

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
490 Old Santa Fe Trail Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

November 9, 2023

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham,

We write to express our deep disappointment at your continued promotion of a hydrogen economy in New Mexico despite longstanding public opposition to this dirty energy distraction. New Mexicans have been clear that we do not want our lands, air, waters, communities, and climate sacrificed for hydrogen. We ask that you stop pursuing public and private investments to prop up this false climate solution and instead commit to the work of a just transition in New Mexico, which requires phasing out fossil fuels and building out clean renewable energy sources like wind and solar.¹

Ninety-nine percent of hydrogen is currently produced using fossil fuels.² Investing in hydrogen will only perpetuate New Mexico's reliance on the oil and gas industry at a time when the state urgently needs to phase out fossil fuels. No matter the fuel source, all forms of hydrogen use vast quantities of water, which our drought-stricken state simply cannot afford.³ Moreover, hydrogen transportation poses unique safety risks, because hydrogen burns hotter than gas and is more combustible and corrosive to pipelines.⁴ The combustion of hydrogen produces more harmful nitrogen oxide than burning methane alone, exacerbating health risks in frontline communities.⁵ Nitrogen oxide contributes to dangerous ozone and fine particulate matter pollution.

For the past two years, the Legislature has rejected bills promoted by your administration that would have aided in the development of a hydrogen economy in our state. These bills were met with widespread opposition from Indigenous peoples, frontline communities, social justice organizations, environmental groups, health advocates and public interest organizations.⁶ Despite the lack of public support from New Mexicans for hydrogen, you remained steadfast in advocating for the Western Interstate Hydrogen Hub (WISHH), which would have enabled the disastrous expansion of dirty hydrogen in already overburdened communities. Indigenous,

¹Center for Biological Diversity, Governor Lujan Grisham's Climate Score: On the Verge of Failure, (September 2023),

[https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/pdfs/Gov-Lujan-Grisham-Climate-Scorecard-2023-09-08.pdf?_gl=1*o8ndqs*_gcl_au*MTc3OTk0NjQ5LjE2OTY5NzQ0Mzg](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/pdfs/Gov-Lujan-Grisham-Climate-Scorecard-2023-09-08.pdf?_gl=1*o8ndqs*_gcl_au*MTc3OTk0NjQ5LjE2OTY5NzQ0Mzg;); *New Mexico Grassroots Declaration for Climate Justice* (September 2023),

https://www.nofalsesolutions.com/files/ugd/ee62dc_a626b800b472483ea568417b8c6d91a0.pdf

² U.S. Department of Energy, *Hydrogen Strategy: Enabling a Low-Carbon Economy*, Office of Fossil Energy (July 2020),

https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/07/f76/USDOE_FE_Hydrogen_Strategy_July2020.pdf

³ Food & Water Watch, *Hydrogen's Water Problem*, (2023)

https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/02/FSW_2302_HydrogenWaterUse.pdf

⁴ Accufacts Inc., *Report: Safety of Hydrogen Transportation by Gas Pipelines*, (2022),

<https://pstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/11-28-22-Final-Accufacts-Hydrogen-PipelineReport.pdf>

⁵ Cellek, Mehmet and Ali Pınarbaşı, *Investigations on Performance and Emission Characteristics of an Industrial Low Swirl Burner While Burning Natural Gas, Methane, Hydrogen-enriched Natural Gas and Hydrogen as Fuels*, *International Journal of Hydrogen Energy*, 43(2), (2018)

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhydene.2017.05.107>

⁶ Redfern, Jerry, *Governor Resurrects Controversial Hydrogen Hub Act*, Source NM (March 11, 2022), <https://sourcennm.com/2022/03/11/governor-resurrects-the-controversial-hydrogen-hub-act/>

frontline, and environmental groups passed resolutions and wrote multiple letters urging you and the Department of Energy to reject the WISHH.⁷ When the WISHH did not receive federal funding, you collaborated with private industry to restate your support for hydrogen, ignoring the public outcry against this false solution.⁸ Then, just a week later, you led a large trade mission to the Asia Pacific 2023 Hydrogen Summit in Australia to seek out private investment in the technology that your constituents have repeatedly urged you to reject.⁹ These actions contradict the principles of environmental justice and energy democracy.

Moreover, your recent decision to partner with Star Scientific on green hydrogen research and manufacturing will also not benefit New Mexicans.¹⁰ Between 20-40% of the renewable energy used to generate green hydrogen is lost in the process, meaning that green hydrogen will always be more expensive and less efficient than renewable electricity.¹¹ Instead of wasting New Mexico's renewable resources in the production of green hydrogen, New Mexico should expand community-supported wind and solar and use this energy directly.

As New Mexico faces devastating climate hazards like wildfires and record-breaking heat waves, it is imperative that you move our state away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy that doesn't repeat the pattern of externalizing costs in frontline communities. Hydrogen, in all its colors, is a distraction from this critical task. We urge you to finally listen to the voices of so many New Mexicans who have asked to stop pursuing this false solution. When it comes to hydrogen, we specifically ask that you:

1. Do not allow Star Scientific to build a joint research and hydrogen manufacturing facility in Albuquerque or anywhere else in New Mexico;
2. Do not seek appropriations from the Legislature for hydrogen research or manufacturing in the 2024 session or subsequent sessions;

⁷ See for example: *New Mexico Hydrogen Policy Letter*, (October 5, 2021), https://westernlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NGO_NewMexicoHydrogenPolicyLtr_100521.pdf New Mexico No False Solutions Coalition, *Re. Reject Western Interstate Hydrogen Hub application for Department of Energy Regional Clean Hydrogen Hubs (H2Hubs) funding (DE- FOA-0002779) and all H2Hub Proposals Nationwide*, (June 13, 2023),

https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/pdfs/23-06-12-NFS-Hydrogen-Letter.pdf?_gl=1*z1pe92*_gcl_au*MTc3OTk0NjQ5LjE2OTY5NzQ0Mzg; *Reject all Hydrogen Hubs*, https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/pdfs/National-Hydrogen-Letter-8_22_23.pdf?_gl=1*sv67uy*_gcl_au*MTc3OTk0NjQ5LjE2OTY5NzQ0Mzg; (August 22, 2023), *Concerns regarding Western Interstate Hydrogen Hub (WISHH) Community Engagement*, (August 10, 2023).

⁸Office of the Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, *Governor, Partners Remain Committed to Hydrogen Hub Following DOE Award Announcement*, (October 13, 2023), <https://www.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023-10-13-COMMS-Governor-New-Mexico-partners-remain-committed-to-hydrogen-hub-following-DOE-award-announcement-Final.pdf>

⁹ Office of the Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, *Governor Lujan Grisham to Lead Hydrogen Trade Mission to Australia*, (October 20, 2023), <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/2023/10/20/governor-lujan-grisham-to-lead-clean-hydrogen-trade-mission-to-australia/>

¹⁰ Office of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, *Australian-based Star Scientific Chooses New Mexico for North American Expansion*, (October 25, 2023), <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/2023/10/25/australian-based-star-scientific-chooses-new-mexico-for-north-american-expansion-albuquerque-to-be-center-for-clean-hydrogen-research-and-manufacturing-creates-200-jobs/>

¹¹ Saadat, Sasan and Gersen, Sara, *Reclaiming Hydrogen for a Renewable Future*, Earthjustice and Right to Zero, (2021), https://earthjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/hydrogen_earthjustice_2021.pdf

3. Do not pursue federal tax credits for hydrogen research, manufacturing, demand or transportation;
4. Do not allow Energy Transition Act funding to go towards hydrogen research, manufacturing, demand or transportation.

New Mexicans haven't fallen for the hydrogen hype. We call on you to begin work on the real solutions that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

New Mexico, Pueblo, and Navajo Nation Organizations:

Alejandria Lyons, Coordinator
New Mexico No False Solutions Coalition

Sofia Martinez, Co-Coordinator
Los Jardines Institute

Ennedith Lopez, Policy Manager
Youth United for Climate Crisis Action

Krystal Curley, Executive Director
Indigenous Lifeways

Julia Bernal, Executive Director
Pueblo Action Alliance

Bianca Sopoci-Belknap, Co-Director
Earth Care

Corrine Sanchez, Executive Director
Tewa Women United

Jessica Keetso, Organizer
Tó Nizhóní Ání

Hazel James, Coordinator
Diné Centered Research and Evaluation

Anna Rondon, Executive Director
New Mexico Social Justice and Equity Institute

Mariel Nanasi, Executive Director
New Energy Economy

Silas Grant, New Mexico Campaigner
Center for Biological Diversity

Anni Hanna

New Mexico Climate Justice

Alexa Moore, New Mexico Organizer
Food and Water Watch

Virginia Necochea, Executive Director
New Mexico Environmental Law Center

Rebecca Sobel, Organizing Director
WildEarth Guardians

Elaine Cimino
Common Ground Rising

Nicole Maestas-Olonovich, President
New Mexico Solar Energy Association

Christopher Ramirez, Executive Director
Together For Brothers (T4B)

Lora Lucero, Chapter Leader
Progressive Democrats of America - Central New Mexico

Jorge Garcia, Director
The Center for Social and Sustainable Systems (CESOSS)

Anson Wright, Coordinator
Chaco Alliance

Nomi Green, Co-Founder
NM Earth Holders

Pat Leahan, Co-Director
Las Vegas (NM) Peace & Justice Center

Francine Bivens, Farmer

Regional, National, and International Supporters:

Juan Mancias, Tribal Chair
Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe of Texas

Jack Collard
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander International Engagement Organisation

Tia Oros Peters, CEO
Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples

Karahkwinetha Sage Goodleaf-labelle, Kanien'kéha youth Delegate
Iakwatonhontsanonstats

Basav Sen, Climate Policy Director
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program

JL Andrepont, Senior Policy Analyst
350.org

Osprey Orielle Lake, Executive Director
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network

Isabella Zizi, National Organizer
Movement Rights

Shannon Smith, Executive Director
FrackTracker Alliance

Thomas Joseph, Co-Director
California Kitchen

Kat Haber, Founder and CEO
TRUST Climate Action Strategists

Mia Montoya Hammersley, Environmental Justice Clinic Director
Vermont Law & Graduate School

Irene Wesier,
Fossil Free Tompkins

Mary Gutierrez
Earth Ethics, Inc

Aleta Toure, Co-op Member
Parable of the Sower Cooperative

CC:

Members of the New Mexico Legislature

Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst
Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department

Secretary James Kenney
New Mexico Environment Department