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Renewable Taos Newsletter - April 2016

1 message

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Newsletter

BOB BRESNAHAN FOR KIT CARSON BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Renewable Taos Co-Founder Bob Bresnahan is running for a vacant seat on the [Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees](#). Bob seeks the District 1 seat recently vacated by Peter J. Adang. District 1, which covers the town of Taos and the areas south to Pilar and north to San Cristóbal, is the largest of the co-op's five districts. District 1 elections will be held May 10, 2016.

Bob Bresnahan's platform mirrors the [Core Values, Mission and Vision of Renewable Taos, Inc.](#) Bob seeks a highly professional approach to our Co-op's progress toward a clean energy economy. This approach must be complemented with a high level of integrity, transparency in Co-op operations, and a healthy and constructive exchange of ideas among our members. Bob wants continuing improvements for our Co-op that is already one of the most respected and awarded Rural Electric Cooperatives (RECs) in New Mexico and the nation.

Kit Carson and electric utilities nationwide are going through major transformations in transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Bob Bresnahan will see that Kit Carson maintains its leadership in this necessary transformation.

Renewable Taos will distribute Bob's detailed platform and other information to our members and the local media well ahead of the upcoming election.

Please spread the word about Bob Bresnahan's campaign, and vote for him for our Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees on May 10th.

TRANSITIONING TO 100% CLEAN ENERGY IS BOTH NECESSARY AND FEASIBLE

[Environment New Mexico](#) joined with community leaders in Albuquerque, NM in March to lay out the components of transitioning our nation's energy supply entirely to wind, solar and other non-polluting sources. Professor Bruce Milne, Director of Sustainability Studies Program at the

NEWSLETTER

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**ARE YOU A
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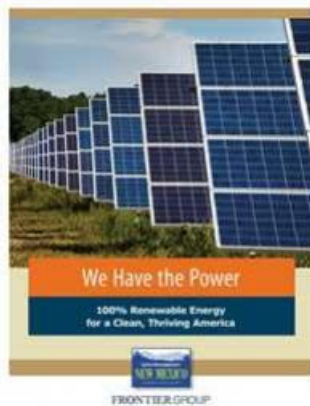
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**JOIN NOW!**

**WE WANT  
YOUR  
FEEDBACK  
ON ALL  
ASPECTS OF  
OUR WORK!**

University of New Mexico led a panel on the new report, **"We Have the Power: 100 Percent Renewable Energy for a Clean, Thriving America."** The report restates an essential message of Renewable Taos:

*"Our transition to a clean energy system has already begun. But, with the need to reduce the pollution that causes global warming growing more urgent every day, we need to step up the pace. To maximize the benefits of moving to 100 percent renewable energy, leaders at all levels must act to accelerate our progress. America's energy policy should facilitate mass deployment of clean energy solutions, support research and development of new clean energy technologies, and keep much of our coal, oil and gas reserves in the ground."*



There is a genuine urgency in the message of a rapid buildup of renewables. We cannot continue to take small, incremental actions towards reducing greenhouse gases emissions and expect to see significant results.

Renewable Taos, Inc. urges your support for tapping our vast, local renewable energy resources. We can build renewable energy generation here in our back yard, both to serve our local citizens and to sell to others using the western electricity grid.

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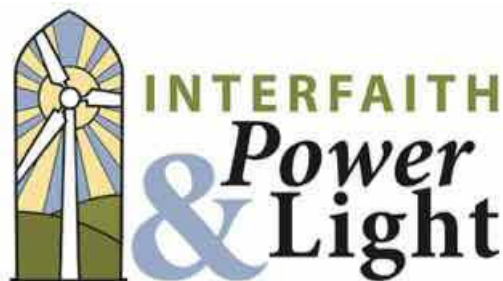
## **CLIMATE ACTION LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS**

The good news is that we are seeing leadership at all levels towards rapidly building renewables and climate change action on many fronts. **Joan Brown, Executive Director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light** had this to say during the Albuquerque panel discussion described above:

**ARE YOU A  
MEMBER?**

"Leading up to Paris and beyond, faith communities and individuals have been signing the Paris Pledge which calls for energy efficiency and renewable energy use of 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050. As Pope Francis wrote in the encyclical *Laudato Si*, we must take care of our common home."

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JOIN NOW!



Joan Brown will speak to Taosños on how faith traditions and civil society are taking more vibrant roles than ever in climate change action. Joan attended the **COP21 Paris** climate talks in December 2015.

She will share her experiences and counsel at one of two **Earth Day Events to be held at El Pueblito Methodist Church in El Prado, NM, Thursday, April 21, 5-6 P.M.**

Contact toddwynward@gmail.com or call [575.770.8681](tel:575.770.8681) for more information.

NEW MEXICO'S ATTORNEY GENERAL JOINS THE BATTLE FOR ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Attorneys General from 17 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands recently committed to work together as "creatively, collaboratively and aggressively" as possible to combat climate change. The group agreed to collaborate on investigations into whether fossil fuel companies misled investors and the public on the impact of climate change on their businesses.

The group includes attorneys general from New York, California, Connecticut, Washington, D.C., Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The group formally filed a petition in support of the **U.S. EPA's Clean Power Plan** on March 29, 2016 in the Washington, D.C. District Court of Appeals.

In a March 29 Press Release, **New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas** stated:

"We have been impacted by climate change, and we see its drastic effects in New Mexico--- extreme drought, increased risk of severe forest fires, and the ruin of our wildlife and natural habitats. Our efforts will ensure that progress is made on climate change and that the public is fully aware of the effects on the health and well-being of New Mexico families."



**NEW MEXICO ATTORNEY GENERAL
HECTOR BALDERAS**

The coalition of attorneys general is the second national alliance of high level state officials on climate change action to form in 2016. The attorneys general join a bipartisan group of Republican and Democratic governors of 17 states (not including New Mexico) who signed an [Accord For a Clean Energy Future](#) on February 16, 2016.

The governor's agreement calls for their states to work together to modernize their power grids and expand wind and solar energy. The agreement is based specifically on the economic benefits of clean energy from local sources, which is also a major thrust of Renewable Taos.

SUPPORT KIT CARSON IN BREAKING FREE FROM TRI-STATE

Please sign our [Renewable Taos Petition to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission \(NMPRC\)](#). This petition is to show our support for [Kit Carson Electric Cooperative and its Board](#). You can sign the online petition, or contact us to sign and circulate a paper petition.

Why do we need the increase?

1) Sales and revenues are going down for two reasons. First, we lost our largest customer in 2014 -- the Questa Moly Mine. That loss is approximately the size of the Co-op's operating loss for last year. Second, home appliances and lighting are becoming more efficient, so most customers are using less. LEDs are a wonderful advance, for example, but they cut into Co-op revenues.

2) Meanwhile, cost of maintenance of the distribution grid continues to go up. Kit Carson serves a sparse population, a few more than 28,000 connections, but a truly vast area. The service area is larger than Delaware and includes mountains and deep river gorges. The mountainous areas are covered in forest which must be continuously cut back to prevent damage to power lines.



3) Our rates are well below those of other Tri-State Co-ops like the one in Montrose CO with a monthly connect fee of \$25/month. The Mora Co-op serves a much smaller area and their monthly connect fee is around \$25. Compare that to the modest rate of \$20.50 Kit Carson will charge when the rate increase is approved.

4) Commercial customers actually subsidize service to residential customers. The Kit Carson Board decided to avoid raising rates for them, an action that would also impact local government, schools, and the hospital. Renewable Taos, Inc. is looking into some of the alternative rate structures that are easier on small users and promote energy efficiency. For now, Kit Carson needs this rate increase to be solvent.

5) The rate increase hearing will cost us something like \$400,000, and is interfering with negotiations to get out of Kit Carson's contract with Tri-State. That contract prevents us from installing any more large-scale solar, so the sooner we can get out of it, the sooner we can start to develop renewable energy in a big way.

We've looked into this carefully and are confident that it is the best thing for our community. If you have any questions, please address them with a reply to this email, or to one of our members. Also, please forward this request to other Kit Carson Electric Cooperative members.

RENEWABLE TAOS JOINS APPEAL TO FEREC OVER TRI-STATE THREATS TO LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY GENERATION

Renewable Taos, Inc. in March 2016 joined organizations from across the United States to protest [Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association Inc.'s attempts to undermine and curtail local development of renewable energy](#). We signed on to documents prepared by the Southern Environmental Law Center in an appeal to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

A long list of national, regional, and state environmental, renewable energy and public interest advocacy organizations from across the United States are protesting. Tri-State is attempting to

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YOUR
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ON ALL
ASPECTS OF
OUR WORK!**

impose a "fixed cost recovery mechanism," which effectively is a penalty Renewable Energy Cooperatives must pay for purchasing locally developed renewable energy.

Southern Environmental Law Center (SLEC) prepared the formal document submitted to FERC.



SLEC's filing with FERC includes the following language:

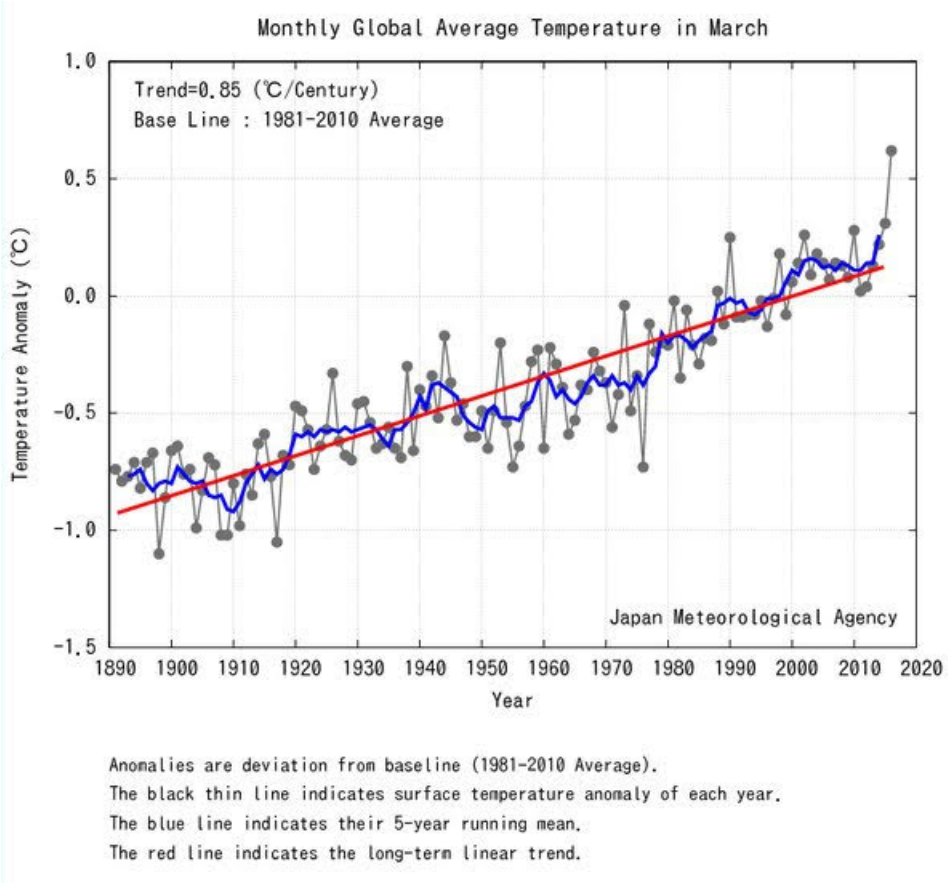
"The Commenters offer comments in this proceeding because we are concerned that the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. ("Tri-State") "fixed cost recovery proposal" ("Proposal"), if approved, will have a chilling effect on the opportunities for qualifying facilities to sell renewable energy to nonregulated electric utilities across the country and will curtail the continued development of renewable energy, in violation of Federal law and policy."

*"We urge the Commission to declare that the Tri-State Proposal contained in revised Board Policy 101 is inconsistent with the **Public Utility Regulatory Policy Act of 1978 ("PURPA")**."*

PURPA has been perhaps the most important federal action to promote renewable energy development. PURPA is the only existing federal law that requires competition in the utility industry and the only law that encourages renewables. Undermining PURPA, as Tri-State intends, would have far-reaching effects for renewable energy development throughout the United States.

EARTH'S WARMING SPEEDS UP

Both February and March 2016 set new global records for the highest monthly temperatures ever recorded. This is part of a continuing and alarming trend of accelerated global warming that is rapidly changing weather patterns around our planet.



ARE YOU A MEMBER?



JOIN NOW!

Locally, New Mexico experienced its driest March since 1895, and 20 percent of our state has lapsed – once again -- into severe drought conditions. We lost 40 percent of our mountain

snowpack to evaporation and early runoff during a warm, dry February.

There was plenty of El Niño moisture this year, but New Mexico and the rest of our Southwest did not benefit from it. Most of the winter and spring storms from the Pacific missed us. During the past six months, these storms tracked through the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies, bringing record rainfall to Seattle, WA. This pattern conforms with what scientists have been repeating for decades: Our USA Southwest is becoming warmer and drier, while areas far to the north of us are becoming warmer and wetter.

What do we do? First we must curtail carbon emissions as quickly as possible. Second, we must expand our use of emissions-free energy -- solar, wind, and water power -- at a much faster rate.

And that is the good news. Renewable energy is cheaper than fossil fuel energy, and it doesn't come with huge health and environmental impacts. Join us to encourage everyone to help in this race against continuing warming.

OUR MISSION

Renewable Taos is dedicated to promoting and facilitating a full transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency in Taos County and our surrounding region.

We advocate for local generation of renewable energy with an emphasis on local ownership. We build community partnerships to facilitate the transition to renewables, and propose and support projects. We recognize that energy efficiency is integral to the transition to renewable energy. We also work with other organizations to change the political climate in the state and country to facilitate the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency.



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Edited by: William M. Brown, April 2016

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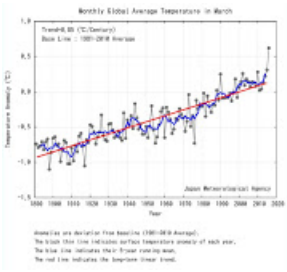
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