

For Immediate Release
Organizer,
March 9, 2018

Contact: Anna Weinberg, CLEAN Lead
aweingberg3@wisc.edu, (812) 340-8840



“Our Time to Shine” Students Lead the Push for 100% Clean Energy at UW-Madison

MADISON - Student activists and community members gathered for “Our Time to Shine,” the first public event sponsored by [Campus Leaders for Energy Action Now \(CLEAN\)](#). The event featured speakers including anti-coal activist Bill Pringle from the Oak Creek area, the Deputy Director of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign Holly Bender, and student leaders of CLEAN. Additionally, attendees held round table discussions to identify concrete ways they could work together to push UW-Madison to 100 percent clean energy by 2030.

This call for clean energy comes as Wisconsinites are facing the toxic and dangerous impacts of Wisconsin’s coal-powered energy. On Monday this week the neighbors of the Oak Creek/Elm Road coal plants (owned in part by Madison Gas and Electric, who provide the majority of power to UW-Madison) woke up to their neighborhood -- cars, houses, and even the [slide at the playground](#) -- [covered in toxic coal dust](#).

Event attendees heard a firsthand account of how the energy UW-Madison receives from Madison Gas and Electric is impacting Wisconsinites outside of Dane County. **Anti-coal activist Bill Pringle** shared the story of how his family had to move out of their dream home in Caledonia after his family began experiencing adverse health impacts from coal dust. “I’ve experienced firsthand how coal devastates the health of Wisconsin families. UW-Madison needs to get off of coal as fast as possible and it’s great that students are working to address this important issue.”

UW-Madison’s current energy mix is majority coal and natural gas, with only approximately 16 percent clean energy. Students in CLEAN are calling on university administration to take action on clean energy for the health of their fellow Wisconsinites, the protection of the environment and climate, and their future on a planet facing climate change.

"I care about the health and prosperity of my community and communities around the world, and it is abundantly clear that clean energy is our future," said **UW-Madison Senior and CLEAN Member Anna Weinberg**. "I am a part of CLEAN because I am done waiting for people with higher pay grades than me to make decisions about my

community's health. We want change now, and CLEAN is a way for us to take the fear we have about our environment's future and translate our energy into action."

Kendl Kobbervig, UW-Madison Senior and CLEAN member, said, "We, the students of CLEAN, will not rest until the University of Wisconsin - Madison joins a nation and planet waking up to the importance and economic sense of a clean energy transition. To those who have the power to land our University squarely on the right side of history - make us proud to call this place our home."

History has proven that organized students are a powerful force for change, and CLEAN plans to continue its ambitious and necessary work until its goal is achieved. Holly Bender has seen student-led clean energy successes in the past, and believes this momentum will continue.

"Students helped kick coal off campus a decade ago, forcing the Charter Street plant to burn its last lump of coal, yet the majority of the power consumed on campus still comes from polluting coal and gas plants owned by Madison Gas & Electric," said **Holly Bender, Deputy Director of Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign**. "Students are poised once again to lead the University's transition away from fossil fuels to 100 percent clean energy and I am honored to be invited to share what I've learned about accelerating this necessary transition with CLEAN as student leaders launch their campaign."

###

[Campus Leaders for Energy Action Now](#) (CLEAN) is a coalition of student organizations, students, and community members working to build excitement and momentum around solar and wind power on University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Its ultimate goal is for the University to commit to 100% clean energy by 2030. UW-Madison is currently at 16 percent clean energy.