

Cheryl Foote

Good evening members and commissioners. My name is Cheryl Foote and I live in Albuquerque. I am a longtime member of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light and I attend St. Mark's Episcopal Church. I embrace the Episcopal Church's position on climate issues, which states "the sustainability of God's creation demands our action. Confronting climate change and environmental degradation has never been more urgent." Under the leadership of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, the New Mexico Environment Department's proposed rules regarding Clean Cars and Trucks would directly address climate change and greatly reduce harm to the environment. These rules require that by 2032 82% of new passenger vehicles in New Mexico will be electric or plug in hybrids. Additionally stricter rules will limit emissions through new tailpipe laws for existing vehicles. These will be giant steps in ending our dependence on fossil fuels and in reducing the particles that poison our air and cause so many health problems.

The time to act is now. New Mexicans have all witnessed the effects of devastating wildfires and other extreme weather events here and across the globe in the past several years. Scientists are predicting an escalation of the intensity and frequency of such events if we do not take action to stop depending on fossil fuels. I want my grandson and his peers to have a bright and healthy future. Auto emissions are a major cause of asthma and other respiratory illnesses. In addition, recent studies in Europe have demonstrated that these emissions also contribute to the increase in autoimmune disorders. We must protect our children from climate catastrophes and from air pollution. And we must demand justice for indigenous, brown, black and low income New Mexicans who are even more vulnerable to these health risks.

The proposed transition to clean cars and trucks may seem overly ambitious to some but I believe the goals are achievable because most Americans are well aware of the devastating consequences of climate change. When the rules are enacted, car dealers in New Mexico will be able to acquire more electric vehicles and consumers will be able to visit local dealers and have numerous models to choose from. Satisfied customers will convince others that the savings on gasoline and maintenance of electric vehicles more than offsets the electric bills for charging the vehicles. And with federal and state rebates and tax credits, lower income New Mexicans will also be able to purchase reliable, energy efficient transportation.

I urge the members and commissioners to lead New Mexico to a future of clean energy and environmental justice. Thank you for accepting my comments.