

Speaker Biographies - Community Lawyering for Environmental Justice Part 7: Connecting Communities with Federal Funding

Rob Brenner, *former Director, Air Policy Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency* - From 1988 until his retirement from Federal service in 2011, Rob was Director of the Air Policy Office, at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He played a key role in the development, Congressional passage and implementation of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. After passage of that landmark law, Rob focused on innovative, cost-effective ways to implement its provisions, particularly through the use of market-based approaches such as emissions trading and other economic incentives. He was a leader in EPA's efforts to promote development of new, more effective pollution-control technologies such as diesel retrofits, and pioneered the use of economic analysis in evaluating the effectiveness of EPA programs.

Rob was also very active in nurturing and developing voluntary partnerships with local organizations to help them reduce pollution in their neighborhoods. The flagship program was Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE), a cross-media toxics reduction initiative. Rob successfully incubated this concept, which is now an established EPA program helping more than 100 communities nationwide to reduce exposures to toxic chemicals.

Both President George H.W. Bush in 1993 and President Clinton in 1998 conferred on Rob the rank of meritorious senior executive. In 2003, he received the Distinguished Executive Award for "sustained extraordinary accomplishment" from President George W. Bush.

More recently, Rob completed a Senior Fellowship at the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions at Duke University where he directed a project on technology innovation and the Clean Air Act. He has also served on the Boards of the Center for Clean Air Policy, CMC Energy Services, and Princeton University's Scholars in the Nation's Service Initiative.

Alexandra Gallo, *Special Advisor and Environmental & Climate Justice Program Manager, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency* - Alexandra serves as Special Advisor to U.S. EPA, Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, where leads the development of the Environmental and Climate Justice Program, a historic program authorized through the Inflation Reduction Act that will invest \$2 Billion in grants and technical assistance in disadvantaged communities. She brings several years of developing and implementing innovative models for community transformation, including at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and at the California Strategic Growth Council - Office of the Governor. Alex is a first-generation college graduate with Bachelors' Degrees from California State University, Fresno and grew up in California's Central Coast.

Jesse George, *New Orleans Policy Director, Alliance for Affordable Energy* - Jesse George is a citizen of Cherokee Nation and a lifelong resident of south Louisiana, having been born and raised in Lake Charles, a major fossil fuel and petrochemical corridor. Witnessing the degradation and destruction that these industries have wrought on the health of fenceline communities and the natural landscape has instilled in him a lifelong passion for environmental justice.

After receiving his B.A. in Philosophy with a minor in Religious Studies in 2005 from Louisiana

State University in Baton Rouge, he attended Tulane Law School in New Orleans. There, he was a member of the Environmental Law Society, a student practitioner in the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, and, upon graduation in 2008, received a certificate in Environmental Law.

Jesse is happy to be back with the Alliance for Affordable Energy after having begun his legal career at the organization, where he represented the Alliance before the Louisiana Public Service Commission, the New Orleans City Council, and other regulatory bodies. Following the 2010 BP oil spill, he accepted a position with The Pro Bono Project, handling oil spill claims for indigent clients. His tenure at The Pro Bono Project spanned more than a decade, during which time he practiced in various areas of law, before being promoted to Director of Legal Services.

Hannah Perls, *Senior Staff Attorney and Lecturer on Law, Environmental & Energy Law Program (EELP), Harvard Law School* - Hannah is a Senior Staff Attorney with the Harvard Environmental & Energy Law Program (EELP) where she supervises research addressing federal agencies' authority to integrate equity considerations into disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery programs, and federal environmental justice initiatives. Hannah applies a human rights-based lens to her work, grounded in her pre-law school experience working with Cristosal, a human rights organization based in the Northern Triangle of Central America providing legal and humanitarian assistance to families internally displaced by violence. Hannah received her J.D. from Harvard Law School and her B.A. with honors in environmental science and sustainable development from Columbia University. She serves on the Environmental Justice Legal Advisory Board for Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) in Roxbury, MA, and as the Law & Policy Co-Chair for the Climigration Network.

Zoe Vogel, *Public Interest Environmental Law Fellow, Environmental Law Institute, Moderator* - Zoe is currently a Public Interest Legal Fellow at the Environmental Law Institute, and previously served as a law clerk at ELI during the summer of 2022. Zoe received her J.D. with honors from Tulane University Law School, where she served as the Editor-in-Chief for the Tulane Environmental Law Journal, a student attorney with the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, and an Intersectionality Chair for the Environmental & Energy Law Society. During her time there, she also held positions with the National Wildlife Federation, the Tulane Institute on Water Law and Policy, and Louisiana's Center for Planning Excellence. She previously earned her B.S.B. from the University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management, during which time she worked as a farm intern to better understand the lived experience of environmental policies.