

# EESI IMPACT

Environmental and Energy Study Institute



APRIL 2022

You are critical to achieving a sustainable, resilient, and equitable world!

## LATEST U.N. CLIMATE REPORT: WE MUST ACT NOW

The science is clear: climate change is already impacting our lives—and things risk getting much worse. A United Nations report released in February is unequivocal in its findings—**climate change presents a grave threat to humans and ecosystems**. The climate crisis has already brought about extinctions and contributed to the death of one in five trees in North America. As temperatures rise, so do sea levels, a hazard for coastal and island communities worldwide. Low-income communities that contribute the least to climate change are the most vulnerable to climate risks and in the greatest need of adaptation solutions.

Yet the key message is not one of despair, but of *urgency*. **Both adaptation and mitigation are needed—fast**. Equitable climate change solutions help us meet other key goals such as reducing poverty, ensuring gender equality, and advancing sustainable development. Another U.N. report, expected this month, will examine how we can curb climate change.

*"There is little good news in the report, but that does not mean our situation is hopeless. We have a small window of time to act, so we need to act now."*

**Daniel Bresette**  
EESI Executive Director



## BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION TOOLKIT





A cleaner and more resilient grid combined with major advancements in cost-effective electric technologies makes it a good time to transition our heating systems, electric vehicles, and other end-use applications to electricity. The process of adopting electric upgrades that result in consumer savings and reduced emissions is called "beneficial electrification."

To help electric utilities provide these opportunities so their customers can benefit, EESI is developing the Beneficial Electrification Toolkit. The Toolkit will help utilities create programs that generate savings for customers while reducing

emissions, improving comfort and quality-of-life, and strengthening the grid. The first-of-its-kind Toolkit also provides case studies of programs already underway, including some that feature on-bill financing to help make improvements more affordable.

The Beneficial Electrification Toolkit will be a free resource to help utilities and stakeholders turn an interest in beneficial electrification into a successful, accessible, and equitable program.

### What Beneficial Electrification Can Do:

-  **Saves money** More energy-efficient appliances waste less electricity, saving money on utility bills.
-  **Benefits the environment** Wasting less electricity, driving an electric vehicle, and using clean energy reduces carbon emissions.
-  **Improves quality of life** New, smarter technology can provide better living experiences at home and on the road.
-  **Fosters grid resilience** Smart appliances and homes can work together to balance load on a clean energy grid.

# PAVING THE WAY FOR EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS



About six months ago, President Biden signed the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** into law. At the time, just as climate negotiations in Glasgow had

ended, the bipartisan package was heralded as proof that Congress could work together. But as far as its climate provisions are concerned, I'd written, "Even though there is a lot to like in the infrastructure bill, Congress has more work to do—much, much more work to do."

A major emphasis of the Administration is to **ensure that these investments advance environmental justice goals**, and Congress is keeping watch.

You helped bring together a panel of climate justice activists to take stock of the Administration's **Justice40** commitment, which sets the first whole-of-government target for climate and clean energy investments in Black, Indigenous, people of color, and low-income communities.

You and I know that climate change has been with us for decades. The **latest U.N. report** makes it clear that **the time for procrastination is long past** (see our frontpage article). EESI decided in 1988—when Ronald Reagan was president!—that all our work needs to be viewed through the lens of climate change. Yet talk about equitable climate solutions on Capitol Hill still outpaces action.

Your commitment helps policymakers and the public understand that **new infrastructure investments must advance environmental justice**. We have to get this right; there can be no do-overs.

Thank you for your continued commitment to advancing equitable climate solutions.

Daniel Bresette,  
Executive Director

# BESTIES GO FROM COLLEGE TO EESI TO COMMUNITY SOLAR

EESI's internship program provides substantive experience for college students. Hired separately as communications and development interns for spring 2020, Phoebe and Uma were already best friends from George Washington University when they started at EESI. Later, they both were hired by Nexamp, a community solar organization in Massachusetts.

# UMA



Uma Atre  
EESI Communications Intern

"The support system EESI's staff provided helped me charge through the tough transition of graduating and landing a job. My internship at EESI gave me a lot of practice being a **flexible, effective communicator**. Writing articles and creating social media content taught me how to **relay complicated environmental and energy policy issues to the everyday person**. Without EESI, I would not have the skills, perspective, or drive that I have now."

# PHOEBE

"The skills I learned as a development intern at EESI enabled me to pursue my current career. EESI taught me how to be **more diligent and efficient with my time**, how to prioritize my work, and also to dive deeper into the things I'm interested in...I recognize how much I learned about the field of nonprofit development and the incredibly necessary, but always challenging, work of policy advocacy. I also recognize how much **I grew as a person**, coming in with little confidence in my professionalism; I left feeling **more self-confident**."



Phoebe Bride  
EESI Development Intern

## EARTH DAY AND EVERY DAY



Clean, decarbonized energy—  
affordable and accessible for all



Resilient, healthy, just communities  
ready for climate change impacts



Informed decision-makers motivated  
and equipped to act now



## CLIMATE JUSTICE IN FOCUS

Climate solutions that do not reflect the needs of communities can have negative outcomes for racial and socio-economic equity. EESI spoke with Kristal Hansley about respecting community concerns and her experience launching the company WeSolar and becoming the first Black woman CEO in the community solar industry.

*“When you look at under-resourced communities, they already have a higher cost for energy, whether it is because of the lack of weatherization, the lack of cost-saving appliances, or older furnaces and window AC units. That makes them run up their gas or electric bills. The community solar projects that are operated and developed by my WeSolar team, which is majority Black- and women- and minority-owned, have that inclusion and representation that is very much needed.”*

-- Kristal Hansley  
Founder & CEO of WeSolar, Inc



## WHAT YOU ARE MAKING POSSIBLE IN 2022

### MARCH

Podcast episode on sustainable agriculture in Puerto Rico. Listen to *The Climate Conversation!*



### APRIL Justice40 Briefing

explored the Biden-Harris Administration’s environmental justice initiative.



### MAY

Article series on digital solutions for water efficiency. Get all our articles in your inbox with *Climate Change Solutions* (eesi.org/signup).



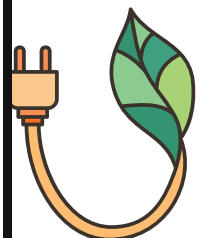
### MAY

Special issue of *Climate Change Solutions* email newsletter with solutions from around the country, maybe including YOUR area.



### JULY EXPO

Our annual forum featuring clean energy leaders in businesses, associations, and Congress.



## IN THE KNOW: JUSTICE 40

### WHAT IS JUSTICE40?

The Biden-Harris Administration announced the Justice40 Initiative within a week of the inauguration. It established a government-wide target of distributing 40 percent of all benefits from climate and clean energy investments to under-resourced communities.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Justice40 emphasizes that supporting communities of color and under-resourced communities is a must for environmental progress. If we do not tackle climate change and systemic injustice simultaneously, we could actually exacerbate historical disparities. Justice40 recognizes that communities least responsible for climate change typically suffer the most from its impacts.

### HOW WILL WE MEASURE ITS SUCCESS?

The Executive Order that created Justice40 also called for the creation of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. Building off an existing EPA platform, this tool will use data and input from communities to track the progress and impact of Justice40 investments.





“I was searching for inspiration and began to listen to EESI's podcast and webinar recordings. The important connection-building and resource-sharing of their small team kept me motivated to be a similar bridge-builder in my own climate career. Keep up the good work, EESI!”

- waa2, GreatNonprofits reviewer (February 15, 2022)

# We moved!



EESI  
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*New office!  
Same great  
commitment  
to advancing  
climate  
solutions!*



**FURTHERING EQUITABLE  
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS IS  
URGENT - EARTH WEEK  
AND ALL THE TIME.**

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please give now at  
[eesi.org/donate](https://eesi.org/donate)**



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