respects. I see climate as part of a “basket” of issues that people care about, and that basket is getting majoritarian support in a lot of places. But the projections for the 2024 election are really scary; it may be the most important one since the Civil War. If climate-concerned legislators become a minority, it’s going to set us back a long way in the U.S. Climate deniers and their base are really passionate about their views so it’s a serious threat.

There are just 60 days until the first Presidential Primary! So we are looking ahead to recommencing our “Get Out the Vote” volunteer work for the [Environmental Voter Project](#) and others. Our 1500 postcards to Virginia played a part in the successful results there (the VA Senate and House now surprisingly have climate-concerned majorities). These groups do good data gathering and can scientifically validate that our activism really makes a difference! Besides, it’s always fun to socialize and snack while we work together!

A new opportunity would be to focus on youth turnout. *16 million people* came of age since the 2020 election! They may need encouragement to register and vote early on.

Greenpeace has a project that is easy to do on your own time: watching social media for disinformation and reporting it. They have a massive network to collate and report the data.

The local results were good too. **Nancy Atwood**, reporting on **Fircrest**, where she has worked so hard to support climate-concerned candidates, said that this year’s winners, including the mayor are generally on board with climate action. New staff members in particular are very climate savvy which is great. She looks forward to talking with them.

Linda Cohan-- Recent Lobby Meetings

These meetings are always fun, you feel like you are “touching power.” You can attend just as an observer to see what it’s like.

Monday, Nov.6-- met with **Senator Murray’s** staffers **Jason Edwards** and **Lila Englander**. **Sen. Murray** is chair of the **Senate Appropriations Committee**, a very powerful position. She helped pass the **Infrastructure** and the **IRA** and helps raise money for climate action. Our first “ask” was for support for the [BIG WIRES Act](#) (clean energy transmission lines permitting reform):

Edwards--Generally the bill is politically palatable and makes sense. "So far it's not getting much opposition, but the Devil's in the details. It gives lots of flexibility to the **FERC (Federal Energy Regulation Commission)**, just a very broad directive to "increase energy sharing between regions to 30%." For the **North Grid** region, including **WA**, there's a hitch—the **Bonneville Power Administration** covering that area owns so much of the energy and the **FERC** is very wary of using their authority over the **BPA**. A very big open question is "who is has to pay?" Rate payers will cover the costs, so it's being discussed with utilities, etc. Our second "ask" was the [RISEE Act](#), (off-shore wind revenue, coastal infrastructure and resiliency):

Edwards— They are worried about tribal treaty violations regarding fisheries. "It is on our radar, but off-shore wind projects represent a problem for coastal tribes with impacts on species that they hunt. We need to get the tribes in the room and research these impacts."

Tuesday, Nov. 7-- met with **Rep Derek Kilmer** and staffer **Marie Fiori**. It was rushed and brief, and we weren't yet aware that he was not seeking reelection next year! He will be sorely missed.

BIG WIRES Act:

Kilmer--"If we're going to get serious about getting to the emission reductions laid out in the **IRA**, cracking the code on transmission is going to be important. This bill just got introduced, so we haven't had a chance to do full due diligence on it, so give us a little time to look into it. I want to talk to the **Sub-committee staff on Energy and Water in Appropriations** and make sure we have a full understanding of the implications of what's being proposed."

We asked him what support he needs from us:

Kilmer--"You guys do such important work. I am grateful to consider you partners. We are in the appropriations battle trying to protect funding for the **IRA** and the **EPA**, fighting hard to protect these priorities that we hold dear and know you do too."

Sue Lepore—Highlights of the CCL Fall Virtual Conference

There are multiple [recordings](#) of the conference on **CCL Community**, if you could not attend. As usual, this was an upbeat, professional event, whose purpose was to bring volunteers up to speed and enthused about their upcoming lobby meetings, plus to offer general words of wisdom for typical chapter activities and efforts. I glanced at the attendance at one point, there were almost 800 attendees! The keynote speaker, **Van Jones**, gave some very direct, striking and pertinent advice for lobbying in these times of partisan split, so we thought it would be worth watching a clip from his address and discussing it in breakout rooms here later on (see below).

After some general presentations with familiar faces like **Dana Nuccetelli** (good news about climate legislation) and **Ben Pendergrass** (a deeper dive into the primary "asks" for lobby meetings), there were options for sessions on various topics.

Group Leaders Chat --They advised that chapters do some kind of social event every month—happy hours, bonfires, nature walks, coffee chats. The leaders need to help volunteers find the

way they would like to contribute and to learn what the team's strengths and weaknesses are when planning projects.

Tips for Social Media Outreach-- One of the best actions on climate is just to *talk about it*, and that's exactly what social media does.

For personal accounts:

- 1) educate your network about climate, use CCL posts, give ideas for action
- 2) follow people who inspire you
- 3) engage your elected officials, especially with praise and appreciation for climate friendly work. Follow their accounts and keep up a drumbeat of attention on climate.

For chapter accounts:

Maintain with regularity, using 1-3 above

Approximate the "CCL tone," which is "a little bit nerdy, hope-filled, wholesome, approachable and human." Use humor and generally keep it light and self-deprecating.

Van Jones Clip from Conference Recordings

It is highly recommended to watch the entire presentation [here](#)

"15 years ago we had a plan that didn't get done and things are moving in a negative, frightening direction which makes the work we are doing now the most important work in the world. We should not give up on a price on carbon, we need it along with the IRA spending. It's the most important tool we have.

He is committed to bipartisanship and would like to share some things learned about working across the partisan split. Learn how to communicate, be a powerful listener. We wonder "*how can they think this way?*". They are in a completely different information environment, they are not crazy. Friendship matters too--it can start a lot of things, find common ground and use that available 1% window to get things done.

Sometimes we get hung up on language. Much better to agree on a principle, and let other people say it however they want to. We can discuss the climate issue without using the word "climate," keep it in other's comfort zones. A lot us do "quiet work" talking to conservative conservationists who just *cannot* use the word climate with their constituents-- it has become so politicized. But "love of God's creation," "the great outdoors," "protection of America's beauty," "Investing in Americas future" are ok. Let outdoor enthusiasts and sports people talk about the obvious changes in the environment they have noticed. Those terms will work for them.

As regards the military--there's not a single Pentagon scenario that doesn't *assume* climate change. The disconnect with the party that supports them so strongly is weird. We need more veterans and generals to speak up about the threat and the need to prepare and protect. Another observation --with the increasing difficulty living in the Global South because of climate disruption, a much bigger immigration push will happen. This is likely to empower populist, right-wing movements in many areas. If they lead, they are not likely to help prevent climate change from getting worse...which will increase the immigration...which will cause a negative political feedback loop that will be very dangerous.

That's why it's so critical to reach out to conservative voters and leaders to embrace our climate agenda. We are going to need a stable governing majority over the next 2-3 decades to solve this problem and bipartisan work is crucial. We can't hide in our corner and just talk among ourselves. *We need to keep the broader community together.* We need as big a tent as possible, be as inclusive as possible and try to help both parties develop real champions in this work who can speak in terms that make sense to them and their constituencies-- that's the way that we can ultimately prevail.

Breakout rooms—a few thoughts

- His comments about the military. That's an area we could add to tabling efforts.
- I like the renaming—pollution vs climate. And a more pragmatic approach (such as home electrification rebate and tax credit facts) is effective and sounds less dogmatic.
- What if we made a list of words we could use instead of climate? Use as tools for tabling.
- Pollution touches everyone, they can relate. No one wants dirty air or lead in water, EV's are cleaner and quieter, there's a lot of common ground in this.
- It's a waste of energy talking to the dismissive, doubtful and disengaged groups from [Yale's "6 Americas"](#). The ones we should spend time with are the cautious, concerned and alarmed groups, encouraging them to be more engaged and suggesting actions they can take.
- We have to reach out beyond preaching to the choir. Maybe try to open a **CCL** chapter in Bonney Lake/Sumner?

Announcements

A tabling committee meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday Nov. 28, 6pm** to discuss tabling through the winter, on campuses, and how to make tabling easier, with a simpler setup. If you know of more places we can table over the winter, or any leads for contacting college or high school groups, let us know. We might be able to encourage a [CFD](#) (carbonfeeanddividend) student group to start! Contact [Linda Cohan](#).

Debra Grady has been attempting to find a contact at **Univ. of Puget Sound**. According to the student activity office there doesn't seem currently to be any club on environmental issues!

Sunday, Dec 10, 4-7pm
CCL Tacoma December Potluck Open House
(a social gathering---families welcome---door prizes!)
Central Co-op, 4502 N. Pearl St.
More details soon!

January's chapter meeting is on **Wednesday Jan 17, 7 pm** on Zoom. The focus will be on our advocacy for good climate bills in the **WA state legislative** (short) session.