

[SQUEAKING]

[RUSTLING]

[CLICKING]

KELSEY WIRTH: Hi. Can you hear me? Great, Thanks. It's a pleasure to be here with you all this morning and with Zeyneb, who I have known now for, I don't know, 10 years or something like that, through Mothers Out Front.

So I want to talk to you today about something that's maybe a little bit different from what others will be talking to you about over the course of the day. And that is power, not the kind of power that you spend a lot of the day talking about and we'll be talking more about this afternoon, but people power. And I want to encourage you to think about climate change as ultimately a problem of political power.

So when we take a step back and we think about why it is that after decades and decades of science and consensus in the scientific community, that we are indeed heating the Earth with catastrophic implications for life on this planet as we know it. We have to think about what it is that is preventing us from making more progress. And we need to think about the powers on the left-hand side of the scale, which represent the fossil fuel industry, the petrochemical industry, the banks and investors that make money from the industry, the politicians that are being heavily influenced by the industry. I think the oil and gas industry spent \$230 million or so getting Trump elected, probably more than that. And then, of course, just status quo. People are resistant to change in general, and we have an entire economy based on, that's built on fossil fuels.

So the question is, what do we do about that? And what we do at Mothers Out Front is we talk about building power, and we engage in the process of building power. So ultimately, the question is, how do we drive transformational change of the level that we need in order to shift the scale so we can actually win campaigns and create the conditions for network geothermal and other important technologies to come in, et cetera, et cetera, and to do so in an equitable manner.

So as it turns out, transformational change throughout American history and around the world has really largely been possible because of social movements. So it's large, large numbers of people coming together out of a sense of shared values and a sense of outrage at the disconnect between the world people want and the world as it is, and people coming together, learning how to organize together and drive campaigns for change. So that has been the case, whether it's the Civil Rights Movement, women's rights, abolitionism before that, LGBTQ rights, the early environmental movement. And we're seeing bits of it, and not enough of it yet, with what you see of the climate movement across the country.

So how does this relate to Mothers Out Front? I'll tell you a little bit about my story, which is I am the mother of two daughters. And when they were quite young, I had one of those moments of absolute despair looking at the climate crisis through the lens for the first time of being a mom and thinking about the kind of world that my children would be growing up in, and thinking, well, I can't not try to do something about this, but-- I don't know if I can go back. Yeah, but I was the little person on the right-hand side of the scale. I was one person, a mom, not a scientist, not an elected official, not a policy expert, wondering what could I possibly do to affect this enormous, overwhelming set of challenges?

And around that time, I had the opportunity to meet a man by the name of Marshall Ganz, who teaches Organizing at the Harvard Kennedy School. And I called him up, and I said, will you please meet with me? And he graciously said yes. He had no idea who I was. And in about half an hour of meeting Marshall, he explained to me the power of social movement building, its role in American history, and importantly, that organizing to build social movements is a practice that anybody can learn. Any one of you can become an organizer.

And so I teamed up with a couple of moms and we started getting together with other moms. We had one-on-one meetings. We invited them to house parties. And we started forming teams of moms and providing a structure that allowed them to come together, think about what they wanted to work on together and start implementing campaigns. So we were starting to build the right-hand side of the scale. And Zeyneb and Anya, who was supposed to be moderating the session and, unfortunately, had to leave, were both integral parts of the early days of Mothers Out Front, as was Nathan Phillips.

So we started organizing about 12 years ago, and our downtown Boston team, led by Anya, among others, was trying to figure out what it is that they wanted to work on for their campaign. And lo and behold, this article comes out in *The Boston Globe* about a study that Nathan Phillips was involved in, indicating the role of gas leaks in killing trees and highlighting the number of gas leaks all across the Boston area. And it was shocking. And that is when our downtown Boston team of moms said, aha, this is what we want to work on. It's a concrete thing. It's killing trees up and down the blocks in our neighborhood. We want to take this on.

And amazingly, this little organization called HEET had created maps. They had taken the data-- publicly available information, input it into spreadsheets, and created maps of different neighborhoods across Boston showing just how many leaks there were. This is a perfect organizing tool because it allowed us at Mothers Out Front to take something that was invisible to everybody and make it visible.

And so what happened next was that Anya and others took it upon themselves to go out and reach out to other Mothers Out Front teams that we had formed across the state by then. And they, all 16 of our teams got involved. And Anya and others made presentations saying you need to know about gas leaks. This is why they're bad. Yes, they're killing trees. They're also bad for our health. And they're major drivers of climate change. And that was the process of engaging the other teams that we had done the work of creating all across the state of Massachusetts in this fight against the gas leaks.

So this was a very cold January day, when a bunch of us got together under Anya's direction. And equipped with the maps of where the gas leaks were, we fanned out across Boston. And we tagged, physically tagged every gas leak in the city. And this exercise of physically tagging gas leaks was repeated in communities across the Boston area, thereby, again, making the invisible visible.

And people, for the first time, were making this connection between gas leaks killing my trees that I sort of know about because I smell them when I walk around and where they're located and what we can actually do about it. So we called attention on all the tags to the responsible company. And all the gas companies started getting harassed by lots of people very upset that there were these gas leaks all over the place. So the people in orange, in case you're wondering, they're supposed to be gas leaks themselves. So anyway, we had a little fun with it too.

So there we are tagging gas leaks. And in the process, while we were also tagging gas leaks, it was part of a broader campaign. It wasn't just about tagging gas leaks. It was a whole strategy. So we met with elected officials in various towns and cities across the state.

We rallied right in front of the state house. We rallied in front of-- what's that? That's I think the Cambridge state house. We spoke up and we testified. We testified at city meetings in the city of Boston. You can see Zeyneb there. That's Anya on the far left, who was supposed to be here. Nathan Phillips joined us for a lot of these activities. And we collaborated. We teamed up with-- we never work alone because you cannot achieve your goals as a relatively small organization.

So we knew we needed allies. Of course, we had HEET working with us because we used their maps. You can see Nathan Phillips down here. And we created-- we brought in as many allies as we possibly could, and in the process even created a whole new organization that then was called The Gas Leaks Allies and is now called The Gas Transition Allies. And that is a group of organizations that continues to meet on a regular basis to talk about how we drive important policy forward in the state. We also sought out unlikely partners, and this is where Geothermal Networks come in. So Zeyneb was part of-- and the arrow is pointing to-- what was her name, Mary?

ZEYNEB Marcy.

MAGAVI:

KELSEY WIRTH: Marcy Reed-- thank you-- who was then the president of National Grid in Massachusetts And this is actually a funny story. So Marcy was refusing to meet with us, and we all were tweeting with her the day that we were tagging gas leaks across the city of Boston. And by the end of the day, she's like, OK, OK, OK. I'll meet with you. So it was very effective. But when we went in to meet with the CEO of Eversource, it was Zeyneb and a few others from Mothers Out Front and I think Audrey from HEET.

And they went in, and they sat down with Bill Ackley, who was asked before the meeting if he thought he needed security because they were so accustomed to the company coming under pressure from advocacy groups. And he said, no, I don't think I need security. It's a group of moms. And he sat down with a group of moms. And Zeyneb and the others in the room started by talking about why they were there, which was for their children.

And Zeyneb said, I have three children. These are their ages. This is why I'm here. I'm worried for their future. And Ackley paused, and he said, oh, well, I have three children too. And they formed this connection around their shared concern about their children. He said, of course I'm concerned for my children too. And it created an opening and an opportunity for collaboration. And that was the beginning of the reason why you're all here today to learn about geothermal networks.

So I think the lesson in all of this is that building power is absolutely essential for creating the conditions we need for the level of transformational change we need to create the future that we all want for our children and our grandchildren and future generations. And I think every time you think about the climate crisis, I would encourage you to always think about where does building power fit into my thinking here because it's a critically important piece, and we all have to be thinking about it and hopefully be part of building that power and implementing that power. So thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]