

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



ROMERO
INSTITUTE

green
power



Lakota People's
LAW PROJECT

LET'S
GREEN
CA!

Message from our Executive Director



Dear Romero Institute Family,

In 2020, thanks to your generous support, the Romero Institute — home to Lakota People's Law Project, Greenpower, and now Let's Green CA — made great strides in our fight for Indigenous rights and for bold solutions to climate change.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, together we made important impacts — on Lakota Country, California, and the nation.

We continued our long-standing opposition to pipelines and the fossil fuel industry — which yielded huge results in 2021. But first, we kicked things off on a high note by opening a much needed Lakota-run foster home for vulnerable Standing Rock youth.

Our energy then shifted to pressing and timely needs at hand. We kept families safe from Covid-19 in Lakota Country by protecting tribal health and safety checkpoints against legal and financial threats by Governor Noem and President Trump.

Knowing that the outcome of the 2020 election would determine the future of environmental and Native justice issues, we teamed up with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to create a professional phone bank that ensured underrepresented voices were heard loud and clear at the polls. Tens of thousands of calls made by Standing Rock citizens to swing state voters made a definitive difference in Arizona and Georgia!

Our team at Romero remained dedicated to our vision of California as the state that can lead the nation into responsible, faster climate policy. The fires across the west catapulted the climate emergency to the forefront, showing that climate denial and half-measures must be replaced with bold, timely solutions. Though fires, evacuations, and the pandemic impeded our progress on these California initiatives, we pressed forward with research and alliance-building, ultimately drafting a bill presenting a path to comprehensive, climate solutions and environmentally-just reform.

Greenpower, now rebranding as Let's Green CA, made the most of the social distancing era by producing powerful, virtual events for leaders in state policy, education, and business. These Central Coast Climate Summit sessions will help make just climate solutions a reality across our region.

In this annual report, you will discover more highlights of our 2020 program work and gain insights into our program impacts, financials, and goals moving forward, all of which happen because of your generous support. Thank you for walking with us on this sacred journey.

Sara Nelson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





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ROMERO
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ROMERO INSTITUTE

Founded 1981

Named for the Salvadoran priest Archbishop Óscar Romero, the **Romero Institute** is an interfaith, nonprofit law and policy center based in Santa Cruz, CA. Descended from the Christic Institute and home of the Lakota People's Law Project, Greenpower, and Let's Green CA, we defend Indigenous communities and the Earth. For more than 50 years, our leaders have been guardians and advocates for the people. Through public education, grassroots organizing, leadership development, research, investigation, impact litigation, and forward-thinking public policy, we take action where our objectives have the potential for large-scale impact. We embrace new ways of thinking that promote a consciousness of unity and cooperation.

Mission: The Romero Institute strategically exposes systemic injustice and implements lasting solutions. We defend Indigenous rights and fight to end the climate emergency. We protect constitutional rights, treaty rights, human rights, and the environment. We champion equity and advocate for the people.



Daniel Sheehan, Esq.

A Harvard-trained constitutional law attorney, Daniel Sheehan, Esq. serves as the Romero Institute's president, chief counsel, architect of public policy, and primary spokesperson. Daniel has led or participated in some of the most important public interest cases of the last 50 years, including the Watergate and Iran-Contra Scandals, the Pentagon Papers, and the killing of Karen Silkwood.



www.RomeroInstitute.org

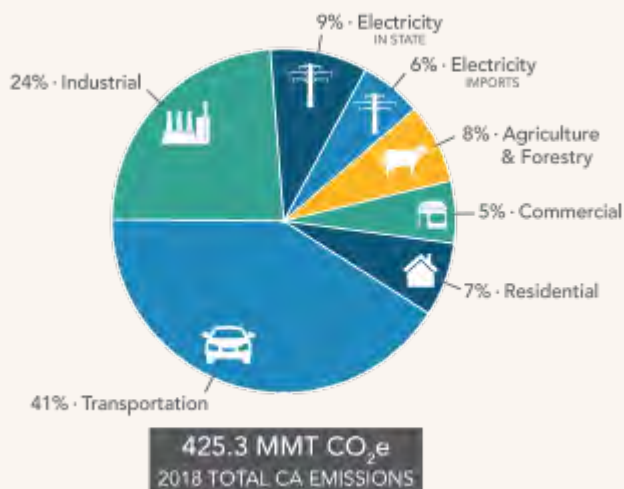
Located at 210 High Street 2nd Floor, Santa Cruz, CA 95060



Only bold and comprehensive solutions can turn the tide on the climate emergency. At Romero Institute, we are advocating for a carbon-free future through the creation of a Green New Deal for California. In 2020, we brought on a top-notch campaign consultant, built an advisory board, reached out to allied organizations for their collaboration, secured experts throughout the state to assist us in assembling legislation, and hired an experienced politician to draft a bill and guide us in our relations with the state legislature. The California Green New Deal we are working towards will lead with environmental justice, achieve carbon neutrality by 2035, and generate green jobs in a thriving clean energy economy.



“The Romero Institute has a proven track record of winning strategic victories for people and the planet, especially in issues that are critical to the public interest. Their courage, commitment, and moral leadership are needed now more than ever in the movement for a green, just, and sustainable future in our state, in our country, and our world.” - *Dolores Huerta*



In order to effectively combat the climate crisis, we are advocating for climate legislation that will:

- Mandate a 10-year path to carbon zero in California
- Televisе quarterly reports to our citizens on progress from a centralized state government agency
- Prioritize the formation of good paying union jobs
- Commit the State of California to doing everything technologically possible to eliminate emissions in seven key sectors and draw down carbon from our atmosphere

Learn More &
TAKE ACTION
www.RomeroInstitute.org





green
power

green power

In 2016, inspired by Pope Francis' call to "care for our common home," and by the climate crisis our planet faces, the Romero Institute launched **Greenpower**. In California, we've gathered an alliance of organizations and jurisdictions to create a carbon-free Central Coast, and we've expanded our focus to prioritize statewide action. Through the power of community organizing and targeted outreach, we implement localized solutions to the global climate emergency.

Mission:

Greenpower is growing a movement to restore the Earth's climate by helping California transition from fossil fuels to local, community-based green energy systems. We empower people to go from apathetic resignation to energized action. We work with elected officials, fellow activists, and allied organizations, allowing us to quickly maximize impact. We believe that saving the planet is humanity's most important social and spiritual imperative.



Greenpower has taken the lead on building a powerful, region-wide coalition of climate-focused organizers across California's Central Coast — from the beaches of Santa Barbara to the redwoods of Santa Cruz.

**Learn More &
TAKE ACTION**
www.GreenPower.ngo

You can't fight the big fights alone. To turn the tide on climate change, Greenpower spent 2020 building a force so we can get something historic done, together.

OUR PARTNERS



San Diego Community
Choice Alliance



Central Coast
Community
Energy



MYNT SYSTEMS



CENTRAL COAST CLIMATE SUMMIT 2020

Greenpower refused to let the pandemic get in the way of climate progress. Together with this coalition of local and regional climate organizations, we produced a virtual, three-part **Central Coast Climate Action Summit** to help our region build just, equitable, community-based solutions to climate change. We provided key resources and networking opportunities for local government, business, nonprofits, academics, and community leaders.

CLIMATE IN MOTION Q + A



greencal.org/summit21

685 Summit Series Registrations **136** City & County Leaders Participated



“I attended Greenpower’s Central Coast Climate Summit. The education on climate action planning was terrific. It offered many resources and connected us to a network of people in our region. I left feeling inspired to take bolder climate action in our city.”

Leslie Jordan, Mayor, City of San Juan Bautista

COMMUNITY CHOICE ENERGY

Greenpower, along with committed activists, won an important victory for clean energy and community choice by successfully convincing Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP) to reject nuclear carbon-free attributes and remain 100% carbon-free in its procurement strategy. The new standards improved the environmental performance of MBCP, while supporting its new brand — Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) — and aligning its procurement strategy with its founding mission.



Graniterock

After more than three years of collaboration with Greenpower and the Aromas Progressive Action League, Graniterock’s A.R. Wilson Quarry received San Benito County’s blessing to install 15,000 photovoltaic solar panels, which makes this 5-megawatt solar farm one of the largest private energy projects in California. Its \$15 million commitment will allow Graniterock to supply well over 50% of the quarry’s energy needs with green energy generated onsite, significantly reducing its dependence on fossil fuels. The project is timed for completion in 2022.

[Read more about it in our blog](#)
romero.gift/graniterock



“GRANITEROCK MINE IN CALIFORNIA COMMITS \$15 MILLION FOR 5 MEGAWATT SOLAR FARM”

“He discussed his idea with Ben Eichert and Daniel Nelson of the Romero Institute, a local environmental advocacy group that had just completed the Greenpower project, whose goal was to get communities in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties to participate in Monterey Bay Community Power, a new publicly-run utility company whose mission is to provide renewable electricity to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses.”

[\(READ MORE\)](#)

Now Introducing...

In 2021, Greenpower is becoming Let's Green CA! Our latest flagship will activate leaders across the state behind an official declaration of the climate emergency. From there, we'll implement ways to solve it.

Together.

LET'S GREEN CA!

Take Action to Green California

Together, we can pass a Green New Deal in California! Start by taking action now.



Tell Newsom: Declare a
Climate Emergency



Ban Fracking Now!



Support Regional
Climate Action

Join the Climate Justice Movement at greencal.org!



Lakota People's
LAW PROJECT



Lakota People's LAW PROJECT

Lakota Peoples Law Project

was born in 2004, when a group of Lakota grandmothers asked us to help them prevent South Dakota's Department of Social Services from removing their grandchildren from their families. Our focus expanded in 2016, when the Dakota Access pipeline threatened the Lakota's sacred lands and water. By 2020, we had developed close ties with tribal nations and nonprofit allies, working together to amplify Indigenous voices, replace fossil fuels with renewable solutions, protect the voting rights of Native people, and provide on-the-ground support when and where it's most needed.

Mission: A coalition of Native and non-Native activists and legal professionals, the Lakota People's Law Project (LPLP) partners with the Lakota people, creating systemic change that supports the sovereignty of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate — the People of the Seven Council Fires. We combine public education, advocacy, on-the-ground organizing, and high-impact legal support to help win justice and secure the Lakota's inherent rights to autonomy and self-determination.

Thank you for supporting our mission for justice over the past year! Watch our lead counsel, Chase Iron Eyes, share our big wins from 2020 and our vision for 2021.

lakota.law/2020review



Our Journey Together in 2020

Opened a Native-run foster care home at Standing Rock

Launched a new action center to expand our reach and increase impact

Began a successful campaign urging the Biden administration to appoint Rep. Deb Haaland to become Secretary of the Interior — the first Native Cabinet secretary in U.S. history.

Protected tribal health and safety border checkpoints to combat COVID and KXL man camps

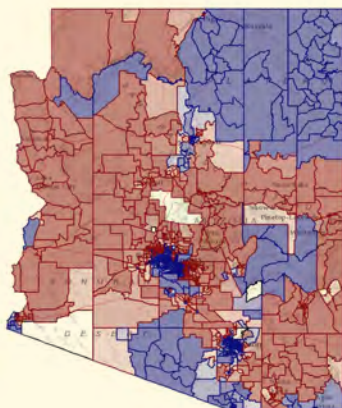
Partnered with Standing Rock to get out the Native and environmental vote in Arizona and then Georgia

We accomplished so much together!



173,334 actions
taken through Lakota Law in 2020

How Arizona precincts voted in
the 2020 Presidential election



Map of tribal
lands in Arizona



Calls from our Standing Rock phone
bankers made a difference in swing
states like Arizona where the Native vote
had a noticeable impact on the election!



30 Standing Rock members
hired and trained as phone bankers
during the 2020 election cycle



250,000

phone calls made to Native &
environmentally-conscious voters

THE NATIVE VOTE

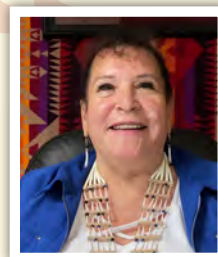
AP Associated Press

“VOTING BY MAIL ISN’T SO EASY ON NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATIONS”

“On the Standing Rock Reservation, which spans North Dakota and South Dakota, the tribe has joined with the Lakota People’s Law Project to organize a phone bank to call Native American voters, especially in the battleground state of North Carolina, where they say tribal members have struggled to get to the polls in previous years.”

[\(READ MORE\)](#)

25 children cared for in
Lakota Law’s Native-run foster
home on Standing Rock



I really want to thank
the Lakota People’s Law
Project for coming into my
community and helping.
*Avis Little Eagle, Standing Rock
Sioux Tribal Council*



31,427 signatures
urging Biden to end DAPL & KXL



I look forward to continuing to work with the Lakota People's Law Project to ensure that the voices of Native voters are heard.
U.S. Senator Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.)

COVID-19 & THE CLIMATE CRISIS



"COVID-19 AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS ARE INTERTWINED THREATS TO NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE EARTH: CHASE IRON EYES"

"These are some of the reasons why, at the Lakota People's Law Project, we're laser focused on our goal of securing justice for the Lakota people. That means protecting Native rights, sovereignty, and health— not just in this time of crisis, but always— and it means keeping an eye to the future."

[\(READ MORE\)](#)

63 educational videos
produced to amplify Native voices



In **2020**, we launched the Lakota Law Action Center — a new website designed to increase our supporters' impact through timely and effective action.

REAL, LOCAL IMPACT OF GENEROUS DONORS

Rapid City Journal

"McLAUGHLIN MAYOR SAYS TOWN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DISCONNECT FAMILY'S UTILITIES"

"The Journal learned about the situation in McLaughlin from the Lakota People's Law Project, a nonprofit that works on social, environmental and other issues impacting the Lakota people. / Daniel Nelson, program director for LPLP, said an anonymous donor recently offered to cover the cost to turn White Mountain's utilities back on after the organization shared the family's story."

[\(READ MORE\)](#)



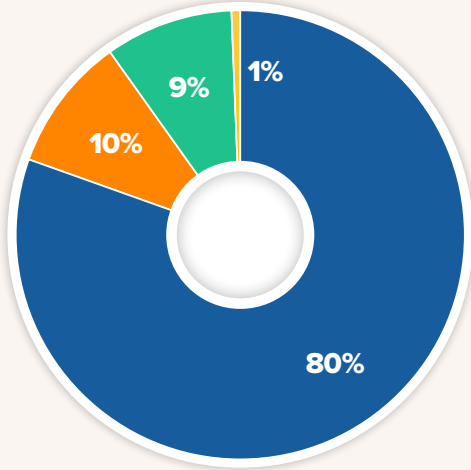
**Learn More
& Take Action**
LakotaLaw.org

547 South 7th Street #149 Bismarck, ND 58504



Financials & the Future...

2020 Financial Overview



Support & Revenue

Individual Contributions	\$2,340,000 (80%)
Foundations and Trust Grants	\$280,000 (10%)
Government Support	\$270,000 (9%)
Other	\$20,000 (1%)

Total Revenue
\$2,910,000

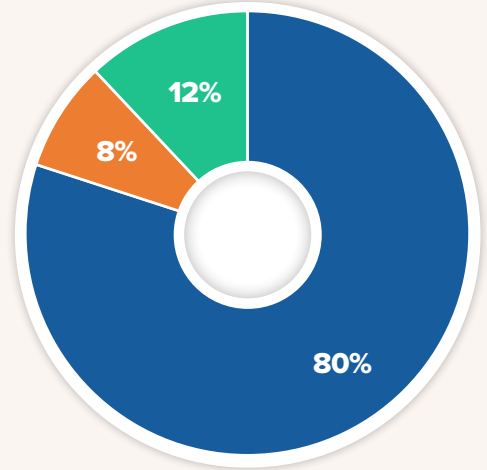
YOUR DEEPENED COMMITMENT

to the Romero Institute in 2020 provided increased stability, empowering our ability to plan strategically for the future of environmental and Indigenous justice. We're grateful for your generous hearts!

Romero Institute's EIN is:
95-3527131

[Click here for a copy of our financials.](#)

romero.gift/financials



Operating Expenses

Program Expenses	\$1,650,000 (80%)
Fundraising Expenses	\$248,000 (8%)
Administrative Expenses	\$165,000 (12%)

Total Expenses
\$2,063,000

7,177
new donors
in 2020

+ 195%
increase in
recurring donors

2x more contributions
made in 2020 than in 2019

87%
increase in
website visitors



Your Support Grows the Movement:

In 2020, Lakota People's Law Project launched a **membership program** which contributed to a big jump in recurring donations! Our circle of 1,200+ members are invited to come together for virtual events with Lakota leaders and activate around timely issues. Heartfelt thanks to this growing community of members whose dedicated support sustains our mission to win Indigenous justice!

<https://lakota.law/membershipimpact>

Lakota People's Law Project also shared with supporters "Other Ways to Give." Allies can show support through legacy giving, stock donations, starting a fundraiser, and more.

lakota.law/waystogive

2020 ROMERO INSTITUTE BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Paul Lee

BOARD CHAIRMAN

Daniel Sheehan, Esq.

PRESIDENT

Sara Nelson

VICE PRESIDENT

Daniel Paul Nelson

SECRETARY TREASURER

Chase Iron Eyes

Eric Thiermann

Dr. Faye Crosby

Gwendolyn Grace

Markell Brooks

Mark Sims

Pearl Daniel-Means

KEY FOUNDATION SUPPORT

(\$100,000+)

- ANONYMOUS
- TIDES FOUNDATION

(\$40,000+)

- CEDAR TREE FOUNDATION
- HUMAN FAMILY UNITY
FOUNDATION

(\$10,000+)

- ANONYMOUS
- ANONYMOUS
- L.P. BROWN FOUNDATION
- RSF FOUNDATION



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LOOKING FORWARD

Thank you for going on this journey with us! Together we have had real impact over the past year — yet we have much, much more to do to ensure a healthy and just future for our planet and her people.

Your support matters now more than ever.

The climate emergency is dire — and the plain fact is that we are running out of time. We need comprehensive solutions, right now, and the Indigenous voice must be at the table to speak for harmony with Mother Earth.

Let's Green CA is launching a statewide campaign calling on California Governor Gavin Newsom to declare a climate emergency followed by executive orders mandating: state funds be used to quickly build infrastructure for electrification; all new green jobs must be union jobs that support families; and that we protect the health and safety of marginalized, frontline communities.

We're collaborating with a renowned green energy research group to produce a white paper identifying the roadblocks to accelerating climate solutions. This paper will help us create new legislation for a much faster solution. We will press forward in 2021 on policy development and collaborative partnerships, and jointly build a grassroots movement that will position the golden state as the climate leader, creating a policy model for other states and nations to follow.

The Lakota People's Law Project's climate action in 2021 includes opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and other dangerous fossil fuel infrastructure, representing water protectors in court, and supporting renewable energy development on tribal nations. We'll engage Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to implement strategic Native and environmental justice initiatives, we'll champion Native voter protections and combat voting restrictions, and we'll continue to support Standing Rock Nation by providing housing and healthy recreation for its most vulnerable kids. Chase Iron Eyes will continue taking our allies and the Native voice to a national audience in his weekly media show, "Cut to the Chase."

Your generosity and gifts to the Romero Institute will help us achieve these groundbreaking goals! Please propel this work forward today with a donation. You'll be extending a hand to vulnerable populations and bringing about a better future. *Wopila!*

[Romero.gift](https://romero.gift)

info@romeroinstitute.org 831-459-6135