

CHICAGO METRO AREA Women & Climate Justice Tribunal

US WOMEN & CLIMATE JUSTICE TRIBUNALS Spring 2012

The Chicago Area Women and Climate Justice Tribunal was held on June 10th, 2012 in Joliet, IL, a nearby suburb of Chicago City and a hub for coal processing.



“I came to the realization that the reason I almost died, was because of that coal plant.”

-Lelia Mendez, Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform member

The Feminist Task Force, together with Eco-Justice Collaborative, Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization (P.E.R.R.O.), Citizens Against Ruining the Environment (CARE) and the Loretto Community at the United Nations, organized the second gender and climate justice tribunal taking place in the United States, the Chicago Women’s Tribunal on Climate Justice.

The tribunal took place in the Chicago neighborhood of Joliet, and featured the testimony of women from Chicago neighborhoods of Romeoville, Lockport, Little Village and Pilsen. During the Tribunal it was reported that Fisk, a local coal plant in the Pilsen neighborhood was attributed in 41 deaths 550 ER visits 2800 asthma attacks.

Women from the Joliet and Lockport areas have been working

for 20 years to stop the pollution from two area coal plants and quarry waste disposal site. They have been breathing harmful emissions from two polluting coal fired power plants from Romeoville and Joliet. Women from Pilsen and Little Village, a predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood, have been breathing air from two of the oldest and dirtiest coal plants in the nation.

These Chicago women from different backgrounds and neighborhoods, have all been witnesses to the harmful impacts of coal on their lives, their communities and their neighborhood. The Chicago Women’s Tribunal on Climate Justice will ensure the voices of urban grassroots women will reach the corridors of power at the local, national and global levels.

The tribunal follows a long line of women’s tribunals spearheaded



Women from the Chicago suburbs of Lockport, Joliet, and Romeoville came together with women from the City of Chicago to testify at the Tribunal.

Tribunal Jurists



Jacqui Patterson
Director of the NAACP Climate Justice Initiative



Rev. Marta Benavides
Co-Chair, Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), and Salvadoran Peace Activist



Kelly Mitchell
Coal Campaigner and Grassroots Organizer with Greenpeace USA.



Brian Perbix
Grassroots Organizer, Illinois coal pollution issues with Prairie Rivers Network.

“We don’t get the power; we just get the pollution.”

-Ardis Doolin, Romeoville Resident

by the [Feminist Task Force](#) and organized around the world since 2007. The Tribunals have been used to create a public space for women to draw attention to critical issues at the local, national and global levels.

They provide an opportunity for women directly affected by poverty, climate change and gender inequality to raise their voices and present testimony, bring awareness and advocate for fundamental human rights.

For complete information on the FTF Women’s Tribunals on Gender and Climate Justice, go to <http://www.climatejusticetribunals.blogspot.com/>

Recommendations:

At the Tribunal, the distinguished panel of jurists offered their policy recommendation to the witnesses and those in attendance. These are a few of the recommendations they called for:

- The immediate closure of the Chicago metropolitan coal-fired power plants and the full remediation of those sites paid for by the company.
- The official classification of coal ash as a toxic hazardous material, and the adoption of federally enforceable rules and safeguards to protect women and their communities from coal ash.
- The restriction of new housing development near coal-fired power plants, and a commitment to prior and informed consent for individuals moving into the area.
- The inclusion of women, minorities and disenfranchised communities in the decision making processes regarding environmental protection.
- Increased jurisdiction by the United Nations of business behavior that has harmful impacts on communities.

“What we found was that in the international world, greed was global, and women and their communities were paying the price.”

-Rosa Lizarde, Global Coordinator of the Feminist Task Force

The Spring 2012 US Women and Climate Justice Tribunals are not the first of their kind to create a platform for grassroots women to share the impacts of climate issues. On the contrary, these US Tribunals have been preceded by 15 Gender and Climate Justice Tribunals in the global south within the past three



Tribunal organizers include the Feminist Task Force, the Loretto Community at the United Nations, Eco-Justice Collaborative, Citizens Against Ruining the Environment (CARE) and Pilsen Environmental Rights Organization (PERRO).



feminist task force



C.A.R.E.



Eco-Justice Collaborative
Living Responsibly for the Earth and All People

P.E.R.R.O.

Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization

Loretto
at the UN

years, spearheaded by the Feminist Task Force in collaboration with the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), Greenpeace International, and Inter Press Service (IPS).

In 2007, the FTF collaborated in hosting an international women’s tribunal on poverty in New York City, but this series is the first to highlight the intersection of women and climate issues in the United States. “All the other Gender and Climate Justice Tribunals have taken place in the global South, in Asia, Africa and Latin America,” said Lizarde. “It’s time to work in the U.S., in the ‘belly of the beast’.”



The Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), coordinated by Rosa Lizarde, has collaborated in hosting over 20 Tribunals around the world, raising the voices of the world’s grassroots women living in areas of persistent poverty.