

Leah Wiste

From: Leah Wiste, Michigan Interfaith Power & Light <director@miipl.org>
Sent: Friday, January 18, 2019 4:58 PM
To: Admin
Subject: January e-Newsletter



Friends,

Rooftop solar is under attack in Michigan and we need your help!

Rooftop solar is just one small piece of the transition to just, clean energy puzzle. But DTE's plan to kill it has bigger implications:

- Solar would become unaffordable for all but the wealthy
- Continued dependence on fossil fuels would mean worse health outcomes, especially for communities of color who suffer disproportionate pollution burdens
- More barriers to clean energy development would prevent us from making the rapid transition we need to make [for the survival of millions on our planet](#)

It doesn't have to be that way. Below are 3 things you can do to help!

As ever,



Leah

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Don't Let DTE Kill Rooftop Solar



In December, St. Peter's Church (Detroit), the home congregation of our Director Emeritus Bob Chapman, welcomed a 10kW solar array!

As many Detroiters engaged in justice work know, St. Peter's is a special place. The church responded to the Detroit water shut-off crisis by becoming a water distribution center and its building hosts a busy soup kitchen and offers low-cost office space to grassroots organizations. Now they're using solar energy to be better stewards of the Earth and to be a model for others wanting to "walk the walk."

But if DTE has their way, churches like St. Peter's-- and folks like you me-- won't be able to afford solar panels.

Currently, "net-metering" ensures that a utility buys any excess energy your solar panels produce at the retail rate. So if you purchase electricity at \$.15/kWh, you will also be paid \$.15/kWh for the extra energy your panels generate. This helps the grid because you'll be producing most of that surplus energy during the summer months, when electricity demands-- all that air-conditioning!-- are at their highest.

But rooftop solar and community-owned solar are threatening to the business models of investor-owned utilities like DTE Energy. They have proposed to

pay a fraction of the current retail rate for the excess energy generated by folks like St. Peter's Church AND impose a monthly fee.

For those of us not grandfathered into the old system, solar energy-- and our ability to own our power-- will be out of reach.

DTE will kill rooftop solar unless we intervene.

With Martin Luther King Day just around the corner, we are reminded of the power that people of faith and conscience have to change the world. Let's not squander it!

Here's what we can do:

1. [**Faith leaders \(individuals with religious titles\) can sign our letter to Gov. Whitmer. Deadline: Wednesday, Jan. 23.**](#) Laypeople can urge the faith leaders they know to sign on, especially if you belong to a church that has solar panels or wants them!
2. **Join our solar lobby day in Lansing**, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 19. Educate your lawmaker about the issue and share your perspective. Details forthcoming!
3. If you're in the Detroit area, you can learn more about our energy system and how it exacerbates environmental and social inequity by coming to the [**MLK Day Teach-In event, Monday, Jan. 21 from 4-8 at Cass Commons**](#) (more details below).

If you've got other ideas, let us know!

MLK Day Climate Justice Teach-in: Monday Jan. 21, 4-8pm

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously wrote that we are "tied together in a single garment of destiny... This is the way God's universe is made."

He was talking about the inescapable interrelatedness of people across racial divides, but these words ring just as true for the interrelatedness of all living things-- the oneness of life that our culture perceives as separate: Humans and Nature.



On this MLK Day, join us in learning how to unlearn this separation. We'll make the link between Social Justice, Environmental Justice and our common future!

You'll learn about:

- Climate Justice
- Just Transition (shifting to a green economy in a way that rectifies social and economic injustice)
- DTE's proposed rate increase (20% by 2022!)
- How we can stake our claim for green, renewable energy and community ownership of energy

There will be community building from 4-5pm with free food and music. Then we'll have a debate--Climate Justice versus Social Justice-- and breakout sessions.

[RSVP on Facebook.](#)

(Childcare is available! Please add a comment indicating the number of children you will be bringing when you RSVP.)

This event is hosted by the East Michigan Environmental Action Council, MI Environmental Justice Coalition, Sierra Club, Soulardarity, and the Work for Me DTE campaign.

Do you have an event other members of the Michigan IPL community might be interested in? Let us know: admin@miipl.org, 248-537-9175.

[Michigan Interfaith Power & Light](#)

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