

# spotlight

2024 Issue 1



Over the years, KBPO has become a community that centers the demands of frontline communities and promotes the collective over the organizational. Photo credit: Bianka Csenki, Artist Network.

## Building global people power together

### Advancing climate justice with the Kick Big Polluters Out coalition

**“Our governments may fail us at every opportunity, but the true hope of climate justice has always been with the people.”**

HELLEN NEIMA | AFRICA CLIMATE  
CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

#### Learn more!

Check out our latest research on climate obstruction at COP28: [CorporateAccountability.org/WorldsWorstCOP28](https://CorporateAccountability.org/WorldsWorstCOP28)

#### Support this work:

[CorporateAccountability.org/Spotlight](https://CorporateAccountability.org/Spotlight)

Over the past decade, we and our allies have been instrumental in exposing just how much of an influence Big Polluters have in climate policy. And together, through the Kick Big Polluters Out (KBPO) coalition, we have helped spur popular outrage at Big Polluters' role in the climate crisis and a global demand to end it.

Without this campaigning, Big Polluters and the governments backing them would have gotten an absolute free pass to keep undermining climate action at last year's United Nations' climate treaty negotiations in Dubai.

The coalition had begun laying the groundwork to expose the truth about who was at the negotiating tables and what their ultimate goals were months before the talks started.

And through the course of the talks, KBPO released hard-hitting research that revealed Big Polluters' stranglehold over climate policy. We also held media interviews and in-person protests in Dubai to continue mounting public pressure against Big Polluters.

Media coverage of this research and organizing reached billions of people around the world! And this exposure was critical to our strategy of completely shifting the landscape in which Big Polluters can operate at these treaty meetings, and beyond.

In the coming months, we'll work with KBPO partners to continue holding Big Polluters accountable and boost public support for real solutions. Thank you!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Making the impossible possible, with you

**Dear friend,**

I couldn't be prouder of our collective impact. Our global campaigns are on fire. As we organize alongside communities targeted by abusive corporations, we're creating real change.

And do we need transformative change! Change that prevents corporations from exploiting and harming people and the Earth. Change that dismantles oppressive systems. Change that builds toward new systems where all people and beings can thrive.

I've always been inspired by how Corporate Accountability organizes toward what is necessary, not what seems politically feasible. We make the impossible possible by employing smart strategy, developing real relationships, and partnering with allies around the world to campaign with dogged determination.

This approach to organizing will continue to fuel me as I move out of my role as executive director and into a new role in the organization. (For the past few months we've been sharing the news of my transition, and I invite you to read more about it on our website.)

This is such an exciting time to be part of Corporate Accountability. Our campaigns are shifting the ground underneath corporations. Our organization is evolving to meet the needs of the world today. And we continue to achieve what people say we cannot.

So I'm confident that as we move through this leadership transition, we'll keep breaking new ground while maintaining steady progress toward our mission.

Today, I'm more grateful than ever for your steady support. And I look forward to continuing to partner with you as we grow our collective power to create the change we need.



Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patti Lynn".

**Patti Lynn**  
Executive Director

P.S. You can read more from our board chair and me about the leadership transition here: [CorporateAccountability.org/Transition](https://CorporateAccountability.org/Transition)

# Making Big Polluters pay for climate deception

## Keeping community needs centered in climate lawsuits

Last year, California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed a lawsuit against Big Polluters for their decades-long campaign of climate deception, making clear that the momentum to make Big Polluters pay is growing all over the U.S.

We might still be a long way from seeing outcomes from the trial, but now is the moment for us to advocate for equitable and just outcomes to any future settlement.

**“California’s lawsuit sends a strong message to Big Polluters that they can no longer get away with delaying climate action.”**

MICHÉL LEGENDRE | CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD MEMBER

That's why we and our allies organized a briefing for hundreds of public officials from across California to present a framework for how to equitably deliver climate justice.

This includes funding climate mitigation projects through the lawsuit and ensuring continuous support for communities most impacted by climate disaster, particularly Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, as well as low-income communities.

And, with your support, we and our allies are playing an important role as we organize to ensure climate justice, accountability for Big Polluters, and real climate solutions!

# Q&A

## Member spotlight: Arden Shank



Arden Shank is a community development consultant and policy advisor from Goshen, Indiana.

### How have Corporate Accountability's campaigns inspired you to take action in your own community?

The notion of "building a world rooted in justice" is what my life's work has always been about. It's hard to change a system that has been in place for so long. That work has to be very, very intentional to succeed.

### What does "organizing toward racial justice" mean to you?

Many of the major achievements of the civil rights movements didn't just pop up out of nowhere. It took decades of sustained organizing to get there, and this is what it's going to take for us today as well. Thousands of grassroots efforts need to happen, so we can expand the idea of what's possible.

### I'd love to hear more about one of these grassroots efforts, such as your church's reparations committee and your involvement with the movement.

This initiative was created through a sustained and organic effort by the entire congregation of Goshen's Assembly Mennonite Church. People became aware of paying reparations in their own ways, but the idea gained ground among all of us when one of our pastors gave a "turning point" sermon on reparations for harm done to Black and Indigenous Americans. We reached consensus to start making reparations payments, which began in late 2023. Our hope is that we will grow a coalition of churches involved in the reparations movement and influence government policy that will bring equity to our communities.

### What keeps you motivated to continue your justice-centered work?

I stay connected with other people who are involved in doing similar work, which reminds me that nothing I do is in isolation. Together, we're building points of light across the country to get the people power to make radical change happen at the highest levels—it can be done, and it has been done.

### Read more!

Don't miss Arden's extended interview: [CorporateAccountability.org/ArdenShank](https://CorporateAccountability.org/ArdenShank)

## Houston abandons water privatization scheme

Grassroots pressure keeps water in public hands

**"This moment proves that when we come together and take action, we can win against corporate giants."**

LEILANI RANIA GANSER | SENIOR WATER ORGANIZER

Everyone, no matter where they live or how much money they have, should be able to turn on the tap and access clean, safe water.

That's why, when we learned that the City of Houston had plans to hand over control of a major section of its water system to a corporation for up to two decades, we sounded the alarm. And now, after mobilizing fierce opposition against the contract in partnership with grassroots Houston groups, including West Street Recovery, the city announced that it had canceled its privatization proposal.

This victory comes after nearly a year of campaigning alongside Houston's environmental, community, and labor organizations. Together, we exposed the risks of water privatization in the media and supported city residents in speaking directly to elected officials about their concerns.

People power is a powerful antidote to corporate abuse. Together, we're organizing to keep water systems in the U.S. and across the world under public control. Thank you for making this possible!



Houston residents and partners demand that the Southeast Water Purification Plant—serving 1 million people—be kept public at a city council meeting. Photo credit: West Street Recovery

### Learn more!

Hear directly from West Street Recovery in our latest Annual Report: [CorporateAccountability.org/2023](https://CorporateAccountability.org/2023)

# Keeping Big Tobacco out of public health

We reach significant milestones in our tobacco campaign

**“No amount of rebranding, health-washing, or junk science research will change the fact that Big Tobacco is a deadly industry.”**

KELTIE VANCE | DEPUTY CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR



Corporate Accountability Tobacco Campaign Director Daniel Dorado and Tobacco Campaign Researcher Jaime Arcila accepted the World No Tobacco Day award from the World Health Organization (WHO) in Brasilia, Brazil on October 20, 2023.

As Big Tobacco tries to find new ways to abuse people and the planet with impunity, our tobacco campaign continues to expose and curb the industry's tactics as they evolve.

One industry giant in particular has attempted to insert itself into different public health initiatives and health-wash its image: Philip Morris International (PMI). And last year, we significantly dented PMI's ability to continue advancing its deadly agenda.

In December, we learned that the so-called Foundation for a Smoke-Free World would no longer accept money from PMI, ending a long-standing partnership between the two entities. This is a huge development!

PMI has been the sole funder of this "foundation" since its establishment

in 2017. Together, they've funded industry-linked research and promoted junk science that downplays the harms of Big Tobacco's products.

But, thanks to our and our allies' organizing, the foundation and its partnerships have met steady resistance by public health experts worldwide. So, we will continue to monitor the foundation's relationship with the tobacco industry, and challenge it at every turn.

We also received an award in October from the World Health Organization for our role in successfully organizing the Canadian government to end its public health partnership with Big Tobacco. This award was a welcome boost for our team and allies as we continue advancing the campaign to kick Big Tobacco out and make them pay.

When it comes to holding corporations accountable for their abuses, our tobacco campaign is setting precedents that reverberate and strengthen all our other campaigns. And we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you!

## Take action!

Join the call to make Big Tobacco pay!  
[MakeBigTobaccoPay.org](https://www.MakeBigTobaccoPay.org)

**CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**  
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# Stronger together

Sustain this work to protect human rights, people's lives, and the planet.

**Contact** Adjwoa Addae, senior membership manager: 617.695.2525.

**Visit** our website at [CorporateAccountability.org/MonthlyGift](https://www.CorporateAccountability.org/MonthlyGift)

**Send** in the enclosed envelope.

## Why monthly giving?

Your gift works more quickly and efficiently to make a bigger impact. You receive insider campaign updates to keep up to date on the influential role you have in creating a more just and equitable world. It's easy to participate, and you help save resources and expenses.

## Thank you for your partnership!



**“As one person trying to make systemic changes, the work can sometimes feel futile. By donating monthly to Corporate Accountability, I know that I am contributing to the struggle against global exploitation, imperialism, and environmental racism.”**

DOMENICA PERRONE | MONTHLY DONOR AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL



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