

ment needs to be doing the same thing.

“Let’s talk to everyone who’s getting food on our table — farmers of color, migrant farmworkers — we need more diversity in who’s talking about farming and who’s able to access farmland,” Bernhardt says.

Coming together as community across differences can strengthen rural power at a time when some politicians are using racial rhetoric to divide folks and distract from government failure to address rural issues.

In order to shine a spotlight on these issues and on much-needed policy changes, People’s Action launched a video storytelling campaign through a platform called Soapboxx (<https://peoplesaction.soapboxx.us/campaign/winrural>), where people can easily upload 90-second videos by following a series of prompts. The goal is to highlight the voices of people in rural communities impacted by federal policy, but who are often left out of the conversation or *told* how to feel about it. This series of videos is a reminder that organizing people to take action is an important part of creating change from the ground up.

Ahrens made a video that described the

impact of a factory farm on his community’s economic stability and water quality. “When the factory farm fight came around, I saw a lot of people negatively affected who were

petitive disparity. It’s in everybody’s interest to start respecting our water. We’re polluting our most basic resource.”

Soden-Groves used his video to talk about a “Just Transition,” one that centers the needs of rural people as policy shifts away from subsidizing fossil fuel companies. “I live in a small town with a school district on the edge, people who are economically on the edge, and we need to make sure people’s needs are met as we move forward,” he says. “Our inclusion of one another and our needs becomes a foundation. We can have a shared joy in envisioning the future we are working toward together, where there is justice and where we are sustainable.”

The tagline on the video project is “this is how you win rural.” It is a message to decisionmakers that earning the support of rural communities requires listening to real people and developing federal policy that is people-centered, not corporate-driven. We can all play a role in highlighting the vibrancy of rural communities and in demanding that the government works for the people it represents. □

*Jessica Kochick is an LSP policy organizer. If you are interested in making your own video about an issue in your community, contact Kochick at [jkochick@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:jkochick@landstewardshipproject.org) or 612-400-6349.*



**“Taxpayers want us to do the right thing for the environment. Let’s get the federal government to act on that and put the money where the public really wants it, which is a better, healthier agriculture,” says livestock farmer Hannah Bernhardt. (LSP Photo)**

afraid to speak, and then others speaking bravely for our community and they didn’t have a lot of support,” he says. “And I thought, if they’re going to go to bat for us, I can’t sit at my house and eat Cheetos.”

He adds that federal agricultural policy is part of the problem. “Small farmers are working hard on soil health, but the factory farm down the road is subsidized 30 times as much. Farm policy at scale creates a com-

## Join LSP’s 2021 Virtual Organizing & Social Change Cohort

In early 2021, the Land Stewardship Project is launching its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Organizing and Social Change Cohort. The cohort will be a powerful opportunity to further develop the leadership and organizing skills we collectively need in order to democratize a food and healthcare system that works for all people, the land, animals, and the environment. It will be held virtually via 10 Zoom sessions from late January until early April.

Through this cohort: **identify** your own motivations and what holds you back from building the collective power needed to accomplish our shared vision; **deepen** your understanding of structures of oppression and how they impact each of us and our communities; **create** ways to change the story about the biggest challenges our communities face; **grow** organizing skills to challenge corporate power and win positive change for people and the land; **unite** as leaders to advance strategic issue campaigns that transform our food and farming system; and **engage** with a growing network of Land Stewardship Project member-leaders across the Midwest.

For more information and to register, see <https://bit.ly/36kKeZS> or contact LSP’s Amanda Koehler at 612-400-6355, [akoehler@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:akoehler@landstewardshipproject.org). □

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. The Lifeline is committed to improving crisis services and advancing suicide prevention by empowering individuals, advancing professional best practices, and building awareness. Call **1-800-273-8255**.

### LSP Farm Crisis Resources

Feeling stressed or know someone who is? Check out LSP’s list of hotlines, websites, and other resources at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/farmcrisis](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/farmcrisis).