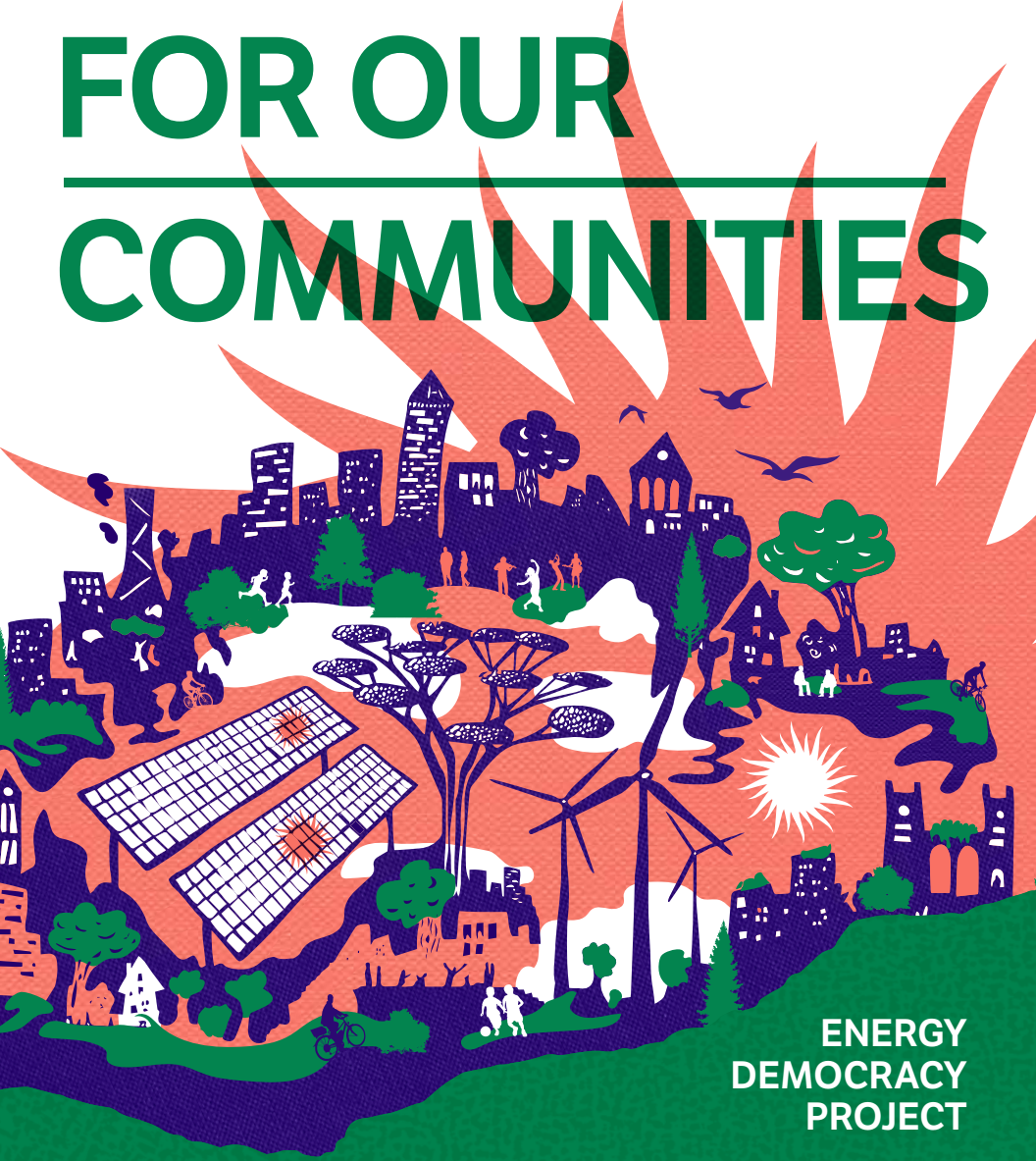


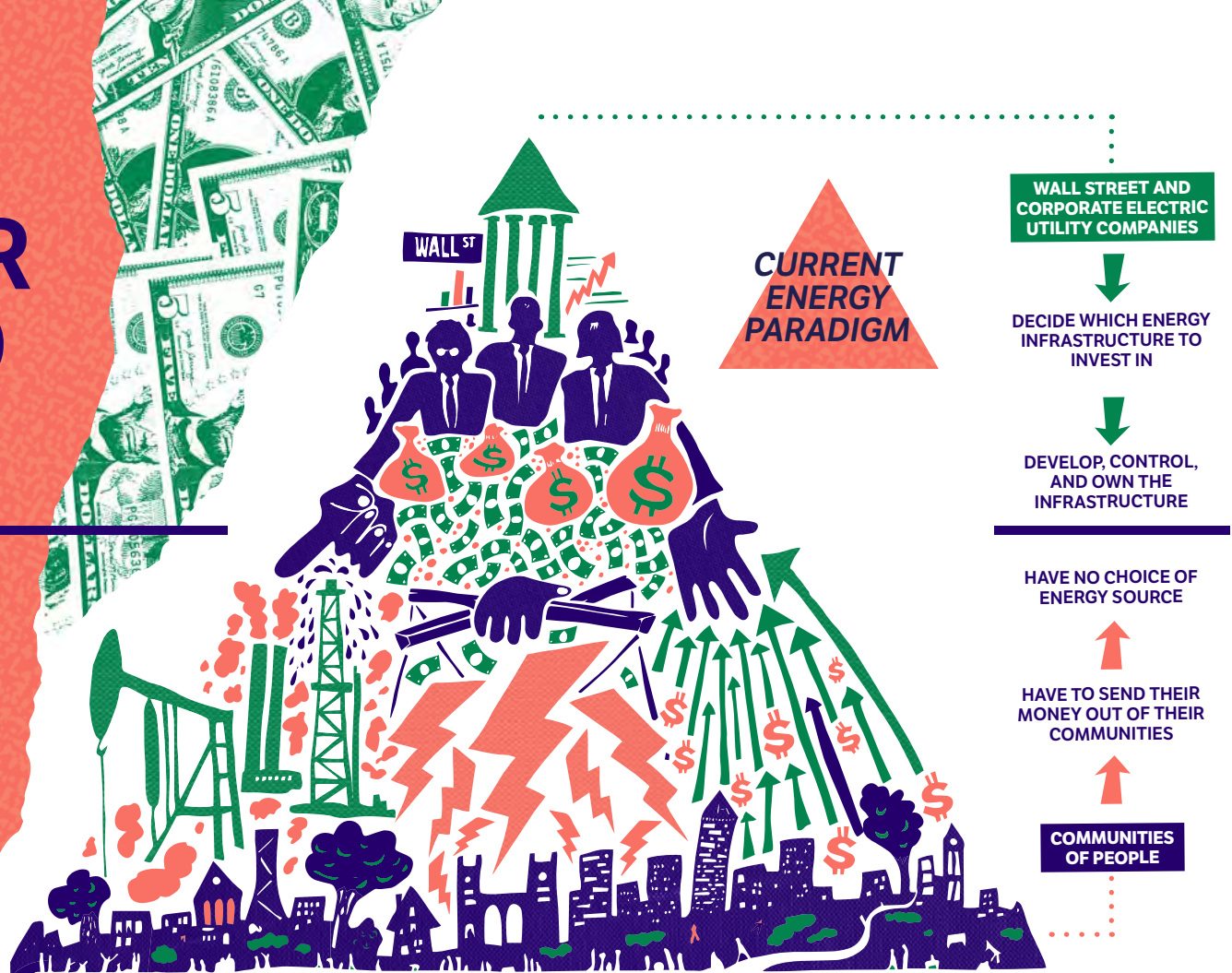
REIMAGINING ENERGY FOR OUR COMMUNITIES



ENERGY
DEMOCRACY
PROJECT

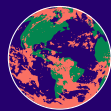
A CRISIS OF PROFIT OVER PEOPLE AND PLANET

The energy systems in place today, in which energy development, control, ownership, and decision-making resides within Wall Street and corporate electric utilities, negatively impact the health and safety of communities, and fail to provide the energy needed to live, especially in the face of climate disaster.



UTILITIES ESCALATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

2010
The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill
kills 11 workers and injures 17, spilling 60,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico each day at its peak.



2018
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
reports the world only has 12 years to limit climate catastrophe before its consequences become irreversible.



2020
COVID-19 pandemic
compounds and exposes inequities and causes millions to fall further behind on their utility bills.



2020
100 degree Fahrenheit day in the Arctic Circle
breaks records as the hottest temperatures ever recorded in the region.

2021
PG&E infrastructure sparks the Dixie fire,
burning nearly a million acres for over three months.

2005
Hurricane Katrina
makes landfall in the Gulf Coast and becomes one of the most devastating hurricanes in U.S. history.



2017
Hurricane Maria
knocks out power on the island of Puerto Rico for months, and leads to the death of ~3,000 people.



2018
Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) transmission line sparks the Camp Fire,
the deadliest fire in California state history, killing 86 people.



2021
Severe winter storms
sweep across the United States, causing power failures in southern states and killing nearly three times more people than Hurricane Harvey.

ENERGY JUSTICE RISING

From Alaska to Puerto Rico, communities being impacted first and worst by energy injustice and climate change are advancing reimagined energy systems. These alternatives redistribute power by ensuring communities can meet our needs ourselves. We call this Energy Democracy.

ENERGY DEMOCRACY is a process by which we advance frontline community empowerment and liberation. It is a framework that allows us to reimagine the ways we organize our lives and livelihoods toward new systems that support the health and wellbeing of our communities and ecosystems.

REFOCUS is a unified movement for energy justice that brings together communities leading local actions for energy democracy.

We are **reimagining** energy for our communities across the U.S.

THESE ARE OUR STORIES...



ONE VOICE

JACKSON, MS

Organizing for energy democracy in rural electric cooperatives.

Since 2005, One Voice has worked to change the rural electric cooperative system of Mississippi into one that is fair, equitable, and inclusive. To us, energy democracy means building a foundation for residents within rural electric cooperatives to have a say in determining which decentralized renewable resources their communities want, in energy efficiency upgrade requirements, and in actions to eliminate energy debt. That way, they don't have to choose between paying light bills versus medical bills. In order for us to achieve energy justice, energy providers must be transparent, and work to ensure that communities have access to local clean energy, broadband, and anything else in their best interest.

We have seen how energy democracy can make real changes. In one election, we were able to increase member engagement by over 100%-from 700 votes to over 2000! Educate yourself, meet your local leadership, and learn the ongoing history behind your community's politics...with people power, we can come together collectively to make a change and know that we are never alone!

"I want you to know that you have a voice and within that voice, you're going to make a change."

CATHERINE ROBINSON



LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CA

Creating a healthier, more equitable energy future for everyone.

I come from an environmental justice community. I grew up near a bunch of different polluting facilities, including gas-fired power plants and electricity transformers, alongside a myriad of wires, diesel trucks, and crematoriums. In my work, I've come to recognize that the polluting industry benefits off the backs of poor communities and communities of color.

Organizing with the Local Clean Energy Alliance, I've learned to communicate a vision of an energy system that is not harmful to people, nor to anyone within the community where energy is produced. To us, energy democracy is about participation in designing the energy system we want to see in our communities - one that actually works for us, rather than hurting us. It's about understanding and weighing in, to ensure we transition this system into a democratized structure that is accessible to all kinds of people: to renters, to people historically shut out from clean energy, and to poor folks.

We can govern ourselves and our energy system. No more governor's front calling the shots on our energy, and bailing out big corporations. I'm tired of our communities losing. But this time, we're not going to lose.

If you want to really talk about equity, it's about including the people that have been left out of the clean energy economy or any economy before that. We're trying to make it accessible to all kinds of people, to renters, to people who have not had access to clean energy before, because that's what it boils down to.

JESSICA TOVAR



What are examples of energy democracy in action in your community?



COMITÉ DIÁLOGO AMBIENTAL

PUERTO RICO

*A renewable, decentralized,
diversified energy system by
the people, for the people.*

When Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in 2017, the centralized electric grid was not prepared for the high winds and flooding. When the storm passed, many people died because they didn't have access to drinking water or the energy needed to power phones, fridges, or medical equipment. Places that did have power either had solar panels or unreliable fossil-fuel generators. In response to this disaster, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allocated an unprecedented \$16 billion for Puerto Rico's electric system and hazard mitigation. Yet, FEMA did not include distributed renewable energy in its environmental assessment and local authorities opted instead to rebuild the exact same system that repeatedly collapses.

Five years later, the impacts of failing to **redistribute and diversify** the energy system by investing in rooftop solar and storage, energy efficiency, energy conservation, and demand response programs, was made apparent when Hurricane Fiona hit. Once again, the energy and water needed to live was not available. But Puerto Rico is not destined to be a place of disaster. The people of the archipelago already have mapped out—and in some places built—solutions to these challenges, as they refuse the centralized, fossil fuel system. It's time for the government to finally listen, and restore power to the people.

*“Energy Justice is
providing energy as
an essential human
service by cutting out
the for-profit part.”*

RUTH SANTIAGO



PEOPLE-POWERED SOLUTIONS

A decentralized renewable energy model, in which energy development, control, ownership, and decision-making resides in the community, can resource our communities to meet our energy needs, ourselves. This alternative is the pathway to energy justice and key to responding to the climate crisis.

PEOPLE-POWER ENERGY PARADIGM



4 ELEMENTS OF PEOPLE-POWERED ENERGY

DECENTRALIZED

Local renewable energy provides safe, reliable power.

DEMOCRATIZED

Community influence and decision-making meets environmental, economic, and social justice needs.

(RE)DISTRIBUTED

All people have access to the energy needed to live, learn, and work, without sacrificing the health or well being of any community.

DIVERSIFIED

Community-scale energy systems are designed to work in harmony with local ecosystems, protecting biological and cultural diversity.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR REIMAGINED ENERGY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Take the time to reflect on these questions with other members of your community and then share your answers with us at EnergyDemocracy.us/REFOCUS

How does top-down control of energy show up in your community?

What does a people-powered solution look like?

What are examples of energy democracy advancing these solutions?

RENEWABLE ENERGY ALONE DOES NOT ACHIEVE JUSTICE



A transition to renewable energy that does not center justice and address institutionalized racism, will not successfully respond to the climate crisis.

The solution to the climate crisis is not a technological switch to renewable energy, but a transformation of the extractive economy that created the climate crisis.



ENERGY DEMOCRACY PROJECT

The Energy Democracy Project represents the efforts of its national network of Collaborators to increase the visibility and strength of the energy democracy movement—to enable it to define a new energy paradigm, to resist the existing energy establishment, and to pursue the transition to renewable energy models and solutions.

Visit ENERGYDEMOCRACY.US/REFOCUS
to learn more and take action!

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