

What is the Energy Democracy Project?

The Energy Democracy Project brings together organizations and individuals across the country to popularize and advance energy democracy as a key strategic perspective within the climate and new economy movements.

By energy democracy we mean bringing energy resources under public or community ownership and/or control, a key aspect of the struggle for climate justice and an essential step toward building a more just, equitable, sustainable, and resilient economy.

Thus, energy democracy seeks to replace our current corporate fossil-fuel economy with one that puts racial, social, and economic justice at the forefront of the transition to a 100% renewable energy future.

While a number of organizations reflect, at least implicitly, an energy democracy perspective, the level of collaboration needed among energy democracy advocates to represent a powerful political force in the broader climate movement is lacking. This lets more establishment organizations and perspectives pursue less effective, non-systemic alternatives to the fossil-fuel economy. We hope to strengthen what we view as a rising energy democracy current that can grow to impact the broader movement.

Goals of the Energy Democracy Project

The Energy Democracy Project is working to bring advocate organizations and initiatives together in Summer 2016 to deepen collaboration and advance the following goals:

1. Promote an energy democracy/just transition narrative.

With renewable energy becoming more popular in the national narrative around climate change, we see energy democracy as a way to ensure that community control and/or ownership of renewable energy; racial, social, and economic justice; and community empowerment are rooted at the center of that narrative.

The goal is not simply to decarbonize the economy, but to transform it into an equitable, ecologically sound, life-affirming economic system. The social forces that have been most marginalized under the current economic system are best suited to envision a different future and to lead the transformation to a new energy paradigm consistent with a new, regenerative economy. That paradigm is one based on decentralized renewable energy under community control.

2. Increase collaboration among energy democracy forces.

We seek vehicles for closer collaboration among partner organizations not only through the mutual sharing of ideas and support, but also through the development of common understandings, programs, actions, and shared resources. For example, a strong energy democracy movement depends on building an platform that can guide organizations in undertaking local campaigns to advance energy democracy and also serve as a foundation for national energy action.

3. Provide demonstration models of community-based, equitable, energy development.

We seek to elevate, demonstrate, and support models of innovation that show that racially equitable energy democracy is not only possible but can thrive. Working together, we can help marshal critical financial and technical support for local planning and implementation of community-based energy projects, and help leverage the experiences we gain through such developments.

To meet these goals, the Energy Democracy Project must not only reflect a climate justice/new economy political perspective, but also represent the breadth of experiences and expertise needed to implement an Energy Democracy program in the U.S.—from those who do conceptual and strategy work, to those who develop policy and program, to those who build the movement through grassroots organizing, to those who develop, finance, and build the kind of energy projects we envision.

Development of the Energy Democracy Project

The Energy Democracy Project is the product of discussions over the past year and a half, following circulation of a paper, [*Expressions of Energy Democracy: Perspectives on an Emerging Movement*](#).¹ Four organizations—the Local Clean Energy Alliance, Center for Social Inclusion, Emerald Cities Collaborative, and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy—began reaching out this summer to bring key organizations and individuals into a stronger collaboration to advance energy democracy.

At this time, the Energy Democracy Project is reaching out to like-minded organizations around the country, providing a space for critical conversations around energy democracy, assembling a reader on energy democracy (edited by Denise Fairchild of the Emerald Cities Collaborative and Al Weinrub of the Local Clean Energy Alliance), and planning a summer convening to strengthen collaboration and help move this project forward.

We invite organizations who wish to be involved in the Energy Democracy Project to contact us at this [web page](#)² and check out some of the [currently available resources](#)³ on energy democracy.

¹ <http://www.localcleanenergy.org/files/Expressions%20of%20Energy%20Democracy.pdf>

² <http://www.localcleanenergy.org/EnergyDemocracyProject%20Contact>

³ <http://www.localcleanenergy.org/EnergyDemocracy>