WYOMING ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT

SUMMARY
Access to clean energy is not just an environmental issue, but also a civil right. Communities of color bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of the fossil fuel based energy economy. This is why the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program stands for just energy policies that will help protect our communities from harmful energy production processes and provide equitable access to clean and renewable energy and the energy economy.

This Snapshot profiles Wyoming’s energy portfolio, compares key state energy policies to NAACP recommendations, documents utility disconnection policies, and outlines opportunities in the clean energy economy for Wyoming residents of color. As a resource rich state with unique geographic and sociopolitical landscapes, energy is often at the fore of state policy debates. With this in mind, it is critically important that NAACP leaders actively engage in these debates to ensure that our community’s needs motivate just energy policies. This snapshot will provide information that will inform NAACP members on avenues for engagement.

STATE ENERGY PROFILE
The biggest industry in Wyoming is energy-related mining and minerals extraction. Coal, crude oil, natural gas, or some combination of those fuels is produced in 22 of Wyoming’s 23 counties, and mineral royalties and severance and related taxes typically provide a substantial portion of state revenues. Although only 6% of the energy produced in Wyoming is consumed there, Wyoming is among the highest per-capita energy consumers of any state and has one of the most energy-intensive state economies. The industrial sector uses more than half of all energy consumed in the state, and the transportation sector consumes more than one-fifth.1

Wyoming is a major producer of coal, natural gas, and crude oil.2 Wyoming has the smallest population of any state, and only Alaska has fewer residents per square mile.3 4 But Wyoming supplies more energy to the rest of the nation5 and has more producing federal oil and natural gas leases than any other state.

Wyoming and Renewable Energy
Wyoming has among the best wind resources in the nation, especially in its southeast. Sustained winds are funneled through mountain passes and out across the high prairie, giving Wyoming wind farms high capacity factors. Wind-powered generating capacity has increased rapidly during the last 10 years. Several large-scale projects are in development, including a 3,000-megawatt project at Chokecherry-Sierra Madre, which may become the largest wind project in the nation. Wyoming officials are actively seeking customers for the state’s wind power in California and Colorado. Both states have ambitious renewable energy requirements.

The Wyoming Infrastructure Authority is encouraging two large transmission projects aimed at transporting Wyoming’s wind-generated electricity to the West Coast. Most of Wyoming’s hydroelectric dams are smaller, older, and owned by the federal government. Although the state has good solar resources, no utility-scale solar generation has been installed, in part because of Wyoming’s relatively low electricity rates. A small amount of distributed (customer-sited, small-scale) solar photovoltaic capacity has been installed around...
the state. The state does not have a renewable portfolio standard or other requirement for renewable energy, but it does provide net metering for residential, commercial, and industrial customers with renewable energy systems smaller than 25 kilowatts, including solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, biomass plants, and hydroelectric generators.\(^\text{ii}\)

**Energy Portfolio\(^\text{ii}\)**

- Wyoming produced 42% of all coal mined in the United States in 2015.
- In 2015, 32 states received coal from Wyoming mines, with 10 states, including Wyoming, obtaining more than 90% of their domestic coal from Wyoming.
- In 2015, almost 88% of net electricity generation in Wyoming came from coal and nearly 11% came from renewable energy resources, primarily wind.
- Wyoming has the third lowest average retail electricity rates of any state in 2015.

**Wyoming Energy Policies**

**RMP's 2011 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)** reflected a significant increase in energy efficiency over past planning cycles. The utility forecasts energy efficiency additions through 2030. Currently, RMP offers several rebate programs RMP is responsible for about 57% of electricity sales in Wyoming. Cheyenne Light and Power, Black Hills Power, Carbon Power & Light, Lower Valley Energy and Questar Gas also run limited sets of energy efficiency programs.\(^\text{iv}\)

**Wyoming Public Service Commission approved demand-side-management programs for Rocky Mountain Power (RMP) that began January 1st, 2009. These programs represent the state's first significant energy efficiency activity.**\(^\text{v}\)

**The Wyoming Business Council, in conjunction with the State Energy Office, re-launched the Wyoming Energy Conservation Improvement Program (WYECIP) in 2011. This program provides support for facilities seeking to enter into an ESPC, including model contracts and other documents to assist with implementation of performance contracts.**

For more detailed information and data on South Dakota's energy portfolio visit the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s webpage: [http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=WY](http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=WY)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Type</th>
<th>NAACP Recommended Policy Standards</th>
<th>Wyoming Policy Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Net Metering | Net Metering Standards require utility companies to provide retail credit for new renewable energy produced by a consumer. | Capacity Limit Recommendation: 25KW  
Mandatory/Voluntary: Voluntary |
|             | **Capacity Limit Recommendation:** 2,000 kW (minimally), per system  
**Mandatory/Voluntary:** Mandatory |
| Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) | A RPS requires electric utility companies and other retail electric providers to supply a specific minimum amount of customer load with electricity from eligible renewable energy sources. | **Recommended Standard:** N/A  
**State does not have**  
Mandatory/Voluntary: N/A |
|             | **Recommended Standard:** Minimally 25% renewable by 2025  
**Mandatory/Voluntary:** Mandatory  
**Allowable Sources:** Wind, solar, geothermal, ocean/wave energy |
| Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) | A EERS establish a requirement for utility companies to meet annual and cumulative energy savings targets through a portfolio of energy efficiency programs. | **Recommended Standard:** N/A  
Mandatory/Voluntary: N/A |
|             | **Recommended Standard:** Minimally 2% annual reduction of each previous year’s retail electricity sales.  
**Mandatory/Voluntary:** Mandatory |
| Local Hire Provision | • Extra renewable energy credit multipliers for in-state installation and in-state manufactured content  
• Renewable energy credits for utility providing incentives to build a plant in-state  
• Renewable energy credit for utility that makes an investment in a plant located in-state  
• Quota for government assisted construction project employers to hire a percentage of workers locally  
• Bidding Preferences for companies that hire a percentage of their employees in-state for state-funded public works projects and service contracts  
• Small Business Non-profit Energy Audit Program.  
• Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit  
• Building Energy Code  
• Black Hills Energy-Commercial Energy Efficiency Programs  
• Carbon Power & light-residential and Commercial Energy Efficiency Rebate Program  
• Small Business Non-Profit Energy Audit Program |
| Disadvantaged Business Enterprise | • Provide training opportunities  
• Notify DBEs of state business opportunities  
• Set-aside funds for DBEs  
WDOT certifies firms for participation in the federally mandated Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program. The DBE program is intended to provide contracting opportunities to small businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. |  

Access to energy is not a luxury, it’s a necessity. With exposure to both extreme heat and extreme cold, folks should not be forced to choose between paying for medications or their energy bill. Public officials have implemented some policies that protect consumers from the life-threatening practice of utility disconnection (As outlined to the left). However, energy justice advocates must continue to hold utility companies and regulators accountable to human rights and basic but life-saving protections.

**Utility Disconnection Policies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice</th>
<th>Notice must be provided to the customer at least seven calendar days before the scheduled disconnection. Notice may be completed by mail, in person, or over the phone. An additional notice may be provided electronically. Notice in person or by phone must be attempted before a disconnection during winter protection period.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Based Protection</td>
<td>Yes. November 1–April 30 additional notice by phone or in person is required before disconnection. No disconnections from December 24–January 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature Based Protection</td>
<td>Yes. No disconnections on days when it is forecasted to be below 32ºF any time in the following 48 hours. Temperature protection applies only for customers who are eligible for government assistance or who are only able to pay for service in installments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment Plan</td>
<td>Yes. Payment plans available to prevent disconnection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnection Fee</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnection Limitations</td>
<td>Disconnections between 8:00am–4:00pm Monday–Thursday. No disconnections on legal holidays, the day before legal holidays, or on any other day when the utility is not open to the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Protections</td>
<td>Postponement of disconnection for 15 days with medical certification. Utilities must assist customers who are elderly or who have a disability and who are unable to pay their utility bills with determining available government assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utility shut-offs have a disproportionate impact on low-income and African American communities. Check out the **NAACP report**, “Lights Out in the Cold” for more information.

More disconnection policy details are available at the **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program State Disconnection Policies webpage**: https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/Disconnect/disconnect.htm

**Action steps**: Meet with the Public Utilities Commission or your local utility company to advocate for the adoption of the following:
- Temperature based protections
- Restriction on reconnection and disconnection fees
- Expanded protection for vulnerable populations
Hot Topics, Issues and Developments

**Massive Wyoming wind farm receives federal approval:** The Bureau of Land Management approves the first phase of a 1,000-turbine wind project in Wyoming, which is slated to be the country’s largest onshore wind farm. The biggest onshore wind development in the works in the U.S. has received two critical federal approvals that could allow the first turbines to go up as soon as next year. Once complete, the wind farm will have as many as 1,000 turbines and generate up to 3,000 megawatts, or enough electricity for nearly 1 million homes. The electricity would go to Southern California over a major power-line project under development by TransWest Express LLC, another Anschutz subsidiary. The power would help meet California’s goal of getting 50 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

**Wyoming Bill Would All But Outlaw Clean Energy by Preventing Utilities From Using It:** While many U.S. states have mandates and incentives to get more of their electricity from renewable energy, Republican legislators in Wyoming are proposing to cut the state off from its most abundant, clean resource—wind—and ensuring its continued dependence on coal. A new measure submitted to the Wyoming legislature this week would forbid utilities from providing any electricity to the state that comes from large-scale wind or solar energy projects by 2019. It’s an unprecedented attack on clean energy in Wyoming, and possibly the nation. And it comes at a time when such resources are becoming cheaper and increasingly in demand as the world seeks to transition to clean energy to prevent the worst impacts of climate change. A new bill would outlaw utilities from providing power from large-scale wind farms like the Foote Creek Rim Wind Project.

**Wyoming’s first major coal mine in decades wins approval:** A state environmental review board voted Wednesday to allow Wyoming’s first major coal mine in decades to proceed despite the objections of another coal company. Amid competition from natural gas and tougher environmental regulations, coal mines tend to be cutting back production or even shutting down — not opening anew. Kentucky-based Ramaco’s relatively small Brook Mine would buck that trend but has faced opposition from another company and a ranch. The Wyoming Environmental Quality Council voted unanimously to allow Ramaco to go ahead despite the Big Horn Coal Company’s objection.
DEVELOPING THE BLACK-GREEN PIPELINE

African Americans are inadequately represented in the clean energy sector. It is the goal of the NAACP Black-Green Pipeline Initiative that African Americans will have increased representation across all sectors of the clean energy economy. The Black-Green Pipeline Initiative promotes the equitable inclusion of communities of color into the green economy in order to address unemployment in our communities and to increase the voices and influence of our communities in the green economy.

Opportunities in Energy

The 2017 U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER) finds that the traditional and energy efficiency sectors today employ approximately 6.4 million Americans. These sectors increased in 2016 by just under 5 percent, adding over 300,000 net new jobs, roughly 14 percent of all those created in the country. The 2017 USEER analyzes four sectors of the U.S. economy:

- Electric Power Generation and Fuels
- Transmission, Distribution and Storage
- Energy Efficiency
- Motor Vehicles

The first two of those sectors make up the traditional energy sector. The Report provides a quantitative lens with which to evaluate the employment impact of new energy technologies, shifting fuels deployment, and evolving transmission and distribution systems:

- Electric power generation and fuels technologies directly employ more than 1.9 million workers.
- In 2016, 55 percent, or 1.1 million, of these employees worked in traditional coal, oil, and gas, while almost 800,000 workers were employed in low carbon emission
- Generation technologies, including renewable, nuclear, and advanced/low emission natural gas.
- Just under 374,000 individuals work, in whole or in part, for solar firms, with more than 260,000 of those employees spending the majority of their time on solar. There are an additional 102,000 workers employed at wind firms across the nation. The solar workforce increased by 25 percent in 2016, while wind employment increased by 32 percent.\textsuperscript{xv}

Wyoming has a high concentration of energy employment, with 31,398 traditional energy workers statewide. 20,342 of these workers are in the fuels sector, 9,408 in transmission, wholesale distribution, and storage, and 1,648 workers are employed in electric power generation. Traditional energy sector in Wyoming is 11.7% percent of total state employment, compared to 2.4 percent nationally. Wyoming has an additional 7,200 jobs in energy efficiency, 0.3 percent of all energy efficiency jobs nationwide.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Energy Sector Employment in Wyoming

![Energy Sector Employment in Wyoming](image)
The Green Labor Market and Communities of Color

Given that communities of color have the most to lose with the disproportionate impact of climate change, correspondingly those communities should have the most to gain from the green economy to balance the effect, decrease economically based vulnerability, and increase resilience. This can be achieved by advancing and improving legislation related to green jobs and availability of contracts and also on implementation by facilitating access to programs that ensure that African Americans are getting green contracts and green jobs. Also this will ensure the development of communities of colors own definition of green jobs including setting standards of equity and safety.

Although racial diversity has increased in other fields over the past several decades, racial diversity in environmental organizations and agencies has stagnated, with only about 14 percent of the workforce consisting of people of color. This includes a number of energy-focused organizations. Environmental organizations are not adequately reaching out to organizations representing communities of color for recruitment.\textsuperscript{xvi}

The Green Energy Economy would create jobs in green renewable generation installation, weatherization/energy efficiency, thermal energy auditing, insulation, and more. With more than 9.6 percent of African Americans still unemployed it is time to take action and create a Green Collar revolution which provides opportunities for all to access living wages and pathways to self-determination and economic wellbeing.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Unemployment Statistics}

In 2015 the gap between the U.S. unemployment rate and the rate for African Americans was 4.3 percentage points.

2015 National Unemployment Rate: 5.3 \%
2015 Wyoming Unemployment Rate: 2.7 \%
2015 National African American Unemployment Rate: 9.6 \%
2015 Wyoming African American Unemployment Rate: Unreported
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Action step:} Host a \textit{Bridge the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy} Program to establish working groups with existing organizations to increase African American engagement with local green economy.
\end{center}
TAKE ACTION -

NAACP leaders released the Wyoming Just Energy Policies Report, which among other things evaluates the state of South Dakota's key clean energy policies and advocates for the focal policies outlined in this snapshot. South Dakota NAACP branches have been environmental justice leaders in their respective communities, engaging with local coalitions of likeminded advocates and championing the NAACP energy justice platform. Listed below are avenues for continued engagement:

Host a Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy Roundtable

- The NAACP ECJ Program is committed to advancing a meaningful dialogue and concerted action on engagement of communities of color in the green economy.
- To start taking action, organize a multi-stakeholder roundtable with socially responsible energy business leaders, historically black colleges and universities, environmental groups, civil rights organizations, labor unions, and others to discuss developing and implementing a strategy to ensure that policies/laws/regulation, research initiatives, community level practices, corporate social responsibility measures, etc. are in place to ensure greater engagement of communities of color in the green economy.

Implement a demonstration project such as a community solar garden or rooftop solar project

- Interested in taking a direct role in implementing clean energy practices in your community? Install rooftop solar or community solar.
- There are several rebates and incentives available to Wyoming residents interested in pursuing renewable energy projects. Visit energy.gov for a list of renewable energy incentive program available on the state and federal levels.
- You can also check out funding opportunities offered through the Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, which aims to support solar energy adoption by making solar energy accessible to all Americans.

Launch a Just Energy Policies Campaign

- Identify one or more of the focal policies outlined in this snapshot and documented more extensively in the Just Energy Policies to champion.
- Build a coalition with likeminded energy justice advocates and other local and state allies to build power and momentum.
- Host a town-hall to educate the community about the policy and get input from members on their needs, priorities, and perspectives.
- Launch an intentional campaign to advocating that Wyoming adopts the recommended policy standard.
- Set up lobby trainings and coordinate a lobby-day with elected officials.

Make public the NAACP energy justice platform and engage the public through media

- Develop and place an op-ed by NAACP Unit President or ECJ Chair in a local newspaper
- Participate in a radio interview, TV interview, podcast
- Be quoted in a local newspaper
- Post an article or blog to an online platform
**Closing**

Wyoming residents have the opportunity to strengthen partnerships with other governmental agencies and other organizations, to have effective and sustainable social change in regards to Environmental Justice, specifically Energy Justice within the state of Wyoming.

Wyoming’s residents of color are disproportionately exposed to toxins in their environment, as well as neglected and discriminated. Building capacity in disproportionately burdened communities, and promoting collaborative problem-solving for issues involving environmental justice is critical for the future of communities of color in the state. Wyoming has the potential to be a clean energy leader in the U.S., but first the state must address the fact they rank first in the Midwest for greenhouse gas emissions per capita.

Embracing a transition to clean, renewable energy sources will not only provide significant environmental and health benefits for the people of Wyoming, but will also diversify and strengthen the state’s economy. While the state has significant renewable energy potential, state policies have not incentivized the growth of renewable energy. NAACP just energy leaders should advocate on behalf of a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard, Energy Efficiency Resource Standard, Net Metering standards, Local Hire Provisions, and Minority Business Enterprise Programs. Our communities have the potential to be key leaders facilitating a just transition to clean, renewable, locally owned and controlled energy.

**South Dakota Green Organizations**

**Climate Justice Alliance** - In which everyone lives a good life by being in just and fair relationship with each other and within healthy, interdependent ecosystems. Based on a culture of sharing rather than hording; localized democracies rather than globalized exploitation; the Web of Life rather than the Chain of the Market. Fairness, equity and ecological rootedness are core values. That celebrates and honors the beauty and diversity of life and the rights of people to realize their full potential as creative beings. [http](http)

**Defenders of Black Hill** - Defenders of the Black Hills is a group of volunteers without racial or tribal boundaries whose mission is to preserve, protect, and restore the environment of the 1851 and 1868 Treaty Territories, Treaties made between the United States and the Great Sioux Nation. [http://defendblackhills.org/](http://defendblackhills.org/)

**Sierra Club-South Dakota Chapter** - The Sierra Club is America’s oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization. Our South Dakota chapter is divided into three groups across our state. Explore this website to learn more about what we’re doing, what we’re planning, and how you can get involved. You can participate in everything from hiking and recycling to environmental education and conservation. We’re engaged in carrying out the Sierra Club’s motto: Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet! [http://www.sierraclub.org/south-dakota](http://www.sierraclub.org/south-dakota)
June 28, 2017

Created by the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 580-5777
ecp@naacpnet.org
www.naacp.org

Contributing Authors:

Marnese Jackson, NAACP

Marcus Franklin, Editor

---

1 http://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.cfm?sid=WY
2 https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=WY
3 http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=WYtabs-2
4 http://database.aceee.org/state/wyoming#sthash.VLKH8OVR.dpuf
5 http://database.aceee.org/state/wyoming
6 http://database.aceee.org/state/wyoming#sthash.tIGnafRM.dpuf
7 http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/detail/2335
8 http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program?fromSir=0&state=WY
9 http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/detail/1880
10 http://www.dot.state.wy.us/home/business_with_wydot/contractors/Disadvantaged_Business_Enterprise.html
12 http://www.denverpost.com/2017/01/18/federal-approval-wyoming-wind-project/
14 http://www.bigstory.ap.org/article/64590e45318c45bead6a5268f9162d0c/wyomings-1st-major-coal-mine-decades-clears-council