

# Equity-Focused Approach to Climate Policy Increases Health and Affordability Benefits

*Targeting clean energy adoption and greenhouse gas reductions in high-impact communities can save lives, lower energy costs, and build climate resilience*

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, August 4, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As federal policymakers consider historic investments to reduce economy-wide carbon emissions, nearly half of all US states have already set binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Research released today from the nonprofit science and policy institute Physicians, Scientists, and Engineers (PSE) for Healthy Energy outlines benefits, strategies, and an actionable framework for integrating equity into these state and federal decarbonization policies.

The [Bringing Health and Equity to Western States Deep Decarbonization reports](#) analyze the public health, cost, and equity impacts associated with meeting 2020-2050 emissions targets in three Western states: New Mexico, Colorado, and Nevada. For each state, researchers identified regions and populations with high exposure to fossil fuel emissions; characterized household and transportation energy cost burdens; and identified strategies to reduce health-damaging air pollution, lower energy cost burdens, and increase climate resilience through decarbonization efforts. The state-based findings hold implications for climate and energy policy at every level, emphasizing the need and outlining strategies for an equity-focused approach.

"Communities currently burdened by pollution and high energy costs have the most to gain from a transition to clean energy," said Dr. Elena Krieger, director of research at [PSE Healthy Energy](#). "However, these same communities are frequently left behind when climate policies focus only on carbon emissions. Policies and programs that engage impacted communities upfront and directly address the inequities of our current energy system can help realize these health, economic, and resilience benefits for those who need them most."

Across all three states, the reports show that focusing emissions reductions and clean energy adoption within targeted populations can reverse longstanding inequities. This equity-focused approach to decarbonization consistently resulted in a more equitable distribution of energy costs, lower public health risks in overburdened communities, and increased climate resilience in at-risk populations. However, the reports also show that decarbonization policies that fail to account for equity may result in prolonged exposure to health-harming pollutants and even increase energy and transportation costs for communities that are already disproportionately impacted by the current fossil fuel system.

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#### About PSE Healthy Energy

Physicians, Scientists, and Engineers (PSE) for Healthy Energy is a nonprofit research institute dedicated to supplying evidence-based scientific and technical information on the public health, environmental, and climate dimensions of energy production and use. We are the only interdisciplinary collaboration focused specifically on health and sustainability at the intersection of energy science and policy. Visit us at [psehealthyenergy.org](https://psehealthyenergy.org) and follow us on Twitter @PhySciEng.

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