NTEC: A Navajo Enterprise ... with Non-Navajos Calling All the Shots

NTEC was set up as a Navajo enterprise for the economic benefit of the Navajo Nation. But the make-up of NTEC’s management suggests anything but a focus on the long-term prosperity of the tribe. The three main executive leadership positions at NTEC are all held by non-Navajo executives with no history on the Navajo Nation and no allegiance or connection to the tribe. They all came to NTEC from failing coal corporations, two of which have or are currently scheming to strip workers of retirement and health benefits. If their backgrounds are any indicator, NTEC is NOT poised to make any sort of “transition” to a more diverse and sustainable energy economy, as its mission suggests, and has instead hitched its future to a failing industry.

Prior to joining NTEC four years ago, CEO Clark Mosely was the CEO of the proposed Morrow Pacific coal export facility in Oregon, a project funded by Australian company Ambre Energy, which wanted to force the development onto local communities who didn’t want it built. The project was ultimately defeated by overwhelming local opposition.

CFO Michael Gisin came to NTEC in September 2015, just a month after the bankruptcy of his former employer, Virginia-based coal-mining giant Alpha Natural Resources, where he served as the Vice President of Corporate Accounting and Reporting. As part of its bankruptcy, Alpha slashed retirement and health benefits for thousands of workers at the same time it paid bonuses of nearly $12 million to 15 top executives.

COO Tim Fagley came to NTEC in 2016 from Colorado-based Westmoreland Coal, where he was the Director of Engineering. In October, Westmoreland filed for bankruptcy, and like Alpha, is seeking to pay executives bonuses amounting to $6 million while also reneging on contractual obligations to pay almost $400 million in worker health and retirement benefits.