Panelist Bios

Mijin Cha

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies | UC Santa Cruz

Mijin Cha is a scholar and educator based at UC Santa Cruz whose work bridges environmental justice, labor, and energy transitions. With deep roots in community-based research, Mijin studies how working-class communities are organizing for more just and sustainable futures—particularly in regions shaped by extractive industries. Her research uplifts the voices of frontline communities while offering practical insights for policymakers and movement leaders seeking a Just Transition. Mijin is passionate about co-creating strategies that center care, equity, and ecological resilience. She holds a JD, LLM, and PhD and her book, *A Just Transition for All: Workers and Communities for a Carbon-Free Future* was published by MIT Press in Dec. 2024.

What does a Just Transition mean to you?
To me, achieving a just transition would mean we have successfully transitioned off of fossil fuels and created a future where workers and communities everywhere have the conditions they need to thrive.

Tracy Scott

Staff Representative, Retired President | United Steelworkers Local 5 (USW Local 5)

Tracy Scott is a dedicated union leader with the United Steelworkers and a longtime worker at the Richmond Chevron Refinery. As an advocate for labor rights and worker safety, Tracy brings decades of firsthand experience from the frontlines of the petroleum industry. He has been deeply engaged in discussions about the future of energy, environmental responsibility, and what a Just Transition means for unionized workers. Tracy believes in building bridges between labor and environmental movements to ensure no worker is left behind.

What does a Just Transition mean to you?
A Just Transition means putting workers and communities first as we move toward a cleaner, safer energy future. It ensures that those most affected by economic and environmental shifts—especially frontline workers—have real power, protections, and opportunities at every step. To me, it's about securing dignity, safety, and a voice on the job while building a future that's equitable for all.

Bryana Gastelum

Community Member | Path to Clean Air Steering Committee

Bryana Gastelum is a Richmond-based environmental justice advocate and a steering committee member of the Path to Clean Air Community Emissions Reduction Plan. Bryana studied Civil and Environmental Engineering at Stanford University with an emphasis on air pollution and energy justice. Bryana has contributed to Just Transition research with Communities for a Better Environment and is deeply committed to advancing environmental justice and its intersectional dimensions within the communities of Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo.

What does a Just Transition mean to you?

To me, a Just Transition is a chance to get things right. It means moving away from the fossil fuel infrastructure that has deeply harmed our communities and environment while also addressing historical injustices. It is an opportunity not only to achieve a clean energy transition in Richmond and San Pablo but to ensure that community members become active beneficiaries in reimagining our neighborhoods and building a future that is equitable, sustainable, and rooted in justice. A future where kids can be kids and our elders can live with dignity, comfort, and care.