

Community Lawyering for Environmental Justice Part 15: Building an Energy Future That Leaves No One Energy Poor

Faculty Biographies

Thomas Lutken, Science Fellow, Climate Judiciary Project, Environmental Law Institute –

Thomas Lutken is a Science Fellow whose work has focused on clean energy and decarbonization. At ELI, Tom supports the Climate Judiciary Project and programming on the energy transition. Prior to ELI, Tom spent over four years at the National Bureau of Asian Research on the Energy and Environmental Affairs team, convening experts from academia, government, and the private sector to address critical issues on climate and energy topics in Washington D.C. and across South and Southeast Asia. His career also included work at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on their India desk, and at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Sedimentation Laboratory as a hydrologic technician. Tom received a Master of Environmental Management from Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment and a Bachelor of Sciences in Environmental Science from Brown University. His master's project focused on energy access and electricity reliability in northern India, particularly rural households in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Karen Lusson, Senior Attorney, National Consumer Law Center – Karen Lusson is a senior attorney at the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) focusing on energy and utility affordability issues affecting financially struggling utility customers.

Karen is a contributor to NCLC's treatise Access to Utility Service and authored Protecting Access to Essential Utility Service During Extreme Heat and Climate Change. She also co-authored the Ensuring Consumer Protections in the Delivery of Energy-Efficiency Financing and Renewable-Energy Programs chapter in What's Possible: Investing Now for Prosperous, Sustainable Neighborhoods and helped author the Water Affordability Advocacy Toolkit. Her work includes advocacy for utility affordability and discount programs, advocacy for utility consumer protections during extreme heat events, promoting strong energy efficiency programs, and promoting an equitable transition away from gas as a heating fuel.

Karen leads Project Stay Connected Illinois, which includes litigation before the Illinois Commerce Commission in proceedings that address affordability of utility service and consumer protections against utility disconnections. She also advocates for increased investment in energy efficiency and affordable access to home electrification and renewable energy for underserved families in Illinois and the Midwest.

Prior to joining NCLC, she was the assistant bureau chief in the Public Utilities Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General's Office where she represented Illinois residential ratepayers in litigation involving utility rate increase requests, rate design, ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs, mergers, rulemakings and low income customer affordability issues. Earlier, Karen

was a staff attorney at the Illinois Citizens Utility Board and an assistant public counsel at the Illinois Office of Public Counsel.

Destenie Nock, Assistant Professor, Engineering & Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon

University - Dr. Destenie Nock is a leader in energy affordability, energy justice, and sustainable energy transition trade-off analysis. In her role as an Assistant Professor in Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE), and Engineering and Public Policy (EPP) she creates optimization and decision analysis tools which evaluate the sustainability, affordability, and reliability of power systems in the US and Sub-Saharan Africa. In another project she is creating a new measure of energy poverty to help utility companies identify energy limiting behavior in low-income households, a hidden form of energy poverty. Dr. Nock is also the CEO of Peoples Energy Analytics, a data driven company which uses energy analytics to identify energy poverty in vulnerable households. Prior to her current position at CMU, Dr. Nock received her PhD in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She earned a MSc in Leadership for Sustainable Development at Queen's University of Belfast, and two BS degrees in Electrical Engineering and Applied Math at North Carolina A&T State University. She is the creator of the Black Electricity Blog site which posts articles about graduate and undergraduate advice, and research updates in energy and sustainability.

Curt Stokes, Senior Attorney, Beyond Gas, Environmental Defense Fund – Curt represents EDF before state utility commissions, where he seeks to align public utility plans, programs, and investments with climate and equity goals, accelerate the transition to clean energy, and collaborate with disproportionately burdened communities to elevate their voices and advocate for energy justice. Prior to joining EDF, Curt worked as a Litigation Attorney and Chief Deputy Counsel for the Missouri Public Service Commission, where he worked on a variety of issues such as certification of high-voltage, direct-current transmission lines and securitization of winter storm costs and coal plant retirements.

Jolette Westbrook, Director and Senior Attorney, Regulatory Solutions, Environmental Defense Fund – As a Director and Senior Attorney in EDF's Energy program, Jolette leads our efforts to improve and reform wholesale markets and also works to advance EDF's objectives before state public utility commissions. Jolette has significant energy regulatory experience as both a former Commissioner at the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities and Director of the Massachusetts Energy Facility Siting Board.