ABA Webinar - Climate Effects on Communities of Color

“Ground-Level Ground-Truthing: Climate Impact Causes in Mebane, North Carolina”

By

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“Ground-Level Ground-Truthing: Climate Impact Causes in Mebane, North Carolina”

WERA’s sky high view of our legal challenges since 1994:

1. Legacy factories & mills.
2. 119-Bypass/Overpass.
3. New mega factories & distribution center.
4. Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP).
5. Zoning the living and dead out of existence by local and state government agencies with our tax dollar.
6. Twenty-year construction plan little regard to civil rights, environmental protection, environmental justice, or climate consequences.
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BASIC RESPECT FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP AND SACRED GROUNDS

“Protection from Highway & Pipeline Construction”

Build a FLOOR with: Faith, Love, Optimism, Overcoming & Results

WEREA Dinner November 15, 2019

Brenda & Omega Wilson, Co-Founders
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BASIC RESPECT FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP AND SACRED GROUNDS

Talking points focus on - who, what, where, when, and why?

A. Who is responsible for challenging the threats? Pastors, congregants, residents, and tax-paid city/county/state/federal appointed and elected officials.
B. What is at risk? Pregnancies, children, seniors, the sick, and the healthy.
C. Where is the risk? Homes, churches, cemeteries, playgrounds, businesses, etc.
D. When was the catalyst for building a “FLOOR” or foundation on which to “change the pain”? Human waste in drinking water, sewage in ditches and streams, unpaved streets, landfills next door, and homes, churches, cemeteries threatened by blind eyes from pulpits, and racial discrimination by tax-paid public officials and university scientists.
E. Why Overcome FEAR!!! In order to get “Right to Basic Amenities” & Respect.
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WERA became a 501©3 non-profit in 1995 when it was discovered that City of Mebane and the North Carolina Department of Transportation planned the 119-Bypass/overpass that would destroy St. Luke Christian Church, the 200-old African American community cemetery, and over 70 homes in West End and dozens more in White Level communities. These residents are one block from two land-fields and Mebane’s sewage treatment plant built in 1921. WERA collected waters samples from drinking wells and streams that were tested at UNC-Chapel Hill and found E. Coli and fecal coliforms.
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A smaller St. Luke Christian Church rebuilt with fund from NCDOT is less than 600-feet from the original site and at the 119-bypass/overpass on-ramp construction. The 119-Bypass / Overpass intersects with HWY-70 on the west side of Mebane.
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Mebane First Presbyterian Church (corner stone 1865) founded by just freed slaves from the Scott Plantation, Haw River, NC. Two North Carolina governors (W. Kerr Scott and Robert Scott) and Senator Ralph Scott. The church and 200-year old cemetery were targeted for destruction by NCDOT and City of Mebane. Elder Donald Tate share history with Bennett College Professor Valerie Johnson.
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Indigenous places of worship and sacred grounds are at risk: Jason and Crystal Keck leading the Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration Panel. Indigenous storytelling around the drum so children and elders remember and respect our rich and honored heritage. The first-time celebration brings respect and recognition to the spiritual, cultural, and value of sacred lands. Saxapahaw, NC October 14, 2019.
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What are the impacts?

- Destruction of streams and forests
- Abuse of property rights
- Health and Safety Risks
- Methane Emissions
- Utility rate hikes to pay for pipeline costs

Mountain Valley Pipeline planned through Alamance County, NC
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Walmart Distribution Center - $100-Million Largest in USA
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Climate Causes-
Direct Impacts: West End Community
1) 119-Bypass/Overpass
2) CAMBRO Plastic
3) Massive Auto junk yard
4) Craftique Furniture (closed legacy chemicals)
5) Farming chemicals site
6) Railroad corridor
Right to basic Amenities & 119-Bypass NEPA Environmental Impact Statement

In 2014, WERA filed interagency DOJ/EPA/NCDEQ Superfund Complaint per NCDOT EIS not including abandoned 30-acre Craftique Furniture Plant hazards. This is the site of the 119-Bypass/Overpass construction across US 70-Highway through West End Community. Complaint resulted in removal of over 5000-pounds of liquid and solid toxins and waste. Cancer-causing benzene and xylene were detected up-to 45-feet below ground at aquifer water table level in test wells by NCDENR(NCDEQ).
Right to basic Amenities & 119-Bypass
NEPA Environmental Impact Statement

Mile long 119-Bypass/Overpass crosses West Holt Street, railroad, industrial land, and 70-HWY through the City of Mebane. In the left background are water tower and contaminated abandoned Craftique Furniture Plant. EIS disregards Title VI & EJ.
Omega Wilson’s “air quality” Input for EPA Recommendations

Sections Include:
3.1 - Effective Community Engagement
3.1a - Community Facilitated Strategies (CFS)

A Report of Advice and Recommendations the National Environmental Justice Advisor Council, A Federal Advisory Committee to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
WERA’s Effective Community Engagement
WERA/Mebane EJ Communities’ Mapping Feb 24, 2021
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Where is the climate justice for Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Communities in Mebane, NC!?