

# TUCSON CLEAN ENERGY, COMMUNITY LEADERS URGE TEP NOT TO PURCHASE OUT-OF-STATE COAL MINE AND TO EXIT DIRTY COAL PLANT

More than 650 individuals add names to advocate for TEP to invest in clean energy over coal

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TUCSON – Today, a coalition of Arizona clean energy and community leaders called on Tucson Electric Power (TEP) to invest in clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency rather than sink ratepayer money into purchasing the out-of-state San Juan coal mine. TEP faces a decision of whether or not to purchase the mine which feeds the San Juan Generating Station in New Mexico as utilities struggle to identify a post-2017 fuel supply for the forty-year old coal plant by end of year. The utility has expressed interest in purchasing the San Juan mine, which would prolong the life of one of the region's biggest threats to clean air and clean water, while tying up resources that could be invested in the local Tucson clean energy economy.

“TEP faces a critical choice: continue to threaten public health by mining and burning dirty coal or truly commit to investing in clean energy like solar. Rather than locking Arizona ratepayers and the surrounding community into a future of even more dangerous, expensive out-of-state coal by purchasing the San Juan coal mine, TEP should take this opportunity to create new jobs here in Arizona by investing in clean energy like solar to power our homes,” **said Dan Millis, Organizer with the Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon Chapter.**

People of faith know that there is nothing more important than caring for Creation. Our world is the only one given to us, and if we don't care for it, then the oceans, the trees, the mountains and the rivers might not be around for our children and grandchildren,” **said Rev. Diane Dowgiert, Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson.** “When we mine coal, we're digging a huge pit into our children's earth. When we burn the coal, we pollute the air our children will breathe, and make them sick. To care for ourselves and our families, we must care for creation.”

[In a letter submitted](#) to TEP President David Hutchens, the coalition highlighted the opportunity the utility has to tap into Arizona's vast renewable energy potential, while also detailing the profound economic and public health consequences of continuing to mine and burn coal at San Juan. In addition to the groups submitting the letter, more than 650 Southern Arizonans sent letters to Hutchens opposing the mine's purchase. Along with the Navajo mine, the San Juan coal mine is a significant source of methane contributing to the now-infamous methane hot spot in the Four Corners region, as well as other dangerous smog and carbon pollution.

[According to Environment Arizona](#), Arizona has the potential to produce more than 320 times the state's energy needs from solar power, including rooftop installations. Despite recent attempts to stifle the state's solar industry, Arizona still ranks second in the nation with nearly 9,000 jobs in

the solar industry.

“Solar energy is an affordable, safe, clean and locally-generated alternative to antiquated coal mines and coal plants,” **said Katharine Kent, President of The Solar Store in Tucson.** “TEP has a variety of choices to generate reliable power to meet Tucson’s needs. Locally-generated clean, renewable energy is the best choice of all.”

“For too long, Tucson Electric Power has been exporting pollution to my neighborhood on the south side, and to our Dine brothers and sisters on the Navajo Nation. Our neighborhoods and tribal lands need clean, locally-generated, renewable energy instead of more dirty coal,” **said Luis Perales, Community Organizer with Tierra Y Libertad.**

The San Juan Generating Station is what is known as a “mine mouth plant,” which means it procures all of its fuel from the adjacent San Juan Coal Mine. Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved a plan to retire units 2 and 3 of the San Juan Generating Station as part a regional haze settlement agreement. Under the plan, units 1 and 4 of the plant will continue burning coal. TEP owns 20 percent of San Juan Generating Station.