

Climate Justice & Texas Legislature: Activist Training Series

Feb 2nd, 2021

Organized with support from Sierra Club, Public Citizen Texas, Environment Texas, Jolt, Clean Energy Now Texas, and other allies.



Land Acknowledgement

Today I speak with you from Somi Se'k, the homeland of the Carrizo-Comecrudo tribal nation, also the occupied territory of Tonkawa and Comanche around Austin. No matter where in Texas you're dialing in from today, the land we meet is the traditional territory of a number of Indigenous peoples. Texas is and has been home to the Caddo, Comanche, Kiowa, Wichita, Chickasaw, Waco, Tonkawa, Lipan Apache, Texas Band of Yaqui, Coahuiltecan, Borrado and Carrizo Comecrudo. Throughout colonization, different native peoples were relocated to Texas, including the Alabama Coushatta, Kickapoo, and Tiguas of the Ysleta del sur Pueblo.

We acknowledge the violent and continuing legacy of colonization in Texas and call on all participants today to reach out to the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter for more information on how to learn more about the history of native peoples in Texas, of systemic racism, and how your activism can help undo the impacts of white supremacy on the environmental movement.

Resources

Welcome to the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter Texas Legislature Page!

From this page you can:

- Find out [who represents you](#).
- Contact your State Senator and State Representatives in our [Alert Center](#).
- Sign up for a workshop in our [Building Power to Win](#) series and connect with others who want change.
- Review our [Bill Tracker](#).
- Read our 2021 [legislative priorities](#).
- Read our written testimony and fact sheets on specific bills (coming in 2021).
- See how your legislator did on our [2019 Legislative Scorecard](#).
- Sign up to receive [email updates](#) on legislative action.

As the session gets into high gear, this section of our website will be updated with new information and resources, so be sure to bookmark it and check back!

Norms

One mic

Patience

Build relationships

Respect

Power & privilege

This is an anti-racist, anti-oppression space

Guiding Principles

We recognize and draw from

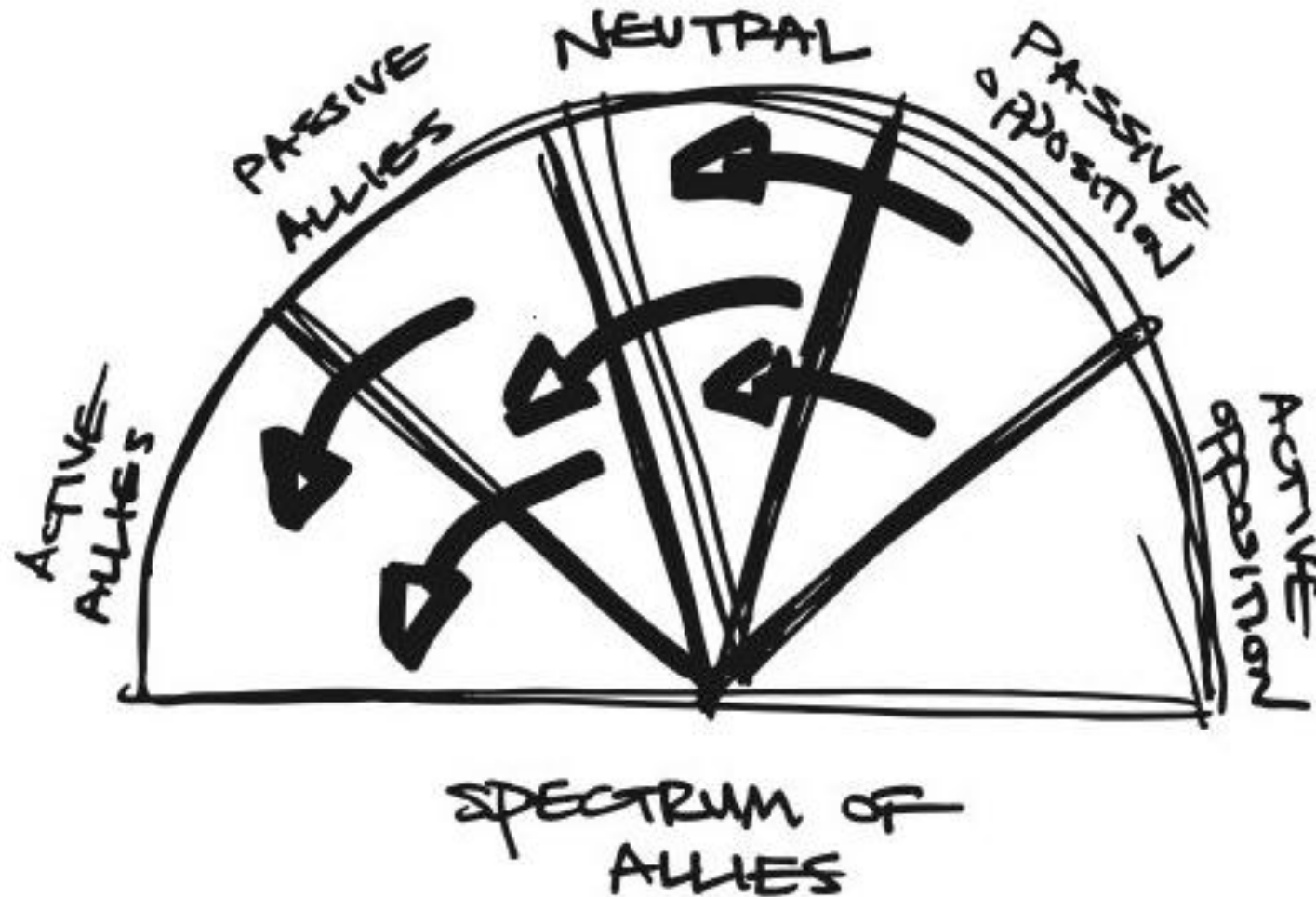
1. [principles of environmental justice](#)
2. [Jemez principles for democratic organizing](#)
3. [Anti-racism principles - People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#)

Range of experience and knowledge – In the “room” we have students, parents, and folx who’ve never lobbied before, as well as seasoned lobbyists and former legislators/politicians. We value all lived experience and knowledge in the room today, particularly from those living with the frontline impacts of environmental racism and climate change.

Analyzing power, challenging all who hold power - As a society, we often believe that individuals and/or their communities are solely responsible for their conditions. Through the analysis of institutional power, we can identify and unpack the systems external to the community that create the internal realities that many people experience daily. Decision-makers in all parties must be targeted and held accountable to a strong climate & environmental justice agenda carried by a broad base of organized people.

No quick fix – Be patient but vigilant. We are here to build, not flip a switch. If we had all the solutions and strategies we wouldn't be here today, nor would we be in this crisis. Victory will come with the intentional cultivating and sustaining of strategic organizing. We are building on the experience and foundations developed over the years across the environmental justice and climate movements in Texas, and we honor the conviction and demands of a new generation of Texans calling for rapid and just solutions.

Shift the spectrum of allies



Shift the spectrum of allies

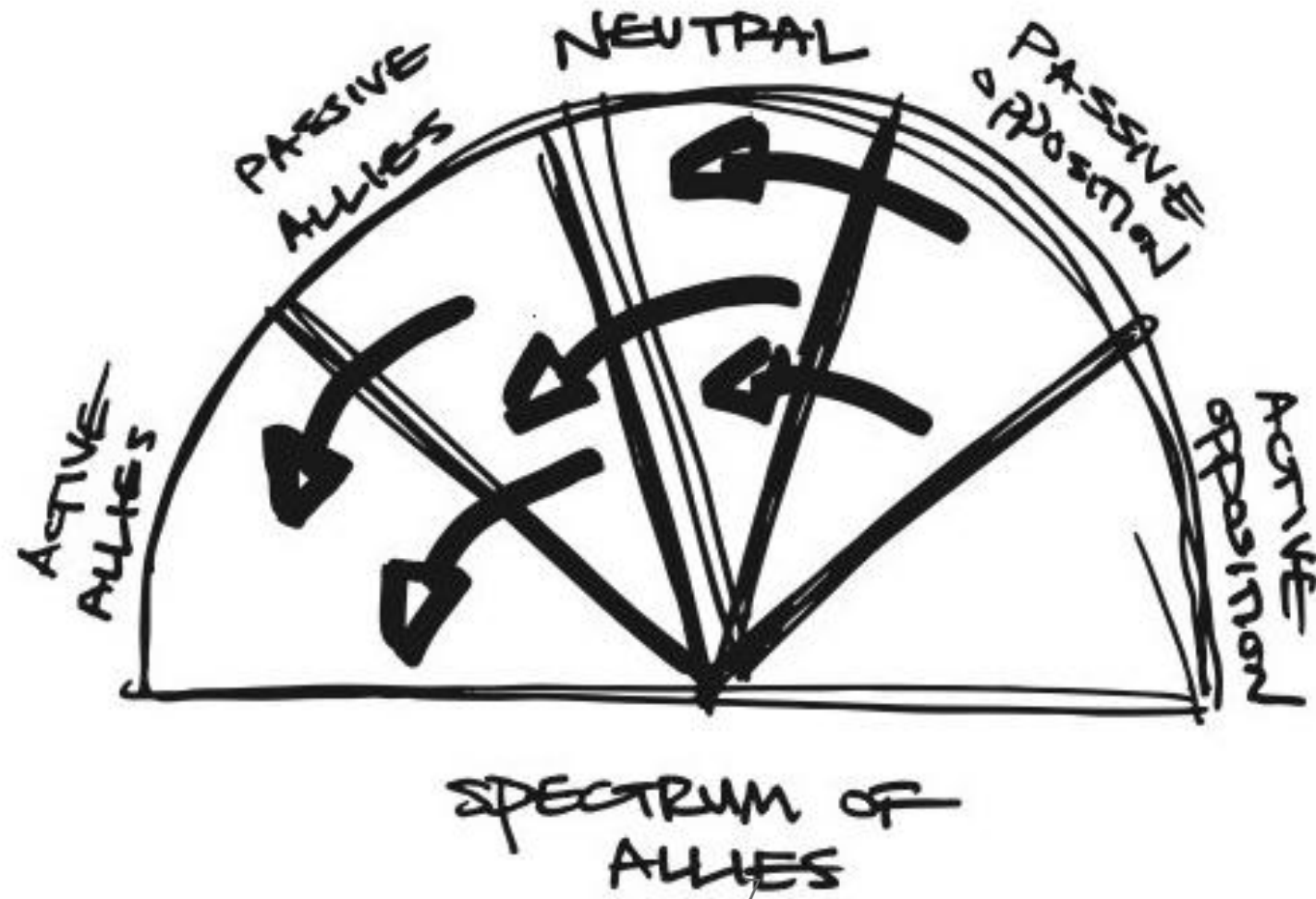
Active allies: people who agree with you and are fighting alongside you

Passive allies: folks who agree with you but aren't doing anything about it

Neutrals: fence sitters, the unengaged;

Passive opposition: people who disagree with you but aren't trying to stop you

Active opposition: ain't gonna come around.

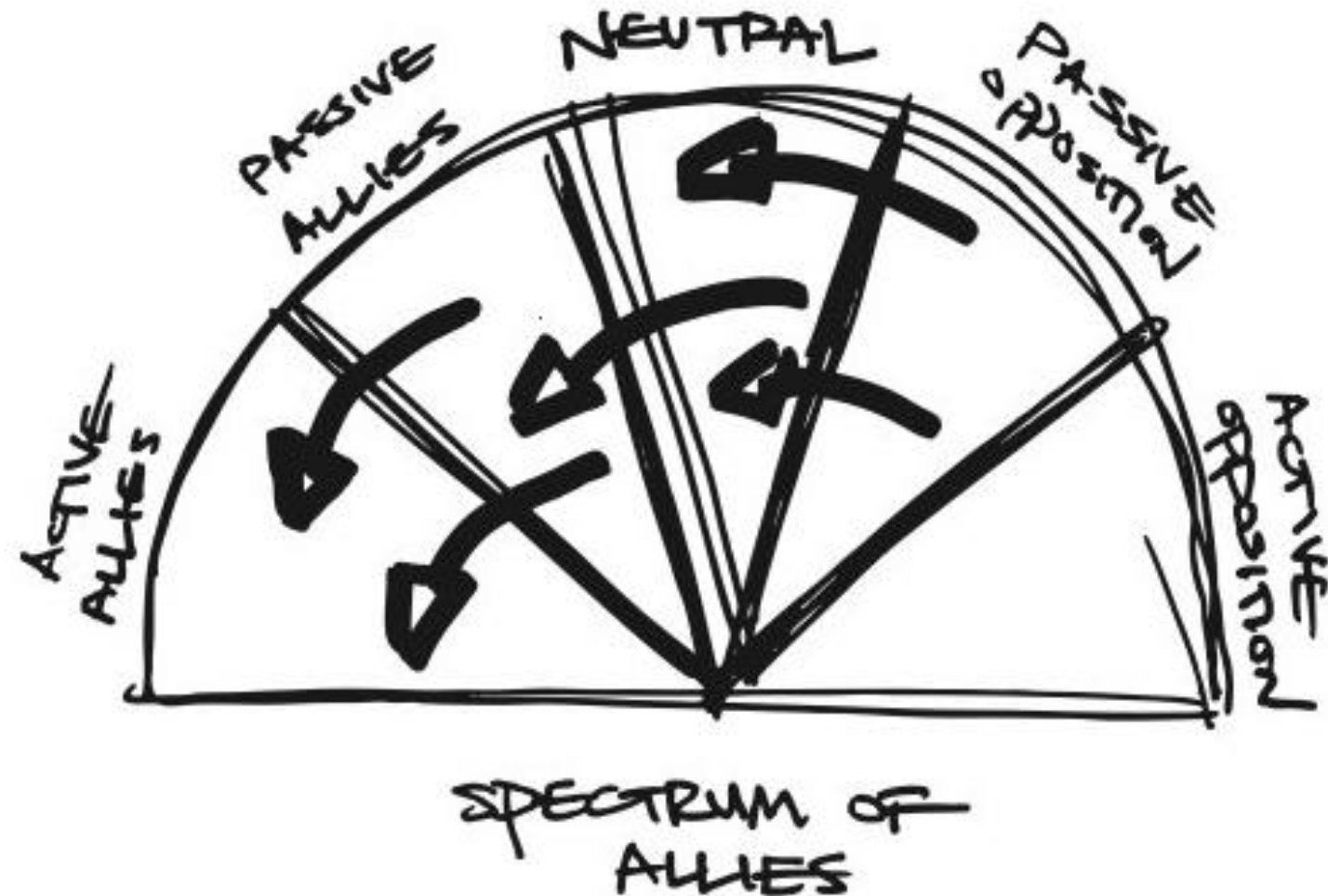




Northern Student Movement Grows; 65 Colleges Chart Course for Year



Shift the spectrum of allies



Graphic and material by
Joshua Kahn Russell.

More info at:

[https://beautifultrouble.org/
principle/shift-the-spectrum
-of-allies/](https://beautifultrouble.org/principle/shift-the-spectrum-of-allies/)

Breakout Groups

PROMPT:

1. **60 second go around:** Name, pronouns, answer: What are some examples of bad bills you've seen before or were part of trying to defeat? Its okay if can't think of any.
2. There is a piece of legislation filed in the Texas House of Reps to get the entire state's electric grid (government and non-government buildings) to move to **50% clean energy by 2030.**

Large industry like semiconductor manufacturers, business organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, houses of worship (Churches), and advocates for the poor and fixed-income have all come out opposed to the resolution due to concerns about increased costs. Fossil fuel industries call it a jobs killer and are mobilizing workers to oppose.

It is unlikely this bill would get past Lt. Gov Dan Patrick nor signed by Gov Abbott. In the Texas House Speaker Phelan has announced he wants to hear all sides of the argument before making a decision.

This means there is a window of opportunity to get a hearing in committee and organize support to potentially get it out of committee. We need 6 of 11 votes to get it out.

Breakout Groups

PROMPT CONTINUED:

- One Republican from a wind & solar rich district has expressed support in exchange for supporting oil & gas subsidies.
- He is 1 out of 6 total R's on the committee.
- Two Democrats from communities with heavy fossil fuel industry presence have said they're unlikely to support it.
- Three other Democrats have expressed support. So we have 4 votes and need the 2 Dems.

While they say cost and jobs cuts to the fossil fuel industry are their main concerns, there is no evidence that their constituents - many of whom are working class or poor - are expressing those same concerns about costs. Many are concerned about killing oil & gas related jobs.

Polling has shown that residents of the two Democratic districts are extremely concerned about climate change and superstorms like Hurricanes Harvey. Companies like Valero, Exxon, and other fossil fuel producers have donated heavily to their campaigns because they want to build or expand several fossil fuel mega projects in their districts.

Breakout Groups

PROMPT CONTINUED:

The two Dems are:

- **Abel Herrero from Corpus Christi**, Vice Chair of the House Energy Resources Committee. His district is home to massive new petrochemical and fossil fuel exports projects that are being built.
- **Mary Ann Perez from Southeast Harris County** (Pasadena, Deer Park, near Houston) “home to the largest petrochemical and industrial energy complex in the United States.”
- Using a spectrum of allies, **name at least five constituencies or groups in addition** to the manufacturers, chambers of commerce, churches, advocates for the poor, fossil fuel corporations, and fossil fuel workers.
- Place all constituencies on the spectrum.
- What tactics could you use to move your active opponents, passive opponents or neutral parties into the passive opponents, neutral or allies category?
- Is there a policy carve out or policy adjustment that might draw them to your side?
- Note the tactics and policies.