

June 8, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

As the Congress considers budget reconciliation legislation, the undersigned organizations write to ask you to prioritize funding for environmental justice in any final reconciliation package. Specifically, we ask that you include the \$162.9 billion in environmental justice funding that formed part of the \$555 billion in climate investments in H.R. 5376, the Build Back Better Act, as passed by the House of Representatives.

This funding is critical to efforts to address the impact of environmental racism that continues to impact communities across the U.S. The environmental injustices low-income and marginalized communities face are rooted in a long history of deliberate policy choices that entrenched segregation, exacerbated inequality, and exposed communities to multiple environmental hazards over the course of decades. The result of these policy choices is visible in communities like Diamond, Louisiana, where for years residents have dealt with illnesses and diseases associated with toxic emissions from the Shell Norco petrochemical facility located directly across the fence-line from their homes. Similar stories can be found across the U.S., from the Pacific Northwest to the Carolinas.

We support legislative initiatives to rectify past environmental injustices, including the Environmental Justice for All Act. We also celebrate the investments in clean drinking water and environmental remediation contained in Public Law 117-58, the Infrastructure Innovation and Jobs Act (IIJA). The environmental justice programs included in H.R.5376— together with the investments made under the IIJA—can help ease the burden on communities impacted by fossil fuel pollution. These programs include:

- \$5 billion for environmental and climate justice block grants to reduce pollution and climate threats in frontline communities and support community-led priorities to reduce pollution and improve public health and climate-readiness.
- \$3.87 billion for a Rural Partnership Program to help rural regions and Tribal Nations realize their vision for inclusive community and economic development.
- \$265 million for air quality monitoring to ensure accountability and transparency of toxic levels of air pollution.
- \$50 million for data collection on disproportionate environmental hazards to identify and track communities disproportionately harmed by environmental threats.

These and other initiatives outlined under the [*Equitable and Just National Climate Platform*](#) form part of the comprehensive response to environmental discrimination that we ask you to support.

Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin said that “one has to fight for justice for all.” The 117th Congress has to fight for justice for all - no community should be left behind as we seek to build a just and sustainable low carbon society. This Congress has a moral responsibility to lift the burden of injustice from the shoulders of those who have borne the brunt of fossil fuel pollution. We ask you to meet this historic moment and pass legislation that includes \$162.9 billion for environmental justice programs as a key part of a robust U.S. response to the climate crisis. Because all of us have a right to clean air, clean water, and healthy, vibrant communities.

Sincerely,

AJF Financial Services, Inc.

Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service Committee

Arizona Faith Network - Cherishing Creation Collaborative
Association of Young Americans (AYA)
Clean Energy Action
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network
Creation Justice Ministries
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Earth Action, Inc.
Earthworks
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon / Oregon Interfaith Power and Light
Empower Our Future
Environmental Defense Fund
Etica Funds - Responsible Investments
Evergreen Action
Figure 8 Investment Strategies
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Franciscan Action Network
FreshWater Accountability Project
Friends Fiduciary Corporation
Gemini Energy Solutions
Green Door Initiative
Green The Church
GreenFaith
Hazon
Honor the Earth
Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship's Climate Action Campaign
Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center
Interfaith Power and Light
Investor Advocates for Social Justice
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
League of Conservation Voters
Media Alliance
MN350
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment

Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Oxfam America
Peace Action Wisconsin
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light
Revitalization Strategies
Seventh Generation Interfaith Board Member
Sisters of Mercy Justice Team
Socially Responsible Investment Coalition
St. Teresa of Avila Ecumenical Catholic Community
Terra Advocati
The People's Justice Council
The Union for Reform Judaism
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
350 Hawaii
350 Merced
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Vote Solar
Waterway Advocates