

DAKOTA COUNSEL

Watchdogs of the Prairie

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CLEAN Holds Annual meeting

DRC's newest affiliate, Citizens Local Energy Action Network (CLEAN), held its first annual meeting and picnic to celebrate the partnership and bring in new members to CLEAN and DRC alike. The atmosphere was festive with Merrill Piepkorn and Loy Larson, also known as the Radio Stars Duo, playing classic country and folk hits with guitar and fiddle. Around 30 members including State Senators, Merrill Piepkorn, Tim Mathern, Kathy Hogan, and Representative Josh Boschke attended the event.

After the festivities elections were held, and DRC would like to congratulate Ed Gruchalla, elected as Chairman of CLEAN, Paul Jenson, Vice Chair, Josh Lunski, Secretary/Treasurer, and Sonja Kaye as the CLEAN DRC board representative. Ed Gruchalla spoke about the partnership that CLEAN and DRC have fostered over the years and that the organization looks forward to the issues that it will tackle in Fargo/Moorhead in the coming years. Paul Jenson also spoke of the similarity of CLEAN and DRC with the UN's sustainable development goals. The Senators in attendance spoke to their goals of addressing climate change and reducing carbon emissions in North Dakota. If you are a DRC member interested in CLEAN, please contact Sam Wagner at sam@drcinfo.com to add your name to CLEAN's membership, or go to drcinfo.org/join-renew to become a member of CLEAN today.

Letter From the Chair



With the addition of CLEAN (Citizens Local Energy Action Network) as an affiliate, DRC once again has a presence in the largest urban city of the state. Ordinarily, DRC has been known as a primarily rural-based and rural- focused environmental and agricultural organization. Our membership has typically been rural residents although we've always had a dedicated group of urban residents who are environmental advocates. Although urban residents' environmental concerns frequently overlap with those of rural residents, we're finding that urban residents' concerns are often – although not exclusively – uniquely their own.

DRC has found it difficult to reach beyond the urban environmental allies into youth who are concerned about environmental issues. To address that younger clientele, DRC and CLEAN have pulled together a coalition of environmental groups from area high schools and colleges to organize a Fridays for the Future Climate Strike for September 24th.

These allies include groups who were involved in the September 2019 Climate Strike as well as in the November 2019 Climate Townhall, both of which were organized by Fargo Commissioner John Strand, local organizer Zac Echola, and me. Like the 2019 Climate Strike and Climate Townhall, the September 24th Climate Strike will feature speeches from area high school and college youth concerned about climate change.

The coalition of these groups will present a series of
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Executive Committee

Curt Stofferahn, Chair
Linda Weiss, Vice Chair
Curt Kralicek, Past Chair
Lisa DeVille, Secretary
David Rydell, Treasurer

At-Large

April Fairfield
Bernie Parkhurst

Affiliate Reps

Pat Ashley, BARC
Vacant, Ft. Berthold POWER
Donny Nelson, MCETA
Sonja Kaye, CLEAN
Vacant, MVRC

DRC Affiliates

Badlands Area Resource Council (BARC)

Fort Berthold Protectors of Water & Earth Rights (POWER)

McKenzie County Energies & Taxation Association (MCETA)

Missouri Valley Resource Council (MVRC)

Citizens Local Energy Action Network, (CLEAN)

Dakota Resource Council
1720 Burnt Boat Drive, Suite 104
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demands for city government and the congressional delegation including having the city commission declare a climate emergency and demanding the congressional delegation support the climate change provisions in the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation budget package.

The devastating summer of extreme climatic events -- including extreme drought in North Dakota and diminished air quality in Fargo from forest fires in the Canadian provinces and in northwestern states -- has demonstrated the effects of climate change much more locally. We're hoping that an outcome of this organizing effort will be a permanent committee representing the coalition partners that can operate under the auspices of Fridays for the Future with support of DRC and CLEAN.

Curt Stofferahn
Chairperson

Oil and Gas

Fort Berthold POWER

Fort Berthold POWER members have been making their voices heard through letters to the editor, interviews with media, public comment opportunities, as well as speaking directly to decision makers. All this activity takes place as POWER says a fond farewell to Theodora and Joletta Bird Bear who are stepping away from their work with DRC and POWER. DRC and POWER appreciate the work they've done over the years and will continue in that same tradition moving forward. As these leaders step away, POWER is fortunate to have the continued leadership of Lisa DeVille and Delvin Rabbit Head Sr. as we continue to build the affiliate up and continue to grow the influence POWER has on issues that affect the people in and around Fort Berthold and beyond.

POWER and other DRC members had a face-to-face with Administrator Regan in June and were again invited to speak to him, this time virtually. The latest meeting, put together by Methane Partners, a national coalition that DRC is part of, provided Lisa DeVille a second opportunity to speak directly to EPA Administrator Michael Regan. She spoke about the impacts methane and other toxic pollutants have on her family and community, and how she and other

frontline communities are twice harmed by oil and gas activities. First from extraction, storage, and transportation of oil and gas products in their communities, and then as that production contributes to climate change which affects all of us. POWER members have and will continue to send letters to the editor to keep the perspective of those living alongside oil and gas production, thus, directly impacted out there to counter the "all is well" narrative of the oil and gas industry in ND.

DRC and POWER are also pushing the Biden administration to strengthen the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to what it was before the previous administration gutted it, but also to strengthen it to new levels. This is being done through commenting on rules and lawsuits that began under the Trump administration. This push to strengthen regulations is happening with waste prevention, new and existing source pollution, and supporting the current moratorium on new oil and gas leasing.

In support of Biden's lease moratorium DRC members, Linda Weiss, (Badlands Area Resource Council) and Lisa DeVille, (FB POWER) have made declarations pushing for the moratorium to be upheld even though some state's congressional delegations, including ND's, are pushing to have it lifted. We believe it's important to get better regulations in place before new leases are made available. Especially as many of these leases would be in the Little Missouri National Grasslands.

Lastly, POWER president Delvin Rabbit Head Sr. attended a solar power training in SD put on by Henry Red Cloud and there are plans just being formed about renewable projects through DRC and POWER.

If you live on or near FB Reservation and would like to be a part of FB POWER and weigh in on all the important issues you are facing, join DRC and FB POWER today. Go to the website, drcifo.org and join today.

Badlands Area Resource Council



BARC is keeping an eye on the Davis refinery, particularly as they met the requirements of the state to renew their Permit to Construct by signing a contract for plans and construction. There is bold talk from the company about when construction will begin, but they are still faced with financial uncertainty and a lack of investors due to many things including a terrible location (on the doorstep of Theodore Roosevelt National Park), poor business practices such as non-payment of local contractors, non-payment of employees in Texas, and a \$2.18 million lien from engineering firm SEH. None of those things cry out “Great investment!” Do they?

Despite the company’s problems, BARC members are keeping a wary eye on this terribly misguided project. It took ten years to put the South Heart Mine project in the win column, despite it being more than twice as far from the park as the Refinery, so members know these are long-term struggles. As members keep an eye on the refinery, there are other issues that need attention and the process of figuring out new issues is just beginning.

Ag & Food

WORC responds to NCBA petition to replace “Product of the USA” with “Processed in the USA”

The National Cattlemen Board Association (NCBA) has responded to recent demands for stricter rules and regulations regarding the “Product of the USA” label by submitting a petition to the USDA requesting to replace the label with “Processed in the USA”. As the current rules are written, “Product of the USA” can be given to any product, regardless of origin, that has had some processing or alteration in the USA.

DRC and WORC responded that Product of the USA should only be reserved for meats that are born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States. By creating a new label, this would only cause confusion and allow more foreign beef and pork to bear the label. Accurate labeling and reinstatement of mandatory Country-of-Origin-Labeling (COOL) for beef and pork will continue to be the goal of our organization, but fighting to ensure that we do not take a step backwards is important.

The NCBA is going against public opinion which states that 93% of Americans want to know where their food comes from and 73% of consumers say country of origin affects their purchases. This petition is only a proposal but it is very telling who the NCBA stands with and it is not the cattle producers. WORC and DRC members responded with comments to the USDA and we will continue to be active to ensure we don’t step back even further from our goal of restoring mandatory COOL

WORC Meets with Andy Green-USDA rewrites of the Packers and Stockyard Act.



The recent USDA announcement on potential changes to the Packers and Stockyards Act in early August has given WORC and DRC a chance to push for the WORC Rule. On August 31st members from across the network met with Andy Green and 5 other staff members to discuss potential rule changes.

The WORC rule (which was developed in the late nineties by WORC to combat unfair prices in the cattle market) proposes that every cow sold would have a minimum price floor that every market would have to offer. By doing this, ranchers would be guaranteed that their overhead costs would be met when they sell a cow to market. The other rule change WORC looks to implement is a rule outlawing the owning of cattle by meat packers unless it is bought at a cash auction, or "spot market" as it's called. This would end the current system of secret packer-to-packer contracts when they trade cattle to each other's feedlots without disclosing the terms of the sale to the public. Cattle prices are typically based on the selling prices at spot markets which need to be reported every day but relatively few cattle are sold in the spot market. WORC maintains that if more people can bid on cattle in a transparent

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DRC PODCAST

Catch the DRC Podast! The Dakota Resource Council podcast is an update with organization news, member profiles & interviews. We also talk with experts that are involved with issues that affect our members. You can download our podcast on iTunes, visit drcpodcast.buzzsprout.com, go to drcinfo.com and scroll to the bottom of the page or watch for updates on our Facebook Page!

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public market, cattle will be sold at higher prices.

USDA announced it will be accepting comments towards rule changes in the Packers and Stockyards Act in the near future but has yet to give a specific date. Green informed the group that the USDA will be focusing on changing regulations, so a producer no longer has to prove that unfair practices by meatpackers damages the entire industry before an individual claim can be filed under the Act. WORC and its member groups will continue to keep up the pressure on our elected officials and activate our resource councils to advocate for the WORC rule until the rule changes are made official. Contact Sam Wagner if you want to continue to spread the message about the WORC rule.

Coal & Clean Energy

Sale of Coal Creek Station Raises Questions



The announcement in late June that Coal Creek Station in Underwood would likely be sold to Rainbow Energy raised many questions about whether the sale will be viable in the long term. The original owner of Coal Creek Station, Great River Energy, disclosed that in 2019 it lost \$170 million in energy sales from Coal Creek Station alone, which is what prompted the company to make plans to decommission or sell the plant. DRC has been skeptical of the sale from day one. This is because the proposed buyer of the plant, Rainbow Energy, has no experience in the power generation industry,

and second is tying the financial success of their purchase to being able to successfully retrofit the plant with unproven carbon capture technology. Despite all of this, North Dakota elected officials have cheered on the sale, while DRC has expressed a hefty dose of skepticism.

DRC's skepticism was highlighted by Fargo Forum Columnist, Mike McFeely, when he discussed that DRC was the only group questioning the sale in his July 31 column. Time will tell whether or not the Coal Creek Station sale will be successful, but in the meantime DRC and its members will continue to question the viability of the power plant, especially with the current trajectory of the coal industry internationally. It is the view of DRC and our members that it would be more fruitful for elected officials to work with coal communities towards a transition that includes job retraining, economic diversification of coal country, and a focus on reclamation in the short term to heal the land after decades of mining. Ultimately, it will be the farmers and ranchers who were there prior to coal that will live with the consequences of decisions made today. It is our hope that with hard work DRC and its allies can ensure that former Governor Link's vision in his speech, "When the Landscape is Quiet Again", is realized in North Dakota Coal Country, while also working to find new economic opportunities for Coal Country like renewables, tourism, and other industries.

CLEAN Members Present Plan for the Fargo Sustainability Committee, Plans Demonstration in Fargo

Leaders of CLEAN presented their vision for a sustainable Fargo in a meeting today Chaired by City Commission member John Strand. John Strand submitted a bill calling for a sustainability committee after the Climate Strike of 2019. This program was put in place by many concerned citizens and community groups across the area
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working together to commit to making Fargo Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Member Paul Jenson laid out some clear initiatives the city of Fargo could follow such as entering a tri-city agreement to create the first “Greenest Cities Pact” in North Dakota. This pact contains policies that 130 metropolises in the United States have agreed to use to combat climate change. Ed Gruchalla was pleased with the presentation and stated, “CLEAN has laid out the blueprint for success. We hope the city decides to follow our suggestions.”



A gathering of CLEAN members will also be organizing for the 3rd annual International Climate Strike on Sept 24th 2021 in an alliance with Fridays for the Future, an international organization started when Greta Thunberg made her historic strike in Stockholm, Sweden in 2018.

CLEAN Tables At Pride in the Park and Red River Valley Market



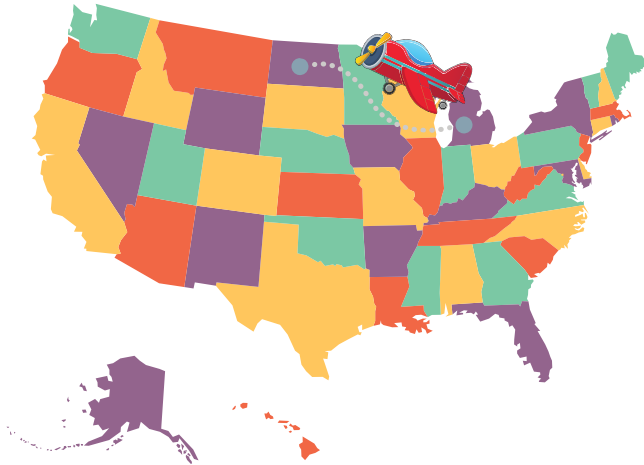
CLEAN has been busy building membership and awareness in the Fargo Moorhead area. Members Martin Fredricks, Michael Graalum, and Josh Lunski have been going to events such as Pride in the Park and the Red River Valley Market. DRC and CLEAN are looking to spread awareness of the organizations.

CLEAN Celebrates Annual Meeting



Let Me Introduce Myself

DRC Hires New Coal Country Organizer



Hi everyone! My name is Eliot and I am so excited to be joining the DRC team as a Coal Country/Clean Energy Organizer! Environmental issues have always been a passion of mine and I am so excited to work with all of you. I am most excited to learn more about your own perspectives and how environmental issues unique to North Dakota impact all of your lives.

A little bit of background about myself! I graduated this past spring from Michigan State University. I studied International Relations with a concentration in Science, Technology, Environment Public Policy. While in school, I was involved in Student government, MSU Divestment, and I served as the Education Officer for one of the co-op houses on campus. I grew up in the beach town of Traverse City, Michigan, and I attended high school in the rural community of Elk Rapids. My work experience includes organizing for the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights. I also have experience working on electoral campaigns across the State. I most recently resided in Sterling, Illinois where I engaged with volunteer management and event coordination for a senior wellness nonprofit. I enjoy hiking, skiing, soccer, and checking out new breweries with my friends. I am so excited to explore and learn more about North Dakota! If you have any suggestions for fun things to do or check out, please let me know!

DRC Member LTE's



Soil health is key to homegrown prosperity

"Homegrown Prosperity" captures the essence of investing in building strong sustainable economies and communities. It's a formula for sustainable prosperity for all by making connections between our major economies of agriculture and energy with our communities, our small businesses, and our future. As a public advocate for "Homegrown Prosperity", as I travel across North Dakota, the one unifying theme from my conversations, the importance of healthy soil. People shared concerns about local food, food security, bee populations, urban gardening, improved farm/beef production, dangerous algae blooms, access to clean water, healthy foods, and green spaces; hunting, flood/drought issues and economic resilience. All these things have one thing in common--the need for healthy soil.

Although we have made strides in preventing soil loss since the 1930s, North Dakota's soils continue to lose high levels of carbon. Soil loss costs North Dakota Farmers millions in losses, affects flood/drought damages and is degrading surface waters as evidenced by several lakes around our state closed due to algae blooms. In a state prone to flooding and drought, healthy soil has proven to stabilize the climate and waterways. The Biden Administration has made its commitment to
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natural climate solutions known and is looking to agricultural practices like investments in soil health as one of the natural climate solutions.

Congress is crafting a \$3.5 trillion funding package to address the climate crisis and critical infrastructure needs. Members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have until September 15th to decide how to allocate \$135 Billion to agriculture and food security. As a landowner focusing on soil health, it's time for a substantial investment to farmers, ranchers, landowners, gardeners, and city planners to promote healthy soils to build climate resilience. Funding for soil health is in perfect alignment with the new administration's commitment to natural climate solutions and food security. To achieve this goal experts at the National Healthy Soils Policy Network recommend a budget containing \$30 billion for soil conservation and range management; that could open the door for more income for struggling family farms, \$5 billion for climate resilience research and organic research that our state universities could easily procure, and \$3 billion for value added agriculture, on farm renewable energy, and livestock processing; which would give North Dakota the opportunity to develop a regional slaughtering facility in North Dakota.

Further, the independent farming laws enshrined in North Dakota's constitution will ensure that the federal investment in our soil and local food production stays local and directly benefits family farms and ranches. Investment into healthy soil will connect family farms and ranches to all aspects of North Dakota life. That's a great investment!

By investing in soil we sequester carbon, improve water quality while also supporting family farms. Both Senator Hoeven and Senator Cramer have voted yes for the much-needed infrastructure bill. Now is the time for Cramer and Hoeven to fight for that investment to go directly to our farmers, ranchers, landowners for one of our greatest resources—our soil.

Shelley Lenz, a Dickinson-Killdeer veterinarian, is a member of the Dakota Resource Council and was the 2020 Dem-NPL candidate for governor.

Don't let people fool you, this is real farm reform



Jenna Vanhorne

Why on God's green earth would people oppose the Farm Systems Reform Act? I struggle to come up with any valid reason. Editorials would have you believe that PETA wrote the bill or point out that Sen. Cory Booker is a Vegan (gasp!) but they never seem to mention anything in the bill besides the limits on animal agriculture. I run a small cattle/dairy operation in Kidder County. I am one of the many rural farmers that has submitted comments to Senator Booker on this bill. I believe that if more people read exactly what is in the bill and how rural Americans suffer from our current agricultural system, that they would better understand how the Farm Systems Reform Act would help rural communities like mine. Here is the best part. If you look closely enough, the people submitting this bill are actually listening to rural America (for once).

Our food delivery system is a mess. We have four companies controlling 85% of our meat industry. The meat packers sell meat at high prices and pay producers less than the amount it takes to raise the cow. Our beef is higher quality than it has ever been. The same is true for the hog and poultry industry. Factory Farming's business model is to treat farmers and rural communities like serfs. Packers tell the producers what to feed their animals, how to care for them, when to sell them, and at what price. Producers don't have the ability to market their products however they see fit. In
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return, farmers get all of the liability and the nearby communities are forced to face the environmental impact. Iowa's hog and chicken farms produce as much liquid waste as the equivalent of 100 million people. Oftentimes state laws dictate that waste water does not have to be treated in any sort of water treatment facilities. Who really wants 1 million hens, 500,000 turkeys, or 20,000 dairy cows a mile away from them? This is a reality many rural Americans face.

It's not just the farmers, consumers also are having a rough time. Poll after poll confirms that Americans want to buy American raised beef to support our ranching community. Yet it's completely legal for meat packers not to tell consumers where their beef products come from. Something can be labeled "Product of the USA " if it was packaged or processed in the USA. This means that foreign beef can be put in a different container on US soil and now be labeled "Product of the USA ". Cheap foreign meat can be mixed with American beef and is used to flood markets and lower the price of cattle. Grocery stores across the country are being closed at an alarming rate in the United States, leaving only large chain stores that can squeeze out local businesses and competition. This is denying consumers a choice in their products they can access.

The Booker Farm Systems Reform act would solve many of the problems here. Producers could more easily file complaints to the federal government for unfair practices that stifle competition. Large factory farms would be banned. Rural farmers would be able to opt out of contracts they deem unfair and then be compensated fairly to restructure their business. Rural Communities would get 100 billion dollars over ten years to research and develop new economic models to bring in jobs for local food production such as butcher shops and farmers markets.. Consumers would get clear labeling for what country their dairy, beef, and pork comes from, and only meats that were born, raised and slaughtered in the USA would be eligible for "Product of the USA" labeling.

This is good legislation that provides the broad vision that rural America needs right now. Senator Hoeven has endorsed many of the Ideas in this bill, including 50-14 rule, Packers and Stockyard reform, and Product of the USA reform.

Jenna Vanhorne
Steele, North Dakota

We need to strengthen the federal methane standards



Lisa DeVille

For the past 11 years I have advocated for regulations to curb oil and gas pollution. Oil and gas pollution hurts communities like mine by degrading our air quality and contributing to man-made climate change.

During the Obama Administration, I worked with frontline communities to push the Administration to significantly cut methane emissions (pollution) from the oil and gas industry. Our effort culminated with the 2016 "methane standards", which provided protections for communities like mine (Fort Berthold), while also cutting harmful climate change causing methane emissions. Unfortunately, these regulations were short-lived. The Trump Administration went on to work to roll-back all the regulations we worked hard to pass. Luckily, through the efforts of a national coalition, we kept most of the Trump roll-backs at bay, which brings me to today.

Now is the best opportunity to get protections in place that protect frontline communities like Fort Berthold from harmful oil and gas pollution. The Biden Administration has shown a commitment to making this happen, but the jury is still out on what they will do. In addition, many oil and gas companies like Exxon, BP and others are supportive of federal regulations curbing oil and gas pollution and showed that by opposing a 2020 attempt by the Trump Administration to roll-back the 2016 methane rules.

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The EPA will be starting a rulemaking to strengthen the federal methane standards in the next few months. I, along with many others, will be calling upon the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to cut methane emissions by 65% below 2012 levels by 2025. I urge anyone in North Dakota that is concerned about oil and gas pollution and the climate to join me in urging the EPA to pass a rule that cuts methane emissions (oil and gas pollution) by 65% below 2012 levels by 2025.

Lisa DeVille

Founder

Fort Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights (POWER)

Meridian...We Still Have a Problem



Meridian Energy Group, Inc. has been given another green light from the ND Department of Environmental Quality for constructing a refinery next to TR National Park. Meridian cited delays because of lawsuits by environmentalists. Many people do not realize that there have been other filings for unpaid wages and bonuses by former and current employees, unpaid bills, and a 1.2-million-dollar mechanic's lien.

In the beginning, discussion of a refinery in the area gave many boastful remarks on providing 500 construction jobs, 200 permanent jobs, and trickle-down jobs. Local contractors were to be given first opportunity. Now we learn that much of the construction will be done out of state. There were even

remarks on helping with a new school.... when a profit was achieved.

Investors and contractors have become skeptical of Meridian's lawsuits and boastful talk, only a small percentage of funding to construct the refinery has been raised.

The down to earth problem with Meridian Energy Group has always been funding this poorly placed refinery. The multiple legal filings and low dollars of investments prove it.

DRC Annual Meeting



Dakota Resource Council's Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 6.

As COVID 19 was slowly disappearing this summer, DRC staff and board members were planning on having an "in-person" meeting in Bismarck this year...but, due to the DELTA Variant spreading far and wide in North Dakota, the planning committee decided to have the meeting "virtual" again this year for the safety of our members.

Please keep a close eye for e-mails in your inbox this month as we will be sending our materials and information to connect on-line for the DRC Annual Meeting.

Thank you for your time and patience and hopefully, next year will be the year to get together in-person!

Dakota Resource Council
1720 Burnt Boat Dr. Ste 104
Bismarck, ND 58503
www.drcinfo.org



I want to join Dakota Resource Council and affect positive change in North Dakota!

Please make your tax-deductible payment to DRC and mail to
1720 Burnt Boat Dr,
Ste 104, Bismarck, ND
58503, OR join at
drcinfo.org/join

1. Choose membership level

- ☐ \$1000* Watchdog of the Prairie
- ☐ \$500 Sustaining
- ☐ \$250 Supporting
- ☐ \$100 Century Club
- ☐ \$55 Household
- ☐ \$35 Individual
- ☐ \$15 Student/Senior

2. I ALSO want to join my local affiliate, please choose one at \$10.00

- ☐ Badlands Area Resource Council
- ☐ Fort Berthold Protectors of Water & Earth Rights
- ☐ McKenzie County Energy & Taxation Association
- ☐ Missouri Valley Resource Council
- ☒ Citizens Local Energy Action Network

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone Email