

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

May 14, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Secretary  
United States Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585-1000

Dear Secretary Granholm:

We write to thank you for your commitment to addressing climate change and rebuilding America's economy through bold investments in infrastructure and the clean energy transition, including in the production and use of hydrogen as a zero-emission energy resource. We were extremely pleased to see in President Biden's American Jobs Plan a proposed investment in 15 decarbonized hydrogen demonstration projects in distressed communities, paired with a new production tax credit like the one we support in the Clean Hydrogen Production Incentives Act of 2021. In light of that welcome proposed investment, we request your assistance in our work to make the state of New Mexico the world's premier center of excellence for clean hydrogen production, research, and workforce development.

New Mexico has a combination of outstanding attributes that make it uniquely suited to serve as the powerhouse of the nation's emerging clean hydrogen economy, which is already attracting significant attention and investments from industry. Wind, solar, and geothermal energy are abundant here, facilitating zero-emission hydrogen production from electrolyzers powered by clean electricity. Similarly, the state's large supply of natural gas and carbon dioxide pipeline infrastructure can facilitate clean hydrogen production through steam methane reforming with carbon capture and sequestration. Expanded clean hydrogen production in New Mexico would support cost-saving regional initiatives like the Western Energy Imbalance Market by better integrating renewables into the regional grid. Our outstanding research universities—the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, and New Mexico Tech—are already driving innovation in hydrogen science, engineering and business. And the Department of Energy's two national laboratories in New Mexico, Sandia and Los Alamos, are ideally positioned to support a major hub of clean hydrogen research, production, and workforce development. New Mexico's DOE labs drive job growth through workforce training programs. Among the state's largest employers, Sandia and Los Alamos have also contributed to a nascent hydrogen innovation ecosystem in New Mexico, providing technical assistance, sparking industry and university partnerships, and spinning out new enterprises like BayoTech, a maker of innovative, modular hydrogen production technologies.

The San Juan Basin of Northwest New Mexico is a perfect example of the clean hydrogen economy beginning to emerge across the state. The area is rich in sun and wind, and it boasts an experienced

energy workforce and well-studied sequestration geology. Together with its proximity to major high-voltage transmission lines and natural gas pipelines, these make it an ideal place for targeted investments in hydrogen that build on existing infrastructure. We have recently met with local and Tribal leaders in the region, and they are highly motivated to support clean hydrogen opportunities. Private industry is already at work developing several forms of hydrogen production in Northwest New Mexico, and the addition of a robust federal investment will drive this important momentum forward.

Clean hydrogen investment in Northwest New Mexico is also critical to workforce development and securing good-paying American clean energy jobs in this economically challenged area. As the Initial Report of the Biden Administration's Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization recently found, San Juan County in Northwest New Mexico is one of the most coal-dependent communities in the nation. With the ongoing decommissioning of the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station and a downturn at the associated San Juan Mine, Northwest New Mexico faces real economic distress that requires place-based solutions. Investment in a clean hydrogen hub in the region is just such a solution. The San Juan Basin's and Navajo Nation's history of fossil fuel production has created a skilled, diverse energy workforce with a proud tradition of powering our nation's economy. Strong and proven energy programs at the area's educational institutions, like the San Juan College School of Energy, are ready to convert federal investment into workers ready to hold good-paying hydrogen jobs and contribute to the nation's clean energy transition.

Hydrogen is likewise emerging in areas all across the state, each with its own particular ability to excel. Southern New Mexico's wide landscapes and powerful sunshine are attracting solar and hydrogen developers, and southeastern New Mexico's Permian Basin boasts some of the nation's strongest existing energy infrastructure and workforce, which stand ready to expand, diversify, and grow. In your confirmation hearing, you committed to work with our delegation to develop a place-based energy transition plan that ensures that New Mexicans who have worked in fossil fuel industries are not left behind by the structural changes in the energy sector. Robust investment in New Mexico as a clean hydrogen center of excellence is a perfect opportunity to deliver on that important commitment.

As you know, the United States currently lags behind both China and other foreign competitors in producing and deploying zero-emission hydrogen. As we work to invest in our nation's infrastructure, rapidly cut greenhouse gas emissions, advance economic equity, and build back better, we urge you to consider New Mexico a strategic center of America's emerging clean hydrogen economy, one that will position the United States to compete in the growing hydrogen economy worldwide. We look forward to working with you and with the Biden administration to invest in making this immense potential a reality.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator



BEN RAY LUJÁN  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Leger Fernández', with a stylized, cursive script.

TERESA LEGER FERNÁNDEZ  
United States Representative