



Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change

February 26, 2013

2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change,

Thank you for reaching out to **WE ACT for Environmental Justice** to provide our ideas on the actions the federal government can take to address climate change. For the past 25 years, WE ACT has sought to amplify the voices of communities of color, and/or low income on many environmental issues, ranging from clean air to toxic chemicals. Back in 2008, WE ACT formed a national group of environmental justice (EJ) leaders and advocates to create a climate justice platform, focused on identifying methods to reduce GHG emissions and alleviate the burdens of industrial pollution on our communities. This national group of leaders, known as the **Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (“the Forum”)**, crafted policy papers, provided testimony, and convened hundreds of community members, scientists, and allies to promote the **concept of climate justice and jointly developed policy recommendations designed to secure climate justice in communities of color and low income.**

Since 2009, the political landscape has changed and a window of opportunity to move forward with climate legislation seems to be in the horizon. We appreciate this Committee’s effort to sincerely consider our voices throughout its entire proceedings – not only limited to providing a response to these three questions, but also being engaged as experts, witnesses for testimony, sounding boards and partners for change.

On the following pages, we offer an overview of the Forum’s recommendations in response to the Committee’s questions. It is our hope that these ideas will provide a platform to expand the current conversation and thoughtfully include the specific challenges and concerns of EJ communities in future policy and administrative solutions to climate change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions.

In health and environment,

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On behalf of the members of the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change,



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Alaska Community Action on Toxics	Alaska
Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corporation	New York
Asian Pacific Environmental Network	California
California Environmental Rights Alliance	California
CATA (The Farmworkers Support Committee)	New Jersey
Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy	Minnesota
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment	California
CIDA, Inc.	Texas
Community Coalition for Environmental Justice	Washington
Communities for a Better Environment	California
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice	Connecticut
Deep South Center for Environmental Justice	New Orleans
Environmental Justice Advocates for Human Rights	Louisiana
Environmental Health Coalition	California
Environmental Justice Action group of Western New York	New York
Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota	Minnesota
Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark-Atlanta University	Georgia
Farmworker Health and Safety Institute	New Jersey
Green Door Initiative	Michigan
Harambee House	Georgia
Indigenous Environmental Network	Minnesota
Jesus Peoples Against Pollution	Mississippi
Just Transition Alliance	California
Kentuckians for the Commonwealth	Kentucky
The Labor/Community Strategy Center	California
Land Loss Prevention Project	North Carolina
New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance	New Jersey
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance	New York
People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources	Texas
People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights	California
Physicians for Social Responsibility — Los Angeles	California
Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice	New Mexico
Sustainable Community Development Group	Washington, D.C.
UPROSE	New York
WE ACT for Environmental Justice	New York

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What actions or policies could federal agencies adopt, using existing authorities, to reduce emissions of heat trapping pollution? (mitigation)

	Federal Agency Actions or Policies	Impacted agencies
1	Fully enforce existing Clean Air Act statutes, pending and proposed (Ozone rule, Tier III, existing rules on power plants)	EPA
2	Establish regulations that will encompass the notion of co-pollutants and hotspots. Develop a policy, that is managed under various federal agencies, that will use this information in siting decisions.	EPA
3	Develop regulations to require a fee on carbon emissions that will encourage emission sources to invest in more efficient controls while ensuring that carbon emissions are being reduced.	EPA
4	Continue funding for the Urban Toxics Program and other community scale monitoring, particularly around roadways.	EPA
5	Develop regulations requiring that environmental impact statements for hydraulic fracturing and other methods of natural gas extraction include an analysis of public health and safety impacts, especially on EJ communities, and that safer, healthier alternatives be duly considered and utilized.	EPA
6	Require a health impact assessment be a part of NEPA's requirements to generate an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement for proposed projects.	EPA, NIH
7	Do not issue a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline.	State Dept.
8	Convene a special task force to examine the potential climate and environmental health problems related to the refining of heavier and dirtier grades of crude oil.	DOT
9	Oppose all new coal fired power plants. Limit the permitting of new fossil fuel plants, refineries and drilling.	EPA
10	Prioritize funding for mass transit projects versus roads.	EPA
11	Increase the regulations on diesel trucks. Increase research and development funding for heavy-duty electric trucks.	EPA
12	Direct Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) to allow and support residential Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing and/or other low-interest financing programs for residential and commercial building energy efficiency and clean energy.	DOE, EPA, HUD
13	Develop a financing or grant program for smart grid infrastructure improvements and development of microgrids that use clean energy and energy storage.	DOE, EPA, HUD
14	Develop a federal financing program and/or support state and local financing programs for upgrading low-and moderate-income single-family and multi family residences with energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy.	DOE, EPA, HUD
15	Expanding the existing partnership between EPA, HUD, and DOE, which promotes Energy Star products and whole building energy rating disclosure in HUD housing, to include incentivizing energy rating disclosure and energy efficiency standards for all new and existing residential and commercial buildings.	EPA, HUD, DOE



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What actions or policies could federal agencies adopt, using existing authorities, to make our nation more resilient to the effects of climate change? (adaptation)

	Administration policies	Impacted agencies
1	Engage EJ communities in conversations, as long-standing, effective leaders and advocates for vulnerable populations	All
2	Prioritize funding and resource mechanisms to build up the most vulnerable communities, for example, supporting existing and future Army Corps Engineer projects that have already been authorized by Congress to enhance flood protection for those vulnerable to extreme storm surges.	All
3	Support a comprehensive study and assessment of community infrastructure, particularly in the Northeastern United States, that is extremely vulnerable to weather events, in the areas of transportation, electrical systems, aging water infrastructure and risk of contamination due to any Superfund site or existing site containing hazardous material spurred by storm surges.	FEMA, EPA, Homeland Security
4	Engage current and newly formed community-based coalitions to inform the resiliency process, especially as it relates to resource distribution for recovery.	EPA
5	Set aside funding and resources to address the non-physical stressors of climate change (i.e. mental health challenges due to relocation, or becoming a climate refugee or not having the resources to recover, etc.) and including this in current adaptation planning.	HHS
6	Funding and mechanisms to assist Native Alaskan villages that need to relocate.	All
7	Ensure that equity is a central component of clean energy and green infrastructure development to ensure that the benefits of these programs are significantly extended to low income and/or communities of color.	All
8	Create policies that insure that any revenues that are generated will provide relief for higher energy costs to low-income energy consumers.	EPA, DOE
9	Support EPA's office of research and development to support funding related specifically to address cumulative impacts, and related scientific tool development. Cumulative impacts, cumulative risk assessment embodies the collective impact of separate pollution sources and their combined impact on EJ communities.	EPA
10	Develop a comprehensive model for ID-ing vulnerable communities, possibly applying some of the elements of the CalEPA CalEnviroScreen, or other potential models being developing amongst researchers in the EJ community.	



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What legislation would you recommend Congress enact to strengthen the ability of federal agencies to prevent and respond to the effects of climate change?

Congressional legislation	Impacted agencies
1 Comprehensive climate legislation that involves the thoughtful input of EJ communities at the forefront in creating the policy.	All
2 Legislation that will hold federal agencies accountable for their climate change adaptation plans. Accountability goes beyond just generating a scorecard, but impacts funding or other resources if goals are not met.	DOJ
3 Legislation that will guarantee and streamline paths of support, particularly to rural EJ communities, to prepare and respond to impacts from climate change, specifically areas that are communities of color, and/or low income.	FEMA, EPA
4 A law that keeps funding for critical community stability programs - EPA (CARE Program), DOE (LIHEAP), HUD (Partnership for Sustainable Communities), Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative - disallows the potential for these programs to not be funded.	EPA, DOE, HUD
5 A requirement that an environmental justice analysis of policies related to climate change, air, and funding are pursued by Agencies, especially considering the guidance and recommendations of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council.	DOJ
6 Utilize NEPA more effectively in policy conversations and protect the premises of the National Environmental Policy Act.	DOJ
7 Directed resources to continue the sustained assessment process outlined in the current draft of the NCA report.	NOAA, CDC
8 Commission a series of GAO reports on the negative impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations.	
9 Legislation that puts a price on carbon, but does not allow for offsets to be bought by polluters near vulnerable communities.	
10 Legislation requiring states to implement a Renewable Portfolio Standard to meet 50% of statewide electricity demand using renewable resources by 2050, at least half of which should be distributed generation. EJ communities should be prioritized for clean, distributed generation investment and job opportunities.	