



Will the San Fernando Valley Be a Part of a Green New Deal For Los Angeles?

By [Eddie Kaufman-Morrow](#) May 7, 2019



San Fernando Valley Team says "No More Gas"! Photo By Katya English

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti recently announced that the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) would not spend billions of dollars to rebuild three gas power plants. Inspired by the federal Green New Deal,

this decision is a huge step toward environmental justice for Angelenos.

But there's still more work to do.

The LADWP owns a fourth gas power plant near my home in the Northeast corner of the San



Fernando Valley, the Valley Generating Station. As coastal gas plants are retired, San Fernando Valley residents like myself risk paying for their closure with our health. As the Valley Generating Station -which previously burned diesel fuel- is run more often to make up for the other gas plant closures, local air pollution will rise even more. CalEPA already ranks Sun Valley in the 80-85th percentile of the most polluted California communities. It also borders communities like Pacoima and Panorama City, where the pollution burden approaches the 100th percentile.

The retirement of three coastal gas plants is a definite step forward, but it is not enough. Before the broader LA community can celebrate this victory, we must work to ensure that all of the communities in LA are able to reap the benefits of clean energy and can see themselves in LA's clean energy future. Los Angeles must fight environmental injustice and climate change in every corner of our city, and the LADWP must publicly acknowledge that a green transition to 100 percent clean energy is possible and explain how it can be accomplished to benefit communities like Sun Valley.

The LADWP must do much more to demonstrate to Angelenos that it values public input. On February 13, LA City Councilmembers introduced a motion mandating that LADWP work with other city agencies to provide a joint report on creating a Green New Deal for Los Angeles. The motion stipulates that grassroots community engagement is a must in the development of any "neighborhood specific climate change and environmental justice strategies defined by and targeted towards communities and residents that have historically borne the environmental burden of the City's growth." But LADWP has yet to lay out a public process to educate and involve Angelenos in how and when all its gas plants will be retired, and what will replace them. One way to involve the community is to work directly with eager youth.

Students and young people like myself across the San Fernando Valley are ready to get to work with LADWP.

As the Green New Deal is fleshed out and the new LA Sustainability Plan is finalized for its release on April 29, I hope they will both detail who is going to be responsible for implementing these strategies and creating jobs as we transition to a 100 percent clean energy economy young Angelenos like myself would benefit from. LADWP partnering with community colleges and universities to offer trainings, internships, and jobs in the clean energy field. My peers at LA Valley College are already working while attending school, so partnerships like this with the DWP could hasten the transition to a clean energy future while providing family-supporting careers for the next generation.

Angelenos know that there is a lot of work to be done, and we know that there is no longer any room for fossil fuels in our future. With clean energy fulfilling the need of gas, we cannot afford to keep dirty and outdated technology like the Valley Generating Station running in any of our communities. The creation of a Green New Deal is an opportunity for Los Angeles to have a truly public process that values all input and creates a bright future for all Angelenos.

When LA tackles climate change head on, we stand ready to make our voices heard and support solutions to address our most pressing environmental challenges for a clean energy future that leaves no Angeleno behind.