

June 8, 2021

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned 29 faith organizations, write to express our support for comprehensive jobs, infrastructure, and climate legislation that leaves no one behind.

As a coalition of diverse faith traditions, we are united across theological lines by our commitment to care for all of Creation and our call to serve vulnerable communities. We are encouraged by the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan as a framework for recovery legislation that advances economic opportunities, prioritizes racial equity, and facilitates a just transition to clean energy. Now, we urge Congress to join our communities and congregations in this work by seizing this historic opportunity to pass legislation that meets the needs of this moment, catalyzing our transition to a cleaner, healthier, and more equitable world.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis are deeply interconnected and highlight the deficit of justice in our world. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis will either further exacerbate existing systems of inequality or provide a pathway toward a more equitable future. With strong infrastructure legislation, we have the opportunity to support a just transition that creates resilient communities and leaves no one behind.

As people of faith, a just transition is a moral imperative, laying out a path toward eliminating environmental degradation and gender, economic and racial inequalities. It calls for the creation of well-paying jobs in the growing clean energy sector that provide workplace safety and economic security. It seeks to prevent regression in economic status for all workers, including those currently employed in the fossil fuel industry, while at the same time eliminating poverty. It honors and lifts up those who live and work on the land as well as traditional local economies and rural areas. It respects tribal sovereignty and the right of all communities to shape their economic future.

Our investments in a clean energy economy to cut carbon emissions and build resilience must benefit those who disproportionately bear the burdens of climate change and economic dislocation—including Black, Brown, Indigenous, and low-wealth communities, women and girls, and historically fossil fuel-dependent workers. This transition should include all industries and sectors, pathways to renewable energy, energy efficiency, economic opportunity, and social equity that effectively address the diverse needs of individual communities and geographic regions—including urban and rural areas, and communities that have historically borne the health and social costs of fossil fuel extraction. It must recognize the full cycle of harm to communities and Earth, which begins with resource extraction as foundational to economic growth and ends with damaged communities and a warming world.

We therefore call for robust jobs, climate, and infrastructure legislation that includes:

- **Pathways to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and economic opportunity that advance racial and social equity in both rural and urban communities.** Investing in a clean energy economy means investing in green job creation. By simultaneously curbing carbon emissions, cleaning up hazardous pollution, and promoting economic security, we will put health, community resilience, and human dignity at the center of our recovery.
- **Investments to build climate-resilient communities and infrastructure.** Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are disproportionately vulnerable to climate-related disasters, and due to systemic racism, often have the least resources to respond. We must not only support communities that are currently recovering from extreme weather events, such as storms, droughts, and wildfires, but also build climate-resilient infrastructure that will protect vulnerable communities from future devastation.
- **Policies that respect the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings.** This should include, and not be limited to, policies that align with the Justice40 Initiative, which seeks to ensure that 40% of benefits of federal investments are delivered to disadvantaged communities. It must also include targeted consultation, engagement, and participation of marginalized people and communities including women; Black, Brown, and Indigenous people; migrants; LGBTQ individuals; and other historically oppressed groups in all stages and all levels of the transition. Mechanisms must also be established for transparency and accountability in policy and programmatic efforts.
- **Funding for environmental cleanup of abandoned coal mines and Superfund sites and for the implementation of job training in these communities, as outlined in the RECLAIM Act (H.R 1733) and AML Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1734).** Such funding offers the opportunity to protect public health and provides immediate employment for impacted communities, including those historically dependent on the fossil fuel industry.

It is the moral responsibility of our nation, and our sacred task as people of faith, to protect our ecosystems, work for environmental justice, and address climate change. We ask you to seize this moment, when we have the opportunity to advance the well-being of all of the diverse people who live together in this land, and to be our faithful partners in enacting policies to protect each other and the Earth upon which all our lives depend, and bring about the more equitable and sustainable future that we pray for.

Sincerely,

Am Kolel
Arizona Jews for Justice
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism

Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church World Service
Colorado Jewish Climate Action
Congregation Beth Am Israel of Penn Valley, PA
Creation Justice Ministries
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Eco Justice Collaborative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
The Episcopal Church
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hazon
Interfaith Power & Light
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Jewish Climate Action Network
Jewish Justice Advocates of Temple Beth El of South Orange County
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Riverdale Jewish Earth Alliance
The Shalom Center
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sojourners
Southern California Jewish Earth Alliance
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Methodist Women
Uri L'tzedek