Abstract: There is a great deal of talk about the need for a just energy transition, that is one that moves the energy system away from fossil fuels and toward renewables in a manner that does so equitably. Our work, and the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA, examines building energy use and solar potential across building types, sociodemographic characteristics, grid capacity, and California energy policy to understand potential implications for underserved communities. We find that current structures make it more likely that underserved communities may be left out of the energy transition or burdened with higher energy costs. I explain how and why, and how traditional economistic thinking cannot address this serious problem.

Bio: Dr. Pincetl is a Professor-in-Residence at the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability and Director of the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA. She brings together interdisciplinary teams of researchers across the biophysical and engineering sciences with the social sciences to address problems of complex urban systems and environmental management. She has written extensively about land use in California, environmental justice, habitat conservation efforts, urban metabolism, water and energy policy, including her book “Transforming California, the Political History of Land Use in the State.”