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Climate and Energy Coalition Applauds President Biden's Visit to New Mexico

Visit comes ahead of the August 16th anniversary of the historic Inflation Reduction Act

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – A broad coalition of climate, energy and environmental justice organizations commended President Joseph Biden for visiting New Mexico to talk about his administration's investments in climate and energy ahead of the August 16th anniversary of the signing of the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The visit provided the President an opportunity to draw attention to the benefits the IRA and other administration programs are bringing to workers, families and communities. He was joined by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Senator Martin Heinrich, Senator Ben Ray Luján, a senior officer from General Electric, and the CEO of Arcos Wind Towers in Belen, about 40 miles south of Albuquerque, where the event took place.

The landmark Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) was the first major piece of legislation passed by Congress to address climate change. It benefits hardworking New Mexicans with tax credits for weatherization improvements and new appliances that will lower energy bills, upgrades to New Mexico's energy grid for more electricity from clean energy sources and more reliable service during extreme weather, and investments that will create jobs in New Mexico's clean energy industry and cleanup of abandoned oil and gas wells and abandoned mines. It also caps prescription drug prices and lowers health insurance premiums.

President Biden emphasized how "Bidenomics" has energized job growth and the economy while fighting climate change, generating 13 million new jobs, including 800 thousand American manufacturing jobs, and 90 thousand new jobs in New Mexico alone, all in less than three years. In a nod to the President's comments on bringing investment to rural America, a point also emphasized by Governor Lujan Grisham, the CEO of Arcosa said that his company had almost closed in 2020. Federal support including the IRA had revitalized the company, which has received over \$1 billion in orders for wind towers.

Biden told the crowd in Belen that there's still work to be done, like bringing semiconductor chip production back home, pointing to the multi-billion dollar investment at the Intel facility in Rio Rancho.

Specific examples of the impact of federal investment include:

- \$35 million to build an electric vehicle (EV) charging system along New Mexico interstates. This represents solid early support for the state's advanced clean cars and trucks rules, which will lead to cleaner air, healthier communities, more clean energy jobs, and long-term savings for EV owners
- Eligibility for nearly \$70 million to mitigate abandoned oil and gas wells around the state, providing jobs, cutting climate pollution, and improving air quality
- \$4 million to create climate action plans for critical greenhouse gas emissions reduction projects, which will be funded with additional federal implementation money; the State of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque both submitted applications to participate in the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program \(CPRG\)](#)
- Creation of clean energy jobs as several recent announcements show: 1) Arcosa Wind Towers is investing \$55 to \$60 million and creating 250 jobs, with \$1 billion in orders; 2) ABB will invest \$40 million to build a new manufacturing facility on Albuquerque's West Side for cables used by electric utilities, creating 55 new jobs; 3) and Geobrugg has a \$9 million expansion of its Sandoval County manufacturing, including its sister company, eConnect, which makes direct current fast-charging system solutions for electric vehicle charging stations
- The Justice40 Initiative ensures that 40% of federal investments from IRA flow directly to low-income and historically impacted communities, making this an especially important and instrumental opportunity for communities and decision makers in New Mexico
- In February, Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller signed an executive order establishing the [City's Justice40 Oversight Coordinating Committee](#), the first of its kind in the nation
- New Mexico State University was selected as one of 17 [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers \(EJ TCTACs\)](#) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy to help underserved and overburdened communities across the country access funds from President Biden's Investing in America agenda, including historic investments to advance environmental justice

Following are statements from some coalition partners:

“Ensuring a just transition is critical for all communities, primarily low-income and people of color, who endure the brunt of climate and other pollution, but will also suffer from the loss of fossil fuel industry jobs with the transition to a renewable energy economy,” said **CEO of the Center for Civic Policy, Oriana Sandoval**. “Hardworking New Mexicans and their families and communities must have an active, engaged voice in the decisions that will impact their lives. The Justice40 initiative and prompt action like that in Albuquerque are a good beginning on ensuring that the most vulnerable can take charge of creating a climate-resilient and thriving future.”

“One year on, the Inflation Reduction Act investments are lifting the lives of hardworking New Mexicans, their families and their communities, as promise turns to progress,” said **Alexis Mena, New Mexico policy director at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council.)** “The law is helping people upgrade to electric appliances, and add weatherization and rooftop solar systems, lowering energy bills and unhealthy pollution. It's making electric vehicles easier to buy. It's enabling businesses to become more energy efficient and save on energy costs. And it's creating jobs in the fast-growing clean energy sector. But amid this dangerously hot summer, state and federal officials must step up action on this vital climate law—so all New Mexicans, including low-income communities, benefit from a cleaner economy.”

“From the largest wildfires in our state’s history to a 1,200 year drought, New Mexico’s watersheds, wildlife, and communities are on the front lines of climate change,” said **Mark Allison, executive director of New Mexico Wild.** “We are immensely grateful to President Biden for his bold leadership enacting the single most important legislation on climate change ever. The Inflation Reduction Act is helping New Mexicans mitigate and adapt to climate change in significant and practical ways - from flood-proofing and storm resistance, to rebates and tax credits for energy efficiency and clean energy projects. We thank President Biden for taking this historic action on behalf of our planet and children.”

“New Mexico can address climate change and invest in historically underserved communities at the same time.” said **Tammy Fiebelkorn of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET).** “For example, the Community Energy Efficiency Development (CEED) block grant program helps improve living conditions for historically underserved New Mexicans and makes energy bills more affordable, while shifting more homes to run on clean, climate-safe electricity rather than polluting fuels. New federal climate investments created through the Inflation Reduction Act will help state and local leaders plan and robustly fund smart programs like CEED, so that we can engage every New Mexican in cutting pollution while living better lives. We thank President Biden, his administration, and Governor Lujan Grisham and her team for their visionary leadership in addressing climate change in New Mexico. We are excited to help maximize the benefits.”

“As impressive as the policies and programs put forward by the administration are, in the face of strong pro-corporate opposition in Congress, there is still much that needs to be done both in Washington DC and in New Mexico if we are going to achieve the bold, critical climate action necessary now to fend off the worst effects of climate change, which we are only just beginning to witness,” said **Executive Director of Conservation Voters New Mexico, Demis Foster.** “We need strong EPA and BLM methane rules, a strong BLM Conservation Rule, we need oil and gas operations reform, and we need effective community participation, all with the goal of setting us on a short glidepath to a collaborative, robust and durable energy transition.”

“The Inflation Reduction Act provides our communities with key tools to address the most devastating impacts of climate change, and we applaud President Biden’s efforts to tackle the climate crisis,” said **Camilla Feibelman, director of Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter**. “New Mexico is on the frontlines of the climate catastrophe having experienced the largest wildfire in our state’s history, the Rio Grande drying up, and more extreme hot summers like this one. We hope President Biden continues to deliver on climate action that must include urgently phasing out fossil fuel extraction.”

“As we work to create a just economic transition from our reliance on extractive industries in New Mexico, we will need significant investments into our communities like those available through the IRA,” said **Michael Leon Guerrero, senior sustainable economy advisor for the Center for Civic Policy**. “With these critical resources and leadership from our most impacted communities to guide the process, we will build a prosperous future where all New Mexican families can thrive.”

“New Mexico has enormous wind and solar energy potential, and it’s gratifying to have the Biden administration seize that opportunity in a way that supports a just transition away from fossil fuels,” said **Erik Schlenker-Goodrich, executive director of the Western Environmental Law Center**. “The Inflation Reduction Act has propelled projects in New Mexico to provide clean energy for 3 million people in the region, make electrification more affordable, and even provide relief for New Mexico communities suffering after climate-caused wildfires. We look forward to helping aid a just transition in New Mexico with the landmark Inflation Reduction Act at its core.”

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