

Climate Justice Is Right Under Our Feet: Community Thermal Networks & Equitable Environmental Access For All

Jared Rodriguez, Emergent Urban Concepts

Audrey Schulman, HEET

Cameron Best, Brightcore Energy, LLC

Lauren Hildebrand, VP of Client Sustainability, Brightcore Energy, LLC

ABSTRACT

In this moderated panel discussion, you'll hear from a group of diverse speakers that represent various aspects of the built industry. Through the lens of building science, consulting, outdoor spaces, healthy materials, policy, and medical backgrounds, we will explore and unpack how race, geography, and economics intersect in healthy housing. Specifically, through networked geothermal heating and cooling, we will exemplify how this sustainable alternative to burning fossil fuels and other pollutants can help support low-income communities through a more cost-effective utility framework, while increasing the health, comfort, and access to open space for BIPOC communities.

BIOGRAPHIES

Jared Rodriguez, Emergent Urban Concepts jared@emergentgroup.com

With his combination of expertise in sustainability, urban planning, and real estate, Jared uses his extensive experience to lead regulatory and advocacy programs for energy- and climate-related initiatives and help industry adjust to new goals. His firm Emergent Urban Concepts is a policy and sustainability consultancy that partners with businesses and state and municipal governments on issues related to decarbonization, sustainable technology, real estate development and management, and transportation. In addition to its work with a diverse set of clients through the Northeast, Emergent Urban Concepts advises the Empire Building Challenge, a program that fosters public-private partnerships with leading commercial and multifamily real estate owners to recruit best-in-class equipment manufacturers, solution providers, and other businesses to invest in low carbon retrofit technology development here in New York State. Jared is currently collaborating with various stakeholders to advance rulemaking and development of renewable thermal energy networks to comply with the recently adopted Utility Thermal Energy Networks and Jobs Act of 2022. Jared serves as proxy Citizens' Representative, a Governor appointment, on the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), a federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13-county northern New Jersey region. He is heavily involved in the Hudson Valley region serving as Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan for Village of Haverstraw and securing funding from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). He is a Commissioner on the Taconic Region State Parks Commission, advocating for investment in the region's State Parks system. Jared serves as Trustee of the Village of Sleepy Hollow and as a board member of several nonprofits in the region. He holds a BS in Civil Engineering and Architectural Studies from Tufts University and an MS in Real Estate Development from New York University.

Cameron Best, Brightcore Energy

Cameron Best graduated from the University of Montana in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in Community and Environmental Planning. After spending 2 years working on environmental policy at the League of Conservation Voters, he joined the geothermal industry to focus on the growth and development of district geothermal systems. Over the last 3-years he has led the development of ten district geothermal development projects in New York state impacting well over 15,000 apartment units. The development of these projects conferred a deep understanding of key regulatory and financial aspects of geothermal development. Cameron Best is Director of Business Development at Brightcore Energy.

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