

PABLO ALVAREZ

From Sept 12th through Sept 14th, California Governor Jerry Brown held the much anticipated Global Climate Action Summit (GCAS) in San Francisco. Prominent figures, such as Harrison Ford, Jane Goodall, Al Gore, Dave Matthews and Alec Baldwin were present at the Moscone Convention Center expressing what they believed were solutions to the global climate crisis. Hundreds more from multinational corporations to global NGOs flooded the luxurious PARC 55 hotel. The wealthier among the attendees anxiously awaited their limos with chauffeurs or private drivers to take them to this summit where \$4 billion would be pledged to combat climate change. Panels of elite scientists and political leaders would attempt to convince government officials around the world to aspire to the goals of the Paris Accords.

“
Although I do not have all the answers, one thing I certainly know is that those solutions are with the people... who have been fighting this struggle on a daily basis.
 ”
 – Pablo Alvarez,
 Environmental Justice
 Community Organizer

Those noticeably absent were the 500 participants of the *Solidarity to Solutions Summit* held 4 miles away at La Raza Park. There, you could find two proud Beyond Toxics travelers, myself and my co-worker, Ana Molina, discussing possible solutions with the people who are most affected by climate change and the environmental devastation that awaits them. There were organizers, community members and elders of communities from all around the world, primarily people of color and women. They discussed daily struggles such as the de-forestation of the Amazon in Brazil, toxic pollution spreading in California cities from EPA superfund sites, democratizing energy production in Indiana, farm workers poisoned with pesticides in the Pacific Northwest, and so many other concerns experienced by frontline communities who attended this gathering.



Pablo Alvarez, Environmental Justice Community Organizer

**Reflections on the “Solidarity to Solutions” Summit in San Francisco
 by Pablo Alvarez and Ana Molina**

Many participants were in San Francisco for an entire week. We all took part in the *Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice March* which attracted 30,000 people. Attendees participated in local environmental justice tours and actions and came together to learn the work being done for climate justice in each other’s communities across the nation and around the world. The summit was an opportunity to listen to each other and offer advice and get to know each other and discover our commonalities. We offered solidarity and showcased the solutions that were working in our own communities and let each group take what they wanted.

This grassroots, democratic approach is what is lacking from big global summits like GCAS. The voices of the people on the ground and who daily live the struggle are missing from the “top-down” approach. The people who attended and lead the Global Climate Action Summit (GCAS) might indeed find solutions, might have the resources to implement such solutions. Their intentions are certainly good. However, they must recognize, that their solutions will continue to be “false solutions” as long as they do not elevate the voices of frontline communities and give them a place at the planning table to plan the future of civilization.

Opening day of the Solidarity to Solutions Summit in Raza Park began with a blessing from an indigenous people’s representative



Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice - The Eugene Team: (L to R) Ana Molina (Beyond Toxics), Sydney Sampson (NAACP) and Pablo Alvarez (Beyond Toxics)

ANA MOLINA

Imagine activist, organizers, leaders, young, old, children and primarily people of color who are Black, Latinx, Indigenous and from all the way across the globe coming together for a weeklong event on climate justice. Do you see all the power we hold? Do you feel the energy of the people building a movement that is Just? Do you hear our chanting down the street demanding climate justice? That is exactly what happened at the It Takes Roots: Solidarity to Solutions Summit (Sol2Sol) in San Francisco in September!

As part of the Oregon Just Transition Alliance, I was very proud to represent Beyond Toxics as I traveled with a contingent of organizers with Got Green and Community 2 Community in Washington and our partners OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon. We joined the many who came together as members of four national alliances: Climate Justice Alliance (CJA), Right to the City, Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ), and Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). Amid the throngs of activists, organizers, people in marches, workshops, and non-violent direct action, we understood the Sol2Sol summit was not environmentalist protesting environmentalist. It was a coordinated protest aimed at California Governor Jerry

“
**The planet should not be sold!
 It is loved and protected.
 Solutions for climate change
 should come from front line communities
 that are most impacted across the globe.**
 ”
 – Ana Molina,
 Environmental Justice
 Campaign Liaison



**Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice march
 Tens of thousands march in San Francisco calling for a fossil-free world**

Brown’s Global Climate Action Summit to criticize proposals of global, market-based solutions to climate change.

This approach proposes that the very same industries who have poisoned our air, soil, and water are the ones we should trust to develop solutions they think we need. Their solutions are designed and implemented behind closed doors, without the voices of Indigenous, Black, Latinx and people of color, all of whom are the most impacted by rampant environmental injustices made worse by the ravages of climate change. What brought people together to the Sol2Sol Summit is our common dedication to fight for climate justice and advocate for our communities every step of the way.